

# Christmas Puzzles Answers

1)

N	E	S	W
3NT	P	P	P
	AJ76		
	A1043		
	543		
	54		

It does no good to lead in a “normal” style against such auctions.

Leading 4<sup>th</sup> highest ( which do you lead the 6 spades or the 3 hearts ?) is all too likely to lose and then the declarer will soon be wrapping up 9 or more tricks. Don't forget that the 3NT bidder has 7 or more solid diamonds or clubs .

The answer is to lead an Ace –any Ace , which will allow you to see the dummy and give your partner the chance to signal whether she likes the lead.

If for the sake of argument you start with the Ace of hearts and partner's hearts are indifferent she will signal with a low heart; in that case you will then try the Ace spades.

It is one of the rare occasions that a lead of an unsupported Ace is the correct lead.

NB partner should be aware that your lead of an Ace does not promise the King !

If they have the King of course they signal positively , without the King they signal low.

2) In 4 Hearts you have to try to make 10 tricks having already lost the Ace + King diamonds.

Well you will tell your partner that , “ yes , you had to eliminate the side suits before executing a throw in and end play “ but if she looks less than impressed with that you might as well admit that actually all you did was cash all your winning hearts and the Queen diamonds to reach this three card end position

[N ]		[S]
J		4
Void		Void
Void		Void
A8		Q10
	K	
	Void	
	Void	
	KJ	
	[W]	

Now simply leading a spade ( the “throw in “ ) forces West to win and having no other cards other than clubs ,has to lead a club ( is “end played “ ).

You might have known what you were doing the whole time ( don't tell anyone otherwise ) but it is one of those hands that you would make if you just keep playing ( and playing ) the long suit until the unfortunate West eventually can't keep all the cards they want to keep.

There were alternative endings and West might have decided to keep these cards at the end

	K6	
	Void	
	Void	
	K	
	[W]	

But then you would simply lead the Ace clubs.

To beat the contract East had to cash only the Ace diamonds (and not also the K Diamonds) before leading a spade.

