# 55. Almost Game in One Hand

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                    ♠ J1098
                    ♥ 543
                    ♦ A1093
                    ♣ 52

      ♠ 2              N            ♠ 5
      ♥ J1098      W       E        ♥ AKQ76
      ♦ 874            S            ♦ Q62
      ♣ K10964                     ♣ J873

                    ♠ AKQ7643
                    ♥ 2
                    ♦ KJ5
                    ♣ AQ
```

| W | N | E | S |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   | 2♣ |
| P | 2♦ | P | 2♠ |
| P | 4♠ | All Pass | |

--None Vulnerable--

**The bidding:**

South, without losing the lead, can take nine tricks with the king of clubs onside. This happens half the time so South has eight and a half quick tricks. This hand will make game with almost no help from partner so South opens two clubs.

North replies two diamonds, waiting. This is superior to two diamonds, negative. Two diamonds except for certain cases is an automatic response. It gives partner room to rebid two of a major or two Notrump. South does his best to make one of these three rebids. Here South rebids two spades.

North, with only one ace or king, goes directly to four spades where south plays.

**The contract:**          Four spades by South

**The opening lead:**      The jack of hearts

**The play:**

East ducks with the six, and West continues hoping declarer has the only unaccounted-for heart. However, East has the seven, and declarer ruffs the second heart, draws trump with the jack of spades and ruffs dummy's last heart. Declarer after stripping or eliminating hearts cashes the ace of clubs and exits the queen of clubs. West wins the king and has no exit cards. He either plays a diamond or gives declarer a sluff and a ruff. Therefore South has no diamond losers.

**The result:** Four spades making plus one for +450

**Note:** If South wins the club finesse and guesses the diamonds correctly, he could make six spades. This has a 25 percent chance of making. However, he could end up with four spades. The line of play involving eliminations and an end play guarantees five spades. As the cards lie, West would win the club finesse and would have a club exit card giving South a guess in diamonds to make five.