

BRIDGE TECHNIQUE SERIES

# PLANNING THE PLAY IN NOTRUMP



*David Bird • Marc Smith*

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# Bridge Technique Series

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## How to Plan a Notrump Contract

You reach 3NT, the opening lead is made, and with a nervous look across the table partner lays down the dummy. What next? Before playing a card from the dummy, you should make a general plan for the contract. The first step is to count how many top tricks you have. You must then determine the safest way to establish the extra tricks you need. Let's see an example straight away.

	♠ K 9 3										
	♥ A Q 5										
	♦ J 10 4										
	♣ Q 7 6 3										
♠ Q 10 8 2	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 7 5 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J 8 3		♥ K 10 6 2									
♦ K 9 6		♦ A 7 5 3									
♣ 9 5 2		♣ 8									
	♠ A 6										
	♥ 9 7 4										
	♦ Q 8 2										
	♣ A K J 10 4										

West leads a fourth-best ♠2 against 3NT. You can count eight top tricks: two spades, one heart, no diamonds and five clubs. A successful heart finesse would give you a ninth trick. If the finesse lost, though, the defenders would clear the spade suit and you would surely go down. How about establishing a ninth trick in diamonds? West's ♠2 lead indicates that the spades are 4-4. By knocking out the ace and king of dia-

monds, you will set up a ninth trick for yourself, at the same time restricting the defenders to just two spades and two top diamonds.

Is the line 100% (assuming spades are 4-4)? Not quite. Suppose West held both missing diamond honors and East held the ♥ K. West could win the first diamond and switch to hearts. You would rise with dummy's ace of hearts and play a second diamond. This is better than finessing, because if East wins the second diamond trick, he cannot hurt you in hearts. However, West could win the next diamond and lead a heart through the queen to beat you. But this would need three cards to be wrong — both diamonds and the ♥ K. If the contract went down on this line, a simple heart finesse would have failed too.

That is our plan for the contract, then — we will play on diamonds. If West wins the first round of diamonds and switches to a heart, we will rise with dummy's ace. Dummy's remaining ♥ Q5 will then act as a stopper if East holds the other diamond honor.

On the next deal, try making a plan yourself.

	♠ A 9 4 3										
	♥ K 5										
	♦ 10 8										
	♣ A Q 10 8 7										
♠ 10 6 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q J 7 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 9 7 6 2		♥ 10 8 4 3									
♦ K 4		♦ A 5 3									
♣ K J 4		♣ 6 5									
	♠ K 8										
	♥ A J										
	♦ Q J 9 7 6 2										
	♣ 9 3 2										

West leads the ♥ 6 against 3NT. Plan the play.

You have only five tricks on top. The diamond suit can provide four more, once you have knocked out the ace and king. Unfortunately, you will not have time to do that. The defenders will clear the heart suit when you knock out their first diamond stopper, then cash at least three hearts when you knock out the second stopper. The only other possibility is to play on clubs, hoping to score five tricks in the suit. You will need West to hold both the missing honors. Only a 24% chance, yes, but better than the near-zero chance of playing on diamonds.

# QUIZ



## To Answers

A.

♠ A 5 4  
♥ A K J 10  
♦ J 10 2  
♣ Q 7 4

♠ 6 led



♠ K 8 2  
♥ 7 3  
♦ Q 8 5 3  
♣ K J 10 2

West leads a fourth-best ♠ 6 against 3NT. How many top winners do you have? How do you plan to increase this total to nine?

B.

♠ J 5 4  
♥ A 8 7  
♦ K J 10 5 4  
♣ A 6

♥ 2 led



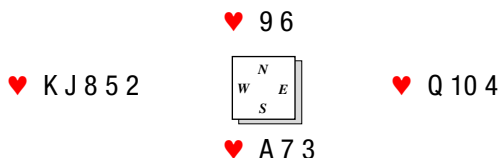
♠ A 8 2  
♥ Q 4  
♦ Q 8 2  
♣ K Q 8 7 3

West leads a fourth-best ♥ 2 against 3NT. How many top winners do you have? Plan the play.

- A.** You have only four tricks on top. To bump this to nine you will need to score three club tricks and two extra tricks in hearts. If you win the opening lead in your hand, the defenders may be able to cut you off from your third club trick by holding up the ace twice. So, win the first trick with dummy's ace and lead a club to the ten. If this wins, take a finesse in the heart suit. Lead the queen of clubs and clear the clubs. When a second spade is played, you will be able to cash your long club and repeat the heart finesse.
- B.** There are five certain top tricks, seven if the clubs break 3-3. The extra tricks you need can easily be established from the diamond suit. What is the best play at Trick 1? If you run the heart lead to the queen, East may win with the king and put the contract at risk by switching to spades. The ♥2 opening lead suggests that hearts are breaking 4-4. So, win the first trick with the ace of hearts and clear the diamonds. The defenders will make the ace of diamonds and three hearts, leaving you to score the remaining tricks.
-

## The Hold-up and Subsequent Play

For many years, none of the commercially available computer bridge programs could perform a simple hold-up! This was incredible, since it is the single most important technique in notrump play. Suppose West leads his fourth-best heart and the suit lies like this:



You hold up the ace until the third round, thereby exhausting East of the suit. You can now afford to let East gain the lead, while you develop the tricks you need. Had you won an earlier round of hearts, leaving the defenders' communications intact, this would not have been the case.

### *The hold-up with one stopper*

The simplest case to consider is where you hold just one stopper in the opponents' suit, typically the ace. After your hold-up one defender will be the 'safe hand', the other the 'danger hand'. You must manage the remainder of the play without allowing the danger hand to gain the lead. This is a typical deal:

	♠ A Q J 7										
	♥ 9 4										
	♦ A 10 6 2										
	♣ 10 9 6										
♠ 8 3 2	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 5 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 8 5 2		♥ K 10 7									
♦ 7 5		♦ Q 9 8 3									
♣ K 8 2		♣ 7 5									
	♠ K 6										
	♥ A 6 3										
	♦ K J 4										
	♣ A Q J 4 3										

West leads the ♥ 5 against your 3NT contract. You hold up the ace of hearts until the third round, exhausting East's cards in the suit. What next? You can count eight top tricks and therefore need only one more trick for game. It would be a bad mistake to take the club finesse, because this would be 'into the danger hand'. If the finesse lost, West would be able to cash his heart winners.

In diamonds you have a two-way finesse; you can play either defender for the queen. It would be an error to finesse East for the queen. If the finesse lost, West would again be able to cash his hearts. The correct play is to take the diamond finesse 'into the safe hand'. You lead the ♦ 4 from the South hand and play dummy's ten. As it happens, the finesse loses. No matter. East has no heart to play and nine tricks are yours.

The fact that one hand is dangerous, the other safe, will often affect how you play on your own main suit.

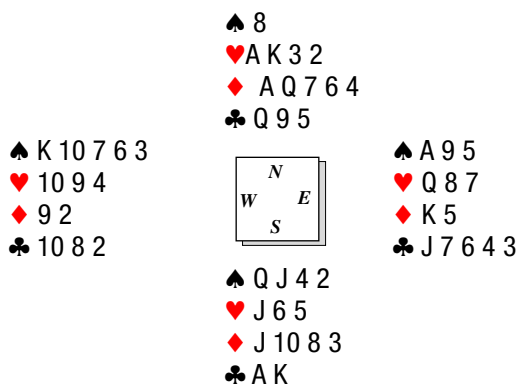
	♠ 7 4										
	♥ K Q 5										
	♦ A 7 6 3										
	♣ K 8 5 4										
♠ K J 9 6 3	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 8 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 10 8 4		♥ 9 7 6 2									
♦ Q 10 2		♦ J 9 5									
♣ Q 9		♣ 10 7 6									
	♠ A 10 5										
	A J 3										
	♦ K 8 4										
	♣ A J 3 2										

West attacks in spades and you hold up until the third round. There

is little prospect of ducking a round of diamonds into the safe hand, so you look to clubs for your ninth trick. If you make the ‘normal’ play in the suit, cashing the king and finessing the jack, you will go down. West will win and cash two more spade tricks.

You need only three club tricks, not four, and should seek to make these without allowing West on lead. Lead the ♣2 from the South hand. If West produces the six or the seven, cover with dummy’s eight. You will score three club tricks when West started with ♣Q76 or forgot to insert his middle card from such as ♣Q97. If West plays the nine or ten, as here, you will win with the king and continue with a second round to the ace. This will catch an initial queen doubleton with West. If East had the club queen all along, you will still score three club tricks, of course. Should he have started with a holding such as ♣Q1076, you will cross to dummy and lead a third round of clubs towards your jack.

We’ll look next at a deal or two where your single stopper is not an ace.



West leads the ♠6 to East’s ace and back comes the ♠9. If the spades are 4-4 or 6-2 the contract is secure; the defenders will not be able to cash the five tricks they need, even if the diamond finesse loses. The risky situation is when the spades are 5-3. What will happen if you cover East’s ♠9 with an honor? West will duck, to preserve communications. When you subsequently take a diamond finesse, East will win with the king and the defenders will score three more spade tricks to defeat the contract. To break the link between the defenders you must play low on East’s ♠9. East will doubtless play another spade but he will have no spade to play when you clear the diamond suit.

‘What if East plays the ♠9 at Trick 1?’ you may be wondering. It

would not be a particularly good play, because it would concede two tricks in the suit if South held ♠K-10-x. On the present layout you would have to play carefully, however, allowing the nine to win. If instead you captured the nine, the defenders would be poised to score four spade tricks when the diamond finesse lost.

Communications is the theme of the next deal, too. East makes a clever play, aimed at preserving the defenders' communications. The declarer must diagnose the situation, then find a counter.

Neither Vul.	♠ 8 3											
Dealer East	♥ K 8 4											
	♦ K Q 10 6											
	♣ Q 9 5 2											
♠ J 10 7 6 2	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A Q 5	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ J 7 5		♥ Q 10 6 2										
♦ 9 5 4 2		♦ A 7										
♣ 7		♣ J 8 6 4										
	♣ K 9 4											
	♥ A 9 3											
	♦ J 8 3											
	♣ A K 10 3											

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

West leads the ♠6 and East makes the bright play of the queen. Do you see the purpose of this? If instead he plays the ace, followed by the queen, South will hold up the king until the third round. When East subsequently gains the lead with the ace of diamonds, he will have no spade to play. By playing the queen on the first round, East hopes to tempt declarer into taking his king prematurely.

Over to you, now. What should you do, as declarer, when the queen appears from East at Trick 1? Many players would win with the king, fearing that West held the spade ace and the defenders might otherwise cash the first five or six tricks. The correct play here is to hold up the king, aiming to break communications between the defenders.

How can you tell that this is right? The first point to note is that there are only 15 points out. East opened the bidding and is very likely to hold the spade ace (particularly as his play of the queen suggests that West holds the jack). Apart from that, you are unlikely to make the contract by winning the first trick. West, who is very short in clubs, is

likely to hold five cards in the suit he has chosen to lead. When you knock out the diamond ace, the defenders will beat the contract by cashing at least four spade tricks. When playing against opponents who are capable of playing the queen from A-Q-x, you should hold up the king. If the cards lie as in the diagram, the contract will then be impregnable.

## *The hold-up with one and a half stoppers*

What do we mean by one and a half stoppers? We're thinking of holdings such as A-J-x and K-Q-x. You are certain of one stopper and may have a second stopper if one particular defender gains the lead subsequently.

When you hold A-J-x in the suit led, and the third hand has played one of the missing honors, your first decision is whether or not you should hold up the ace. If you win the first round, your remaining J-x will act as a stopper if West subsequently gains the lead. If East is more likely to gain the lead, you may fare better by holding up the ace for two rounds. Let's look at a typical deal:

	♠ 7 3										
	♥ A 10 5 4										
	♦ K Q 6										
	♣ Q J 5 2										
♠ K 10 8 5 2	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 9 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J 6		♥ Q 9 8 2									
♦ 10 7 4 2		♦ J 9 3									
♣ K 6		♣ 8 4 3									
	♠ A J 4										
	♥ K 7 3										
	♦ A 8 5										
	♣ A 10 9 7										

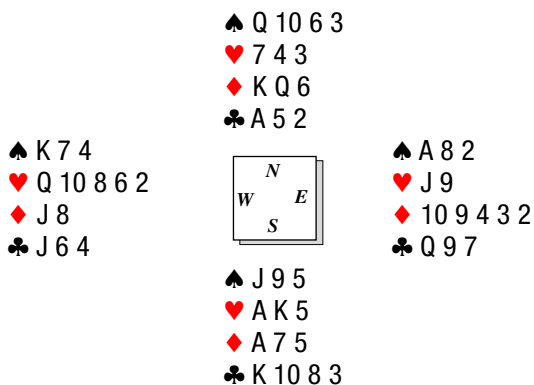
West leads the ♠5 to East's queen. Before playing to the first trick, you must consider your play of the whole hand. You will have to play on clubs to set up nine tricks and only West can gain the lead in that suit. You should therefore win the first round of spades. You cross to dummy with a diamond and run the ♣Q. The finesse loses but your remaining ♠J4 will guard the suit with West on lead.

Suppose that we swap the North and South club holdings. It is now East who may gain the lead and this affects your play at Trick 1. Aiming to exhaust East of spades, you would hold up the spade ace until the third round. If the club finesse subsequently lost, East would have



♠ 10 6 4  
♥ Q 10 8 6 2  
♦ K 9 5  
♣ 7 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2NT
pass	3♣	pass	3♦
pass	3NT	all pass	



A 1NT-3NT auction gives little away and West leads the ♥ 6 to East's jack. Let's see first what will happen if you win the first trick. You have seven tricks on top and need to knock out the ace and king of spades to create two more. When you play on spades, East will win with the ace and play a second heart. Ducking at this stage is no use — West will win and clear the heart suit. He will subsequently gain the lead in spades and cash two more heart tricks. One down!

To make the contract you must duck the first round of hearts. East will doubtless continue the suit and you win with the ace. You can see the difference this hold-up makes. When you play a spade to the queen and ace, East has no heart to return. You will make the contract easily.

Suppose, on that hand, that your clubs had been weaker, just ♣K762. Some players would then say 'I'd better not hold up in hearts. East may switch to clubs and I could lose two spades, one heart and two clubs.' That's true in a way and if you thought that West had led from only a four-card suit (if he had led a fourth-best ♥ 2, for example) you would do best not to hold up. When there is any chance that the lead is from a five-card suit, it is usually best to hold up regardless. Even when the defenders can, in theory, beat the contract with a switch, they rarely do so. For one thing, they don't know that you have a double stopper in the first suit. If you had only one stopper it might be essential to remove it.

A similar situation may arise when right-hand-opponent has bid a suit and his partner leads it from shortness:

	♠ 7 5 2										
	♥ J 4 3										
	♦ Q 8 6 5										
	♣ A Q 2										
♠ 8 4	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q 9 6 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 10 8 7 2		♥ Q 9 6									
♦ K 7 4		♦ A 2									
♣ 10 8 6 4		♣ J 9 7									
	♠ A J 10										
	♥ A K 5										
	♦ J 10 9 3										
	♣ K 5 3										

East opens 1♠ and you overcall 1NT, raised to 3NT. West leads the ♠8 and East plays the queen. If you win with the ace, you will go down. West will win the first round of diamonds and clear his partner's spade suit. When you knock out the second diamond stopper, East will cash his winning spades to put you one down.

Instead, you should allow East's ♠Q to hold the first trick. You win the next round of spades with the jack and West will have no spade to play when he gains the lead. (Yes, East could and should have thwarted you by playing low at Trick 1, forcing you to take your second stopper immediately. West would then have had a spade to play when he took his ♦K. This doesn't mean you shouldn't take advantage of the many defenders whose skill does not stretch that far!)

## Key points

1. The aim of a hold-up is to leave one defender with no cards in the suit that has been led. He then becomes the 'safe hand', his partner the 'danger hand'. You must aim to establish the tricks you need without allowing the danger hand to gain the lead.
2. The fact that the danger hand must be kept off lead will affect how you plan the play. In general, you should take finesses into the safe hand. When you have a choice of suits to attack, choose the one that offers the least chance of the danger hand gaining the lead.
3. A holding such as A-J-x may be thought of as one and a half stoppers. When you expect your left-hand-opponent to gain the lead, it is usually right to take the ace at once, retaining the J-x as a second

stopper. If instead your right-hand-opponent is more likely to gain the lead, it may be better to hold up the ace for two rounds, aiming to exhaust him of the suit.

4. When you have two enemy stoppers to knock out, consider holding up in the suit led even when you hold a double stopper. If right-hand opponent started with a doubleton in the suit led, this will exhaust his holding. He will not be able to attack your remaining stopper when he gains the lead.
-

# QUIZ



## To Answers

**A.**

♠ 7 5 4  
♥ K 4  
♦ A 10 2  
♣ A Q 10 7 4

♠ 6 led



♠ K J 2  
♥ A Q 6 2  
♦ K 7 6  
♣ J 8 2

West leads a fourth-best ♠ 6 against 3NT, East playing the queen. Plan the play.

**B.**

♠ K J 7  
♥ 8 7 6  
♦ A 10 2  
♣ J 10 6 4

♥ 5 led



♠ Q 10 6  
♥ A Q 2  
♦ K 9 6  
♣ A Q 7 3

West leads a fourth-best ♥ 5 against 3NT, East playing the king. Plan the play.

- A.** When the defender to your right plays the queen to the first trick, a holding of K-J-x plays similarly to A-J-x. Since you will have to take a club finesse into the East hand, you must aim to exhaust East of spades. Allow the spade queen to win the first trick. East is welcome to continue with a spade because, in the dangerous case where spades are 5-2, this will be his last card in the suit. If a subsequent club finesse fails, East will have no spade to return.
- B.** You should allow East's king to hold the first trick. Win the heart continuation and play a spade to the king. If East wins and has a heart to play, the suit will have broken 4-3 and poses no threat. If instead dummy's ♠K wins the trick, take advantage of the entry to dummy by running the ♣J.

The problem with winning the first heart trick is that you would then need to play on clubs before spades, attacking the entry to the danger hand. There is no safe entry to dummy to allow you to play on clubs first. If you used the ♦A for that purpose you would be at risk in the diamond suit.

# Which Suit Should I Attack?

---

Sometimes you will need to play on more than one suit in order to create the extra tricks you need. In that case it may be important to attack the right suit first. On other occasions you will have two suits, each of which might produce sufficient extra tricks on its own. You may then have to choose which suit is the better prospect. In this chapter we will look at some general guidelines that will steer you in the right direction.

## *Knocking out the entry to the danger hand*

Suppose you need extra tricks from two different suits but one of the defenders is threatening to set up his own suit. It is usually best to play first on the suit where the danger hand has a potential entry. If he then clears his suit, the other defender may not be able to reach his partner's hand when he subsequently gains the lead. An example deal will make this clear.

	♠ A J 7 3							
	♥ K J							
	♦ J 10 3							
	♣ K J 6 4							
♠ K 5 4	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr></table>	N		E	W		S	♠ Q 9 8 2
N		E						
W		S						
♥ 10 9 8 7 5		♥ A 6 2						
♦ K 7 6		♦ 9 8 2						
♣ 7 3		♣ A 8 5						
	♠ 10 6							
	♥ Q 4 3							
	♦ A Q 5 4							
	♣ Q 10 9 2							

West leads the 10 against 3NT. East wins dummy's jack with the ace and returns the ♥ 6. Let's see what happens if you play on clubs first. East will rise with the ace immediately and clear his partner's hearts. When you eventually take the diamond finesse, West will win and cash two heart tricks to put you one down.

Since you need more than one diamond trick anyway and that finesse is into the danger hand, you should play on diamonds first, while you still have the hearts guarded. Suppose you run the jack of diamonds at Trick 3. West wins with the king but the contract cannot be beaten. West is welcome to knock out your last heart stopper. East will have no heart to play when he gains the lead with the club ace.

The next deal was misplayed when it arose at the table. Would you have done better?

	♠ J 6							
	♥ 7 4 2							
	♦ A 10 8 6							
	♣ 10 9 5 2							
♠ Q 7 5 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr></table>	N		E	W		S	♠ K 9 8 4
N		E						
W		S						
♥ Q 10 8 6 5		♥ J 9						
♦ 7 5		♦ K 9 3 2						
♣ K 7		♣ 8 6 4						
	♠ A 10 3							
	♥ A K 3							
	♦ Q J 4							
	♣ A Q J 3							

West led the ♥ 6 against 3NT and declarer won East's jack with the king. (A hold-up would be dangerous, since East might switch to

spades.) The queen of diamonds was run to East’s king and back came a second heart. Declarer ducked this trick but it brought him no reward. When West cleared the heart suit, declarer cashed his three diamond winners and took the club finesse. ‘Both finesses wrong!’ he exclaimed, as West won and cashed two heart tricks to beat the contract.

At Trick 2, declarer should have played on clubs, attacking the entry to the danger hand (West). Declarer would have to play ace and another club, rather than taking a finesse, but that does not matter at all. Three clubs, three diamonds, and three top cards in the majors would bring the total to nine. It would make no difference which defender won with the club king. Clearing the heart suit would not damage the contract because the subsequent diamond finesse would be into the safe hand.

Here is a final deal on this important theme. Take the South cards.

Neither Vul.		♠ 9 7 6 5 2	
Dealer Wes 9 5 2		♦ A 9 5 3	
		♣ A	
♠ 4		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>N</span><span>E</span></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>W</span><span>S</span></div> </div>	♠ K Q J 10 8
♥ J 10 4			♥ A 8 6 3
♦ Q J 7 4			♦ 10 6
♣ J 8 7 5 2			♣ 4 3
		♠ A 3	
		♥ K Q 7	
		♦ K 8 2	
		♣ K Q 10 9 6	
<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>
pass	pass	1♠	1NT
pass	2NT	pass	3NT
all pass			

A spade lead would have beaten the contract. However, West ignores his partner’s third-seat opening and gives you a chance by leading the ♣5 which you win with dummy’s ace. You then play a heart to the king, which wins. What next?

If you clear the club suit, West will have the chance to switch to spades. You will then have only eight tricks. Instead you should cross to the ace of diamonds and play a second round of hearts. You are playing on the suit where the danger hand has a stopper (♥A), rather than on the suit of the safe hand’s stopper (♣J). It makes no difference what

East does. If he wins and clears the spades, he will have no entry to them. If instead he ducks the second heart, you will clear the club suit and collect your nine tricks.

## Reading the opening lead

When you have a choice of suits to develop, your decision may depend on how you read the opening lead. Look at this deal:

	♠ K Q J 5	
	♥ Q J 4	
	♦ 7 5	
	♣ K J 6 2	
♠ 8 7 2		♠ A 9 4 3
♥ 8 3 2		♥ K 9 7 6
♦ A 10 8 4 3		♦ K 9 6
♣ 9 7		♣ 8 4
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="text-align: center;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>W</span><span>E</span> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">S</div> </div>	
	♠ 10 6	
	♥ A 10 5	
	♦ Q J 2	
	♣ A Q 10 5 3	

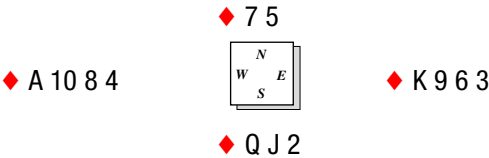
West leads the ♦4 against 3NT. When East wins with the king and returns the ♦9, West follows with the three, allowing your queen to win. (This is good defense. He is preserving the communications between the defenders' hands.) What next? Should you knock out the ace of spades or cross to dummy with a club and take the heart finesse?

If East holds the ♥K a finesse will give you three heart tricks, enough to bring your total to nine. If the heart finesse loses, however, the contract will go down. You will lose one spade, one heart, and at least three diamonds. How about knocking out the ace of spades instead? This will succeed if diamonds are 4-4, or if diamonds are 6-2 and East holds the ♠A.

To decide which major to play on, you must read the lie of the diamond suit. West's fourth-best lead of the four, followed by the three on the next round, shows five cards in the suit. East's ♦9 on the second round confirms this; if he held four diamonds he would have returned his own fourth-best card. The diamonds are clearly 5-3. If you play on spades you will go one down, losing four diamonds and the spade ace. You should therefore cross to a club and run the queen of hearts, taking a solid 50% chance of making the contract.

West may try to fool you on the lie of the diamond suit, by following with the eight on the second round. What then? East's  $\diamond 9$  should still be enough for you to read the suit correctly. East cannot afford to false-card, in general, because his partner's play at Trick 2 may depend on a correct reading of the suit.

Suppose, still on the same deal, that this had been the lie of the diamond suit:



West would again lead the  $\diamond 4$  to the king. When East returned the  $\diamond 3$ , you would read the diamonds as 4-4. It would then be safe to play on spades.

### *Which is the better chance?*

Sometimes you have a chance of extra tricks in two different suits and must calculate which offers the better odds. Although few bridge players perform calculations with actual numbers at the table, it is helpful to know the approximate odds for the various types of finesses and breaks in a suit. These are the approximate percentage chances for the ways in which a suit can break:

CARDS	BREAK	ODDS	CARDS	BREAK	ODDS
4	4-0	10%	6	6-0	1%
	3-1	41%		5-1	15%
	2-2	49%		4-2	48%
5	5-0	4%		3-3	36%
	4-1	28%			
	3-2	68%			

What about finesses? A simple finesse is 50%, of course. The chance of making two tricks from A-J-10 opposite x-x-x is (roughly) 76% — you will succeed in your objective unless the king and the queen are both offside. With A-Q-10 opposite x-x-x, you have a 24% chance of three tricks, both missing honors being onside. You have a 52% chance of two tricks, with one honor onside and the other offside.

Finally, you have a 24% chance of making only one trick, when both the king and the jack are offside.

Comparing the odds in two suits is rarely as simple as it may seem, unfortunately. Look at this 3NT contract:

♠2 led

♠	9 7 5
♥	A J 10
♦	A 7 5 3
♣	A 6 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠	A 6
♥	8 7 5
♦	K 8 6 2
♣	K Q J 3

West leads the ♠2. East wins with the king and returns the ♠3 to your ace. How would you plan the play?

There are eight top tricks and chances for a ninth in both hearts and diamonds. Spades appear to be 4-4, so you can afford to lose the lead. Should you take two heart finesses, hoping that West holds at least one of the missing honors? Or should you duck a diamond, playing for a 3-2 break in that suit? Prospects in hearts are 76%. You will fail only in the 24% case where East holds both the king and queen. Prospects in diamonds are (look back at the table) 68%. So, at first glance, playing on hearts may seem to be the better shot.


In fact, giving up a diamond is better! Why is that? The first point to note is that the odds of a 4-1 diamond break alter, once we know (or assume) that the spades are breaking 4-4. An even division of one suit increases the chance that another suit will break evenly. Once spades are 4-4, the chance of a 3-2 diamond break rises from 68% to 76%. This makes prospects for the two lines equal.

There is another edge in favor of ducking a diamond. Suppose you do so, and the opponents then cash their spades. By winning the return and cashing your club winners, you may make the contract even when the diamonds are 4-1! If the defender with the long diamonds holds both missing heart honors, he will have to surrender one of his guards when you play the last club.

What are the lessons to be drawn from all this? Be aware that the odds fluctuate every time fresh information comes to light. Also, when two lines of play seem as good as one another, prefer the one that may give you some secondary chances.

## Leading through a defender's honor

When you are wondering which suit to play on, you must sometimes ask yourself: 'If I play on such-and-such a suit, what will happen if I lose the trick?' That's the case on the next deal.


	♠ 7	
	♥ K Q 9 3	
	♦ Q 9 8 2	
	♣ K J 6 4	
♠ Q 9 6 4 2		♠ J 8 5 3
♥ 10 8 7		♥ A J 2
♦ A 10 6		♦ J 7 5 3
♣ 7 3		♣ 8 2
	♠ A K 10	
	♥ 6 5 4	
	♦ K 4	
	♣ A Q 10 9 5	

West leads the ♠4 against 3NT and you win East's jack with the king. How would you plan the play?

You have seven top tricks and must seek another two from the red suits. Many players would play a heart to the king without further ado. East would win with the ace and play another spade. The contract would then be doomed. This outcome would have been obvious, had declarer asked himself: 'What will happen if a heart to the king loses?'

Since your remaining ♠K10 is a double stopper with West on lead, it is better to play on diamonds first. Suppose you cross to dummy with a club and play a diamond to the king. 'What will happen if this loses to West's ace?' The answer is: 'You are almost certain to make the contract.' West cannot continue spades profitably from his side of the table, so unless the cards lie very badly (East has ♦J10xxx and the ♥A), you will be able to set up a heart trick to bring the total to nine.

What if East had held the diamond ace, the suit lying like this:

	♦ Q 9 8 2	
♦ J 10 6		♦ A 7 5 3
	♦ K 4	

A lead towards the diamond king would still have guaranteed the contract. If East played the ace on thin air, you would have two dia-

mond tricks — enough for the contract. If instead he played low, you would pocket one diamond trick and turn to the heart suit for the game-going trick.

The play in the diamond suit is a very useful technique. By leading through East's high card (the ace, here) you make him pay a high price for winning the trick.

### ***Key points***

1. When you may have to lose the lead twice, to establish the tricks that you need, you should generally attack the potential entry to the danger hand first. If the other defender gains the lead subsequently, he will have no card remaining in the enemy suit.
2. The correct line of play often depends on the lie of the suit that has been led. Against 3NT, if the defenders have only three tricks to cash in that suit, you can afford to lose the lead (knocking out an ace, for example). If the defenders have four tricks to take, you must seek a line that may not lose the lead (a finesse, or playing for the drop).

# QUIZ



## To Answers

**A.**

♠ A K J 3  
♥ 9 7 6  
♦ K Q 5 2  
♣ 6 5

♥ 5 led

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 6 5  
♥ A 4  
♦ J 10 6 3  
♣ A K Q J 3

West leads a fourth-best ♥ 5 against 3NT, East playing the queen. Plan the play.

**B.**

♠ J 7 5  
♥ 10 3  
♦ A K 5 2  
♣ K 10 6 3

♥ 6 led

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q 4  
♥ A K 9  
♦ 10 6 3  
♣ Q J 9 7

West leads a fourth-best ♥ 6 against 3NT, East playing the jack. Plan the play.

- A.** You should hold up the ace of hearts for one round, in case West has led from a six-card suit. If West follows with the three or two on the second round of hearts, the suit cannot be 4-4. You should therefore seek a ninth trick by finessing the ♠J, rather than by knocking out the diamond ace. (If the spade finesse loses, you will still make the contract if West started with six hearts and East holds the ♦A.) If West plays a card higher than the five on the second round of hearts, and East returns the ♥2, it is likely that hearts are 4-4. You should then knock out the ace of diamonds instead of taking the spade finesse.
- B.** You should win the first round of hearts, leaving yourself with a double stopper should West be first to gain the lead. If you play on clubs next, East may win and play a heart through your remaining ♥K9, clearing the suit. A subsequent losing finesse in spades will allow West to cash his heart winners, beating the contract. To avoid this outcome you should cross to the ace of diamonds at Trick 2, then finesse the spade queen into the safe hand. West cannot persist with hearts from his side of the table. You will win his return and clear the clubs, making the game easily.

## Combining Chances

When there are two possible sources for the extra tricks you need, it is not always a question of ‘choosing which suit’. You can often combine the chances. This is a typical deal:

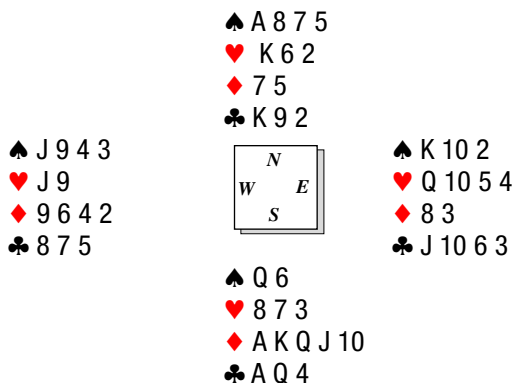
	♠ 10 4	
	♥ A 7 3	
	♦ A K 3	
	♣ Q J 10 6 4	
♠ Q J 8 7 2		♠ A 9 5 3
♥ 0 6 2		♥ 9 8 5
♦ Q 7		♦ 10 9 6 2
♣ K 8 2		♣ 7 5
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <div style="text-align: center;">N</div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <span>W</span><span>E</span> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">S</div> </div>	
	♠ K 6	
	♥ K Q J 4	
	♦ J 8 5 4	
	♣ A 9 3	

West leads the ♠7 against 3NT, East winning with the ace and returning the ♠3 to your king. To maximize the chances of making the contract, at teams or rubber bridge scoring, you should cash the ace and king of diamonds before taking the club finesse. The diamond queen will fall in two rounds 16% of the time. You will therefore make the contract 58% of the time, instead of the 50% that the club finesse alone provides.

At matchpoint pairs you would play differently. If you tried to drop the diamond queen and failed, which would happen 84% of the time, you would set up at least one more trick for the defenders. If the club finesse then failed, you would go two down, compared with the one down suffered by declarers who had not cashed the top diamonds.

If you take the club finesse first and it succeeds, you can cash the top diamonds afterwards, of course.

Even on deals where it does seem that you have to choose between alternatives, it may be possible to combine the chances to some extent.



West leads the ♣7 against 6NT. How would you plan the play?

There are eleven top tricks and you have chances for a twelfth in both spades and hearts. Suppose you win the club lead in dummy and play a spade towards the queen. You will make the contract when East holds the ♠K, a 50% chance. The other possibility is to duck a heart, hoping that the suit will break 3-3. Look back to our table of probabilities (on page 25) and you will see that this is only a 36% chance.

So, it's considerably better to play a spade to the queen, is it? Not at all, because ducking a heart allows you to combine two different chances. You make the contract if hearts are 3-3. You succeed also if the same defender holds the ♠K and four or more hearts, as in the diagram. After winning the defenders' return, cash the ace of spades, followed by the remaining clubs and diamonds. On your last winner, East will have to throw either the ♠K or his heart guard. Nearly half of the time when hearts do not break 3-3, you will still make the contract. Ducking a heart therefore gives you a total chance of around 68% (36% + half of the remaining 64%), considerably better than the 50% for leading a spade to the queen.

On page 26 we looked at a 3NT deal where we had to compare the chance of a combination (A-J-10) finesse with that of a 3-2 break. We concluded that it was a close decision. The next deal features the same two combinations but we have changed the spade suit, so that the defenders have no communications. What a difference that makes!

	♠ K 4										
	♥ A J 10										
	♦ A 7 5 3										
	♣ A Q 6 2										
♠ 10 9 8 2	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 5 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 3 2		♥ K 9 8 6 4									
♦ Q 10 9 4		♦ J									
♣ 9 5		♣ 10 8 7 4									
	♠ A Q J 6										
	♥ 7 5										
	♦ K 8 6 2										
	♣ K J 3										

West leads the ♠10 against 6NT and you can count eleven top tricks. On the face of it, you must — once again — decide whether to play for a 3-2 diamond break (68%) or to take two heart finesses (76%). What would your choice be?

As before, a simple comparison of single-suit figures does not paint the whole picture. The best play is to cash the ace and king of diamonds. If the suit breaks 3-2, you will concede a diamond and claim the contract. If diamonds break 4-1, you are still batting! If West holds the diamond length, you can finesse twice into the safe East hand, succeeding when the heart honors are split (a 52% chance). If East holds the diamond length, you will still be all right when West holds both heart honors (24%). Combining your chances in this way gives you a total chance of over 80%, rather than the 68% that the diamond suit alone provides.

(Those who like to press the last drop of juice from the lemon, may play to extract East's black suits when West shows up with four diamonds. A heart to the jack will then endplay East when he started with both heart honors!)

Sometimes you can combine the second-best chance in one suit with the best chance in another.

	♠ Q 10 5										
	♥ K 3										
	♦ A J 6 3										
	♣ K 7 4 2										
♠ K 9 7 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 8 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 5 4 2		♥ 10 9 8 6									
♦ 10 7 4		♦ Q 9									
♣ Q 9 5		♣ 10 8 3									
	♠ 6 4										
	♥ A Q J 7										
	♦ K 8 5 2										
	♣ A J 6										

West leads the ♠2 against 3NT. Although it doesn't matter on this occasion, your best play from dummy is the ten. This will generate a trick when West has led from the A-J or K-J. The alternative of rising with the queen will succeed only when he holds A-K.

The ten loses to the jack, and the defenders claim four tricks in the suit, exiting with a heart. How will you play the contract?

You have eight top tricks and a successful finesse in either of the minor suits would bump your total to nine. However, simply guessing which finesse to take will restrict your prospects to just 50%. A better idea is to try to drop one of the minor-suit queens first. If the queen does not fall, you will still have a 50% finesse left in the other suit.

Since you have eight cards between the hands in diamonds, and only seven in clubs, the diamond queen is appreciably more likely to drop. In fact it will fall in two rounds 33% of the time. The chance of the club queen falling is only 18%. So, cash the ace and king of diamonds. If the queen appears, as here, claim your overtrick. Should the diamond queen not drop, you will take your final chance — the club finesse. By combining the second-best chance in diamonds with the best chance in clubs, your total prospects increase from 50% to a robust 67%.

On our final deal on this theme you can combine three different chances.

	♠ K J 5 2	
	♥ 8 3	
	♦ A Q 4	
	♣ A 8 6 3	
♠ 7 6 3	<div>W<sup>N</sup>E S</div>	♠ Q 10 8 4
♥ Q 6 5		♥ 10 9 7 2
♦ 9 7 2		♦ J 10 8 3
♣ K Q J 10		♣ 7
	♠ A 9	
	♥ A K J 4	
	♦ K 6 5	
	♣ 9 5 4 2	

West leads the ♣K against 3NT. You duck the first round and win the second, East throwing a diamond. What now?

You could simply finesse both of the major-suit jacks, succeeding when either queen was well-placed. You can do better than this, though. The best move is to play a low spade to the nine. If this wins, or forces the queen, you have your ninth trick. If it loses to the 10, you can try to drop the spade queen in three rounds (the second chance) before falling back on a heart finesse (the third chance). With West holding four clubs to his partner's one, the prospects of any particular finesse against East are more than 50%. The total odds for our recommended line are in fact nearly 89%.


## Combining two finesses

When a standard A-Q finesse succeeds you do not lose the lead, of course. Suppose instead that you have this position:

	♣ Q 7 4				
♣ K 10 3	<table><tr><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>W   E</td></tr><tr><td>S</td></tr></table>	N	W   E	S	♣ J 9 6 2
N					
W   E					
S					
	♣ A 8 5				

Leading towards the queen will set up an extra trick, yes, but if West goes in with the king you will have lost the lead.

When combining finesses of these two different types, it is often important to take the right finesse first.


	♠ K 6 4 3	
	♥ J 2	
	♦ A K J 7	
	♣ A 7 3	
♠ J 10 9 7		♠ Q 8 2
♥ Q 9 5		♥ 10 8 6 4
♦ 8 5 4		♦ Q 10 9 2
♣ 9 6 4		♣ 10 5
	♠ A 5	
	♥ A K 7 3	
	♦ 6 3	
	♣ K Q J 8 2	

Six clubs (or even seven clubs) would have been the best spot, since you could ruff hearts in the dummy. You reach 6NT, however, and West leads the ♠J. How would you continue?

Suppose your first move, after winning the spade lead, is to finesse the ♦J. East will win with the queen and you will go down. Your eye does better to alight on the other red jack first. If you lead a low heart to the jack at Trick 2, you have two chances of success. First, West may hold the ♥Q and dummy's ♥J will then give you a twelfth trick. Secondly, if East takes the ♥J with the queen your chance in diamonds will still be alive. You will make the contract if *either* red queen is onside.

## Avoiding a premature guess

Sometimes you are forced to take the second-best chance in the first suit because you fear being put to a premature guess in the second suit. Look at this deal:

	♠ A 10 4 2	
	♥ 8 3	
	♦ Q J 6 3	
	♣ K J 5	
♠ Q 5		♠ J 9 7 6
♥ J 9 4 2		♥ K 10 6 5
♦ 10 5 2		♦ 9 7 4
♣ 9 8 7 2		♣ 4 3
	♠ K 8 3	
	♥ A Q 7	
	♦ A K 8	
	♣ A Q 10 6	

You play in 6NT and West leads the ♣8 (second-best from bad suits). There are eleven tricks on top and you have chances of an extra trick in each of the major suits. Suppose you had to rely on spades alone. The best play would be to cash the king first, then play low to the ten. (Unless the nine shows from East, when you should run the eight next.) This would give you a 61% chance of three tricks.

Playing spades in this way would not be best on the present deal. Why is that? Because if East won an early round of spades he might switch to hearts, forcing you to take an early decision in that suit before you knew if the spades would yield a twelfth trick. In other words, you would have to choose between your chances in spades and hearts, rather than combining them.

Suppose instead you cash the ace of spades and lead low to the eight. West wins but cannot play on hearts from his side of the table. You can test the spades, finding them unhelpfully disposed on this occasion, and then fall back on your second chance — the heart finesse.

Ducking into the hand that cannot put you to a premature guess is an important technique. Here is another example:

	♠ 7 4							
	♥ 7 5 4							
	♦ A K 7							
	♣ K 9 7 6 2							
♠ K 8 3	<table><tr><td colspan="2">N</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">S</td></tr></table>	N		W	E	S		♠ J 10 9 6
N								
W	E							
S								
♥ A 10 8 2		♥ K 9 3						
♦ 10 5 2		♦ 8 6 3						
♣ J 10 3		♣ Q 5 4						
	♠ A Q 5 2							
	♥ Q J 6							
	♦ Q J 9 4							
	♣ A 8							

After bidding of 1NT-3NT, West leads the ♥2. East wins with the king and returns the nine, West preserving communications by allowing your queen to win. How would you continue?

Hearts appear to be 4-3. If you continue with ace, king and another club and find that the suit breaks 4-2, the opponents will score three hearts and two clubs before you have the opportunity for a spade finesse. Nor would ace and another club, ducking the trick to East, be ideal. He might switch to spades, forcing you to a decision in that suit before you knew if the clubs were 3-3.

The best idea is to cross to dummy with a diamond at Trick 2, then play a club towards your hand. If East plays low, you can cover with the eight, ducking the trick to West. You will then be able to test the clubs before you have to play on spades. If East plays a club honor on the first round, you should win with the ace and play a second club to the king. It is more likely that East started with a doubleton Q-J, Q-10, or J-10 than a singleton honor. On this particular hand, the odds are stronger than normal — if East holds a singleton club, West has decided to lead from four hearts rather than from five clubs.

### ***Key points***

1. Wherever possible, seek to combine chances in two suits, rather than rely on a favorable lie in just one suit.
2. When comparing the chances in two suits, remember to consider what residual prospects there will be if the first chance fails.
3. When two queen finesses are possible, but you cannot afford to lose a trick, play for the drop in one suit, then finesse in the other. You should play for the drop in the suit where you have the longer holding. This is an example of combining the second-best chance in one suit with the best chance in another.
4. The best play in one suit may lose the lead to a defender who can then put you to a premature guess in another suit. In this situation it may be better to make a less promising play in the first suit, keeping the danger hand off lead and thereby allowing you to combine your chances.

# QUIZ



## To Answers

**A.**

♠ K J 10 2  
♥ 8 4  
♦ A Q J 5  
♣ 10 7 2

♥ 3 led

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q 3  
A 10 2  
♦ 8 7 6 3  
♣ A Q 4

After bidding of 1NT-2♣, 2♦-3NT, West leads a fourth-best ♥3 and East plays the king. You allow this card to hold and East returns the ♥. Plan the play.

**B.**

♠ K J 6 2  
♥ J 7 5  
♦ K J 10 2  
♣ K 10

♣3 led

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 5 3  
♥ A Q 9 2  
♦ A 9 6 4  
♣ A 7

After bidding of 1♦-1♠, 2NT-3NT, West leads the ♣3 against 3NT. Plan the play.

- A.** The heart suit appears to be 4-3. Suppose, after winning the third round of hearts, that you play a diamond to the queen. If East wins with the king and switches to clubs, you will have to guess whether to finesse in that suit before you know if the diamonds are 3-2. A better idea to play a diamond to the ace, return to a spade honor, and play a second diamond to the queen. If East wins now, you will know — in good time — whether the diamonds are good for three tricks.
- B.** Win the club lead with the ace and play a heart to the jack. If the jack wins, finesse the ♥ 9 next. If instead the jack loses, win the return and play hearts from the top. Suppose the heart suit fails to provide the three tricks you need from it. You should then play to drop the queen in the eight-card diamond holding. If this chance fails too, you will fall back on the spade finesse. This is the best way to combine your chances in the three suits.
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# Communications Play

In Chapter 2 we studied at some length the hold-up play, designed to break communications between the two defenders. It is now time to see how you can make the most of your own communications, as declarer. We will start with a few hands where the aim is to establish a long suit in the dummy.

	♠ A 7 2										
	♥ 8 6										
	♦ A K 9 6 5 2										
	♣ 8 4										
♠ J 10 8 4	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 6 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q J 10 9 7		♥ 5 2									
♦ 8		♦ Q J 10 3									
♣ Q 5 2		♣ K 10 7 6									
	♠ K 9 5										
	♥ A K 4 3										
	♦ 7 4										
	♣ A J 9 3										

West leads the ♥Q against your 3NT. Since a spade switch would be unwelcome, you win the first round of hearts. What next?

You need four tricks from the diamond suit. When the suit is divided 3-2, it will be good enough to play the ace and king of diamonds, conceding the third round. The spade ace will serve as an entry to the established cards in diamonds. This line would fail here, since East

holds four diamonds. A better idea, which costs nothing when diamonds are 3-2, is to duck the first round of diamonds. If East returns a heart you can win, then cash the two top diamonds. The suit breaks 4-1, so you then have to concede a fourth round of the suit. No problem! The safe hand has to win and you now have nine tricks.

There are many similar positions where it can pay you to duck an early round or two of the suit:

♦ A 9 7 6 4



♦ K 8 2

Here you would cash the king first, then duck the second round. This would preserve the ace as an entry to dummy to run the suit.

♦ A K Q 8 3



♦ 7 4

Suppose you have this diamond holding and there is no side entry to the dummy. If you need only four diamond tricks, you should duck the first round. This will protect you against a 4-1 break.

♦ A 10 8 6 2



♦ 5 3

With one side entry to dummy, you would duck the first round of diamonds, then play ace and another, hoping for a 3-3 break. Even if there were two side entries to dummy, a first-round duck would still be correct. It would allow you to set up a long card against a 4-2 diamond break.

Less well known is the fact that such ducking plays can be right when dummy has the king and the ace is missing. Look at this deal:

	♠ 9 8 6										
	♥ 8 4										
	♦ K 9 6 5 2										
	♣ A 8 6										
♠ 10 3	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q J 5 4 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 9 5 2		♥ J 7 6									
♦ A 10 8		♦ Q J 3									
♣ J 10 9 7		♣ 5 4									
	♠ A K 7										
	♥ A K 10 3										
	♦ 7 4										
	♣ K Q 3 2										

West leads the ♣J against 3NT and you win with the king. A 3-3 club break is not very likely, after the opening lead, so it seems that you will need to set up the diamond suit. Suppose you play a diamond to the king. It wins, yes, but the contract will go down. One diamond trick is not enough for you.

Let's try ducking the first round of diamonds instead. With the diamonds so helpfully disposed, there is nothing the defenders can do. You will win the return (in hand, if they play a second round of clubs), then lead a diamond to the king. Three diamond tricks are yours and you will make an overtrick.

## Scoring all your winners


You should always be wary about releasing the last entry to the dummy, or to your own hand. Declarer played carelessly on this deal:

Neither Vul.												
Dealer West												
		♠ 5										
		♥ A J 4										
		♦ A 9 3										
		♣ A 8 7 6 4 3										
♠ Q J 8 7 6 2	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 4	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 10 3		♥ K Q 9 5										
♦ Q 2		♦ K J 10 7										
♣ J 9 5		♣ Q 2										
	♠ A K 3											
	♥ 8 7 6 2											
	♦ 8 6 5 4											
	♣ K 10											
<b>WEST</b>	<b>NORTH</b>	<b>EAST</b>	<b>SOUTH</b>									
2♠	3♣	pass	3NT									
all pass												

West opened with a weak two and eventually led the ♠7 against 3NT. Declarer won East's nine with the ace. Not giving the hand the attention it deserved, he continued with king, ace and another club. All would have been well if West had continued spades, allowing South to score the spade king. However, West knew from his partner's play at Trick 1 that South held this card. Realizing that a second spade trick would bring declarer's total to nine, he switched cleverly to the ♥10. The defenders persisted with the red suits and the contract went one down. Do you see how declarer could have avoided this fate?

At Trick 2 the right play was to lead the ♣10 from hand, ducking in the dummy. Whichever suit the defenders returned, declarer would be able to untangle his nine tricks. The club king would provide an entry to the otherwise stranded king of spades.

Take the South seat on the next hand and see what you make of it. The problem is similar to that on the last deal, but the required solution is quite different.

North-South Vul.		♠ A 7 5	
Dealer North		♥ A 10 4	
		♦ A K 10 6 5 3	
		♣ 4	
♠ 10 2			♠ K Q J 9
♥ K J 8 6			♥ Q 2
♦ 8 4			♦ Q 9 7
♣ K 10 8 6 2			♣ J 9 5 3
		♠ 8 6 4 3	
		♥ 9 7 5 3	
		♦ J 2	
		♣ A Q 7	

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
pass	1♦	pass	1NT
	3NT	all pass	

You decide not to mention your feeble major suits and arrive in 3NT. West leads the ♣6 to his partner's jack and you win with the queen. How will you play the hand?

The best idea is to lead the ♦2 to dummy's ten. If East wins with the queen and switches to spades, the jack of diamonds will provide an entry to the ace of clubs, your ninth trick. If instead dummy's ten wins the trick, you should cash the diamonds from the top, hoping for a 3-2

break. Should diamonds prove to be 4-1, you will have to clear the suit and cross your fingers for a club return!

Suppose now that the diamonds in the South hand were weaker, just 9-2 doubleton. How would you play the hand then?

You should cash your second club winner before playing on diamonds. If clubs are 5-4, you will lose just one diamond and three clubs. If clubs are 6-3, at least you tried your best!

## *Winning with a higher card than is necessary*

A common technique is to win the opening lead with a higher card than is necessary, to promote dummy's holding into an entry. This is a typical deal:

	♠ Q 6 3										
	♥ J 4 3										
	♦ K 10 6 5 3										
	♣ 6 4										
♠ K 9 7 5 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr> <td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr> <td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 7 5		♥ K 10 8 2									
♦ 8		♦ A 9 4 2									
♣ Q 10 8 5		♣ J 9 3									
	♠ A J 4										
	♥ A 9 6										
	♦ Q J 7										
	♣ A K 7 2										

West leads the ♠5 against 3NT, East playing the ten. If you do what comes naturally and win with the jack, the contract will go down. East will hold up the ace of diamonds until the third round, then play a spade. With no way to reach the dummy, you will be two down.

Suppose instead that you win the first trick with an unnecessarily high card, the ace. This will promote dummy's spade queen into an entry. East does best to switch to hearts when he wins the third round of diamonds. You counter this by holding up the ace until the third round; then you can lead a spade towards dummy. West has no heart to play when he takes the spade king and you can reach happily for your scoring pen.

The next deal is on a similar theme. Try it for yourself.

	♠ J 6 2										
	♥ K J 6										
	♦ 6										
	♣ K 9 8 6 5 2										
♠ Q 9 5	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 8 7 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 8 7 4 2		♥ 9 3									
♦ Q 10 3		♦ K 7 5 4									
♣ 10 4		♣ A J 3									
	♠ A K 4										
	♥ A 10 5										
	♦ A J 9 8 2										
	♣ Q 7										

West leads the ♥4 against 3NT. You play low from dummy and East plays the nine. How will you plan the play?

If you win the first trick with the ten, you will go down. East will hold up when you lead the queen of clubs. With only one side entry to dummy (♥K) you will not be able to set up and enjoy the club suit. Suppose instead that you win brightly with the ace of hearts at Trick 1. Dummy's K-J holding in hearts will now provide two entries. East's first-round duck in clubs will no longer prevent you from making four club tricks and your contract.

Let's tweak that heart suit a bit:

	♥ A J 5										
♥ Q 8 7 4 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♥ 9 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♥ K 10 6										

West leads the ♥4 to East's nine and this time it may seem that you can afford to win with the ten. Not if West is a good defender! When you subsequently lead the ♥6 towards dummy, hoping that a finesse will give you two entries in the suit, West may rise with the queen. This will force dummy's ace and the jack will no longer be an entry.

Once again you should win the first round with an unnecessarily high card, the king. West will then have no chance to be so clever.

## ***Winning the opening lead in the right hand***

When the suit you need to establish is in your own hand, you must sometimes be careful where you win the opening lead. Declarer played thoughtlessly on this deal:

	♠ A 6 3										
	♥ A J 10										
	♦ A K 10 2										
	♣ K 6 4										
♠ K 10 8 2	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 9 7 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 9 6 2		♥ K 8 5									
♦ 9 5		♦ Q J 7 6 4 3									
♣ A 10 5		♣ 7									
	♠ Q J 5										
	♥ 7 4 3										
	♦ 8										
	♣ Q J 9 8 3 2										

After bidding of 1♦-1NT, 3NT, West led the ♠2. Declarer won in hand with the queen and played on clubs. Unfortunately for him, West held ace third and was able to hold up the ace for two rounds. West knew, from his partner's card at Trick 1, that South held the ♠J. He therefore switched to the ♦9. There was no entry to the established clubs and the contract could no longer be made.

As you see, declarer should have won the opening spade lead with dummy's ace. He could then have cleared the club suit, knowing that his ♠QJ would provide a later entry to the South hand.

On the next deal, running the lead to the South hand will provide an extra trick. Resist the temptation!

	♠ K 6										
	♥ A 10 4 2										
	♦ A 10 8 6										
	♣ 9 4 2										
♠ 10 8 7 5 2	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 9 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ Q 9		♥ K 8 6 5 3									
♦ 7 5 4		♦ K Q J 9									
♣ A 6 5		♣ 8									
	♠ A J 3										
	♥ J 7										
	♦ 3 2										
	♣ K Q J 10 7 3										

West leads the ♠5 against 3NT. You play low from dummy and... Do you? If so, you will go down! East's queen will dislodge your ace, a key entry to the South hand, and West will subsequently hold up the ace of clubs for two rounds. The defenders will then play on the red suits, denying you an entry with the jack of spades. You will go at least one down.

If you tumbled to defeat on such a deal, you would have no answer to partner's accusing glare! The contract can be guaranteed by rising with dummy's king of spades at Trick 1, then clearing the club suit.

On the next deal, various factors affect declarer's correct play at Trick 1.

	♠ A 8										
	♥ A 4 2										
	♦ A 10 8 6										
	♣ K Q 5 2										
♠ Q 9 7 5 2	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 6 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 7 6 3		♥ 10 9 8 5									
♦ 7 5		♦ K 3 2									
♣ A 7		♣ 8 6 4									
	♠ K 10 3										
	♥ Q J										
	♦ Q J 9 4										
	♣ J 10 9 3										

West leads the ♠5 against 3NT. How would you plan the play? If the diamond finesse is wrong you will have two cards to knock out (♦K and ♣A) before you can score nine tricks. It follows that you cannot afford to win the ace and king of spades on the first two rounds of the suit. East would still have a spade left, even if you knocked out the club stopper before the one in diamonds.

What will happen if you duck the first round of spades in both hands, allowing East's jack to win? East may then put the contract at risk by switching to hearts. You would lose two hearts, one spade, and the two minor-suit stoppers.

The only safe way to play the contract is to rise with the spade ace at Trick 1. You then play on clubs, attacking the potential entry to the danger hand. If West persists with spades, you hold up on the second round of the suit. The defenders can pack their bags. It will not damage you for West to clear the spades because the diamond finesse will be into the safe hand.

## ***Key points***

1. When you are setting up a long suit in a dummy short of entries, it often helps to duck a round or two. With A-x-x-x-x opposite x-x-x, for example, you would duck two rounds, then use the ace as an entry.
2. Unusual plays within a single suit may assist your entry situation. For example, playing a low card from both hands with K-x opposite A-x-x-x-x-x will retain the king as an entry. Similarly, with J-x facing A-K-10-x-x-x you might play low to the ten. If the finesse lost, your jack would be good for a later entry.
3. Be wary of running the opening lead to your own hand when entries are short there. You may do better to win the lead in dummy, retaining your own high card(s). This can be true even when the action actually costs a trick.



# QUIZ

To Answers

A.

♠ A 6 3  
♥ K 10 8 3  
♦ A K 5 2  
♣ 5 4

♠ 5 led



♠ K 4  
♥ A 6 2  
♦ 7 4  
♣ A 10 8 7 6 2

West leads a fourth-best ♠ 5 against 3NT. Plan the play.

B.

♠ 8 7 5  
♥ K 9  
♦ K Q J 6 5  
♣ 8 6 2

♠ 3 led



♠ A K 2  
♥ A 6 4 2  
♦ 7 2  
♣ A K 7 5

West leads a fourth-best ♠ 3 against 3NT, East playing the jack. Plan the play.

# QUIZ



## To Answers

C.

♠ A K 7 3  
♥ 5  
♦ K 9 7 6 3  
♣ A 7 6

♥ 4 led



♠ 9 8 2  
♥ A Q 7 6  
♦ A 5 2  
♣ Q 8 3

West leads a fourth-best ♥4 against 3NT, East playing the jack. Plan the play.

D.

♠ 8 5  
♥ Q 7 4  
♦ K J 10 9 4 2  
♣ 6 4

♥ 6 led



♠ A K Q 2  
♥ K 10 2  
♦ 7 3  
♣ A K 7 5

West leads a fourth-best ♥6 against 3NT, East playing the eight. Plan the play.

- A.** Since you have two club stoppers to knock out, you will have to hold up in spades at some stage. It is not safe to hold up on the first round, since a diamond switch may threaten the contract. Win the first round of spades with the king, intending to hold up on the second round. You must then lead a low club from the South hand, preserving the ace as a later entry. If the defenders persist with spades, duck the second round and win the third. You will then play ace and another club, hoping that if spades are 5-3 it is East (the safe hand) who wins the trick.
- B.** If you hold up on the first round of spades, a switch to hearts or clubs may be dangerous. So, win the first spade. If you continue with a diamond to the king, East will duck with a holding such as  $\spadesuit A1083$ . You will then score only two diamond tricks — not enough for the contract. To aid your communications with the dummy, you should duck the first round of diamonds, playing a low card from both hands. You can then win the return (in hand, if a heart is played) and play a diamond to the king. Unless the diamonds break 5-1, you will score three diamonds and two tricks in each of the other suit — a total of nine.
- C.** Win the jack of hearts with the queen. You have seven top tricks and must hope for a 3-2 diamond break to bring your total to nine. To preserve an entry to the South hand, so you can cash your second heart winner later, you should duck the first round of diamonds. If the defenders then switch to a black suit, you will be able to untangle your nine tricks.
- D.** You will need the  $\spadesuit Q$  to be onside. Even if you are lucky in this respect, the defenders will hold up the diamond ace and you will need a heart entry to dummy. You should therefore win East's  $\heartsuit 8$  with the king, an unnecessarily high card. This will ensure that dummy's heart queen provides an entry, assuming West holds the  $\heartsuit A$ .

## Running the Long Suit

‘When all else fails, run your long suit!’ You have doubtless heard this piece of advice a few times. It may seem a crude idea, but it can be very effective. Even when the defenders are not truly squeezed, they may throw the wrong cards!

Suppose a defender holds ♦J962 and can see ♦A85 in the dummy. Can he afford to throw a diamond? He cannot be certain. If declarer holds four diamonds, a diamond discard is likely to cost a trick. If instead he retains his diamond holding and discards something else, he may find he has conceded ground in the other suit.

Let’s put that diamond situation into a full deal:

	♠ 5 4										
	♥ K 8 3										
	♦ A 8 5										
	♣ A Q J 10 7										
♠ Q J 10 3	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 9 8 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 10 9 6 4		♥ J 5									
♦ J 9 6 2		♦ Q 10 3									
♣ 9		♣ 8 6 5 2									
	♠ A 7 6										
	♥ A Q 7 2										
	♦ K 7 4										
	♣ K 4 3										

West leads the ♠Q against your 6NT. You have eleven tricks on top and, on the face of it, will need an even break in the heart suit to give you a twelfth trick. There is no hurry to play for this chance. You should allow West’s ♠Q to win. By losing at an early stage the one trick that you can afford to lose, you will make it more difficult for the defenders to find discards later.

East encourages with the ♠9 at Trick 1 and West continues the suit. What do you do when you win with the spade ace? Test the heart suit? You would do that only if West was your boss, invited to dinner, and you wanted to make life easy for him. Instead you should run dummy's club suit. After partner's signal at Trick 1 West can safely throw his remaining spades. What should he discard on the fourth club? He has no way of telling. If he throws a diamond, he will give you a twelfth trick if you started with ♦KQxx. If instead he throws a heart, he will give you the contract as the cards actually lie.

So, don't despise the idea of running the long suit. Put the defenders under pressure in this way and a bundle of tricks will come your way.

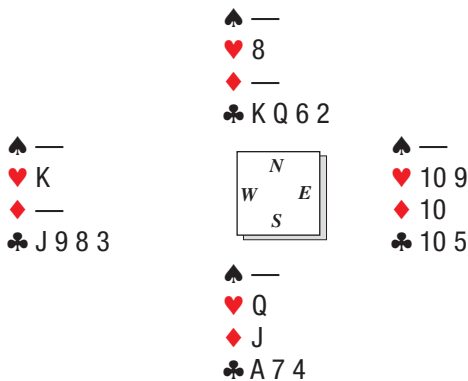
## *Exerting genuine pressure*

We will look next at some hands where running the long suit gains a trick by force. The most common situation is when one defender guards two suits and has to release one of his stoppers when you play the last card in your long suit. That's what happens here:

	♠ K Q J 4										
	♥ A 8 2										
	♦ A 5										
	♣ K Q 6 2										
♠ 9 8 3	<table border="1"><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 7 3		♥ J 10 9 6									
♦ 6 4 3		♦ 10 8 7 2									
♣ J 9 8 3		♣ 10 5									
	♠ 10 5 2										
	♥ Q 5 4										
	♦ K Q J 9										
	♣ A 7 4										

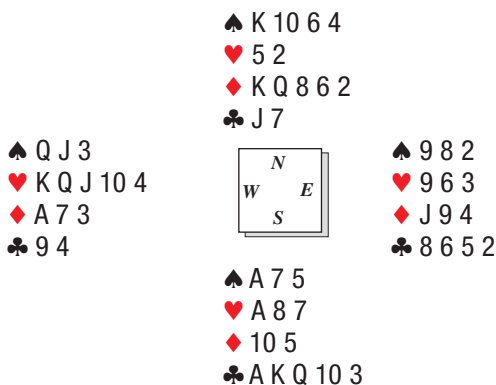
West leads the ♠8 (second-best from bad suits) against your 6NT. East wins dummy's king of spades with the ace and returns the ♥J. How should you play the hand?

There is no chance at all that East holds the ♥K, so you should play low in the South hand and win with dummy's ace. You have eleven top tricks and a 3-3 club break would give you a twelfth. Another chance is that the same defender (presumably West) holds the ♥K and four clubs. To put him under pressure, cash your winners in spades and diamonds. This position will arise:



West holds both stoppers and must release one of them when you play the ♦J. As you may know, the position is known as a ‘simple squeeze’. With many squeezes, there is nothing more to it than that. You run your long suit and the defender has to throw one of his guards.

Sometimes a defender has to throw winners in order to keep one of declarer’s suits guarded. When the number of outstanding winners has been reduced sufficiently, you can afford to lose the lead in search of the extra tricks you need. Look at this deal:



West opens 1♥ and leads the king of hearts against your eventual 3NT contract. Suppose for the moment that this hand was not in a chapter about running your long suit. Would you know what to do?

You’re absolutely right! You should win the third round of hearts and run your long suit (clubs). West can happily throw two diamonds on the third and fourth rounds of clubs. What can he discard on the last club? If he throws a spade, dummy’s spades will be good. He cannot

afford the ace of diamonds, of course, so he will have to throw a heart winner. Now it is safe for you to knock out the ace of diamonds. West has only one heart winner to cash and you will claim the remainder. Game made.

Try playing this similar hand:

	♠ K Q J 10 4										
	♥ 5 2										
	♦ A 9 8 5										
	♣ J 7										
♠ 9 3	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	N		E	W				S		♠ 8 5 2
N		E									
W											
	S										
♥ A Q J 4 3		♥ 10 9 7 6									
♦ Q 10 6		♦ J 2									
♣ 10 8 4		♣ 9 6 5 2									
	♠ A 7 6										
	♥ K 8										
	♦ K 7 4 3										
	♣ A K Q 3										

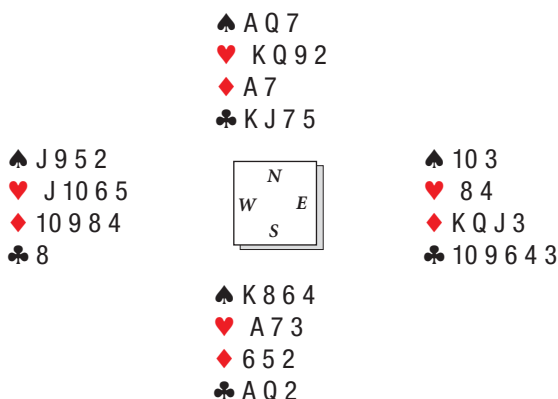
You arrive in 6NT after a 1♣ opening by you and a 1♥ overcall from West. A safe spade is led and prospects appear gloomy. You have eleven top tricks — usually a favorable sign — but what chance is there of a twelfth?

West surely holds the ace of hearts over the king. The only chance is to run your black-suit winners and hope that West holds at least three diamonds as well as the ♥ A. You will reach this end position:

	♠ 10										
	♥ 5										
	♦ A 9 8										
	♣ —										
♠ —	<table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"><tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>	N		E	W				S		♠ —
N		E									
W											
	S										
♥ A Q		♥ 10 9 7									
♦ Q 10 6		♦ J 2									
♣ —		♣ —									
	♠ —										
	♥ K 8										
	♦ K 7 4										
	♣ —										

You lead dummy's last spade winner, throwing a diamond from your hand. West has no card to spare. If he throws the ♥ Q you can duck a heart, setting up your king. If instead he throws a diamond, you will have three diamond tricks.

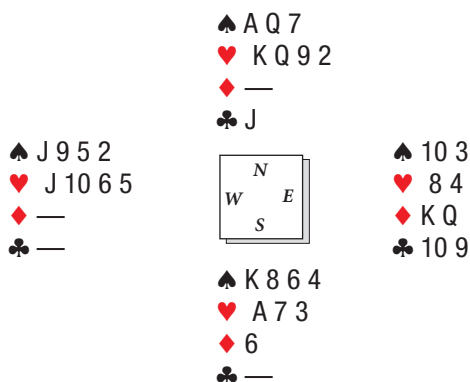
We do not have space here to give a detailed explanation of squeeze play. (Another book in the series, *Squeezes made Simple*, does exactly this.) We would like to make one important point now, though. A defender cannot be squeezed unless every card in his hand is busy guarding one of your suits. Look at this instructive deal:



West leads the ♦ 10 against your contract of 6NT. You have eleven top tricks and a 3-3 break in either major suit will bring this total to twelve. Another possibility is that the same defender holds the stopper in both major suits and can be squeezed. A glance at the diagram will show you that this is in fact the case — West holds four spades and four hearts.

What will happen if you win the diamond lead and play four rounds of clubs. Will West squirm in his seat? Not at all! He can throw his remaining three diamonds away, retaining both major-suit guards. The slam will then go down. What went wrong? At the key moment, when you led the last club, not all of West's cards were 'busy'. He had one idle card — his last diamond — and he could afford to throw that.

The time to remove West's idle card is at Trick 1! You should duck the opening lead, giving the defenders the first trick. This move, which may have surprised you if you have not encountered it before, will tighten the end position. You win the next diamond and, as before, play off your clubs. This time everything works sweetly:



All of West's cards are busy guarding the major suits. When you lead the ♣J he will look respectfully in your direction and throw one of his stoppers. You will have your twelfth trick. So, remember this. When you are playing in a small slam it is often beneficial to surrender an early trick. Similarly, when attempting 3NT it may assist you to lose four tricks at an early stage. In both cases you will remove idle cards from the defenders' hands, possibly setting the scene for putting them under pressure later.

## Key points

1. When a notrump contract appears to be hopeless, you may succeed by running your long suit. The defenders do not know what cards you hold and may choose the wrong discards.
2. Even when you do have genuine chances, playing the long suit first may increase them. Be careful, though, that you do not need your long suit to provide entries.
3. A genuine squeeze arises when one defender holds the sole guard in two of your suits and is forced to give up one of them.
4. Most squeezes occur only when all of a defender's cards are busy guarding two or more of your suits. To ensure that this is so, you should aim to lose at an early stage those tricks that you can afford to lose. In a small slam you must lose one early trick. In a notrump game you would need to lose four early tricks.

# QUIZ



## To Answers

**A.**

♠ A K 7  
 ♥ K 8 5  
 ♦ J 6 4  
 ♣ A J 10 4

♠6 led



♠ Q 8 2  
 ♥ A 7 6 2  
 ♦ A K  
 ♣ K Q 8 2

West leads the ♠6 against 6NT. What lies of the cards will allow you to score twelve tricks? How will you play the hand?

**B.**

♠ K 9 6 3  
 ♥ A 7 5  
 ♦ A 10 9 6  
 ♣ K 8

♣Q led



♠ A 8 2  
 ♥ K Q 8 2  
 ♦ K Q J 3  
 ♣ A 2

West leads the ♣Q against 6NT. What lies of the cards will allow you to score twelve tricks? How will you play the hand?



# QUIZ

To Answers

C.

♠ A 4  
♥ K Q 8 4  
♦ A Q 3  
♣ A K 9 2

♠K led

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 2  
♥ A 7 3  
♦ K 8 6 2  
♣ Q J 10 4

West leads the ♠K against 6NT. What lies of the cards will allow you to score twelve tricks? How will you plan the play?

D.

♠ A K 4  
♥ K Q 5  
♦ K Q 9 2  
♣ A Q 4

♠Q led

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 7 3  
♥ A 7  
♦ A 10 5 4  
♣ K J 6 3

West leads the ♠Q against 7NT and you win in the dummy. All seems to depend on picking up four diamond tricks. You play the ♦K first and both defenders follow. Which diamond honor will you play next and why?

- A.** You have eleven tricks on top. The slam can be made when hearts break 3-3. You can succeed also when the same defender holds four or more hearts and the queen of diamonds. Win the spade lead and duck a heart. Win the return (with the king if a heart is returned), and cash the two top diamonds. Then play your black-suit winners, ending in the dummy. If either defender started with both red-suit guards, the last winner will force him to throw one of them.
- B.** Once again, you have eleven tricks on top. The slam can be made when spades or hearts break 3-3. A further chance is that the same defender holds at least four cards in both majors. Win the club lead and duck a spade. After winning the return, cash all your winners in the minors. You can then test the major suits in turn. A defender holding length in both majors will have been forced to unguard one of them when you cashed your last minor-suit winner.
- C.** You have eleven tricks on top and will score an easy twelfth if either red suit breaks 3-3. Another possibility is that the same defender guards both red suits and can be squeezed. To tighten the end position, to ensure that the defender who holds both guards does not have any idle card in his hand, you should duck the opening lead. Win the continuation and play all your clubs. This will squeeze a defender who holds both red-suit guards.
- D.** If West holds jack fourth in diamonds, you would like to play the ♦A next. If East has the long diamonds, you would like to play the ♦Q instead. Which should you do? You should play the queen of diamonds. Why is that? Because West has surely led from a Q-J-10 combination in spades. If he holds jack fourth in diamonds too, you will be able to squeeze him in diamonds and spades. Simply cash your hearts, followed by the clubs. West will not enjoy it at all!

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