September 2009

Welcome to another series of classes that hopefully demonstrate the success of bidding sequences and conventions already given in previous years..
Nothing in bridge works all of the time but the conventions you have been given will work more times than not. Often the difficulty is recognising whether to overcall or double or pass. Your success rate will improve with experience and having the confidence to trust your system.

There are no short cuts to success but feel comfortable that you can trust the bidding of better players more than those who bid haphazardly. For example a good player will rarely let you play in a fit at the 2 level, or double your opening bit without a four card major. Learn from their use of doubles, their pre-emptive bids and their ability to push you one level higher than you wanted to bid.

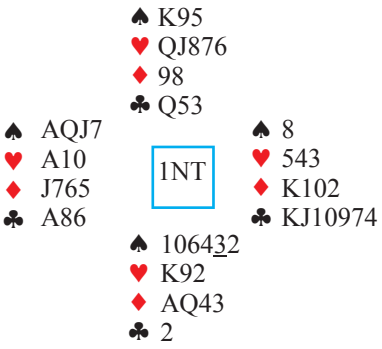
The hands we will use and the results are real and this year you will be given the matchpointed score for the result shown. You will see how results are rarely due to genius. They are often more likely to be the result of opponent error, but ***clear planning at trick 1*** and ***careful observation during the play*** will improve your results considerably. Learn to ask yourself "What did the bidding show?" If LHO had opened 1NT count his points as he plays!

Most of the lessons will have a theme but nothing is written in stone and if you would like me to cover any aspect of the game I will try to include it at some stage in the term

1. **Introduction**
2. **Declarer Play - Thinking ahead**
3. **Declarer Play - Thinking ahead**
4. **Declarer Play - Asking questions**
5. **Declarer Play - Planning**
6. **Declarer Play - Thinking ahead**
7. **Defence - Mid game leads**
8. **Defence - Covering honours**
9. **Defence - Ducking in defence**
10. **Defence - Sacrificing honours**



Avoid Falling Through Thin Ice



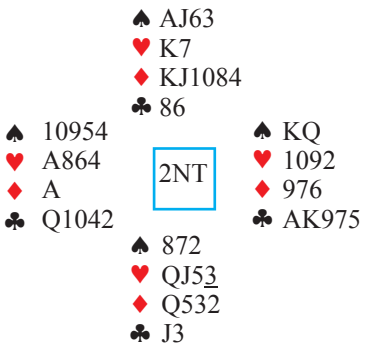
W	N	E	S
1S	P	1NT	P
P			

♠3 LEAD **AN EASY FINESSE EH?**

Looking around the two hands declarer sees no problem.
7 tricks are a doddle. "With all those clubs, perhaps we should have been in 3NT!"
Even the lead seems favourable! SO the finesse must be right for another overtrick. - WRONG!

The finesse loses and north switches to ♥Q! Declarer only now sees the weakness in his hand. He ducks, but on the 2nd heart, south unblocks ♥K. Now declarer MUST get the clubs right without letting the opponents in again. Sadly, he guesses wrong, playing for the drop. Opponents take 1 spade, 4 hearts 2 diamonds and 1 club for -200.

Win the ♠A and finesse the club in safety.
When it holds, return to ♣A and play ♠Q for 9 tricks.



E	S	W	N
1NT	P	2C	P
2D	P	2NT	

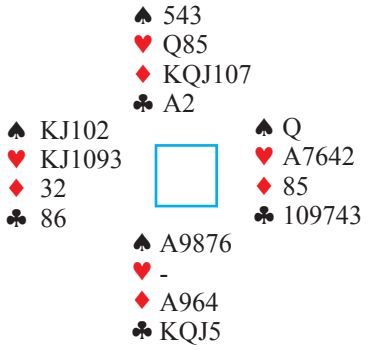
♠3 LEAD **EVEN THE RULE OF 7 TELLS YOU!**

OK west should not use Stayman with only 10 HCPs!
But we're not all perfect and partner's play is always so good.

The ♥3 lead IS favourable and looking around the two hands we can count 5 club tricks, 1 diamond, 1 heart and eventually 1 spade. That makes 8 tricks doesn't it?

UNFORTUNATELY HOWEVER,
declarer decides to hold off her ♥A !?!
So north wins and switches to ♦4.
Now, although declarer cashes 5 clubs she cannot establish the spade winner before the opponents cash 4 diamonds, a heart and a spade.

If you have counted 8 tricks cash them in the correct order
Win ♥A and lead towards ♠KQ



S	W	N	W
1S	P	2D	P
3D	P	4S	

♥J LEAD **LOSING CONTROL**

Declarer is annoyed that 6♦ has been missed.
Without much thought, he tried the ♥Q and ruffed east's ♥A.
With long side suits to run, drawing trumps seemed like the right thing to do, so he then played ♠A and another.

UNFORTUNATELY
west won, drew trumps and cashed four hearts for -400.

Declarer can make his contract IF he realises that the only losers are three trumps. Cash ♠A and then simply play off the minor suit winners.

As long as declarer has one more trump than the opponents, he is safe.

On Ice, if you think at Trick 1

In each of these contracts there is a way to ensure your contract - Well on most days!
It requires you, as declarer, to do the most difficult thing -
STOP and work out what you need BEFORE you play a card to trick 1

S	W	N	E
1D	P	1S	P
2D	P	2H	P
2NT	P	3NT	

	♠ AQ542 ♥ A1054 ♦ Q ♣ QJ10	
♠ J106 ♥ KJ98 ♦ 43 ♣ 9762		♠ K973 ♥ 76 ♦ J652 ♣ K85
	♠ 3 ♥ Q32 ♦ AK10987 ♣ A43	

DON'T ALWAYS ACCEPT THE OPPONENT'S GIFTS

Lead: ♣2 East plays ♣K

Did you pounce on East's ♣K?
If you did you can say goodbye to your contract.
This would remove a crucial entry to hand and you could no longer establish and use the diamonds.
It's a bit painful but you must duck the ♣K.

Assume a club is returned. Win in dummy, lead the ♦Q and overtake it in your hand — look at those beautiful diamond spots. Just continue leading diamonds to smoke out the jack, and you have nine certain tricks: two clubs, five diamonds, and dummy's two aces.

S	W	N	E
1H	P	2D	P
2NT	P	3H	P
3NT			

	♠ 3 ♥ K32 ♦ Q9432 ♣ AQJ10	
♠ K9852 ♥ 107 ♦ J8 ♣ 9764		♠ 10764 ♥ A986 ♦ A106 ♣ 85
	♠ AQJ ♥ QJ54 ♦ K75 ♣ K32	

FORCE OPPONENTS TO PLAY 2ND HAND HIGH!

Lead: ♠5 East plays ♠10
After winning the ♠Q you have six top tricks, and you can establish two in hearts and one in diamonds.
The problem is you may have to give up the lead twice, and a spade through your ace/jack of spades will hurt.
The solution is to force east to waste an ace.
Cross to dummy in clubs and lead a low heart.
If east takes the ace you'll get three heart tricks and the battle is over.
So assume the ♥Q wins.
Cross again in clubs and lead a low diamond.
Similar story! Finally, if the ♦K wins, just lead another heart to ensure nine tricks.

S	W	N	E
1H	P	1S	P
3D	P	4C	P
4N	P	5H/5S	P
6NT			

	♠ AKJ92 ♥ 52 ♦ Q ♣ AK862	
♠ 864 ♥ J1098 ♦ J854 ♣ 73		♠ Q753 ♥ 76 ♦ 1097 ♣ Q954
	♠ 10 ♥ AKQ43 ♦ AK632 ♣ J10	

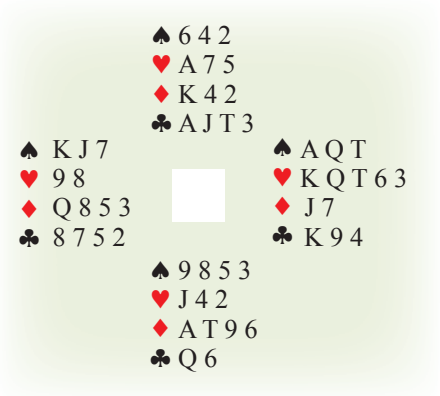
UNBLOCK THAT ♦Q

Lead: ♥J
Win the opening heart lead.
Lead a diamond to dummy's queen.
Next lead the spade two. If this loses to the queen, you have 12 tricks (four spades, three hearts, three diamonds and two clubs). If the spade 10 wins, cross to dummy with a club and continue spades to drive out the queen.

Note

It would be an error to take the spade finesse at trick two (a heart return removes your entry back to hand.) or after unblocking diamonds if you play a second heart, you would have no further entry to your hand.

Questions, Questions, Questions



North opens 1NT. East doubles and that becomes the contract.

Questions for the bidders N/S Vulnerable

1. Should north open with a 4.3.3.3. 12 count?
2. If yes, should east overcall 2♥* or X or pass?
3. If no, should east open 1♥ or 1NT?
4. Should south pass a double by east?
5. Should west pass a double by east?

Questions for the defence.

1. Opening lead ? ♥*K Nothing else makes sense.*
2. What continuation when declarer ducks?
   Opening up another suit doesn't look attractive
   West could have ♥A9, so ♥3 looks OK .
   Declarer wins with ♥J!

Question for Declarer.

a. Where is ♥Q?
b. Should declarer duck ♥K lead, or take ♥A? *Take ♥A in case a spade switch is found.*
   After the lead you always have two hearts - *unless you duck!*
c. Does declarer set up clubs or diamonds? *Clubs will guarantee three tricks!*
   Instead declarer plays ♦6 to ♦K then ♦2. After covering east's ♦J he realises he has no entry to dummy yet still leads ♦10 to west's ♦Q

3. What does east discard? *East discards ♣9 asking for a spade (McKenney discard)*
4. What does west lead? *♠K, followed by ♠J.*
5. What does east play on ♠J? *♠K.*
6. What does east play now? *A heart, to force out ♥A while he has ♣K as an entry to the hearts.*

d. Declarer loses 3 hearts, 3 spades 1 diamond and 1 club. -300 looks bad but +180 ***was*** on offer!

IF east had overcalled 2♥ - passed out.

Questions for the defence.
a. What would south lead? ♦6 or ♠8

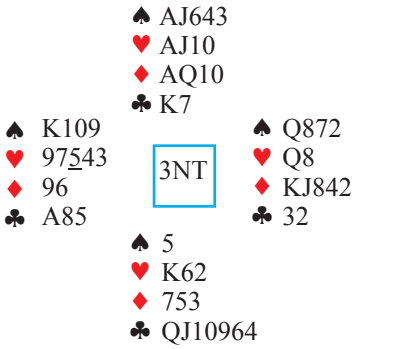
Question for Declarer. - Assume ♠8 lead.

1. Where are there 8 trick? (*4 trumps 3 spades and a club.)*
2. What does declarer play at trick 1? (♠K *and drop ♠Q*)
3. Major problem? *(Entries to dummy)*
4. What do you lead at trick 2? *(♥9, playing north for ♥A.*
b. Should north play ♥A? *(No) East wins ♥K rather than ♥Q.*
5. At trick 3 play ♠Q to ♠K. *(and lead another heart).*
c. Should north play ♥A? *(Yes, to get off lead with last heart).*
   It is now VERY difficult for declarer with no entry to dummy and only two FROZEN suits to open up.
d. *IF declarer leads ♦7 south should play ♦9.*
e. *IF declarer plays ♦J south should allow north to win.*
f. *north should return his last spade to set up a winner for south.*

RESULTS for this hand played on line.

		LEAD		N/S
3N	W	C3	-3	300
2N	E	H2	-2	200
2H	E	D6	-2	200
1N	E	CQ	-1	100
1N	S	H9	1	90
1H	E	CQ	1	-80
1N	E	D6	1	-90
2H	E	S8	2	-110
2H	E	CQ	2	-110
2H	E	D6	2	-110
2H	E	CQ	3	-140
1N	E	CQ	3	-150
1Nx	N	HK	-2	-300

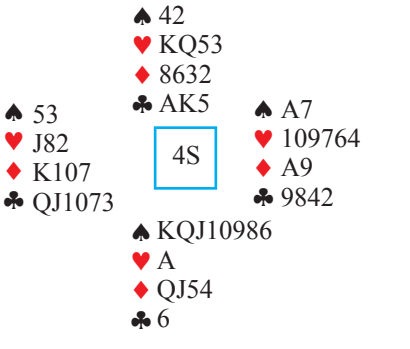
Planning the Play



S	N
P	1S
1NT	3NT

♥5 LEAD
ENTRIES?

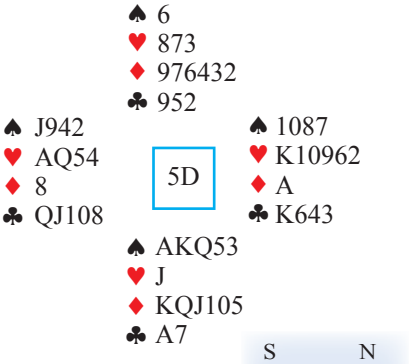
Count four top tricks. Do you play the ♥J? Do you win with the ♥K? If so, how do you get back to hand to your winning clubs?



S	N
1S	2D
4S	

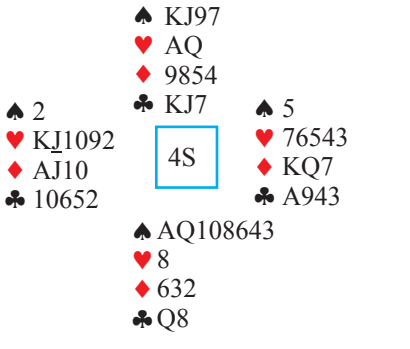
♣ Q LEAD
UNBLOCK ♥A
Count 11 tricks. Problem? Hearts are blocked and your only entry has been knocked out Solution?

You don't need 11 tricks throw ♥A on ♣ A



S	N
2D	2H
2S	3D
4NT	5C
5D	

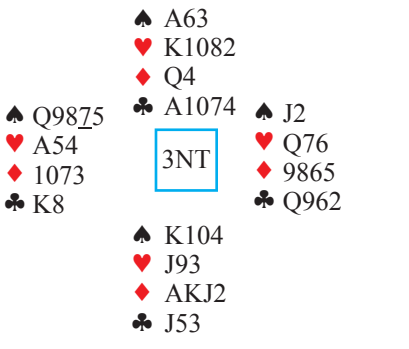
♣Q LEAD
DON'T DRAW
Count losers. If you draw trumps defenders can take 3 tricks! Reduce losers to 2, before giving up the lead. Throw losing clubs on spade winners



S	N
3S	4S

♥J LEAD
FINESSE
Not enough winners. Count 4 losers. Risk losing five tricks to make the contract.

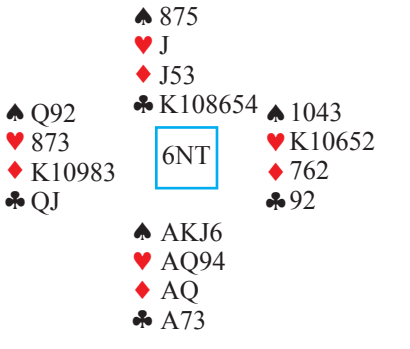
Best chance finesse the ♥Q at trick one. Throw ♦2 on ♥A



S	N
1NT	2C
2D	3NT

♠7 LEAD
RULE OF 7

Count 7 top tricks. Extras from hearts. ♥J finesse loses to ♥Q now east has no spade to return. When west wins ♥A it is too late!

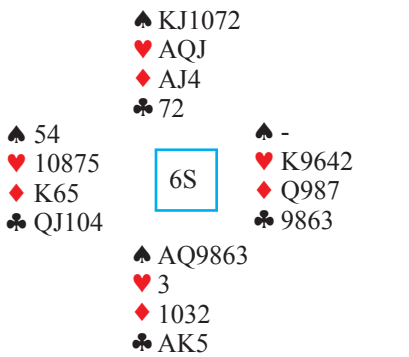


S	N
2C	2D
2NT	6NT

♥7 LEAD
GETTING TO WINNER

♥J - ♥K - ♥A
♣A & low to ♣K.

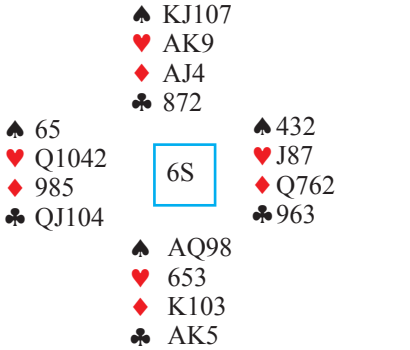
Now you have 11 top tricks. Finesse ♦Q at trick 4 to set up a 12th trick while you can still get to it!



S	N
1S	4NT
5S	6S

♣Q LEAD
SLOW LOSERS

Establish two winners on which to throw diamond losers BEFORE ♦A is removed. Win ♣A. Draw trumps ending in south. Finesse ♥Q. Even if it loses, you have two winners for the diamond losers.



S	N
1S	4NT
5S	6S

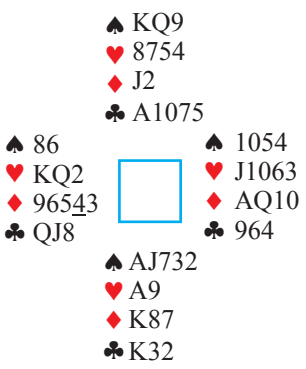
♣Q LEAD
STRIP & THROW IN

Win and draw trumps.

Strip clubs. Play ♥A, ♥K and a 3rd heart.

E/W will find ♦Q for you!

Finding that Extra Trick



S	N
1S	2C
2NT	3S
4S	

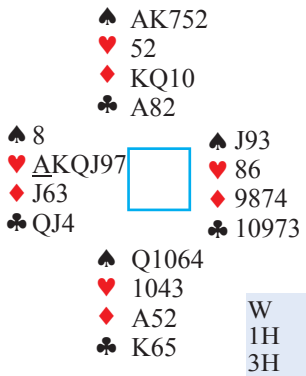
BRIDGE CLUB LIVE

AT NO COST

♦4 LEAD to ♦A.
♦10 returned to ♦K. 3rd diamond ruffed.
♠K and ♠Q cashed. Low club to ♣K and last trump drawn.

KEY PLAY

There is only one chance to pull in 11 tricks.
The ♥9 slow loser is currently protected by ♥A.
So, can you set up a winner on which ♥9 can be ditched?
Play a small club from both hands. Yes they break 3-3 and you can reach the 4th club on which to throw your losing heart.



W	N	E	S
1H	X*	P	2S
3H	3S	P	4S

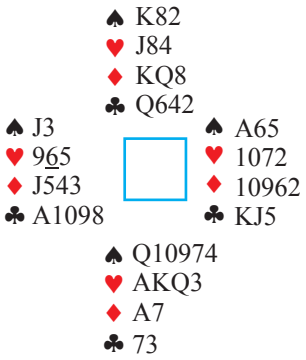
* Too strong for an overcall!

WHEN ALL LOOKS BLEAK ♥ A,K,Q LEAD

Did you notice east's hi-lo.
You've lost two tricks. An over-ruff would be a third loser and the mirrror image in diamonds and clubs means that you will lose a club trick in the end. One off - or is it?

Why not give them the third heart AND the club loser at the same time?

Solution - throw the ♣2 on west's ♥Q! (Loser on loser).



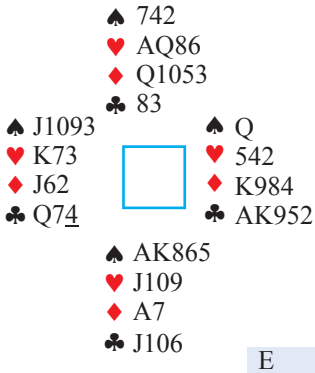
S	N
1S	2C
2H	4S

BRUNTON

AT NO COST ♥6 (or ♦5) LEAD

You have three obvious losers. (Two clubs and spade ace.)
The contract appears to hinge on you finding ♠J.
You are fortunate to avoid a club lead but if you tackle trumps first, opponents are likely to switch to clubs (where you have two *fast losers*).

Because leading trumps means giving the lead away, get rid of a loser ***before*** tackling trumps.
Play ♦A, then ♦7 to ♦K and on the ♦Q throw ♣3.
Even if this IS ruffed, you lose nothing.
With equal trump tenaces in both hands the play of spades is a bit of a guess BUT if low to ♠Q was captured by ♠A return to dummy with ♥J and run the ♠8. (*Playing for split honours).*
For +450 you score 22/28 match points.



E	S	W	N
1C	1S	1NT*	2S
P	P	P	

*Not the advisable 9 pts.

CRAMLINGTON

AT NO COST ♣4 LEAD

East wins ♣A and continues with ♣K. With no attractive switch available east plays a 3rd club which is ruffed in dummy. South cashes ♠A and ♠K and get the bad news.

♦7 is a *slow loser* so playing the ♥J finesse gains whenever hearts are 3-3 or of course if the finesse works.
When hearts break 3-3 your fourth heart provides a ditch for the ♦7. E/W take only two spades and two clubs.

For +140 you score 22/28 match points.
+110 gets you only13/28

Defence in Mid Game - Leads

Count signals are crucial to good defence. Another simple principle in defensive signalling is that in mid game, the LEAD of a high card says "No interest in this suit partner".
The LEAD of a low card says "I like this suit"! **L**ow = **L**ike . **H**igh = **H**ate.
Here it is in practise.

Switch please

It is not always possible to find exactly the right opening lead, particularly if the bidding has given very little away.

S	W	N	E
1♠	-	2♣	-
2NT	-	3NT	

It would be normal to lead 4th highest ♦4
East plays ♦9 won by South with ♦J.
Declarer now plays ♣A and then ♣4 towards ♣Q
You win with the ♣K. Now what?
Declarer must have ace and king of diamonds.
(Partner played his highest diamond.)
Three diamonds, ace of clubs, and three more on table plus two top spades will give south the contract.

So your only chance is a heart switch.
But which heart do you lead? Partner **may** think you want your original lead of diamonds returned.

In mid game use attitude leads.
The lower the card I lead the more I want the suit returning!
Lead ♥3 and partner will return hearts!

If you had led ♥8 partner would win and return your first suit.

Dummy
♠ A K
♥ 10 7 4
♦ 7 6 5
♣ Q J 10 5 2

♠ 9 2
♥ K Q 8 3
♦ Q 10 8 **4** 3
♣ K 8

3NT by south

♠ A K
♥ 10 7 4
♦ 7 6 5
♣ Q J 10 5 2

♠ 9 2
♥ K Q 8 3
♦ Q 10 8 4 3
♣ K 8

FULL HAND

♠ J 8 7 4 3
♥ A 6 2
♦ 9 2
♣ 9 7 6

♠ Q 10 6 5
♥ J 9 5
♦ A K J
♣ A 4 3

Return my suit please

♠ A K
♥ 10 7 4
♦ 7 6 5
♣ Q J 10 5 2

♠ 9 2
♥ 9 8 5 3
♦ A Q 10 4 3
♣ K 8

3NT by south

♠ J 8 7 4 3
♥ A 6 2
♦ 9 2
♣ 9 7 6

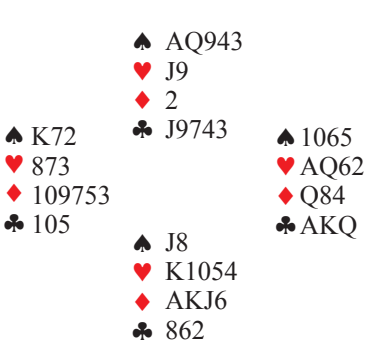
♠ Q 10 6 5
♥ K Q J
♦ K J 3
♣ A 4 3

On this hand, the auction, and north & east's hands are identical.
So is the lead, and south again wins with the ♦J.
Declarer, south, does the same as before ♣A, and low to ♣Q.
Again, you win with the ♣K.
What now?

This time you desperately need to get into partner's hand for a diamond continuation. Again it has to be hearts.
If you carelessly lead the ♥3 partner will do what he did last time and return a heart. Your ♥3 would promise an honour!

You must lead the ♥9, expressing no interest in this suit.
Partner will now return your diamonds!

Cover an Honour with an Honour?



Brunton 02 / 08

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2H	X
2S	P	P	X
P	3D	3S	

♣10 LEAD

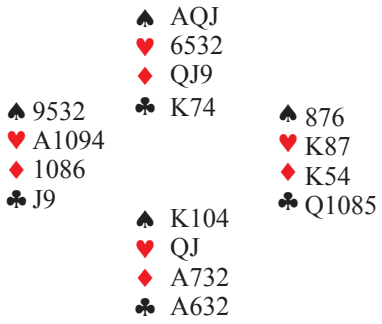
East's 1st double of 2♥ should be taken as a penalty X of 1NT.
When east doubles a 2nd time, this is confirmation of the 16-18 range. (Not merely lead directing)
West with only 3 pts. takes out the double to 3♦ and thankfully north bids on to an unmakeable contract.

OF COURSE YOU COVER!

Three clubs cashed and then the ace of hearts.

Declarer wins the heart continuation with ♥K, and leads ♠J. IF west does not cover this, declarer makes the contract - and shouldn't!

West MUST cover!



S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	

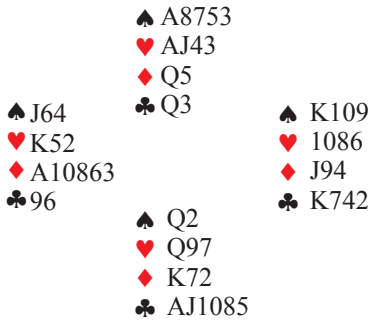
♥4 LEAD

No sequences or any other reason not to lead 4th highest when you have two honours in the suit.

DON'T COVER TOUCHING HONOURS

E/W take the 1st four heart tricks. West switches to ♣J won in dummy with ♣K.

Now ♦Q is played. East must NOT cover. If you do, west's ♦10 is trapped by north's J9 and a finesse will bring in the contract. When north plays the ♦J, you can POUNCE, setting up a a winner for west.



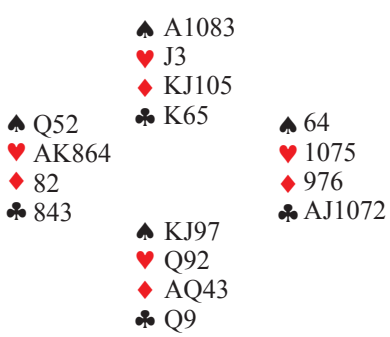
S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2H	P
2S	P	3H	P
3NT			

♦6 LEAD

North transfers to show five spades, and then bids 3♥ to show a four card heart suit with enough points for game.

EAST MUST DECIDE IN CLUBS. WEST MUST DECIDE IN HEARTS

Declarer plays ♦Q which holds the trick. ♣Q is next. IF you cover, declarer makes 5 clubs, 2 hearts,1 spade, 1 diamond. Declarer can never catch your ♣K so keep ducking. - Now he tries the ♥Q. IF west doesn't cover with ♥K, declarer makes 4 hearts and the contract.
On best defence, only seven tricks are possible.



S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2C	P
2S	P	3S	P
4S			

♥A LEAD

Stayman and then an invitational 3♠ is raised to 4♠ on south's 14 count.

DECLARER IS FISHING! DON'T BE CAUGHT!

After cashing ♥A & ♥K, east plays ♥5 & ♥7 (showing three) West switches to ♦8, won by south's ♦A.
Now ♠J is led. (Declarer is trying to find your ♠Q - Don't tell him!) Partner has only two trumps.
If you don't play ♠5 *as smooth as silk* you have *given* declarer the contract!

As soon as dummy is faced, you should have decided which spade you are going to play!!

Ducking in Defence

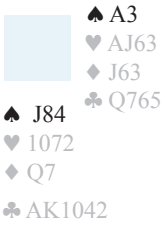
You lead ♠7 and are ecstatic to have found partner's ♠A. *Bridge is a great game!* East dutifully returns the ♠4 (Highest from 4-3) and you win ♠K.

WHOOPS!
It looked so obvious to win and clear the suit, but - - you now realise that bridge offers constant lessons in humility?

You should have ducked the spade return hoping that your partner could get in again to lead another spade!



If partner only had two spades your play would sacrifice a trick, but you should risk that to give yourself the *best chance* of setting the contract.

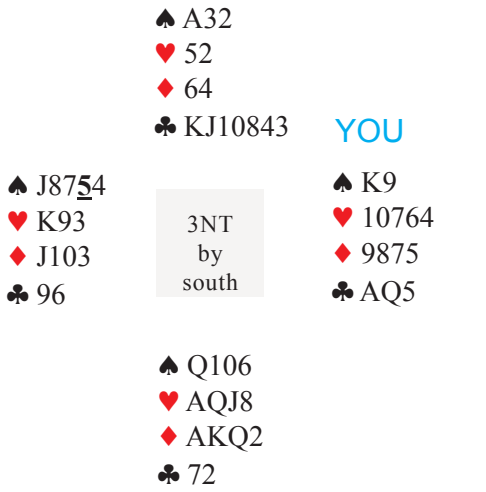


BUT I HAD TWO STOPS!!
Defending 3NT again, partner leads ♠5
Declarer plays low and you win with ♠K
You return ♠9. Won by declarer with ♠Q
West plays ♠8 suggesting a heart switch.
Declarer plays a club to the jack.

Do you win with the ♣Q?
You have two stops so it looks safe doesn't it?

Unfortunately, you don't have another spade for partner but you win and switch to a heart. Declarer wins and plays another club to the jack. Oh dear he still has the ♠A.

If you had ducked the ♣J initially declarer could not establish the club suit.



DECLARER IS OUT DUCKED BY WEST?!
On this layout declarer needs to finesse ♠Q to establish spades and make the contract.

IF declarer wins ♥Q with ♥K and the spade finesse fails, east will play another heart, through ♥J2 into your lovely heart winners.
Declarer should duck at trick 1 and hope that when he plays ♥K on east's ♥4 return, ***you are silly enough*** to win the ♥A and play back to the ♥J. Duck his tempting ♥K. Your ♦K is not an entry!



DON'T DUCK! DELIBERATE
On this slightly altered layout of the N/S cards, there is no need for declarer to duck ♥Q because the spade finesse will be made ***into*** your hand. As long as you are on lead, declarer's ♥J2 are safe.
If declarer ***does*** duck, I'm afraid he's a dead duck!

As is often the case, declarer's finesse fails, both times, BUT ESTABLISHES WINNERS!



Sacrificing Honours in Defence

	♠ J8754 ♥ Q754 ♦ 83 ♣ 63	
♠ Q9 ♥ KJ632 ♦ K97 ♣ AJ2	2S by south	YOU ♠ 103 ♥ A10 ♦ AQ106 ♣ Q9854
	♠ AK62 ♥ 98 ♦ J542 ♣ K107	

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2♣*	P
2♠	P	P	P

2♣ Remember that you can use Stayman with no points when you have 5/4 in the majors.

West leads ♥2 to east's ♥A. ♥10 return to ♥K. A 3rd heart led.

IF east ruffs with ♠3 declarer can over-ruff and draw defender's trumps without loss.
By ruffing with ♠10, you establish partner's ♠Q.

	♠ AJ95 ♥ - ♦ QJ952 ♣ 9742	
YOU ♠ K106 ♥ 9753 ♦ 1083 ♣ AJ6	2♥ by south	♠ Q84 ♥ K62 ♦ A74 ♣ Q1053
	♠ 732 ♥ AQJ1084 ♦ K6 ♣ K8	

West leads ♦8, thinking that ♦3 would promise a much higher honour. East reads this lead as a doubleton and holds off.
Declarer wins with ♦K, cashes ♥A and leads ♥Q?
East wins ♥K and cashes ♦A.
West warns that he cannot ruff by playing ♦10. (MUD)
East switches to ♣3 - ♣K - ♣A.

NOW a key decision!
The lead has set up diamond winners in dummy,
AND declarer has an outside entry with ♠A.
Despite the low club switch (promising an honour) - west leads ♠K. (Merrimac Coup). Declarer wins ♠A and cashes ♦Q, throwing a club. When ♦J* is led, east ruffs, south over-ruffs and west over-ruffs the over ruff to lead a club.
After drawing trumps, declarer assumes that ♠Q is with west and confidently leads towards ♠J. East wins ♠Q and when west wins the ♠10, the contract is set.
Declarer SHOULD now simply ruff a club and draw trumps.

THE MERRIMAC COUP

iswhereaplayer(usuallyadefender)sacrificesahighcardin ordertoeliminateavitalentryfromanopponent'shand(usually adummy).ItwasnamedafterAmericansteamshipMerrimac, whichwassunkduringtheSpanish-AmericanWarin1898in SantiagodeCubainanattempttobottleuptheSpanishfleet.*

Where Do Slow Losers Go?

	♠ A54 ♥ J9753 ♦ 9 ♣ KQ64	
♠ J106 ♥ K8 ♦ AQ1064 ♣ A95	2♥ by south	♠ Q873 ♥ 62 ♦ K75 ♣ 10873
	♠ K92 ♥ AQ104 ♦ J832 ♣ J2	
	YOU	

South plays in 2♥ West leads ♠J.
If heart finesse is wrong you can count a loser in each suit.
In spades, your loser is a ***slow*** loser. Where can it go?
The solution is not difficult but do you try the trump finesse 1st?
NO. If it loses, another spade will be played before you have established the club winner on which the losing spade can be thrown.
Win ♠K (keeping ♠A as an entry to the clubs). At trick 2 lead ♣J.
If west ducks, continue with ♣2.
As the cards lie you can make 10 tricks.

	♠ 752 ♥ K65 ♦ J5 ♣ J10743	
♠ Q83 ♥ 10842 ♦ Q762 ♣ K9	6♠ by south	♠ 96 ♥ 7 ♦ K10984 ♣ Q8652
	♠ AKJ104 ♥ AQJ93 ♦ A3 ♣ A	
	YOU	

South plays in 6♠ West leads ♥4.
Treating your hand as the master hand, a quick check shows that you have two ***slow*** losers. (A spade & diamond).
You should be able to throw ♦5 on a heart winner but you will need a trump left in dummy to ruff ♦3.

On a diamond lead, you need trumps to break 3/2 AND the defender with three trumps to hold at least three hearts.
Win ♥A and cash ♠A and ♠K. when trumps break, lead ♥3 to ♥K and ♥5 to ♥Q. On ♥J, throw losing ♦3.

It's the same play on a diamond or club lead (but fewer worries).