

More Declarer Play In No Trumps

♠AK5
 ♥K732
 ♦AJ7
 ♣AQ4
 ♠J106
 ♥865
 ♦K10986
 ♣85
 ♠Q874
 ♥QJ109
 ♦53
 ♣K73
 ♠932
 ♥A4
 ♦Q42
 ♣J10962

Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all

West	North	East	South
	2♣ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	2♦ ⁽²⁾
Pass	2N ⁽³⁾	Pass	3N

All pass
 1 21-22 balanced; or 8 playing tricks in any suit 2 Relay
 3 21-22 balanced

East leads ♥Q. We can count six top tricks and can develop three more in clubs. We plan our entries so we take the first heart in hand to play ♣A and ♣Q. East might duck this second club but we play the third round. We have preserved ♥A in dummy so can enjoy the club winners there.

Had we won ♥A we could have been defeated. First if we used that entry to finesse ♣Q East can duck and the communication with dummy is severed. Secondly if we ran ♣J East could take this and we would find the suit blocked.

Key Point : Play high cards from the shorter holding to unblock a suit.

♠9876
 ♥6532
 ♦Q107
 ♣82
 ♠542
 ♥A7
 ♦AJ952
 ♣K64
 ♠K10
 ♥KQ4
 ♦K86
 ♣AJ953
 ♠AQJ3
 ♥J1098
 ♦43
 ♣Q107

Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♣	Pass
3N	All pass	1N ⁽¹⁾	Pass

1 15-16, balanced

South leads ♥J and we can count seven top tricks. We'll have to find two further winners to fulfil our contract. The holdings in the minors are very similar so in either suit we can play the top card from the shorter hand and then finesse the longer holding's queen. We do, however, have one further consideration. We should think of North being the *danger hand*. If that hand gets in it can push a spade through our vulnerable, doubleton-king-of-spades holding. Since we always want to keep the danger hand off lead we are drawn to winning ♥A (a play that doesn't block the heart suit) and finessing ♣J. This loses but we have built the necessary two extra tricks and haven't jeopardised the contract.

Had we finessed dummy's ♦J North would have won and the spade return would have led to defeat.

Key Point : Arrange to lose tricks to the safe hand.

♠AQ5
 ♥AJ10
 ♦5432
 ♣432
 ♠J98
 ♥K76
 ♦87
 ♣QJ965
 ♠K107
 ♥Q985
 ♦1096
 ♣1087
 ♠6432
 ♥432
 ♦AKQJ
 ♣AK

Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1♦
Pass			3N

1 10-12, 4card support (limit raise)

West leads ♣Q and we see that we have eight top tricks – one spade, one heart, four diamonds and two clubs. We can take a spade finesse of ♠Q but if that loses and another club comes back the contract will be defeated. If, however, we play on hearts we can plan to take two finesses against ♥Q and ♥K. This play is a roughly 75% chance (better than the 50% spade play). It will work provided the two heart honours are split or West holds both of them. So at trick two we finesse ♥10. It loses, a club comes back and we successfully finesse ♥J. Contract made.

Key Point : A double finesse is a better option than a single finesse.

<p>♠ 1082 ♥ K9752 ♦ 752 ♣ A4</p> <p>♠ AK3 ♠ Q975 ♥ A104 ♥ J3 ♦ K86 ♦ A3 ♣ Q872 ♣ KJ1063</p> <p>♠ J64 ♥ Q86 ♦ QJ1094 ♣ 95</p>	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠⁽¹⁾</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1N</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3N</td> <td>All pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>1 <i>Doesn't suppress a major, even with club support</i></p> <p>North leads a 4th best ♥5. We can count six top tricks and can develop a further four tricks in clubs to bring our total to at least ten tricks. Normally when we have A x x opposite x x we duck two rounds of the suit, winning the third. In this way we protect ourselves if the suit breaks 5-3 but the ♣A is with the shorter holding (if the heart suit were 4-4 we'd only lose three hearts and a club). Here, however, we have ♥10 and ♥J and after South has played ♥Q a second heart can be promoted once ♥K has been knocked out. We should take the first heart and play on clubs. We shall be successful. If we spuriously duck the first heart South will play a second round. Now North will be able to clear the suit and set up heart winners. ♣A is the entry to enjoy them.</p> <p>Key Point : <i>Don't hold up at trick one if winning the trick will promote lower cards in the suit.</i></p>	West	North	East	South	1♣	Pass	1♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	1N	Pass	3N	All pass
West	North	East	South										
1♣	Pass	1♠ ⁽¹⁾	Pass										
1N	Pass	3N	All pass										
<p>♠ A763 ♥ AK5 ♦ 862 ♣ AJ6</p> <p>♠ J1094 ♠ 82 ♥ QJ102 ♥ 974 ♦ A5 ♦ 974 ♣ 932 ♣ KQ1074</p> <p>♠ KQ5 ♥ 863 ♦ KQJ103 ♣ 85</p>	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2N⁽¹⁾</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3N</td> </tr> </table> <p>All pass 1 15-18</p> <p>East leads ♣K. We count our six sure winners – three spades, two hearts and a club. We can develop our extra tricks in the diamond suit but must be careful. If we take the opening lead and West has ♦A, West can play a second club through our delicate club holding. West is the danger hand and should be kept off lead, at least in the early play. We duck the opening lead and East is powerless – a second club allows us to win a cheap trick with ♣J and we still have a club stop when we knock out the top diamond. This duck from A J x, when the king is led, is known as a Bath coup, a play found in that city when whist was the coffee house game of choice.</p> <p>Key Point : <i>With A J x in your hand, consider ducking the first trick when the king is led.</i></p>	West	North	East	South		1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	2N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3N
West	North	East	South										
	1♠	Pass	2♦										
Pass	2N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3N										

<p> ♠ J972 ♥ KJ2 ♦ 432 ♣ KQJ </p> <p> ♠ AK106 ♠ 854 ♥ Q95 ♥ A84 ♦ QJ10 ♦ AK75 ♣ 432 ♣ A108 </p> <p> ♠ Q3 ♥ 10763 ♦ 986 ♣ 9765 </p>	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3N</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1N⁽¹⁾</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>1 15-16</p> <p>An argument could be made for leading a heart, diamond or club from the South hand but, as the opponents have not sought a heart fit, a lead of that suit is suggested. So South leads ♥7, second from a bad suit. We play low from dummy and North plays ♥J. We win with the ace and see we have eight top tricks. We could play on spades and hope for a 3-3 break, a roughly one in three chance. But we can do better. We play lower of touching honours in defence. This is done to help partner but that information can be used to advantage by the declarer. When North plays ♥J we can be pretty certain that North will not have deceived partner. In that case South has ♥10 and we can play a second heart at trick two, finessing ♥9. This draws ♥K and promotes the queen for our ninth trick.</p> <p>Key Point : <i>As a general rule, when you have nothing else to go on, trust the opponents' carding.</i></p>	West	North	East	South	1♠	Pass	1♦	Pass	3N	Pass	1N ⁽¹⁾	Pass
West	North	East	South										
1♠	Pass	1♦	Pass										
3N	Pass	1N ⁽¹⁾	Pass										
<p> ♠ AQ7 ♥ 75 ♦ QJ2 ♣ AQ1093 </p> <p> ♠ J104 ♠ K9863 ♥ J982 ♥ 1043 ♦ 7654 ♦ K10 ♣ 85 ♣ K76 </p> <p> ♠ 52 ♥ AKQ6 ♦ A983 ♣ J42 </p>	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3N</td> <td>All pass</td> <td>1N</td> </tr> </table> <p>There is a modern tendency towards passive leads so ♠J would be the choice of many with the West hand. We can count six definite winners and the club suit will provide us with the necessary extra tricks (at least three to allow game to be made). Let's say we put ♠Q in at trick one. East will continue spades and we'll take the third round. We cross to hand with a heart and run ♣J. This loses to East who has the spade length. We lose four spades and the king of clubs. Can we do better? Yes, we can protect dummy's spade holding by winning the first trick (with ♠A). Now when we cross to hand and take a losing club finesse East cannot profitably continue spades – our queen is protected from attack.</p> <p>Key Point : <i>Refuse a finesse if necessary to protect your suit from attack.</i></p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	3N	All pass	1N				
West	North	East	South										
Pass	3N	All pass	1N										

<p>♠987 ♥10654 ♦1098 ♣J93</p> <p>♠A54 ♥AKQ3 ♦6532 ♣104</p> <p>♠32 ♥J2 ♦AKJ4 ♣AQ765</p> <p>♠KQJ106 ♥987 ♦Q7 ♣K82</p>	<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td>1N</td><td>Pass</td><td>3N</td><td>All pass</td></tr></table> <p>Continuing our theme of passive leads (and hitting a major in which the opposition have shown no interest) North's best lead is a spade (either a top-of-rubbish ♠9 or a middle-up-down [and second from rubbish] ♠8. We follow good principles by ducking the first two rounds and winning ♠A on the third. We can count eight top cards so our ninth trick will come from diamonds or clubs. The play of the spades will tell us that South holds the length. We see that any finesse is into that danger hand so is a little uncomfortable. We could finesse either minor suit knave but there is something better. We have eight diamonds so there will be a chance that the queen drops in two rounds. We can cash two top diamonds. If no queen appears we'll fall back on the club finesse. As it is, ♦Q drops and we do not have to risk the club play.</p> <p>Key Point : <i>Sometimes you can combine your chances by trying for the drop in one suit before finessing in another.</i></p>	West	North	East	South	1N	Pass	3N	All pass
West	North	East	South						
1N	Pass	3N	All pass						
<p>♠AK72 ♥KQ7 ♦K3 ♣A864</p> <p>♠95 ♥1052 ♦Q6542 ♣J73</p> <p>♠Q864 ♥864 ♦987 ♣Q52</p> <p>♠J103 ♥AJ93 ♦AJ10 ♣K109</p>	<p>Board 1 (Talk) : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table><tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr><tr><td></td><td>2N⁽¹⁾</td><td>Pass</td><td>6N⁽²⁾</td></tr></table> <p>All pass 1 19-20, balanced 2 Knows of a combined 33-34 hcps</p> <p>It's recommended to lead passively against 6N so East begins with ♦9 (or ♦8) – of course what's passive for one player may not be so for partner and this lead locates ♦Q for declarer. Declarer, after this lead, can count two spades, four hearts, three diamonds and two clubs. That's eleven tricks so we need to develop one more trick. We can take a spade finesse. We don't mind if it loses because ♠10 will be promoted – twelve tricks (and there would have been thirteen had the spade finesse worked and that suit broke 3-3).</p>	West	North	East	South		2N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	6N ⁽²⁾
West	North	East	South						
	2N ⁽¹⁾	Pass	6N ⁽²⁾						

<p> ♠9542 ♥1052 ♦Q65 ♣J109 </p> <p> ♠J103 ♥AJ93 ♦AJ10 ♣K73 </p> <p> ♠AK7 ♥KQ7 ♦K43 ♣A864 </p> <p> ♠Q86 ♥864 ♦9872 ♣Q52 </p>	<p><i>Board 2 (Talk) : Dealer East : All vulnerable</i></p> <table> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2N⁽¹⁾</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>6N⁽²⁾ All pass 1/2 As for Board 1 (Talk)</p> <p>The cards for declarer are similar to the first example but the big hand has one spade fewer and one diamond more. Again a diamond is lead giving the eleventh trick. Now if we take a spade finesse, running the knave, it loses. With no fourth spade we do not build a third spade trick. If we now play for clubs to be 3-3 we're too late as we'd have to give up a second trick to "make" twelve tricks. Not so clever at the six level. No, we need to change our order of play and combine our chance. We take the opening lead and duck a club. We win the continuation and cash two more clubs. We're happy. The suit breaks 3-3 and the club suit provides our twelfth trick. Had the clubs not broken evenly we would have resorted to the spade finesse, being successful if North had ♠Q.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			2N ⁽¹⁾	Pass
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>						
		2N ⁽¹⁾	Pass						