

U3A Bridge

Lesson 3: Play at No Trump

Planning the Play

How many winners do I have?

Which long cards or intermediate honours can be established to bring total to required number?

Have I enough stoppers in the enemy suit to allow me to carry out my plan before they can cash enough tricks to defeat me?

If not, what can I do about it?

Play in no-trump is a race; defenders are trying to establish enough winners to defeat the contract before declarer establishes enough winners to make the contract.

♠ QJ4
♥ AQ1084
♦ J74
♣ J9

♠ 63
♥ 962
♦ A63
♣ 108542

♠ K10984
♥ K75
♦ K8
♣ 763

♠ A72
♥ J3
♦ Q10952
♣ AKQ

South declarer in 3NT after East overcalls in spades, West leads spade 6 starting race to set up partner's long suit. Dummy plays the jack; East covers with the king; South wins the ace and works on his own long suit' leading the diamond 2. West plays low, dummy the jack and East winning the king. East returns the 10 of spades establishing his suit. Dummy plays a diamond forcing out West's ace and establishing the suit. Since West has no more spades, he leads the heart 9 hoping to give partner the lead. But declarer plays Dummy's ace, and cashes his high diamonds and clubs to make the contract.

There are plenty of mistakes both in declarer play and defence as described but the hand illustrates the race for defence to establish spade tricks and declarer to establish diamonds.

Mistakes

1. West should take diamond ace right away and lead a spade, keeping partner's **entry** intact.
2. South should duck the initial spade K, still retains 2 stoppers
3. Once South has taken the first trick can recover by playing hearts rather than diamonds as he only needs to lose the lead once.

Vital factors are *stoppers* and *entries*.

Hand 1	Hand 2	Hand 3	Hand 4
♠ K74 ♥ Q92 ♦ K85 ♣ AJ65 ♠ QJ8 ♥ A103 ♦ QJ4 ♣ KQ74 3NT by N lead 4♥	♠ A87 ♥ A32 ♦ KQ32 ♣ 654 ♠ K32 ♥ K98 ♦ J1054 ♣ KQJ 3NT by N lead 6♥	♠ AQ6 ♥ AK83 ♦ AK5 ♣ 984 ♠ K72 ♥ 742 ♦ 862 ♣ QJ105 3NT by N lead Q♦	♠ 864 ♥ AK3 ♦ AJ97 ♣ AK6 ♠ K2 ♥ 862 ♦ K1062 ♣ QJ73 3NT by N lead Q♥
Run lead to own hand. Have to lose to A♠, A♦ and a heart.	Only 4 top tricks, need to lose to A♦, and then to A♣.	7 top tricks so need 2 more which can only come from clubs. Duck opening lead and lead club, regain lead and knock out other top club.	Need 3 diamond tricks but need to avoid spade lead from N. Win lead play A♦ then another towards dummy, cover card played by N

Hand 5	Hand 6	Hand 7	Hand 8
♠ A ♥ K743 ♦ QJ109 ♣ AQJ2 ♠ QJ109 ♥ A32 ♦ 876 ♣ K54 3NT by N lead 6♥	♠ AQ108 ♥ J5 ♦ K107 ♣ K863 ♠ J97 ♥ AQ2 ♦ QJ53 ♣ A52 3NT N after W has overcalled H lead 8♥	♠ AQ3 ♥ AJ42 ♦ 7 ♣ A10864 ♠ 84 ♥ Q5 ♦ AKJ853 ♣ 732 Contract – see below East leads 5♠	♠ AJ83 ♥ AK5 ♦ 1072 ♣ A73 ♠ 95 ♥ 863 ♦ KQJ64 ♣ K62 3NT N East leads 4♣
7 top tricks, can make 2 more in ♠. Win K♥ to retain A as entry. Unblock A♠, cross to K♣ and knock out K♠.	W wins K♥ and returns another E playing 3♥. Only 5 top tricks, must make ♠ and ♦ tricks. Play ♦ first as if W wins and knocks out last ♥ can now take ♠ finesse safely. E cannot have any more hearts.	6 top tricks. Different plans: 1NT; set up ♥ trick 2NT; set up 2 extra in clubs 3NT; need 3 extra – best chance is to finesse diamond	Need 4 diamond tricks, make sure you win lead with the ace in order to preserve the club king as an entry to the diamonds once the diamond ace has been knocked out