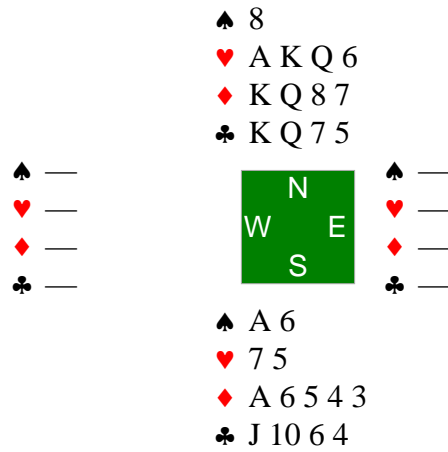


Don't Paint Yourself In a Corner!



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	1 ♠	2 ♠
3 ♠	Dbl	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Opening lead, 10 of ♠

3 NT by South

Good morning, Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to this, the 22nd edition of Shark's Pointer's Online!

Frequently bridge has been compared to chess because one often has to think 4 or 5 moves or tricks ahead in order to achieve success and avoid major pitfalls.

Today we are going to look at a few different situations in which declarer has to think ahead. Our Shark's Pointer is - always think a few tricks ahead and Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner!

Here's a situation that arises quite frequently. NS get to 3N, and it looks like they have an easy 9 tricks - 5 diamonds 3 hearts and 1 spade.

Don't Paint Yourself In a Corner!

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	1 ♠	2 ♠
3 ♠	Dbl	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

3 NT by South

South wins the spade lead and plays on diamonds, and oops! The 3-1 diamond split creates a blockage in the suit and there is now no way to get more than 4 diamond tricks before giving up the lead - down 1.

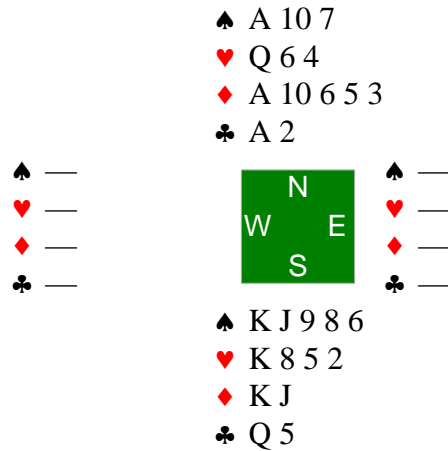
There was a very simple remedy. All South had to do was to duck the opening lead and win the second spade - after pitching a low diamond from dummy. What this accomplishes is it unblocks the diamond suit, so South can win the third round in hand and cash the 4th and 5th diamond winners.

What our declarer did was a very common mistake. He didn't spot the not unlikely possibility of a blockage in the diamond suit - he played too quickly at trick 1 - and he painted himself into a corner.

OK, let's look at another hand....

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner!

IMPs
NS Vul
South Dlr



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by South

Opening Lead 3 of ♣

Take a look at the following hand that was played recently by an expert declarer.

South has 4 sure spade tricks, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 1 club - bringing his total up to 8.

He actually has chances for extra tricks in each suit - can you see it?

- If he guesses the location of the spade Q, he has an extra trick there.
- If he finds an opponent with Ax of hearts and plays accordingly, he can develop a second trick.
- If he guesses the location of the diamond Q, he can get an extra trick there.
- Seems like the safest option is to hope for the hand on lead to have led away from the club K.

No play is without risk. Getting a second heart trick is very improbable. I'd put that one on the back burner. I'd hate to make a blind guess for the spade Q until I get more info.

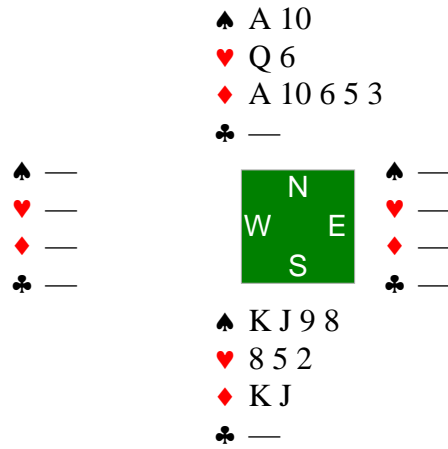
The diamonds might be our best play, but if I finesse wrong, I will probably go down.

So we stick with the club option and duck, but it loses to the K and a club comes back.

OK, we are back to square 1. What's your plan?

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner

IMPs
NS Vul
South Dlr



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by South

Opening Lead 3 of ♣

Our declarer played a heart to this K which held, and now played a spade to the 7 which won!

Looks like we are up to 9 tricks now- 5 spades, 1 club, 1 heart and 2 diamonds.

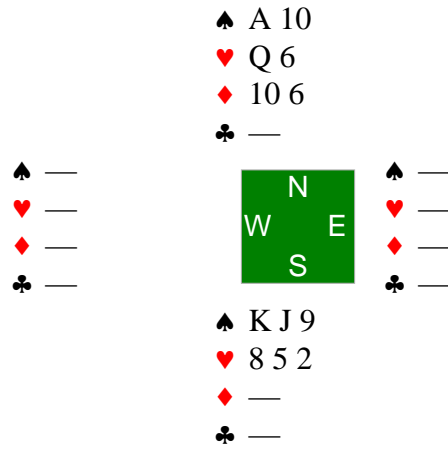
What's your plan for a 10th trick? Looks like diamonds is the logical plan. Diamonds will split 4-2 (48.5% of the time) or 3-3 (35.5%) a combined 84% of the time!

If you played K - A of diamonds and a low diamond - East (the player on your right) will show out!.

What's your plan, now?

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner

IMPs
NS Vul
South Dlr



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by South

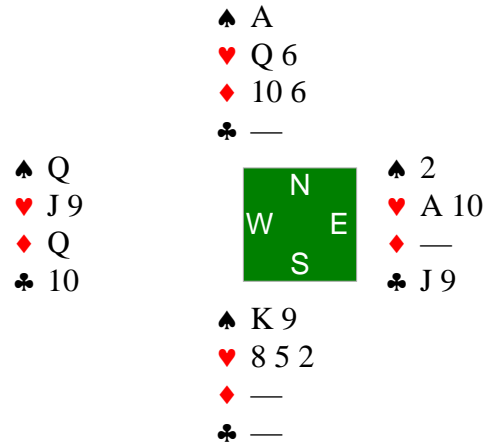
Opening Lead 3 of ♣

Looks like you are home free now!

You play the J of spades and it goes low on your left. Uh oh. See what happened?

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner

IMPs
NS Vul
South Dlr



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by South

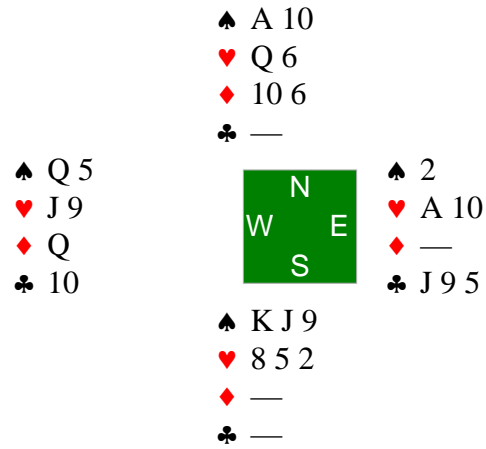
Opening Lead 3 of ♣

You can win the spade, cross to the A of spades, drawing the last trump and ruff a diamond, but now you have no way to get back to dummy to cash the diamond.

So let's go back and play the 9 of spades, instead of the J.

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner

IMPs
NS Vul
South Dlr



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

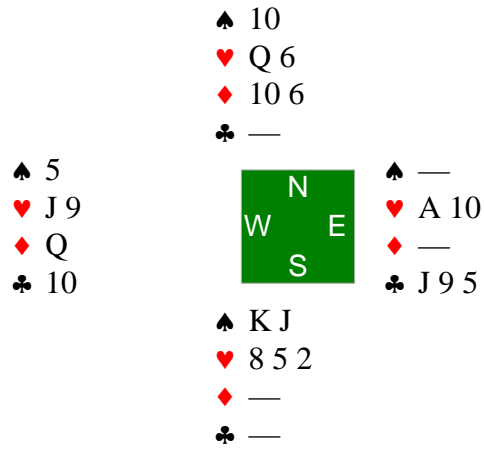
4 ♠ by South

Opening Lead 3 of ♣

Let's have our astute West now fly with the Q of spades! Uh oh....

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner

IMPs
NS Vul
South Dlr



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by South

Opening Lead 3 of ♣

Still down 1! You can not unscramble your tricks!

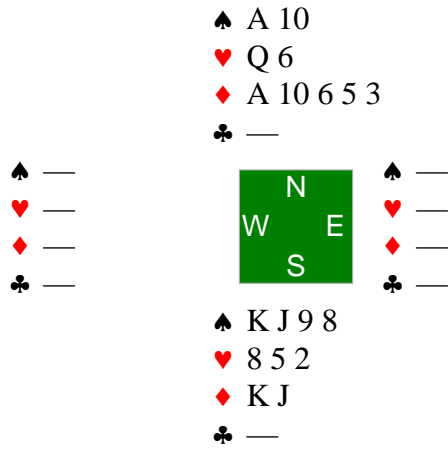
What happened here?

Is there a solution? And if so, what?

Let's go back to the point at which we played the third round of diamonds and East showed out.

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner

IMPs
NS Vul
South Dlr



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by South

Opening Lead 3 of ♣

Now, instead of ruffing low, let's ruff with the K!

Now we are all set. 8 of spades to dummy - covering whatever card West plays, and ruff 4th round of diamonds with our J!.

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner

IMPs
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

	♠ A 10 7		
	♥ Q 6 4		
	♦ A 10 6 5 3		
	♣ A 2		
♠ Q 5 4	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 3 2	
♥ J 9 3		♥ A 10 7	
♦ Q 8 7 2		♦ 9 4	
♣ 10 7 3		♣ K J 9 8 6 4	
	♠ K J 9 8 6		
	♥ K 8 5 2		
	♦ K J		
	♣ Q 5		

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

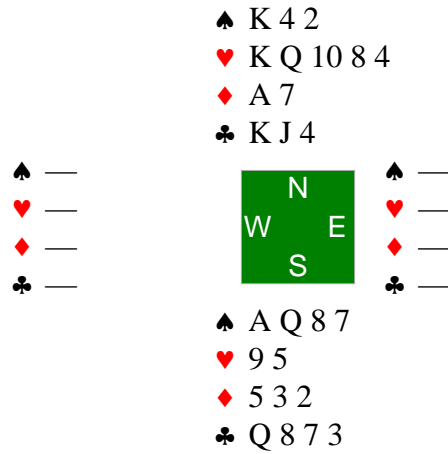
4 ♠ by South

Opening Lead 3 of ♣

Here was the complete deal!

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner!

IMPs



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
3 ♦	Dbl	Pass	3 ♠
All pass			

Opening Lead 2 of ♥

3 ♠ by South

OK, one more hand.

This was from the same session and our "Unlucky Expert" once again boxed himself in a corner.

You're declarer in 3 ♠, and get the lead of the 2 of ♥. You rise K and are surprised when this holds the trick. Doesn't seem likely that East would ever duck this trick if he held the Ace as partner would most likely have a singleton. Now you play the K of spades and a spade to your Ace, noting the 10 on your right. Now you play a club to the K, which holds the trick and the J of clubs, which holds and a third round of clubs to East's Ace with West following. Now East returns a spade. You win, and it is your play.

Don't Paint Yourself In A Corner!

IMPs

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 10 6	♠ K 4 2	♠ J 9 5 3									
♥ A 2	♥ K Q 10 8 4	♥ J 7 6 3									
♦ Q J 10 9 8 4	♦ A 7	♦ K 6									
♣ 10 9 5	♣ K J 4	♣ A 6 2									
<table style="border: 2px solid green; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A Q 8 7										
	♥ 9 5										
	♦ 5 3 2										
	♣ Q 8 7 3										

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
3 ♦	Dbl	Pass	3 ♠
All pass			

Opening Lead 2 of ♥ !

3 ♠ by South

If you returned your Q of clubs, which seems like a "safe" play, you will go down as East will ruff and play K and a diamond. West will win the Ace of hearts, and cash his diamond.

What you had to do - and you probably should have done it sooner- was play a heart towards dummy. West will have to win, and return a diamond, but you can win, cash the second high heart pitching one of your diamond losers, and ruff out the J of hearts. Your tricks are 2 clubs, 4 spades, 1 diamond and 2 hearts - making 3!

South went down because he painted himself in a corner and never scored a second heart trick.

So, today we have seen some dramatic examples of how success or failure can depend upon proper prior planning. Bridge technique is frequently compared to chess mastery. In order to win at bridge, a good declarer has to think 3 or 4 plays ahead - and make sure not to paint himself in a corner.