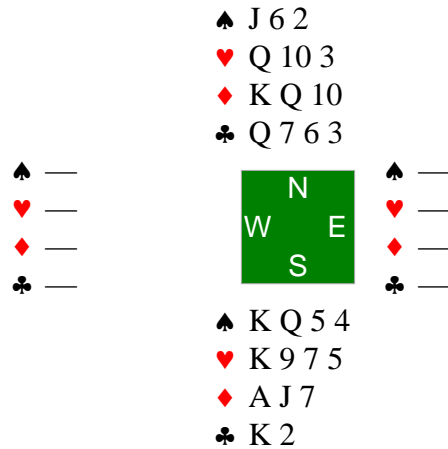


## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs



Opening Lead 8 of ♠

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

3 NT by South

Good Morning, Ladies and Gentlemen and welcome to this, the 25th session of "Shark's Pointers Online". Today's topic is entitled "Ice Cold Contracts."

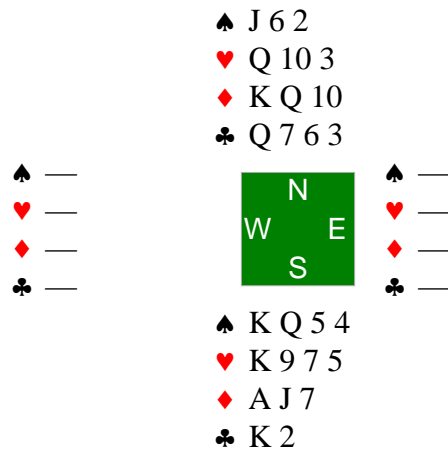
How many times have you gone down in contracts that a double-dummy analysis of Deep Finesse will tell us are "Ice Cold" on any lead? Quite frequently, success or failure will depend upon seeing all four hands and knowing which opponent to finesse for a queen or a jack, etc. I frequently jokingly say that "A Jack never wins a trick in a postmortem!"

While I think it is frequently unwise to worry about how to better guess a card, I do think that studying these double dummy analyses will frequently provide tips on how to find a way to succeed - without actually looking at the hand records.

Today, we are going to examine a couple of these "Ice Cold Contracts" in which I or my partner recently managed to find a way to fail. The first is - in retrospect - relatively simple. I should have made this hand. Every once in a while, I have a very vague idea of how to play a hand. This was such a hand. In most cases, all I have to do is count my tricks in order to find the play that would have led to success.

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs



Opening Lead 8 of ♠

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

3 NT by South

On the diagrammed deal, the opening lead of the 8 of ♠ was followed by the 2 from dummy, and the 9 from East. It looked to me like I might lose 3 clubs, 1 spade and 2 hearts. The high spade lead made me think the J of hearts was more likely to be with West, so I immediately false carded by winning the opening lead with my K and leading a low heart to dummy's 10. My hope was that if the 10 lost to the Ace, East might continue spades, and I would be home free.

I started with 2 or 3 spades, 2 or 3 hearts, 3 diamonds and 1 club. It's not unreasonable to assume the J of hearts is on your right, but how can it hurt to start with the ♥ K? If either West or East wins the ♥ A and continues spades, we still are in control. If West wins and continues spades, and East wins the A, we have 3 ♠, at least 2 ♥ - regardless of who holds the J, 3 ♦, and 1 ♣. That totals 9 tricks. If East wins the heart A, and continues spades, we are in the same situation.

This was the complete deal...

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs  
East Deals  
Both Vul

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

Opening Lead 8 of ♠

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3 NT	Pass	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

3 NT by South

After winning the K of ♠, and playing the K of ♥, declarer is home free. If West wins the Ace, and continues Spades, the hand is essentially over, as we just discussed. So, let's have him win and shift to a club. East needs to duck and South will win the K. Let's assume that West ducks. South has to cross to dummy in diamonds and play a spade towards hand. East must win, and obviously cannot play a heart or a club - so he will continue diamonds. South has to win in hand and now play a heart to the 10 - which, as you can see, loses to East's doubleton J! But now, South is in control. He has only lost 2 hearts and 1 spade. East can cash the Ace of clubs, or continue diamonds, but still South has 9 tricks - 2 hearts, 3 spades, 3 diamonds and 1 club.

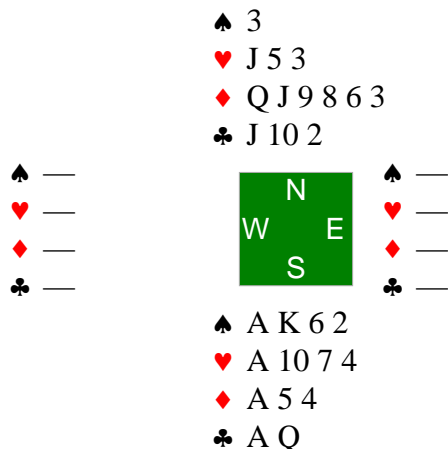
This is a pretty interesting hand. The subtle play of the K of hearts is not that obvious. In practice, I played a heart to the 10 at trick 2. Now the J of clubs was played. I won the K, crossed to a diamond and played a spade, but now East won the Ace and played his other heart to his partner's Ace. The club continuation allowed EW to score 2H, 1S, and 2 C - down 1.

Any questions, before we move on to the next hand?

The next hand is not at all obvious.

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs



Opening Lead 2 of ♦

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 N
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	6 NT
All pass			


6 NT by South

The bidding needs some explanation. The 3D bid showed a minimum with a 6 card suit. North's 6N bid is not recommended. In fact, adding the 21 points to the 6-7 she should expect to find in partner's hand, signing off in 3N - or possibly inviting with 4N is plenty. Telling you that the contract is Ice Cold gives away some information. Clearly, East does not hold K105 of diamonds, or 6N would have no play. So, we have to assume we have 6 ♦ tricks. Ok, let's start by playing the Q of ♦ from dummy. It is covered by the K. You win the A, and return a ♦, to the 7 and after thinking a few seconds, you play the 8, as East discards a low spade. Well, that's the first hurdle, now what? If East has KQx or KQ doubleton of hearts, then NS can score 3 ♥, 6 ♦, 2 ♠, and 1 ♣. It's not likely that the KQx of hearts is onside. It is even less likely that you will find KQ doubleton - so let's not even consider that as a reasonable approach. Let's just stick with KQx. To start with, 3-3 split occurs only 36% of the time, and both the K and Q being in the East hand only occurs 1/4 of the time - or 1/4 of 36% - only 9%. You are up to 6 ♦, 2 ♠, 1 ♥, and 1 ♣ - 10 tricks. If you take a club finesse, and it wins, you still can fall back on a lucky heart position - or some exotic squeeze. If you take a club finesse and it loses, you still win get 2 club tricks. You merely unblock the A of ♣ on the run of your diamonds. You no longer will have the 9 or 10% play in hearts, but you still may have some squeeze chances.

Today's Shark's Pointer is - when you are two tricks shy of your goal and one play will 100% guarantee that you will get within 1 trick of your goal - without eliminating any chance of getting the trick you need - go for it!

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs  
North Deals  
E-W Vul

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

Opening Lead 2 of ♦

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 N
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	6 NT
All pass			

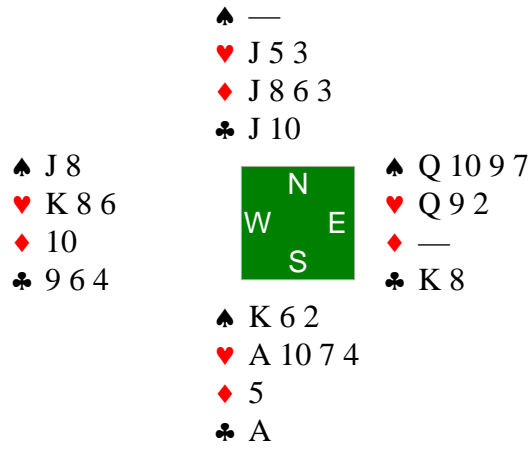
6 NT by South

Ok, let's take a look at all four hands. After winning the diamond Ace, finessing a diamond and finessing a club, there are two ways we can successfully continue. We can cash a high spade before starting to run the diamonds - or we can just start running the diamonds without cashing a top spade.

Let's look at what happens after cashing a top spade.

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs



Opening Lead 2 of ♦

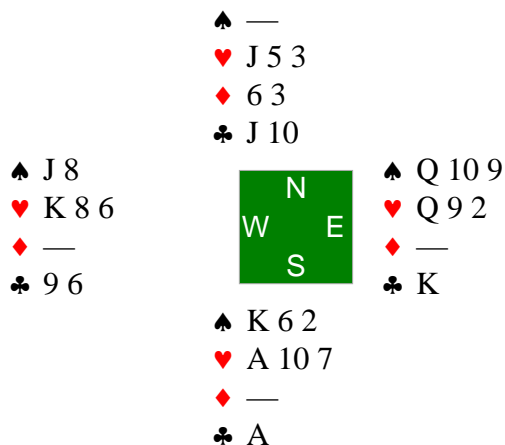
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 N
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	6 NT
All pass			

6 NT by South

Ok, let's now cross with a diamond. East can pitch a club. On the 8 of diamonds, East can pitch a spade. and South can pitch a heart. Let's have West pitch another club. Here's the position...

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs



Opening Lead 2 of ♦

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 N
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	6 NT
All pass			

6 NT by South

Now the 8 of diamonds. We know that East cannot pitch a heart. We'll come back to him in a minute. West has no problem pitching a club, South has no problem pitching a heart. Let's assume East pitches another club.

On the 6 of diamonds, If East pitches his last club, dummy will pitch the Ace of clubs, and declarer will cash 2 high clubs, his last diamond and a heart and a spade -making 6. So East must not pitch his last club. If East instead, pitches a heart, South will pitch both spades from dummy on his two diamond winners, and play a heart to dummy's 10. He will score an extra heart trick when East's Q drops, so once again, pitching a heart is not an option. This leaves as the only option that East must pitch a spade. Now South will pitch a heart and West will pitch a club. Here's the position...

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs

♠ —		♠ Q 10									
♥ J 5 3		♥ Q 9 2									
♦ 3		♦ —									
♣ J 10		♣ K									
♠ J 8	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <table style="border: none; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 6 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ K 8		♥ A 10									
♦ —		♦ —									
♣ 9 6		♣ A									

Opening Lead 2 of ♦

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 N
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	6 NT
All pass			

6 NT by South

Well, that doesn't help either. Since East was squeezed down to the singleton K of clubs, declarer will pitch dummy's 10 of hearts, and declarer will safely cross to dummy with a club to play K and a spade.

Even if East unblocks the Q of spades, West will be forced to either return a heart to dummy which is good, or play a club to declarer's J.

Dummy will pitch a spade and will score the last two tricks.

Let's look at the full deal again...



### Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs  
North Deals  
E-W Vul

	♠ 3					
	♥ J 5 3					
	♦ Q J 9 8 6 3					
	♣ J 10 2					
♠ J 8 4	<table border="1" style="background-color: #008000; color: white; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W    E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W    E	S	♠ Q 10 9 7 5	
N						
W    E						
S						
♥ K 8 6		♥ Q 9 2				
♦ 10 7 2		♦ K				
♣ 9 6 4 3		♣ K 8 7 5				
	♠ A K 6 2					
	♥ A 10 7 4					
	♦ A 5 4					
	♣ A Q					

Opening Lead 2 of ♦

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 N
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	6 NT
All pass			

6 NT by South

The situation isn't much different if South doesn't cash a high spade at trick 4 before crossing back to run the diamonds. This will be the key position...

## Ice Cold Contracts

IMPs

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

Opening Lead 2 of ♦

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2 ♦	Pass	2 N
Pass	3 ♦	Pass	6 NT
All pass			

6 NT by South

The situation isn't much different if South doesn't cash a high spade at trick 4 before crossing back to run the diamonds. This will be the key position...

On the 6 of diamonds, East has to pitch a spade, and South will pitch a heart, and another heart on his last diamond. Now he crosses to the Ace of clubs as before and K and the 6 of spades will establish declarer's lowly 2 of spades for the 12th trick.

I hope you enjoyed today's talk and next time you hear someone talk about an "Ice Cold" contract, you will think about these hands I have shown and chuckle quietly.

See you next Friday!