



## Unblocking

As declarer (and also defence!) you have two hands of cards to manage.

The order that you choose to play the cards of each suit is often crucial.

The simple motto is:

"Play the high cards from the 'short' suit first."

In each hand you will have a holding in each of the four suits. Sometimes you have the same number of cards in each holding, making life simple. Often one holding has more cards than the other. The holding with more cards is the 'long' suit, the holding with fewer cards is the 'short' suit.

## Entries

Often the need to unblock is closely linked to the number of entries in the weaker hand.

Always identify your entries and work out how they relate to your plans to unblock.

### DUMMY (North)

♠ 10 5 3

♥ Q 7 6

♦ 8 4 2

♣ A K Q 2

### DECLARER (South)

♠ K Q J 4

♥ J 8 4 3

♦ A Q 3

♣ J 6



## Planning the Play

Dummy				Declarer
♠ 4 3 2				♠ 7 6 5
♥ 4 3 2				♥ A K 9 6
♦ A K J 4				♦ Q 6
♣ 4 3 2				♣ A 7 6 5
	Opening Lead			
	♠ Q		1NT	

There are, hopefully, four tricks to be lost in Spades.

Then declarer should get the lead.

There are seven top tricks provided 4 tricks are won in diamonds.

### High Card from Short Suit First

In Diamonds, the "short" suit is the declarer suit. The high card in the short suit is the queen. Play the queen first, and then a low one to the remaining honours in dummy for four tricks.

Take any honour in dummy first, and you won't get four tricks.



## Managing entries

The diamond suit is blocked from the start.

To win tricks with queen and jack, the king and ace must be played first to “unblock” the suit.

It's easy to get to declarer's hand from dummy. But there's only one entry to dummy: ♠A. Win the first trick with ♠K to preserve the entry. Then cash the diamonds in declarer's hand. Then cross to dummy to take the tricks with queen and jack of diamonds.

Dummy				Declarer
♠ A 3 2				♠ K 6 5
♥ 4 3 2				♥ A K 9 6
♦ Q J 4 2				♦ A K
♣ 4 3 2				♣ A 7 6 5
	Opening Lead			
	♠ Q		3NT	



## Sometimes you have to overtake

Dummy				Declarer
♠ 4 3 2				♠ 7 6 5
♥ 4 3 2				♥ A K 9 6
♦ A K 10 4				♦ Q J
♣ 4 3 2				♣ A 7 6 5
	Opening Lead			
	♠ Q		1NT	

Here you take one trick with a diamond honour in declarer's hand. Then you play the second diamond but overtake with a higher card in dummy so that you can then take the rest of the diamond tricks.



Sometimes the play at the first trick can be crucial

Dummy				Declarer
♠ Q J				♠ A K 2
♥ 8 7 6				♥ A 5 3 2
♦ K Q J 8 7 4				♦ A
♣ 8 3				♣ K J 6 4 2
	Opening Lead			
	♠ 10		3NT	

Here in a 3NT contract you play ♠J from dummy but note that ♠Q is the only possible entry back to dummy to make those lovely diamonds, so you must overtake ♠J with ♠K or ♠A and immediately play ♦A from hand. Now play ♠2 to dummy's ♠Q, cash the diamond winners and probably make at least 10 tricks.



## Sometimes you have to overtake an honour

Dummy				Declarer
♠ A 5 4				♠ K 7 6 2
♥ K J 10 9 8 3				♥ Q
♦ 8 2				♦ A 7 6 5
♣ 9 5				♣ A Q 3 2
	Opening Lead			
	♠ Q		3NT	

Here in a 3NT contract you note that ♠A is the only possible entry to dummy to make any heart tricks, so you must overtake take the first trick in hand with ♠K and immediately play ♥Q. However, good defenders may duck the first round of hearts so you must overtake with dummy's ♥K and then keep playing hearts until ♥A appears. The ♠A is still available to get back to dummy to run the remaining hearts. Now you will probably make at least nine tricks.