

Planning the hand – an introduction

Board 3: Dealer South, EW vul (Pairs) Planning to make maximum tricks

| | | | |
|--------|-----------|----------|--|
| | ♠ J | | |
| | ♥ J1073 | | |
| | ♦ K1054 | | |
| | ♣ Q975 | | |
| ♠ AK72 | | ♠ Q10943 | |
| ♥ Q954 | | ♥ A86 | |
| ♦ 9862 | | ♦ QJ7 | |
| ♣ 8 | | ♣ J6 | |
| | ♠ 865 | | |
| | ♥ K2 | | |
| | ♦ A3 | | |
| | ♣ AK10432 | | |

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
| | | | 1♣ |
| P | 1♥ | P | 2♣ |
| P | 3♣ | P | 3♠* |
| P | 4♣ | P | 5♣ |
| P | | | |

Lead: ♠A and switches to ♥4 after East's suit preference signal of the ♠10. East wins and returns the ♥6 hoping for Pard to have the ♥K.

Can you make the rest of the tricks?

You can afford to test trumps and still ruff 2 spades. With trumps breaking 2-1 you make 11 tricks.

8 Playing pairs, West plays in a contract of 4♠. North leads the ♣Q. Plan the play.

| | |
|---------|---------|
| ♠ AJ982 | ♠ KQ763 |
| ♥ 2 | ♥ 1086 |
| ♦ KJ102 | ♦ Q3 |
| ♣ K53 | ♣ A42 |

Playing on the correct side suit - Planning ahead

Win the trick with the ♣K and take out trumps. Now knock out the ♦A. The losing ♣ will now be discarded on the established ♦. If you play on ♥s, the defence will knock out your ♣ guard before you have knocked out the ♦A. Playing on ♦s yields 11 tricks; playing on ♥s yields only 10 tricks.

10 West plays in a contract of 4♥. North leads the ♠K. You win and cash the ♥K, South dropping the ♥J. Plan the play.

| | |
|--------|---------|
| ♠ A4 | ♠ 32 |
| ♥ K753 | ♥ A1064 |
| ♦ A975 | ♦ 8642 |
| ♣ AQ10 | ♣ KJ9 |

Playing for your only chance of making the contract

You have 3 certain losers (1 ♠ and 2 ♦s) so you cannot afford to lose a trump. In order to pick up the ♥s for no losers, South must have QJ doubleton. So play for the only realistic hope. Cash the ♥A and the ♥10; cash the ♣s and exit with a small ♦!

The defence can now:

- 1) Take a ♠ before giving you a ruff and discard
- 2) Play a ♣ giving you a tempo, or
- 3) Help you to set up the ♦s

Whichever poison they use, you have time to set up the ♦ suit (assuming a 3-2 split) for 10 tricks.

11: Dlr South Both NV

| | | |
|-----------|----------|------------|
| | ♠ AJ97 | |
| | ♥ 74 | |
| | ♦ A7 | |
| | ♣ Q9864 | |
| ♠ KQ5 | | ♠ 8 |
| ♥ AQ10652 | | ♥ J |
| ♦ 84 | | ♦ KQJ10653 |
| ♣ A10 | | ♣ KJ72 |
| | ♠ 106432 | |
| | ♥ K963 | |
| | ♦ 92 | |
| | ♣ 53 | |

Bidding:

| West | North | East | S |
|------|-------|------|---|
| | | | P |
| 1♥ | | 2♦ | |
| 2NT | | 3♦ | |
| 3NT | | | |

Note: 2NT is GF so East can rebid his ♦s below 3NT. With a better hand perhaps 4♦ would have been the better bid.

OK you are in 3NT and LHO leads ♠6 and South plays the 3. How do you play it?

Planning ahead - Setting up a long suit

You must **not** win Trick 1 with the ♣10 else you will never be able to get back to the East hand to enjoy your ♦s. So you win with the ace, and play on ♦s. North wins the 2nd ♦ and perhaps puts another ♣ through. Playing pairs you may chance the jack, but if it loses to the queen your ♦ suit will be lost. So win with the king (Jx protects the running of the ♣ suit) cash the ♦s and play a ♠ for 10 tricks. These 10 tricks will outscore 4♥ and 5♦ at pairs (even if these contracts are made!).

13 West plays in a contract of 6♣. North leads the ♦4.

| | |
|---------|-----------|
| ♠ KQ32 | ♠ - |
| ♥ 32 | ♥ AJ4 |
| ♦ K1032 | ♦ AQJ9 |
| ♣ KQ3 | ♣ AJ10987 |

Planning the hand

Win trick 1 with the ♦A (you will need to keep your entries to the West hand in reserve). Take out trumps. Overtake the ♦Q with the ♦A. Play the ♠K and discard ♥4, whether the king is covered or not. Win the return. Now play the ♦9 to the ♦10 and play the ♠Q discarding your other ♥ loser.

Be careful of a ♦ ruff, so you must take out trumps.

19 West plays in a contract of 5♦. North leads ♠3. Plan the play?

| | |
|---------|---------|
| ♠ 102 | ♠ AQ75 |
| ♥ AQ | ♥ 753 |
| ♦ KQJ84 | ♦ 10975 |
| ♣ KJ102 | ♣ AQ |

Planning ahead (refusing a finesse)

Win with the ace and commence taking out trumps. As long as trumps are not 4-0 you are home. When the defence win the ♦A and cash their ♠K, refuse the ♥ finesse if South switches to a ♥. Win with the ace. If a third ♠ is played, ruff high. Complete taking out trumps and cash 4 rounds of ♣s, discarding 2 ♥s from the East hand. Now a ♥ ruff in the short trump hand yields the 11th trick.

21 West plays in a contract of 3NT. North leads the ♥J. Plan the play?

| | |
|---------|--------|
| ♠ J102 | ♠ K43 |
| ♥ AK2 | ♥ Q3 |
| ♦ AQ102 | ♦ 8643 |
| ♣ AKQ | ♣ J432 |

Planning ahead - Setting up your tricks – you need 9 and you have 8 top tricks

Win in the West hand. Cash three ♣ tricks and Run the ♠J if its not covered. Your ♥ entry allows you to cash J♣. You also have the tempo to make a ♠ trick before the opposition knock out your ♥ stops. Hence you come to 3 ♥s, one ♦, four ♣s and at least one ♠. You should not try to set up extra tricks in ♦s in case the outstanding cards are badly situated.

24 West plays in a contract of 7♥. North leads the ♣Q. Plan the play?

| | |
|----------|---------|
| ♠ A10864 | ♠ 2 |
| ♥ KQ104 | ♥ AJ95 |
| ♦ AQ3 | ♦ K42 |
| ♣ 5 | ♣ A7643 |

Planning ahead - Cross-ruffing after taking side suit winners

If you take out trumps you will only have 9 tricks. The only chance to make 13 tricks is to make your trumps separately (that is, cross-ruff). Before embarking on this line you must hope for a 4-3 ♦ break and cash 3 rounds of ♦s. (If you cross-ruff before playing ♦s then the Oppo will discard ♦s and have trumps left to ruff your ♦s.) When ♦s stand up you can cross-ruff the black suits. Your tricks are 1-♠, 3-♦s, 1-♣ and 8 trumps (via separate ruffs).

25 West plays in a contract of 7♥. **North leads a trump.** Plan the play?

| | |
|----------|---------|
| ♠ A10864 | ♠ 2 |
| ♥ KQ104 | ♥ AJ95 |
| ♦ AQ3 | ♦ K42 |
| ♣ 5 | ♣ A7643 |

Planning ahead - Setting up a suit

Your only hope, a very slender hope indeed, is that one of the black suits break 4-3, and that you can set up that suit for the 13th trick. Apart from the black suit splitting favourably, the trumps must break 3-2. Here we go at setting up the ♠ suit. (There are insufficient entries for setting up the ♣s.)

- Win the trump lead with the ace.
- Play ♠A and ruff a ♠.
- Small ♦ to the ace and ruff a ♠.
- Small ♦ to the queen and ruff a ♠.
- Now trumps are exhausted in the East hand.
- You now have to cash a ♣ and ruff a ♣.
- You now have two top trumps in the West hand to take out trumps.
- Now you can cash your promoted ♠ and win the last ♦ in the East hand.

29 West plays in a contract of 4♠ following a 3♣ pre-empt from North. North plays the three top ♣s, South following with the ♣Q and discards two small ♥s. Plan the play?

| | | |
|----------|------------|---------|
| | ♠ 952 | |
| | ♥ J7 | |
| | ♦ 10 | |
| | ♣ AKJ10762 | |
| ♠ AKQ108 | | ♠ J3 |
| ♥ 64 | | ♥ AK5 |
| ♦ A865 | | ♦ J9432 |
| ♣ 83 | | ♣ 954 |
| | ♠ 764 | |
| | ♥ Q109832 | |
| | ♦ KQ7 | |
| | ♣ Q | |

Using the opposition's bidding to advantage

The only way to make your contract is to bring in the ♦ suit. If ♦s break 2-2 you will have no problem. However, you can expect them to break 3-1 due to the 3♣ pre-empt. An extra chance is to pin the singleton 10. (Note: North has already shown up with 8 HCPs so probably will not have either the ♦K or ♦Q.) Take out trumps, they break 3-3 (say thank you!). Enter the East hand with a ♥ and play the ♦J, running it if it isn't covered. Of course, you will play the ace if it is covered. Whichever, you will only lose one ♦. And if South has KQ10 then the contract can never make.

- 34 West plays in a contract of 4♥ after North opened 1♦. North leads the ♠A followed by the ♠K and exits with a third ♠, South following throughout. Plan the play (trumps break 2-2)?

| | |
|----------|---------|
| ♠ 6543 | ♠ AK102 |
| ♥ AJ1073 | ♥ KQ92 |
| ♦ AQ | ♦ 63 |
| ♣ J8 | ♣ Q43 |

Planning - Counting the opponent's points.

- AK of ♣s
- KJ of ♦s
- QJ of ♠s

Taking a premature discard.

The only way that this contract can go down is if South has QJxx of ♠s; in which case you will need to discard a ♠ on the ♣. You will need the losing ♦Q to throw North in later. Take two rounds of trumps, the suit breaks 2-2. Cash the ♠A. Go back to the West hand on a trump and lead towards the A102 of ♠s; if North follows just cover. You now guarantee 3 ♠s. However North shows out on the second round. Now you must win, cash the ♦A and exit with the ♦Q. North will now be on lead to give you a ruff and discard to dispose of the ♠ loser.

- 35 West plays in a contract of 6♣. North leads the ♦J. Plan the play?

| | |
|-----------|---------|
| ♠ A2 | ♠ QJ3 |
| ♥ K5 | ♥ A9763 |
| ♦ A2 | ♦ Q53 |
| ♣ AKQJ975 | ♣ 103 |

Planning ahead - Making the best use of all your chances (playing the odds)

The opposition have made the only lead to cause problems. However, all is not lost. The lead seems to indicate that the ♦K is with the South hand. However, you may as well try the queen. Alas it fails. The ♦K does cover the ♦Q. You have 11 top tricks and only have to develop one extra trick. The chances of making an extra trick are if the ♥s break 3-3 or the ♠K is in the South hand. It is important that the play must follow the correct route otherwise you will not be able to try both chances.

Cash the ♣A, hopefully both follow. Now play ♥K (♥3) followed by ♥5 to the ♥A. Now play ♥6 and ruff high. If the ♥s break 3-3 you must now hope that trumps break 2-2. You can play a small trump to the ♣10 and if both defenders follow your two master ♥s can be used to allow discards from the West hand.

If ♥s don't break 3-3 or the ♣s don't break 2-2, you will need to take the ♠ finesse after entering the East hand on the ♣10.

36 West plays in a contract of 7NT. North leads the ♥7. Plan the play?

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| ♠ A | ♠ KQJ |
| ♥ K | ♥ AQ |
| ♦ AKQ | ♦ J1098765 |
| ♣ AKQ109875 | ♣ 3 |

Planning ahead - Keeping communications

You must win with the ace. Cash the ♥Q discarding ♠A. Now follow with the ♠KQJ discarding your ♦AKQ. Now you can cash your seven ♦ tricks, discarding everything except a boss ♣.

Who would have thought that the East hand would have won 12 tricks and the West hand one! Perhaps I should have asked you how many tricks East would win in order to make the contract!

38 West plays in a contract of 6♣. North leads the ♥A and continues with a small ♥. Plan the play?

| | |
|--------|---------|
| ♠ KJ75 | ♠ A62 |
| ♥ K753 | ♥ J |
| ♦ 3 | ♦ AKQ75 |
| ♣ QJ75 | ♣ AK32 |

Planning ahead - Combining chances for your contract - Dummy reversal

You have 10 top tricks, so need two ruffs for your contract. The worry is a 4-1 trump split. Win with the ♥K discarding a ♠. Lead a ♦ to the ace and ruff a ♦ with the ♣5. Cash ♣Q and play a ♣ to the ace.

If both defenders have followed to two rounds of ♣s you are home. You can now ruff another small ♦ high and enter dummy with the ♠A to draw trumps (2 ♠s, 1 ♥, 3 ♦s, 2 ruffs and 4 trumps).

If the ♣s break 4-1, play a ♣ to the jack. Enter the East hand via the ♠A and cash the master trump. Now cash your master ♦s. If they break 4-3 you are OK but if they also break badly, you still have the ♠ finesse available.

Notes:

1. It is not a hand for a cross-ruff (your trumps are too small)
2. It is tempting to ruff ♥s in the East hand but there are insufficient entries. Try it!

47 West plays in a contract of 3NT. North leads ♠Q. Plan the play?

| | |
|--------|--------|
| ♠ A32 | ♠ K65 |
| ♥ K92 | ♥ A53 |
| ♦ QJ43 | ♦ A762 |
| ♣ A93 | ♣ K65 |

Allowing for a bad split - Playing a suit to best advantage

Having seven top tricks you can only develop others in ♦s. Play the ♦ ace, hoping for a singleton king, and low towards the QJ. If South follows to the second round of ♦s then if North wins, the suit has split 3-2 and you will make your contract. If after playing the jack North shows out, you return to the East hand to lead towards the queen. Again, you must make 3 ♦s tricks and hence nine for your contract.

48 West plays in a contract of 6NT. North leads a ♠J. Plan the play?

| | |
|--------|--------|
| ♠ A32 | ♠ KQ5 |
| ♥ K92 | ♥ AQ3 |
| ♦ QJ43 | ♦ A762 |
| ♣ AQ3 | ♣ K65 |

Planning - Allowing for a bad split - Playing a suit to best advantage

Cash the ♦ ace in case there is a singleton king. When the king doesn't fall and the suit breaks 3-2 you have no worries. You can lose 1 trick only so you will make your contract. However, if ♦s break 4-1 with North holding K10xx you cannot make your contract. The important situation occurs when South has K10xx. You must now lead towards QJ4 twice. You have sufficient entries to go back to the East hand to lead towards the ♦ honours. However South defends, he cannot stop you making three ♦ tricks.

54 West plays in a contract of 4♥, North overcalled your 1♥ opening with 2♣. North leads ♣Q. Plan the play?

| | |
|----------|--------|
| ♠ K42 | ♠ A65 |
| ♥ KQ1086 | ♥ J754 |
| ♦ A4 | ♦ K75 |
| ♣ K75 | ♣ A64 |

Planning the hand at trick 1

You have the following losers: 1 ♠, 1 ♥ and 1 ♣. You also have 10 winners, what could be simpler? Since North has overcalled in ♣s and without the AK he must have length in ♣s. There is also a good chance of North having the ♥A, hence an excellent chance of giving South a ruff.

The best way to avoid another loser is to play North for no more than 6 ♣s. Therefore, you should win with the ♣A and play on trumps. When North wins the first round he can give his partner a ruff in ♣s but South will only be ruffing a loser; for you can play a losing ♣ from both hands if South ruffs or you can win and draw trumps, if South declines to ruff.

64 West plays in a contract of 6♣. North leads ♣Q. Plan the play?

| | |
|---------|---------|
| ♠ K9865 | ♠ A1073 |
| ♥ A2 | ♥ KQ53 |
| ♦ KJ53 | ♦ AQ4 |
| ♣ AK | ♣ 53 |

Trump Management - Catering for a 4-0 trump break

What a lovely contract. There are plenty of top tricks so what could go wrong?

The only danger is a 4-0 trump break! Win the ♣ lead and play a small trump from the West hand and cover any card played. If North plays the ♠2, play small from the East hand. If the South hand wins, then the suit has split 3-1 at worst and your ♠AK will pick up the remaining trumps. If North had started with QJ42 you will be able to finesse for one honour, hence only losing to the other honour. If North had showed out on the first round, you must win with the ace and finesse on the second round. Again, you will only lose to one honour.

65 West plays in an ambitious contract of 4♠. North makes the good lead of the ♠6. Plan the play?

| | | |
|---------|---------|---------|
| | ♠ 86 | |
| | ♥ AJ653 | |
| | ♦ KQ5 | |
| | ♣ 853 | |
| ♠ QJ952 | | ♠ A1074 |
| ♥ Q842 | | ♥ - |
| ♦ 7 | | ♦ J9864 |
| ♣ A106 | | ♣ KQ72 |
| | ♠ K3 | |
| | ♥ K1097 | |
| | ♦ A1032 | |
| | ♣ J94 | |

Trump Management - Playing on a cross-ruff

Although North may be leading from the Kxx of ♠s it is more likely that South has the singleton ♠K, so win with the ♠A. You need to start a cross ruff to make your contract so give up a ♦. The defence will win and surely play a second round of trumps, but they can't stop you making your contract on a cross ruff and setting up your ♦s. Declarer can make 11 tricks (4 ♣s, 1 ♦, 1 trump and 5 ruffs).

81 Dealer North. East/West Vul. - planning and trump management

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

West plays in 4♠ and North leads: ♣8. Plan the play?

Win with the ace, Cash two top ♥s, discarding a ♦ and ruff a ♥. Trump to ♠K; ruff a ♥. Trump to ♠A and play another ♥ discarding a ♦, unless South foolishly ruffs. If he ruffs high, a ♦ goes away, if low he is overruffed and now doesn't get a trump trick. You should lose 1♣, 1♦ and 1 trump.

Note: You cannot afford to play a trump(s) early because you need to use the top trumps for entries to the ♥s.

Board 6 Dir East East/West vul – Making the most of the lead

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>♠ J8764 ♥ Q92 ♦ 973 ♣ 52</p> | <p>♠ 10952 ♥ J6 ♦ Q2 ♣ AJ874</p> <p>♠ KQ ♥ 43 ♦ KJ864 ♣ Q1063</p> | <p>♠ A3 ♥ AK10875 ♦ A105 ♣ K9</p> |
|---|---|---|

| West | North | East | S |
|------|-------|------|----|
| | | 1♥ | 2♦ |
| 2♥ | P | P | P |

Lead: ♠K

Win and take 2 rounds of trumps (AK) then lead towards the ♠J. South wins and plays a ♣. North wins with the ace and switches to Ds, but now you win with the ace and have an entry to dummy (trump) to get a ♦ discard on the ♠J.

Board 14 Dlr East Both NV - Cross ruffing

Contract 3♠.

| | |
|-----------|--------|
| ♠ A432 | |
| ♥ 532 | |
| ♦ 7 | |
| ♣ AQ963 | |
| ♠ K9 | ♠ Q |
| ♥ K764 | ♥ AJ98 |
| ♦ AKJ10 | ♦ 8632 |
| ♣ K107 | ♣ J852 |
| ♠ J108765 | |
| ♥ Q10 | |
| ♦ Q954 | |
| ♣ 4 | |

Lead: ♦A

The defence take a ♦ + 2 hearts, and declarer ruffs the 3rd round of hearts.

Ruff a ♦, take 1 top trump and cross ruff. The defence can overruff whenever they want (9 tricks).
