

**STOP, THINK,
PLAY.**

Exp 1

Contract 3NT by East

South leads ♠Q

Plan your play

West dummy

♠ K6
♥ QJT94
♦ J63
♣ J83

East

♠ A43
♥ K6
♦ AK54
♣ A764

Count off the top winners: 2♠, 0♥, 2♦, 1♣ = 5

You can see four more winners in the ♥ suit once we have knocked out the ♥A

Play

Trick one must be won with the ♠A in declarer's hand.

Now declarer plays on the ♥ suit by playing the ♥K from hand. Even if defence hold up the ♥A declarer persists with the ♥6 over to dummy's ♥QJT9. When defence win with the ♥A they lead back to one of our top cards and we claim our contract.

There are various ways declarer might slip up on this contract.

1. By cashing their minor suit winners before setting up the ♥ tricks.
2. By winning trick one in dummy West with the ♠K. This would remove the entry if defence hold up the ♥A
3. By playing the ♥6 before the ♥K and blocking the suit if again defence hold up on the ♥A

	North	
	♠ 952	
	♥ A83	
	♦ QT98	
	♣ Q92	
West dummy		East
♠ K6		♠ A43
♥ QJT94		♥ K6
♦ J63		♦ AK54
♣ J83		♣ A764
	South	
	♠ QJT87	
	♥ 752	
	♦ 72	
	♣ KT5	

Exp 2

West
1NT

North
P

East
3NT

South
ALL PASS

Contract 3NT West

Lead ♠K

Plan your play.

West ♠ A32
♥ Q64
♦ AKJ3
♣ 632

East ♠ 765
♥ AK5
♦ T542
♣ AK7

You are in a **NT** contract so the first thing you should do is count your **off the top winners**.

1 in ♠ A

3 in ♥ AKQ

2 in ♦ AK

2 in ♣ AK

8 in total

This hand is similar to Exp1. You need to **duck** the first two rounds of ♠s. When West shows out on trick 3 you know that **North started with 5♠s and is the danger hand**.

Your only chance of making your 9th trick is in ♦s but the finesse is into the danger hand North.

For this reason we must decline the finesse and play the ♦s from the top, just in case North started with a singleton or doubleton ♦Q. Remember we can lose 1 ♦ trick to South as they do not hold any more ♠s.

If North started with 3♦s to the Q there is nothing we can do and our contract would go down.

Contract makes 10 tricks if you hold up ♠s and play ♦s from the top. You will go 1 off if you try the ♦ finesse. If South had started with 3♦s to the ♦Q we would just make our 9 tricks.

	North ♠ KQJT9	
	♥ 832	
	♦ Q7	
	♣ QJ8	
West ♠ A32		East ♠ 765
♥ Q64		♥ AK5
♦ AKJ3		♦ T542
♣ 632		♣ AK7
	South ♠ 84	
	♥ JT97	
	♦ 986	
	♣ T954	

Exp 3

Contract 3NT West
Lead ♦K

West

♠ AK
♥ QJ63
♦ 6432
♣ A54

East

♠ QJ54
♥ AK
♦ A875
♣ 963

We can count 10 top winners (4♠ 4♥ 1♦ 1♣)

Both major suits are blocked, how can we overcome problem?

After winning the opening lead with ♦A we could play ♥AK and unblock this suit then cross to hand with a small ♠ playing ♠AK to unblock this suit. But now we have a problem, no more entries into the East hand to cash the ♠QJ !

The winning play is to win ♦A on trick one then play ♠4 to the ♠A. Cash the ♠K and then cross to East with the ♥3 to the ♥A. We follow this with the ♥K then cash our unblocked ♠QJ. We re-enter West with the ♣3 to the ♣A then cash our unblocked ♥QJ.

Giving us 10 tricks in total.

EXP 4

North	East	South	West
P	P	1♥	P
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

What do you lead sitting East ?

East ♠ A9
 ♥ JT92
 ♦ Q65
 ♣ 7543

Lets recall the bidding.

Our standard lead of a ♥ does not look promising as that was the suit opened by South. Also due to lack of entries the likelihood of establishing a ♥ trick is slight.

Lets now look at the other 3 suits. ♣s with no honour card does not look like a good lead.

Three ♦s to the ♦Q might be OK but lets look and think about the ♠ suit.

Did either North or South bid ♠s ? NO

For this reason North and South are at best likely to be holding three cards each in ♠s.

If you give North / South a combined total of six ♠s with East's two this means West is holding a minimum of five ♠s.

See full hand over page.

Conclusion, lead A♠.

We need to think about unblocking the suit so the card to lead is the ♠A

Partner West plays high to encourage (♠7).

East plays ♠9 and contract is defeated.

	♠ 432	
	♥ 75	
	♦ A943	
	♣ KQT9	
♠ KJ765		♠ A9
♥ 843		♥ JT92
♦ 752		♦ QJ6
♣ J2		♣ 7543
	♠ QT8	
	♥ AKQ6	
	♦ KT8	
	♣ A86	

Exp 5

Contract 4♠ by East

South leads ♣K

Plan your play.

West

♠ 9872
♥ 654
♦ AQ7
♣ A32

East

♠ QJT643
♥ AKQ
♦ K
♣ 876

Losers 2♠, 2♣ = 4

Play

We can count 4 losers in total. One too many. With the ♣K lead it means if we draw trumps straight away the defence win with their top ♠s and cash their ♣Q&J.

How can we get over this problem? We can not get rid of our 2 losing ♠s so we need to try a get rid of a losing ♣. The key to this hand is you only need to get rid of one loser not two to make your contract.

So on the first trick we win with the ♣A then play the ♦A dropping the ♦K. Then play the ♦Q discarding a ♣ loser. If we were to get greedy and play the ♦7 to the ♦K we then have no way of getting back into dummy to use our ♦AQ.

Now the contract is safe with 1♣ loser and the top 2♠s as long as we now draw the trump.

See full hand over page.

	North		
	♠ AK ♥ T973 ♦ JT86 ♣ 954		
West		East	
♠ 9872 ♥ 654 ♦ AQ7 ♣ A32		♠ QJT643 ♥ AKQ ♦ K ♣ 876	
	South		
	♠ 5 ♥ J82 ♦ 95432 ♣ KQJT		

Exp 6

Bidding

West	North	East	South
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♠	P	4♠	P

Contract 4♠ West
North leads 2♥

	East (dummy)
	♠ KQT9 ♥ JT65 ♦ KQJ ♣ KQ
South	
♠ 64 ♥ A9743 ♦ AT64 ♣ T2	

North leads the ♥2 and dummy East goes down onto the table with four ♥ cards. Lets recall the bidding, West opened 1NT. This means that West is balanced with no voids or singletons. South can see five ♥s in their hand and four ♥s in dummy East, with West's guaranteed two ♥s this means partner North has two also. But wait, if North had two ♥s they should lead high-low and they have not done this so the ♥2 must be a singleton. South must win the opening trick and then play the ♥9 (high card) to show their re-entry is in ♦s, the higher ranking of the other two suits. This way defence come to four tricks to get the contract down: A♥, A♦ and 2 ♥ ruffs.

Contract 4♠ West
North leads 2♥

North
♠ 875
♥ 2
♦ 952
♣ J98765

West
♥ AJ32
♥ KQ8
♦ 873
♣ A43

East (dummy)
♠ KQT9
♥ JT65
♦ KQJ
♣ KQ

South
♠ 64
♥ A9743
♦ AT64
♣ T2

Exp 7

Contract 3NT West

North leads ♥5

Plan your play

West
♠ 542
♥ J8
♦ 83
♣ AK6542

East dummy
♠ AK76
♥ AK
♦ KT542
♣ 73

Count off the top winners: 2♠, 2♥, 0♦, 2♣ = 6

You might get length winners in ♠s and ♦s but neither looks very good.

You will get length winners in ♣s

Play

You win the opening lead and start playing on your longest suit ♣s. You have counted your ♣ holding (8) which give defence five. As long as the clubs break 3/2 you can take five ♣ tricks, but you must be careful with entries. You are missing the ♣QJT98, this means that one of the defence will hold a ♣ stop. How do you overcome this problem and the lack of entries into the West hand? You must **DUCK** the first round of ♣s and let the defence win. By doing this when you get back on lead later on you can run the ♣s and make your contract.

	North	
	♠ T8 ♥ QT7543 ♦ Q9 ♣ QJ9	
West dummy		East
♠ 542 ♥ J8 ♦ 83 ♣ AK6542		♠ AK76 ♥ AK ♦ KT542 ♣ 73
	South	
	♠ QJ93 ♥ 962 ♦ AJ76 ♣ T8	

Exp 8

Contract 3NT East
Lead ♠5 by South

West	East
♠ QJT ♥ 53 ♦ QJT98 ♣ 432	♠ A43 ♥ A762 ♦ AK ♣ AK76

Start by counting your Top Winners, (♠1, ♥1, ♦5, ♣2) 9 tricks

The play.

♠5 lead from South, ♠10 from West, ♠8 North, our 10♠ is winning so we play the ♠3.

We now play ♦8 over to our ♦A followed by the ♦K to unblock the ♦ suit.

Now we need to get back into dummy to cash the ♦QJT winners. How do we do this ? , we play ♠4 over to the ♠Q , but North plays the ♠K. If we had played the ♠A is that any better ? , No, North plays ♠2 and still stops your entry to west.

How do we get over our entry problem ?

We need to plan our play at trick 1. Our only entry into the West hand is in ♠s. To guarantee a ♠ entry must overtake and unblock the ♠ by winning trick 1 with the ♠A.

By doing this it means we are left with the ♠43 to be played over to the ♠QJ. Defence can only now cover once with their ♠K. This play also give us a extra trick; 3NT +1 as long as you still remembered to unblock the ♦s.

Summary

Take your time when dummy goes down on the table.

Count straight away off the top winners in NT.
Count losers in a suit (trump) contract.

Remember the bidding.
In a competitive auction who is showing points or a long suit.

Work out a plan of play.
Look for long suit holding where you can possibly make extra tricks.

By taking your time on trick 1 and making a plan your Declarer / Defence play will improve.
You will find that your card play speed will increase because you have made a plan of play.
Do not allow your opponents to rush you.