

Hands for Next Steps Seminar 2 - Declarer Play in NT

<table border="0"> <tr><td>♠ A6</td><td>♦ 843</td><td>♦ 1042</td><td>♣ AKQ52</td></tr> <tr><td>♦ K742</td><td>♦ J952</td><td>♦ AK</td><td>♣ J108</td></tr> <tr><td>♦ J3</td><td>♦ 1076</td><td>♦ J965</td><td>♣ 4</td></tr> <tr><td>♦ AKQ</td><td>♦ Q873</td><td>♦ 9763</td><td></td></tr> </table>	♠ A6	♦ 843	♦ 1042	♣ AKQ52	♦ K742	♦ J952	♦ AK	♣ J108	♦ J3	♦ 1076	♦ J965	♣ 4	♦ AKQ	♦ Q873	♦ 9763		<p>Board 1: Dealer North: Love all</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>2NT</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>3NT (1)</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♠10 (2)</p> <p>(1) Worth 14 points because of the 5th club. (2) When holding honour-10-9-x-x, lead the 10 (but lead the jack, of course, from J-10-9-x-x). This holding is known as an interior sequence and you lead the top of the touching cards.</p> <p>There are 7 top tricks and, with 9 cards in clubs including the top three honours, Declarer should identify that the length in clubs should provide the extra two tricks,</p> <p>Correct play: The spade lead crucially removes North's only entry outside the club suit. After winning the ♠A, Declarer should play the ♣AKQ, crucially playing ♣9, 7, 6 from dummy to unblock the suit (Key Play), and retaining dummy's ♣3. When Declarer then plays the ♣5, Dummy will only have the ♣3 left, and Declarer can then cash the ♣2. The ♥AKQ will then provide the other three tricks needed to make the contract.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT		3NT (1)	All Pass									
♠ A6	♦ 843	♦ 1042	♣ AKQ52																																		
♦ K742	♦ J952	♦ AK	♣ J108																																		
♦ J3	♦ 1076	♦ J965	♣ 4																																		
♦ AKQ	♦ Q873	♦ 9763																																			
West	North	East	South																																		
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT																																		
	3NT (1)	All Pass																																			
<p>Wrong Play: Playing the ♣3 from dummy on any of the first three rounds of clubs. This means the 4th round of clubs will be won in dummy and declarer's 5th club will be stranded.</p> <p>Declarer needs to recognise from the start that to make 5 club tricks the lead must stay in hand. Thus, the 5 of clubs must win a trick and to achieve that, dummy must not be left with a higher club which will block the suit.</p>																																					
<table border="0"> <tr><td>♠ K105</td><td>♦ Q1052</td><td>♦ 72</td><td>♣ Q1085</td></tr> <tr><td>♦ 74</td><td>♦ A73</td><td>♦ A73</td><td>♦ J105</td></tr> <tr><td>♦ A6432</td><td>♦ K7</td><td>♦ K7</td><td>♦ Q9862</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>♦ K96</td><td>♦ K96</td><td>♦ J84</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>♦ AQ984</td><td>♦ AQ984</td><td>♦ K63</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>♣ J9</td></tr> </table>	♠ K105	♦ Q1052	♦ 72	♣ Q1085	♦ 74	♦ A73	♦ A73	♦ J105	♦ A6432	♦ K7	♦ K7	♦ Q9862		♦ K96	♦ K96	♦ J84		♦ AQ984	♦ AQ984	♦ K63				♣ J9	<p>Board 2: Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>2NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>3NT</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♠6</p> <p>The opening lead looks like it could be 4th highest from a 5, or even 6, card suit. There are six top tricks available (♠A, ♥AK, ♦A and ♣AK). Diamonds could well generate the Extra Tricks necessary (five if the finesse is successful and can be repeated) but the finesse will need to be taken into the South hand. We need to ensure that this is safe – i.e. South is not in a position to run the Spades. When North plays the ♠K, Declarer must eschew the Hold Up and win this trick with the Ace. If South then wins the ♦K, South can cash the ♠Q but East still holds the ♠J3 as a stopper. Provided Declarer retains control of the other suits, South will be unable to put North (the Danger Hand) on lead for a Spade lead through the ♠J.</p> <p>Correct play: After winning the ♠A at Trick 1, Declarer crosses to Dummy with ♥A (or ♣A) and runs the ♦J. South wins and may cash ♠Q but is powerless to prevent Declarer taking at least nine tricks.</p>	West	North	East	South	2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
♠ K105	♦ Q1052	♦ 72	♣ Q1085																																		
♦ 74	♦ A73	♦ A73	♦ J105																																		
♦ A6432	♦ K7	♦ K7	♦ Q9862																																		
	♦ K96	♦ K96	♦ J84																																		
	♦ AQ984	♦ AQ984	♦ K63																																		
			♣ J9																																		
West	North	East	South																																		
2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass																																		
3NT	All Pass																																				

♠ A85	
♥ KJ5	
♦ J10842	
♣ A10	
♠ Q10432	♠ J6
♥ Q6	♥ 107432
♦ K73	♦ A5
♣ J64	♣ Q532
♠ K97	
♥ A98	
♦ Q96	
♣ K987	

Board 3: Dealer South : EW vulnerable

West **North** **East** **South**
1NT

Pass 3NT All Pass **Opening Lead: ♠3 (1)**

(1) 4th highest from a suit headed by an honour.

As a general principle, you should hold up (ie duck) in the suit the opponents lead if you have as many opposing high cards to force out in another suit as the number of stoppers you hold in the suit led (assuming there is no more dangerous suit to which the opponents might switch). With two cards to force out, Declarer should hold up even if she has two stoppers in the suit the Defence has led.

West leads a spade to East's jack. Here Declarer counts six top tricks.

Three more tricks will come from Diamonds once the Ace and King are forced out. The danger is that West, with a 5-card spade suit, can gain the lead in Diamonds and run the spades. Say declarer wins the king on the first round of spades and (as she has to) leads the queen of diamonds. East wins the ace and leads his second spade to the ten and (say) ace, but when declarer leads a second diamond, West wins the king and cashes the queen and two long spades. Down one. The key is ensuring that East has no more spades to lead when East is in with the ♦A. Because declarer has two diamond stoppers to dislodge, she should duck East's jack of spades at trick one. She wins a second spade and leads the ♦Q, but this time East has no more spades and declarer can set up diamonds before the defence set up spades.

Note ducking the first spade is fine because the good intermediate cards in hearts and clubs prevent the defence from profitably switching to either suit - without giving declarer a third trick.

♠ 98542	
♥ Q653	
♦ J9	
♣ J6	
♠ AQJ	♠ 106
♥ AK8	♥ J74
♦ AQ42	♦ 753
♣ 853	♣ A9742
♠ K73	
♥ 1092	
♦ K1086	
♣ KQ10	

Board 4: Dealer West : All vulnerable

West **North** **East** **South**

2NT Pass 3NT All Pass **Opening Lead: ♠8 (1)**

(1) A high spot card denies an honour (MUD).

North leads a high-for-hate ♠8 to (dummy's ten — to tempt out the king), South's king and Declarer's ace. Declarer counts seven guaranteed tricks and needs to generate two more from dummy's five-card club suit. Although Declarer is missing ♣KQJ10, the suit rates to break 3-2 68% of the time.

The Danger for Declarer is that the only dummy entry is the ♣A. Declarer must therefore play it on the third round - not before. At trick two, Declarer ducks a club (key play). South will win and may switch to a diamond, hoping Declarer only has one stopper in the suit. Declarer will win the ♦Q and should duck another club, noting with relief that both defenders follow. The defence win, but are powerless to prevent Declarer shortly regaining the lead, playing a third club to dummy's ace and enjoying the two long clubs. Game made.

The general principle here is that if you have to lose a trick(s) in the long suit, lose the first round, and the second if necessary.

<table border="0"> <tr><td>♠AQ9</td><td>♦Q1095</td><td>♣K97</td></tr> <tr><td>♥AJ6</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦A6</td><td>♦843</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣QJ85</td><td>♣64</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♠J73</td><td>♠K10852</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♥8754</td><td>♥K92</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦A103</td><td>♦843</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣KJ72</td><td>♣64</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♠A1032</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♠64</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♥Q103</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦KJ72</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣A1032</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	♠AQ9	♦Q1095	♣K97	♥AJ6			♦A6	♦843		♣QJ85	♣64		♠J73	♠K10852		♥8754	♥K92		♦A103	♦843		♣KJ72	♣64		♠A1032			♠64			♥Q103			♦KJ72			♣A1032			<p>Board 5: Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♠5</p> <p>The opening lead gives Declarer two spade tricks to go with one top heart and two top clubs. Another four tricks are needed. Three tricks can be generated in Diamonds once the Ace has been forced out. Hearts offers the potential for one or two extra tricks dependent on who has the ♥K. The question for Declarer is which to try first? The finesse will need to be taken into the East hand – which is the Danger hand (potentially with the long spades). If East has both the ♥K and the ♦A, the contract is doomed although this is unlikely as, with 10 points, East may well have overcalled with a 5-card spade suit. If East has the ♦A, and West the ♥K, the contract should be safe because the heart finesse is working. If the heart finesse fails, there is still a chance if West has the ♦A, provided West is void of spades.</p> <p>Correct Play. Beat West's ♠J with the ♠Q and immediately cross to the ♣A to run the ♥Q – key so that the finesse can be repeated should West hold the ♥K. When East wins and returns a top spade, hold up the ♠A until the third round of the suit and then cross fingers and play a top diamond to force the Ace. When West wins, claim nine tricks.</p> <p>Incorrect Play. Declarer tries to knock out the ♦A first. West wins and leads a Spade. Even if Declarer holds up for a round, East will eventually win the ♥K and cash two spade winners to defeat the contract.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass			
♠AQ9	♦Q1095	♣K97																																																						
♥AJ6																																																								
♦A6	♦843																																																							
♣QJ85	♣64																																																							
♠J73	♠K10852																																																							
♥8754	♥K92																																																							
♦A103	♦843																																																							
♣KJ72	♣64																																																							
♠A1032																																																								
♠64																																																								
♥Q103																																																								
♦KJ72																																																								
♣A1032																																																								
West	North	East	South																																																					
	1♦	Pass	2♣																																																					
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT																																																					
All Pass																																																								
<table border="0"> <tr><td>♠K72</td><td>♦10876</td><td>♣95</td></tr> <tr><td>♥J976</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦10876</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣95</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♠103</td><td>♠QJ95</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♥AK53</td><td>♥42</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦AK542</td><td>♦93</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣74</td><td>♣AKQ62</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♠A864</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♥Q108</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♦QJ</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>♣J1083</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table>	♠K72	♦10876	♣95	♥J976			♦10876			♣95			♠103	♠QJ95		♥AK53	♥42		♦AK542	♦93		♣74	♣AKQ62		♠A864			♥Q108			♦QJ			♣J1083			<p>Board 6: Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♥6 (1)</p> <p>(1) 4th highest from a suit headed by an honour.</p> <p>In the quest for extra tricks, one method has undoubted superiority: by Force. If you have a sequence of touching high cards - more cards in the sequence than the number of missing higher cards - then you can force out the opposing higher cards and so promote the remaining card(s) in the sequence.</p> <p>In this deal, Declarer counts seven top tricks. Two more can come from clubs if the suit breaks 3-3 (35% probability). However, as Declarer holds the ♠QJ109 between both hands, she can guarantee two spade tricks by Force, provided she starts on the suit straight away.</p> <p>Correct Play: Declarer should win the opening lead in hand and immediately play ♠10 (high from the short side first). South will win and return the ten of his partner's hearts. Declarer, who knows hearts are 4-3 (West's fourth highest six of hearts was the lowest outstanding), will win the ace and lead a second spade. North can win this trick and cash ♥J9, but that is the end of the defence. Declarer will win any return and has nine winners via her seven top tricks plus dummy's promoted ♠QJ: two extra winners by Force. Nine tricks and game made.</p> <p>Wrong Play: If Declarer attempts to make extra length tricks in clubs, Declarer will discover too late that there is a 4-2 break and declarer will now lose a club trick to go with two hearts and two spades for one down.</p>	West	North	East	South		1♣	Pass		1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	3NT	All Pass					
♠K72	♦10876	♣95																																																						
♥J976																																																								
♦10876																																																								
♣95																																																								
♠103	♠QJ95																																																							
♥AK53	♥42																																																							
♦AK542	♦93																																																							
♣74	♣AKQ62																																																							
♠A864																																																								
♥Q108																																																								
♦QJ																																																								
♣J1083																																																								
West	North	East	South																																																					
	1♣	Pass																																																						
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass																																																					
3NT	All Pass																																																							

♠ 74			
♥ A73			
♦ 975			
♣ AQJ92			
♠ Q9862	♠ K105		
♥ J84	♥ Q1052		
♦ QJ3	♦ 1086		
♣ 65	♣ K73		
♠ AJ3			
♥ K96			
♦ AK42			
♣ 1084			

Board 7: Dealer South : All vulnerable

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Opening Lead: ♠6

This is similar to Board 2 with the opening lead looking like it could be 4th highest from a 5, or even 6, card suit. There are again six top tricks available and the only realistic prospect for another three is the club finesse – this time into the East hand. West is the Danger Hand. Should Declarer play the Ace on East's King at Trick 1, the danger is that East will lead a spade back to West, should the Club finesse lose to East's ♣K and the contract will be one or two down.

Correct Play. Declarer needs to use the *Rule of Seven* and hold up the Ace for two rounds. Then play the ♣10, planning to run this if West does not cover it. Now, when East gains the lead with the ♣K, if she has a spade left, it means the suit has broken 4-4 and Declarer will lose only three spade tricks and the ♣K. Again, it is important to keep control in the other suits so as not to allow West to have an entry (in diamonds, say, if Declarer decides to cash the top diamonds before embarking on the finesse). By holding up the Ace for two rounds, East has been transformed into the Safe Hand, unable to defeat the contract should she gain the lead.

♠ K10852			
♥ 942			
♦ A43			
♣ 64			
♠ AQ9	♠ 64		
♥ Q103	♥ AJ6		
♦ Q1095	♦ KJ72		
♣ K97	♣ A1032		
♠ J73			
♥ K875			
♦ 86			
♣ QJ85			

Board 8: Dealer West : Love all

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
			Opening Lead: ♠5

This hand is almost identical to Board 5. The opening lead gives Declarer two spade tricks to go with one top heart and two top clubs. Another four tricks are needed. Three tricks can be generated in Diamonds once the Ace has been forced out. Hearts offers the potential for one or two extra tricks dependent on who has the ♥K. The question for Declarer is which to try first?

North is the Danger Hand – able to run the Spades once the ♠A and ♠Q have been played - South the Safe Hand. Declarer needs to ensure that she still has a Spade guard should North gain the lead, and North can

only gain the lead with the ♦A as the heart finesse will be taken into the South hand. Declarer also needs to ensure that South has no more Spades left to lead should South gain the lead with the ♥K.

Correct Play. Declarer wins Trick 1 with the ♠Q (covering South's ♠J). Declarer then immediately plays on diamonds to force out the ♦A. North will win and lead back the ♠K (or ♠10) in case Declarer has the ♠9. Declarer should now hold-up the Ace to guard against a 5-3 break and win the third round. Now run the ♥Q, losing to South's King and, when South has no more spades to return, claim nine tricks, conceding a club at the finish.