

03/05/2021 Hand of the Week 62: Maintaining communication in defence

1NT is passed out- what do you lead?

N	Erika Pick
♠	A9632
♥	Q3
♦	J104
♣	Q85

It is usually best to lead 4th highest in this situation, particularly when you have the major, so no reason not to go with the 3♠

		N Erika Pick		W N E S
D	8	♠ A9632		1NT P P P
		♥ Q3		
		♦ J104		
		♣ Q85		
W	Neilhfxrob		♠ 3	E GeorgeP53
			♠ K	♠ 104
			♠ 4	♥ A75
			♠ Q	♦ Q832
				♣ A974
		S med029		
				1NT W NS: 0 EW: 1

Declarer leads the 10♣, which partner wins with the J♣

Partner returns the 8♠, declarer plays the 5♠

Crunch time coming up! Do you:

Win the A♠ and lead a third spade?

Win the A♠ and switch to a heart?

Duck the trick?

What do we know so far?

Assuming declarer holds K♣, they have established the suit, so far they have 3 clubs, 2 spades and A♥- 6 tricks.

Declarer has 12-14 points, 10 on table and 9 in hand- so partner started with 7-9 points and we have already seen the Q♠ and J♣. Partner may well have another entry but not enough to set up another suit- our best chance would seem to be to establish spade tricks.

What do you make of the 8♠? Partner is forced to play Q♠ on the first round. When returning the suit the convention is to play high if they now hold an even number of cards, and low if an odd number. We can see the 9 and 10, so 8 must be from an even number- so partner started with 3 spades, which means declarer also has 3, which must be KJx- so we can establish 3 spade tricks. The important point to notice is that the only entry to hand is the A♠.

Taking all this into account, the best option is to duck and let partner lead their remaining spade when they get in. The full hand:

D 8	N Erika Pick	W	N	E	S
	♠ A9632 ♥ Q3 ♦ J104 ♣ Q85	1NT	P	P	P
W Neilhfxrob				E GeorgeP53	
♠ KJ5 ♥ J862 ♦ A96 ♣ K106				♠ 104 ♥ A75 ♦ Q832 ♣ A974	
	S med029				
	♠ Q87 ♥ K1094 ♦ K75 ♣ J32				
		1NT W		NS: 0	EW: 0

After the 10♠ wins, Declarer crosses to the K♣, finesses the Queen and returns to hand with the A♦ - they now lead low towards the Q♦.

Partner wins and returns their remaining spade.

The defence takes 3 spades, J♣, & K♦. What did you discard on the 4th club? If you threw a heart you can cash the J♦, otherwise exit with a heart-either way defence take one more trick and hold declarer to 7.

1NT= scored 62% for NS, 1NT+1 scored 25%.