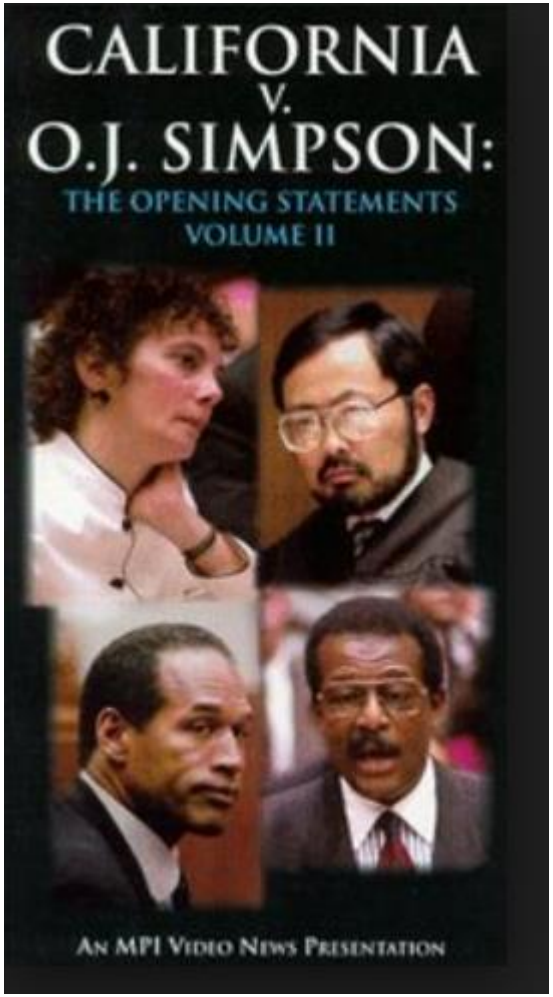
The Case for the Defence (By Marc Chawner)



Introduction

- Thank you for participating in the first of our monthly Boot Camps.
- All the results can be found with this link: https://play.realbridge.online/dp.html?p=230219122454&q=X5AstqB0xpApbootcamp
- The 24 boards that you have just played in this session were designed to illustrate certain aspects of Bridge Strategy.
- This month's topic was *defence*.
- The 24 hands were devised in such a way so that each participant, within the session, was placed under the 'Spotlight' on six of the twenty-four boards played.
- On some of the boards, help would also be required from the partner of the player placed under the 'Spotlight'.
- There were several 'Themes' that I tried to illustrate within this month's topic of defence.
- We will look at the boards that you played, theme by theme and we will therefore jump around the boards demonstrating the different themes in action.
- Within each board, I have given a suggested bidding sequence, however, for today's exercise, the bidding is not too much of a concern.

Introduction

- The first theme involves the concept of how two defenders can communicate with each other.
- The big advantage that the declarer has over the defenders is that, in the play of the hand, the declarer has no communication issues with their partner (The Dummy Hand), seeing that declarer controls both their own hand and the dummy hand.
- To become good defenders, we also need to be able to have no communication issues with our partner.
- The opening lead for the defence is a good way to start communications between the two defenders.

Communicate with your PARTNER.

Opening Lead

- The opening lead can often be a lottery, so we should “Thank Our Lucky Stars”, when we are dealt a suit headed by the Ace-King, because we know that by leading one of those top honours, we are going to get a ‘Free’ look at dummy, which will hopefully point us in the right direction for our defence strategy.
- So, which one of those top honours should we be leading?
- Gone have the days where the person on lead was expected to lead the higher of touching honours telling their partner their holding in the suit.
- What is the point of telling our partner what we hold, when it us who are more than likely going to have to decide at trick 2 on how to continue?
- It is much more prudent to attempt to extract information from our partner.
- The modern thing to say at this point is that ”Other Defensive Carding Method Brands are available”, however, if you failed to find the winning defence on the next three boards, I strongly recommend that you sit down with your partner and agree a strategy.

Opening Lead

- One such strategy is that against a suit contract, when we lead an Ace, ideally holding the Ace-King, we are asking our partner just one thing, which is: “Partner, do you hold the Queen of this suit?”.
- If our partner holds the Queen of the suit led, then they will respond in a positive way, by playing their *lowest* card. (It is much easier to identify a low card than a high card). If they are not in possession of the Queen of the suit led, then they play their *highest* card that they can afford.
- So, even if our partner holds a small doubleton and they may be getting excited about getting a ruff, they must play their highest card, which is denying possession of the Queen.
- Continuing with this strategy, when we lead the King against a suit contract, presumably either from Ace-King or King-Queen, then we are requesting that our partner indicates their current length. i.e. High-Low indicating an even number and Low-High indicating an odd number.
- My personal preference is that with an even number, I would play my highest card followed by my lowest card, although again I should say, “Other Carding Method Brands are available”.

Opening Lead

- Against a No-Trump contract, the Ace lead is a bit more ‘General’ in that partner will give the ‘Thumbs Up’ not only when they are holding the Queen, but when they like the suit that has been led, because they have length in it. Again, they are expected to give the ‘Thumbs Up’, by playing their lowest card.
- The lead of the King has an extra request against a No-Trump contract, which is asking our partner to play a high honour, if they hold one, otherwise they show their length in the normal way.
- The lead of the King against a No-Trump contract would be from a strong holding such as KQ109x, seeing that we are prepared for our partner to jettison a high honour.
- The decision that the opening leader has to make is, what piece of information do they want to extract from their partner.
- Let us now see these strategies in action on three boards from the session, namely boards 2, 19 and 16.

Ace or King Lead?

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ 3 ♥ Q 10 9 8 6 3 ♦ 5 4 3 2 ♣ 7 6	
♠ K 10 8 6 ♥ 7 5 ♦ K Q J 10 9 ♣ 5 2	N W E S	♠ A Q J 9 7 4 ♥ J 4 ♦ 7 6 ♣ A Q 10
	♠ 5 2 ♥ A K 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ K J 9 8 4 3	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♠	2 ♣
4 ♠	All pass		

The spotlight is on SOUTH for board 2.

South must decide whether to lead the Ace or King of Hearts.

There really appears to be no hope of giving our partner a ruff in Hearts, so there is no point in leading the King of Hearts asking them to give us a length signal.

Our best chance is to find our partner with the Queen of Hearts, so we can get them in, to lead a Club through declarer.

So the Ace of Hearts is the lead and when our partner plays the 3 of Hearts, that can only mean one thing and that is that they hold the Queen of Hearts. (Our partner will only play their lowest Heart, when they are in possession of the Queen of Hearts).

So our play at trick 2 is the 2 of Hearts, so our partner can lead their 7 of Clubs through declarer, so the defence ends up making 4 tricks and defeating East's game contract.

Note that if our partner had denied the possession of the Queen of Hearts by playing their highest Heart, we would have no choice but to play a small Club and hope that our partner held the Queen of Clubs.

When dummy appears with all those Diamonds, we know that this is not a hand to be passive.

Board 2
Dealer E
NS Vul

	♠3 ♥Q109863 ♦5432 ♣76	
♠K1086 ♥75 ♦KQJ109 ♣52		♠AQJ974 ♥J4 ♦76 ♣AQ10
	♠52 ♥AK2 ♦A8 ♣KJ9843	

Opening Lead (Board 2)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	6	3	10	3	9
S	6	3	10	3	9
E	6	9	2	8	4
W	6	9	2	8	4

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠= E	♥K		420	0.00	0.00
Sarah Street & Mary D	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♠= E	♥A		420	0.00	0.00
Tony French & Jon Ward	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♠= E	♠5		420	0.00	0.00
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠= E	♠2		420	0.00	0.00
jayne randall & graham randall	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠= E	♥A		420	0.00	0.00
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= E	♥K		420	0.00	0.00
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠= E	♠5		420	0.00	0.00
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠= E	♥K		420	0.00	0.00
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠= E	♥A		420	0.00	0.00
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠= E	♥A		420	0.00	0.00
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠= E	♥K		420	0.00	0.00

- Eleven Easts in the 4 Spade contract
- Eleven North-Souths fail to take their 4 tricks
- Well, that wasn't too difficult for me to analyse.
- All I can say is that everyone needs to sit down with their partner and discuss this aspect of the opening lead.

Opening Lead

- There are two additional concepts when we lead the Ace against a suit contract.
- The first one is that when dummy appears with the Queen of the suit led, seeing that the person on lead's question has now been answered, the partner would indicate their length in the suit led, by playing High-Low with an even number and their lowest card with an odd number.
- The second exception is when dummy appears with a Singleton/Void in the suit led and then our partner is expected to give us a McKenny signal with the card that they play. i.e. A *high* card would show a preference to the *higher* of the other two remaining suits and a *low* card would show a preference to the *lower* of the two remaining suits.
- The lead of the Queen is like the lead of the Ace in that it is asking our partner whether they have specifically one of the high honours. i.e. The Ace, King or Jack of the suit led. Like the Ace lead, our partner is expected to give us the 'Thumbs Up' by playing their lowest card.
- Typically, the Queen would be led from the King-Queen or Queen-Jack holdings.
- The lead of the King against a No-Trump contract would be from a strong holding such as KQ109x, seeing that we are prepared for our partner to jettison a high honour.
- From a weaker holding such as KQ10x, we would lead the Queen, and wait to see if our partner gives us the 'Thumbs Up', presumably holding the Ace or Jack.

Board 19
South Deals
E-W Vul

Ace or King Lead?

	♠ 7 6 4 3 ♥ K Q 4 ♦ J 6 5 ♣ K Q 3	
♠ 5 2 ♥ 6 5 3 2 ♦ A K 9 2 ♣ A 7 6	N W E S	♠ J 8 ♥ J 10 9 8 ♦ 8 7 ♣ J 10 9 8 2
	♠ A K Q 10 9 ♥ A 7 ♦ Q 10 4 3 ♣ 5 4	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

The spotlight is on WEST for board 19.

West must decide which top Diamond to lead at trick 1.

The whereabouts of the Queen of Diamonds is not going to help us, so we lead the King of Diamonds, requesting our partner to give us a COUNT signal in the Diamond suit.

East dutifully plays their 8 of Diamonds, the start of a High-Low signal.

West continues with the Ace of Diamonds and East plays their 7 of Diamonds.

Even if South has not bid their Diamonds on this auction, we know that it is our partner who is the one holding the doubleton Diamond, because using our method that our partner initially plays their highest Diamond and then subsequently plays their lowest Diamond to the second trick, they cannot be holding four diamonds.

(If East had held Q1087, they would have played their 10 of Diamonds on the first trick).

We must be greedy and go for a second ruff, so we play the TWO of Diamonds for our partner to ruff. The TWO of Diamonds is our LOWER Diamond, so our partner knows that having ruffed the Diamond at trick 3, they should return the LOWER suit, which is a Club to return to our hand, which enables West to play a fourth round of Diamonds for our partner to ruff and take the 4 ♠ contract 2 off.

Board 19
Dealer S
EW Vul

	♠ 7643 ♥ KQ4 ♦ J65 ♣ KQ3	
♠ 52 ♥ 6532 ♦ AK92 ♣ A76		♠ J8 ♥ J1098 ♦ 87 ♣ J10982
	♠ AKQ109 ♥ A7 ♦ Q1043 ♣ 54	

Opening Lead (Board 19)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	10	8	7	9	7
S	10	8	7	9	7
E	3	3	5	4	6
W	3	3	5	4	6

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Tony French & Jon Ward	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠= S	♦A	420		+9.70	-9.70
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♠= S	♦A	420		+9.70	-9.70
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠-1 S	♦K		50	-0.60	+0.60
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠-1 S	♦K		50	-0.60	+0.60
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠-2 S	♦A		100	-2.60	+2.60
Sarah Street & Mary D	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠-2 S	♦A		100	-2.60	+2.60
jayne randall & graham randall	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠-2 S	♦A		100	-2.60	+2.60
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠-2 S	♦K		100	-2.60	+2.60
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♠-2 S	♦A		100	-2.60	+2.60
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠-2 S	♦A		100	-2.60	+2.60
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠-2 S	♦A		100	-2.60	+2.60

- A much better result for the defenders this time, with *nine* successful defences, albeit two of them failed to take the second ruff.
- A mixture of Ace and King leads, so how many Wests knew that their partner held a doubleton, Diamond?

Lead the King to Request an Unblock of an Honour

Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ J 10 9 8 ♥ 7 6 ♦ A 9 ♣ K Q 10 9 4	
♠ K 7 6 ♥ A Q 8 ♦ K 7 6 ♣ A 7 6 5	N W E S	♠ A Q 2 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ Q 8 5 4 3 2 ♣ 8
	♠ 5 4 3 ♥ J 9 5 3 2 ♦ J 10 ♣ J 3 2	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

The spotlight is on NORTH/SOUTH for board 16.

The King of Clubs is the lead from North, which requests their partner, South, to play an honour if they hold it.

When South plays their Jack of Clubs at trick 1, the defence comfortably take their five tricks to defeat West's 3 NT contract.

If South does not play their Jack of Clubs at trick 1 and West correctly ducks the opening lead, North would have to assume that West holds the Ace and Jack of Clubs and North would have to give up on the Club suit.

Board 16
Dealer W
EW Vul

	♠ J1098 ♥ 76 ♦ A9 ♣ KQ1094	
♠ K76 ♥ AQ8 ♦ K76 ♣ A765		♠ AQ2 ♥ K104 ♦ Q85432 ♣ 8
	♠ 543 ♥ J9532 ♦ J10 ♣ J32	

Opening Lead (Board 16)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	1	3	3	1	6
S	1	3	3	1	6
E	8	8	10	12	7
W	8	8	10	12	7

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3NT-1 W	♣K	100		+7.60	-7.60
jayne randall & graham randall	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3NT-1 W	♣K	100		+7.60	-7.60
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3NT-1 W	♣K	100		+7.60	-7.60
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT-1 W	♣K	100		+7.60	-7.60
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3NT-1 W	♣K	100		+7.60	-7.60
Sarah Street & Mary D	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3NT+1 W	♣K		630	-5.60	+5.60
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3NT+1 W	♣K		630	-5.60	+5.60
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3NT+2 W	♠J		660	-6.70	+6.70
Tony French & Jon Ward	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3NT+2 W	♣K		660	-6.70	+6.70
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT+2 W	♣K		660	-6.70	+6.70
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT+2 W	♣K		660	-6.70	+6.70

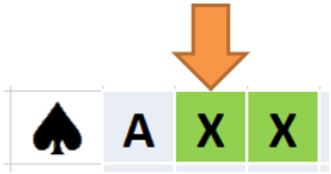
- 10 Norths correctly led the King of Clubs.
- 10 Souths ‘Incorrectly’ played their 2 of Clubs.
- 5 Norths, quite understandably gave up at this point and switched.
- Incredibly, 5 Norths used their ‘Psychic Powers’ and continued the suit, unless of course they are going to tell me that they are using some obscure signalling system?
- (Well done to all 10 Wests who all held up their Ace of Clubs at trick 1).

Returning Partner's Suit at Trick 2

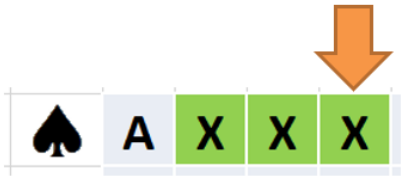
- It is very important, if a defender wins the opening trick and continues that suit, that the defender comes back with the correct card.
- The rules are very specific.

Having won the trick, the player must play the correct card back.

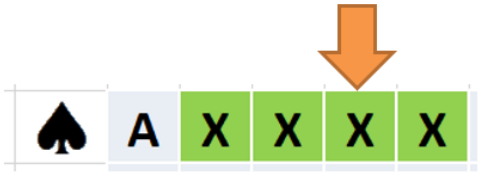
If you started with TWO, then come back with your only card.



If you started with THREE, then come back with your now, top of your doubleton.



If you started with FOUR, then come back with your ORIGINAL FOURTH best.



If you started with FIVE, then come back with your ORIGINAL FOURTH best.

Returning Partner's Suit at Trick 2

- On this occasion I have to say that "Other Defensive Carding Method Brands are *not* available".
- When I see my partner return a card in my suit at trick two, I say to myself that it is either their highest card or they have precisely two cards above the one that they have returned.
- Let's see this strategy in action on board 6.

Trust your partner, especially at trick TWO.

Return the Correct Card at Trick 2

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ K 10 9 ♥ K 4 3 2 ♦ K J 3 ♣ K 8 3	
♠ A 8 7 4 2 ♥ 10 8 7 6 ♦ 7 ♣ Q 10 9	N W E S	♠ Q J 5 3 ♥ Q 9 5 ♦ A 6 5 4 ♣ 7 2
	♠ 6 ♥ A J ♦ Q 10 9 8 2 ♣ A J 6 5 4	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	1 ♦
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

The spotlight is on EAST for board 6. East finds themselves on lead against a 3 NT contract by North and they lead the unbid suit with the 3 of Spades lead.

West wins the trick with the Ace of Spades and they must now lead back the correct Spade card, so that East can work out the correct strategy.
West must now return their original 4th best, which is the 4 of Spades.

North, having played the 9 of Spades at trick one, now plays the 10 of Spades at trick 2. East wins the trick with the Jack of Spades and now must evaluate the situation.

The rule is that West, at trick 2, has either returned their highest Spade or they have returned the Spade that has precisely two cards higher than itself.

East can rule out the fact that the 4 of Spades is West's highest Spade, as that would give North at least 5 Spades, which is inconsistent with the bidding, so West must be holding two Spades higher than the 4, which can only be the 8 and 7. (West has denied the King of Spades at trick 1).

East's conclusion is that it is safe to continue Spades as West has the 8 and 7 of Spades with the 10 and 9 having been played at tricks one and two.

However, there is still work to be done by East. Who has the 2 of Spades? It must be our partner, holding a 5 card Spade suit, so it now essential that East comes back with their Queen of Spades, unblocking the Spade suit and take the 3 NT contract off.

Note that if West had come back the 2 of Spades at trick 2, East would know that West must have started with only 4 Spades, which gives North 4 Spades and a K1098 holding and it would not be correct for East to continue Spades.

Board 6
Dealer E
EW Vul

	♠K109 ♥K432 ♦KJ3 ♣K83	
♠A8742 ♥10876 ♦7 ♣Q109		♠QJ53 ♥Q95 ♦A654 ♣72
	♠6 ♥AJ ♦Q10982 ♣AJ654	

Correct Card at Trick 2 (Board 6)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	8	6	8	11	10
S	8	6	8	11	10
E	2	7	4	2	3
W	2	7	4	2	2

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3NT= N	♦4	400		+6.10	-6.10
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3NT= N	♠3	400		+6.10	-6.10
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3NT= N	♠3	400		+6.10	-6.10
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3NT= N	♠3	400		+6.10	-6.10
Sarah Street & Mary D	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3♠-3 W	♦3	300		+3.50	-3.50
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3♦+2 S	♥8	150		0.00	0.00
Tony French & Jon Ward	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT-1 N	♠3		50	-4.80	+4.80
jayne randall & graham randall	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT-1 N	♠Q		50	-4.80	+4.80
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3NT-1 N	♠3		50	-4.80	+4.80
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT-2 N	♠3		100	-6.30	+6.30
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3NT-3 N	♠Q		150	-7.20	+7.20

- There were more ‘Psychic Powers’ on show with this board.
- Even when the two of Spades was returned at trick 2, which can only be from an original 4 card Spade suit, East was still capable of finding the correct defence of unblocking with the Queen of Spades.
- Only Bernie Hunt found the correct play of the 4 of Spades at trick 2, but unfortunately his partner had not read this article.
- Other than that, West was returning random cards making East task impossible.

Win a Trick Quickly to Preserve our Partner's Entry

- This next defence Strategy/Theme is primarily used against No Trump contracts.
- At first glance, this strategy appears quite advanced and difficult to spot in 'Real-Time' at the bridge table. However, the key to good defending is the ability, once dummy has gone down and we can see our partner's opening lead, to be able to recognise what our partner's opening lead is trying to achieve and to determine how we can help our partner achieve their objective.
- The characteristics of this defence is that our partner has made an attacking lead and is trying to set up their long suit against a No-Trump contract. Obviously, we can help out our partner by returning their suit as soon as we obtain the lead.
- Typically, if our partner is trying to set up their long suit of say five cards or more, we will probably only have a doubleton in their suit.
- The key to this defence is that we must win a trick before our partner does.
- i.e. If our partner and ourselves both have one entry each, it is no good our partner winning their trick first and then setting their suit up, because by the time we win our trick, we cannot return our partner's suit. On the other hand, if we can win our trick first and return our partner's suit, our partner still has their entry left to run their established suit.
- Let us see this strategy in action on boards 23 and 1.

Make Every Effort to Win Trick 2 to Preserve Our Partner's Entry

Board 23
South Deals
Both Vul

	♠ A K 8 ♥ A K ♦ J 10 8 7 ♣ 7 6 3 2	
♠ Q 7 2 ♥ Q J 10 9 4 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ K 8	N W E S	♠ 10 9 6 5 4 ♥ 8 7 ♦ 9 6 5 ♣ A 5 4
	♠ J 3 ♥ 6 5 3 2 ♦ A K Q ♣ Q J 10 9	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

The spotlight is on EAST for board 23.

West leads the Queen of Hearts and East is holding such a 'Boring' hand that it is so easy to just 'Go Through the Motions'.

However, even when the hand looks so trivial, we must be alert in readiness for known strategies.

Our thought process should be:

Our partner has made an attacking lead and our best chance to defeat the contract is to make tricks in the suit that our partner has led.

We know our strategy here, which is to make every effort to win a trick as soon as possible, whilst we are able to help our partner establish their long suit and more importantly preserve our partner's entry.

So as soon as we have played to the first trick, rather than look out of the window waiting to follow suit to the second trick, we should already be anticipating our play to the second trick.
In fact we have our Ace of Clubs in our hand even before declarer has called for a small Club from dummy.

We play our Ace of Clubs at trick two and continue our partner's Heart suit.

Now we can go back to sleep.

Our partner still has the King of Clubs as an entry to their Hearts, which have now been set up.

Board 23
Dealer S
All Vul

	♠ AK8 ♥ AK ♦ J1087 ♣ 7632	
♠ Q72 ♥ QJ1094 ♦ 432 ♣ K8		♠ 109654 ♥ 87 ♦ 965 ♣ A54
	♠ J3 ♥ 6532 ♦ AKQ ♣ QJ109	

Preserve Partner's Entry (Board 23)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	8	7	8	10	11
S	8	7	8	10	11
E	3	6	5	2	2
W	3	6	5	2	2

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3NT+1 S	♥Q	630		+3.00	-3.00
Tony French & Jon Ward	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3NT+1 S	♥Q	630		+3.00	-3.00
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3NT+1 S	♥Q	630		+3.00	-3.00
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3NT= S	♥Q	600		+2.10	-2.10
jayne randall & graham randall	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3NT= S	♥Q	600		+2.10	-2.10
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3NT= S	♥Q	600		+2.10	-2.10
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3NT= S	♥Q	600		+2.10	-2.10
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT= S	♥Q	600		+2.10	-2.10
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT= S	♥Q	600		+2.10	-2.10
Sarah Street & Mary D	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3NT-1 S	♥Q		100	-10.80	+10.80
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT-1 S	♥Q		100	-10.80	+10.80

- One 'Superhero' on this board and that was Gemma Fewster, who was the only East to rise with their Ace of Clubs at trick 2 and therefore preserving their partner's King of Clubs entry.
- Well done, Gemma.

Make Every Effort to Win Trick 2 to Preserve Our Partner's Entry

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ 6 5 3 2
♥ J 3
♦ Q J 10 9
♣ A K Q

♠ 8 7
♥ 10 9 6 5 4
♦ K 5 4
♣ 9 6 5

N
W E
S

♠ Q J 10 9 4
♥ Q 7 2
♦ A 8
♣ 4 3 2

♠ A K
♥ A K 8
♦ 7 6 3 2
♣ J 10 8 7

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

The spotlight is on WEST for board 1.

Virtually the same idea as the previous board.

East has made an attacking lead with the Queen of Spades and when West sees the dummy and goes through the various strategies that could be relevant in this situation, the only one that looks relevant is the one where we have to make every effort to win a trick as soon as possible, to help our partner set their suit up, whilst they still have an entry to their hand.

Our objective is to win a trick before our partner does, so that we preserve our partner's entry.

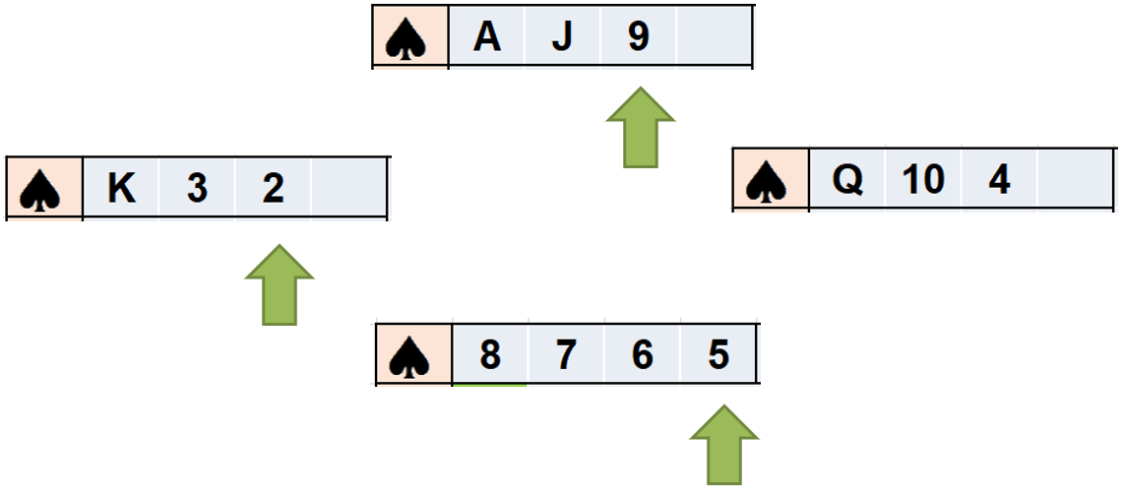
So when declarer calls for a small Diamond from the table, we do exactly that and play our King of Diamonds.

You are probably thinking that it is very easy to make that play, when we can see all four hands, but what happens when declarer has the Ace, Queen of Diamonds, we have just given declarer a 'Free' Diamond finesse?

It is not a 'Free' Diamond finesse, it is just a finesse, a finesse that the declarer was going to take anyway, so it can never cost.

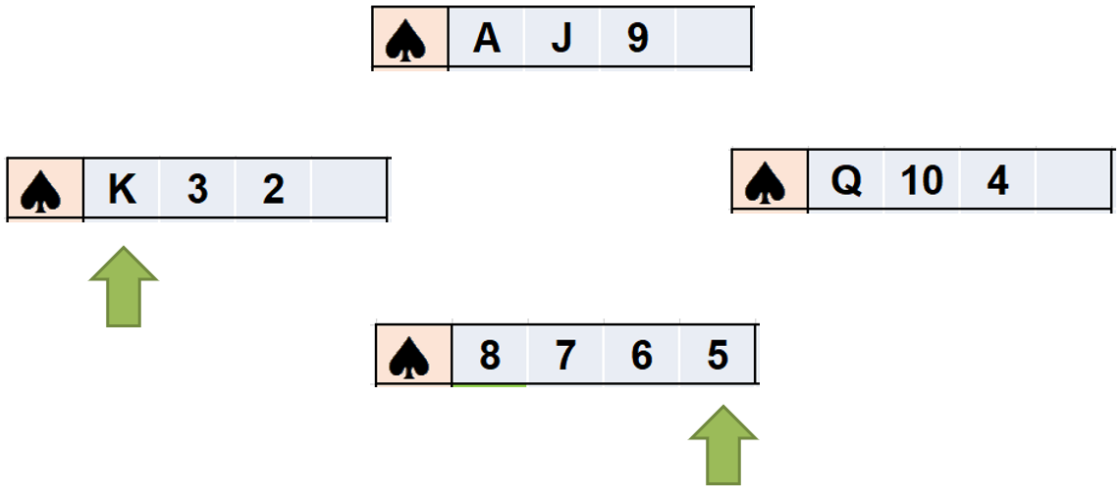
Let us look at some other suit combinations and we will see that the play of the King of Diamonds can also be successful even when our partner does not hold the Ace of Diamonds.

Win a Trick Quickly to Preserve our Partner's Entry



Declarer leads the 5 of Spades from dummy and we follow suit with the 2 and declarer inserts the 9. Our partner will win with their 10 and set up their suit, however, they will never get back on lead. Declarer, on the second round of Spades will play from the dummy and if we play low, declarer will play their Ace and our partner is locked out. It is too late at this stage to play our King, because declarer will just play low and let us win the trick.

Win a Trick Quickly to Preserve our Partner's Entry



Look what happens when we play our King on the *first* round of Spades.
If declarer ducks, we just play our partner's suit, and they still have the Queen of Spades as an entry to their established suit.
Alternatively, declarer could play the Ace on our King, but now we have generated two entries for our partner.

Board 1
Dealer N
None Vul

♠ 6532
♥ J3
♦ QJ109
♣ AKQ

♠ 87
♥ 109654
♦ K54
♣ 965

♠ QJ1094
♥ Q72
♦ A8
♣ 432

♠ AK
♥ AK8
♦ 7632
♣ J1087

Preserve Partner's Entry (Board 1)

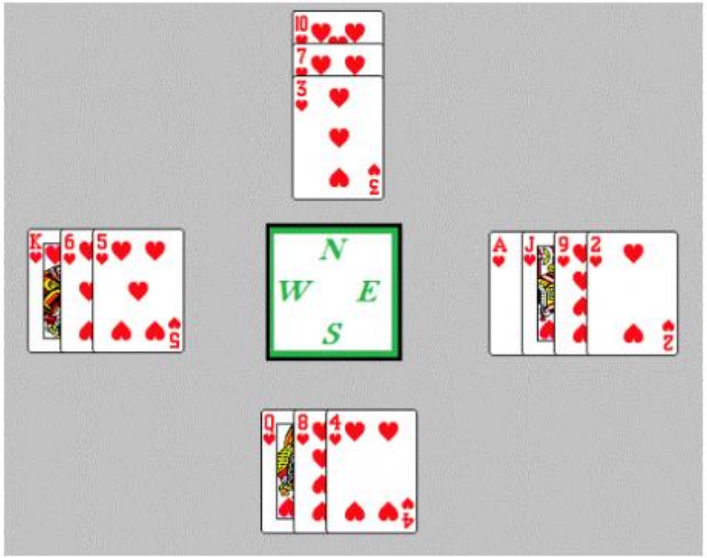
	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	8	8	7	11	10
S	8	8	7	11	10
E	3	5	6	2	2
W	3	5	6	2	2

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3NT+2 N	♠Q	460		+6.20	-6.20
Sarah Street & Mary D	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT+1 N	♠Q	430		+5.10	-5.10
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3NT+1 N	♠Q	430		+5.10	-5.10
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3NT+1 N	♠Q	430		+5.10	-5.10
jayne randall & graham randall	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3NT= N	♠Q	400		+4.50	-4.50
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3NT= S	♠8	400		+4.50	-4.50
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3NT-1 N	♠Q		50	-6.10	+6.10
Tony French & Jon Ward	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT-1 N	♠Q		50	-6.10	+6.10
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT-1 N	♠Q		50	-6.10	+6.10
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3NT-1 N	♠Q		50	-6.10	+6.10
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3NT-1 N	♠Q		50	-6.10	+6.10

- This play is much tougher to find than the previous board, but we had One 'Superhero' who played their King of Diamonds at trick 2 and that was Brian Sharkey.
- Although other declarers did go down, that was mainly down to inferior declarer play.
- Brian's play was even more remarkable by the fact that it was the first board of the day.
- Well done, Brian.

The Surround Play

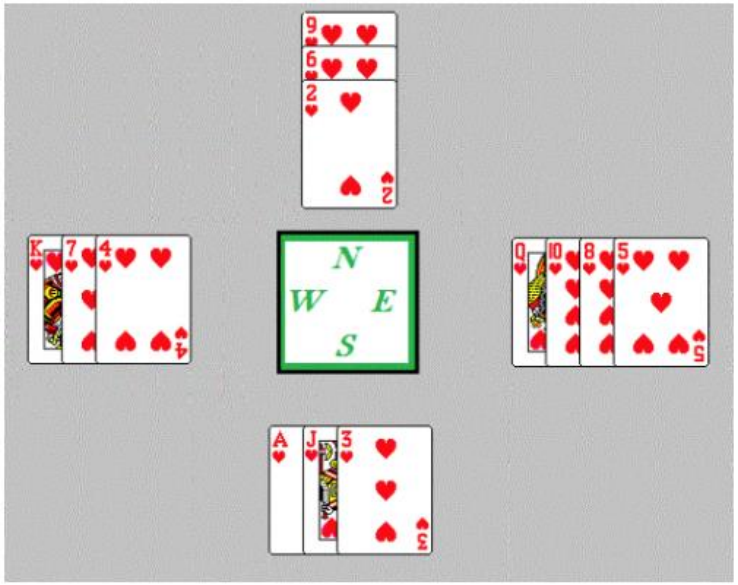
- This defensive strategy can occur at anytime during the play.



- South is declarer with East on lead and they need to play Hearts.
- Which Heart should East lead?
- For this strategy to work, two things are required.
- 1. East needs to have dummy's highest card 'Surrounded'. i.e. Dummy's 10 is surrounded by East's Jack and 9.
- 2. East is required to have an additional higher honour. (In this case the Ace).
- When these two ingredients are in-play, East should lead the card one higher than dummy's highest card. i.e. The Jack of Hearts.
- East-West will now win all three Heart tricks.
- A Heart other than the Jack will result in East-West winning only two Heart tricks.

The Surround Play

- Another example.



- East has dummy's highest card, the 9, surrounded with their 10 and 8.
- East also has an additional higher Heart, the Queen.
- East must lead the card that is one higher than dummy's highest card. i.e. Lead the 10.
- If declarer plays the Jack, West's King wins and West returns a Heart and East has dummy's 9 surrounded and the defence make two Heart tricks in total.
- If East had instead led the 5, declarer plays low, and the defence make just one Heart trick.
- If East had led the Queen, then declarer plays the Ace, and the defence cannot successfully attack the Heart suit for two tricks.
- Let us see this strategy in action on boards 14 and 18.

The Surround Play

Board 14
East Deals
None Vul

	♠ A J 8 5 ♥ 5 ♦ 10 7 5 ♣ A K J 9 4	
♠ 7 6 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ A 8 6 2 ♣ 8 5 3 2	N W E S	♠ 4 2 ♥ A Q J 7 6 2 ♦ K J 9 ♣ 10 6
	♠ K Q 10 9 3 ♥ K 4 3 ♦ Q 4 3 ♣ Q 7	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♥	1 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

The spotlight is on EAST for board 14.

East wins the first trick with the Ace of Hearts and looks at the menacing dummy.

We do not need to be a genius to work out that declarer is going to make their contract very easily with lots of black tricks, King of Hearts and probably even a Heart ruff, so we must make some Diamond tricks, whilst we can.

So which Diamond do we play at trick 2?

We have both ingredients for a 'Surrounding Play' in the Diamond suit.

The first ingredient being that we have dummy's highest card 'Surrounded'. i.e. We have dummy's Ten of Diamonds surrounded with our Jack and Nine of Diamonds.

The second ingredient is that we have an additional higher honour, the King.

So the strategy is that we play the card which is one above dummy's top card i.e. Our Jack of Diamonds.

Once we play the Jack of Diamonds, we must take three Diamond tricks and defeat the contract.

Note that if we play any other Diamond, declarer will escape with just the two Diamond losers and they will successfully make their 4 ♠ contract.

Board 14
Dealer E
None Vul

♠ AJ85
♥ 5
♦ 1075
♣ AKJ94

♠ 76
♥ 1098
♦ A862
♣ 8532

♠ 42
♥ AQJ762
♦ KJ9
♣ [illegible]

♠ KQ1093
♥ K43
♦ Q43
♣ Q7

The Surround Play (Board 14)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	9	9	5	7	9
S	9	9	5	7	9
E	3	1	8	5	3
W	3	1	8	5	3

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
jayne randall & graham randall	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠+2 S	♠6	480		+4.50	-4.50
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♠+2 S	♥10	480		+4.50	-4.50
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠+2 S	♥10	480		+4.50	-4.50
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠+2 S	♥10	480		+4.50	-4.50
Tony French & Jon Ward	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠+1 S	♥10	450		+3.70	-3.70
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠+1 S	♥10	450		+3.70	-3.70
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= S	♥10	420		+2.70	-2.70
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3♠= S	♥9	140		-3.80	+3.80
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠-1 S	♥10		50	-8.10	+8.10
Sarah Street & Mary D	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠-1 S	♥10		50	-8.10	+8.10
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♠-1 S	♥10		50	-8.10	+8.10

- *Three* amazing 'Superheroes' on this board; Namely, Ray Clarke, Garry Waller and Gemma Fewster, who all found the amazing Jack of Diamonds switch at trick 2.
- A small mention to Mike Harbour, who also found the Jack of Diamonds switch at trick 2, however, unfortunately for Mike, he was only defending the contract of Three Spades, so we can only grant Mike the status of 'Hero'.

The Surround Play

Board 18
East Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ A K 6 3 ♥ 9 2 ♦ 9 6 4 ♣ Q 10 8 3	
♠ Q 10 9 ♥ J 10 7 6 ♦ K Q 10 ♣ 9 6 2	N W E S	♠ 5 4 ♥ A K Q 5 4 ♦ A 8 2 ♣ A J 7
	♠ J 8 7 2 ♥ 8 3 ♦ J 7 5 3 ♣ K 5 4	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♥	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	All pass

The spotlight is on NORTH for board 18.

South may well lead the 2 of Spades at trick one.

Even if they do not, declarer, at some stage, will lead a Spade to the 9, with South having played their 8 of Spades, indicating an even number of Spades.

In either case, North will find themselves on lead with their King of Spades.

They should be alert to the imminent danger that declarer will next play a Spade to the 10 and therefore setting up the Queen of Spades which will result in a losing Club being discarded from the East hand.

This is not the time for North to be passive. The defence must take their Club tricks before one of them disappears on that menacing Queen of Spades.

So North must play a Club, but which one?

The clue is that we have dummy's top Club, which is the 9 of Clubs, 'Surrounded' with our 10 and 8 of Clubs and not only that, we have an additional higher Club which is our Queen of Clubs, so this constitutes a 'Surrounding Play' situation, which means we must play the Club which is one above Dummy's Club, i.e. the 10 of Clubs.

Look what happens when we lead the 10 of Clubs.

If declarer plays the Jack, South wins with the King and returns a Club and now North has the Queen, eight of Clubs surrounding dummy's nine, so the defence must make two Club tricks, which defeats the 4 ♥ contract.

Board 18
Dealer E
NS Vul

	♠AK63 ♥92 ♦964 ♣Q1083	
♠Q109 ♥J1076 ♦KQ10 ♣962		♠54 ♥AKQ54 ♦A82 ♣AJ7
	♠J872 ♥83 ♦J753 ♣K54	

The Surround Play (Board 18)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	4	6	4	5	6
S	4	6	4	5	6
E	9	7	9	8	7
W	9	7	9	8	7

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♥-1 E	♥3	50		+9.00	-9.00
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♥-1 E	♥3	50		+9.00	-9.00
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♥= E	♠8		420	-2.00	+2.00
Sarah Street & Mary D	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♥= E	♥8		420	-2.00	+2.00
Tony French & Jon Ward	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♥= E	♥8		420	-2.00	+2.00
jayne randall & graham randall	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♥= E	♥3		420	-2.00	+2.00
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♥= E	♥3		420	-2.00	+2.00
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♥= E	♥8		420	-2.00	+2.00
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♥= E	♠8		420	-2.00	+2.00
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♥= E	♥8		420	-2.00	+2.00
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♥= E	♠2		420	-2.00	+2.00

- Tony French was our one and only potential ‘Superhero’ on this board, when he returned the 10 of Clubs, unfortunately his partner failed to continue the Club suit.
- This does highlight the fact that the partner of the ‘Surround Play Superhero’ must be alert to the possibility of this situation.
- The couple of declarers who went off, was down to the declarer play.
- Several Norths did appreciate that, when in with the King of Spades, a Club switch was required, but alas, they tried their three of Clubs.

When we hold a control in the trump suit think twice as hard

- When we hold the Ace of trumps or some control in the trump suit our plan can be a long-term plan, because we know that sooner or later, we will be on lead again.
- Basically, when we hold the Ace of trumps, the number of plans that we have at our disposal is double the normal.
- However, if we produce a winning plan, wherever possible, take control of the situation.
- Just because we can see a winning plan, do not assume that your partner can also see it.
- Let us see this idea in action on boards 9, 4 and 21.

Controlling the Trump Suit Gives Us Extra Chances

Board 9
North Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ J 4 ♥ J 10 9 5 ♦ A Q 10 8 3 ♣ A K	
♠ K Q 10 8 2 ♥ 3 2 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ 10 9 5	N W E S	♠ A 5 3 ♥ K Q 6 ♦ 2 ♣ 8 7 6 4 3 2
	♠ 9 7 6 ♥ A 8 7 4 ♦ K J 5 4 ♣ Q J	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

The spotlight is on EAST for board 9.

West leads the King of Spades.

East is holding the King and Queen of the trump suit, which means that they will definitely be on lead at some future stage.

East should count the tricks for the defence and see if they can get to 4.

There should be 2 Spade tricks and a trump trick, so where is the 4th trick coming from?

Surely a Diamond ruff?

East must take control of the situation by overtaking their partner's King of Spades lead with their Ace of Spades and returning the 2 of Diamonds.

When declarer plays the Jack of Hearts from the dummy, we must remember to split our Heart honours by playing the Queen of Hearts.

When we win with our King of Hearts, we play back a Spade to our partner's known Queen of Spades and wait for our Diamond ruff.

Board 9
Dealer N
EW Vul

♠ J4
♥ J1095
♦ AQ1083
♣ AK

♠ KQ1082
♥ 32
♦ 976
♣ 1095

♠ A53
♥ KQ6
♦ 2
♣ 876432

♠ 976
♥ A874
♦ KJ54
♣ QJ

Long Term Plan (Board 9)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	8	4	9	10	4
S	8	4	9	10	4
E	5	8	3	3	9
W	5	8	3	3	9

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
Sarah Street & Mary D	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
Tony French & Jon Ward	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
jayne randall & graham randall	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♥= S	♠Q	420		+1.00	-1.00
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♥= S	♠K	420		+1.00	-1.00
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♥= S	♠Q	420		+1.00	-1.00
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♥-1 S	♠K		50	-10.00	+10.00

- Every West led a top Spade against this contract, but not one East overtook with their Ace, to switch to their singleton Diamond.
- The one and only ‘Successful’ defence was down to inferior declarer play.
- The key to this defence is for East to realise that four tricks are staring them in the face.
- Even when West leads the Queen of Spades, East knows, what with the Jack in dummy, that their partner is holding the King of Spades.

Controlling the Trump Suit Gives Us Extra Chances

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

	♠ 5 ♥ 9 7 4 2 ♦ Q J 10 3 2 ♣ K 9 2	
♠ K Q J 10 2 ♥ A Q 10 5 3 ♦ 9 7 ♣ A	N W E S	♠ 9 8 3 ♥ K J 8 ♦ 6 5 ♣ Q J 10 8 4
	♠ A 7 6 4 ♥ 6 ♦ A K 8 4 ♣ 7 6 5 3	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

The spotlight is on SOUTH for board 4.

North leads the Queen of Diamonds and South is holding the Ace of Trumps.

When we hold the Ace of trumps or a control in the trump suit, we should think extra hard as there will be more than the usual number of strategies available for the defence.

When dummy goes down, there is only one number that should be in South's head and that is the number FOUR.

The defence requires FOUR tricks to defeat the contract and where are they coming from?

It certainly looks like we have the Ace, King of Diamonds and the Ace of trumps, but where is the fourth trick coming from?

Seeing that we have the Ace of trumps, we know that we can get a Heart ruff?

Our partner has led the Queen of Diamonds from length, so they must be holding the Jack of Diamonds, so we must take charge.

We overtake our partner's Queen of Diamonds with our King and lead our singleton Heart, so that when we get back in with the Ace of Spades, we can lead a small Diamond to our partner's known Jack of Diamonds, so that they can give us a ruff in Hearts and defeat the 4 ♠ contract.

Board 4
Dealer W
All Vul

	♠5 ♥9742 ♦QJ1032 ♣K92	
♠KQJ102 ♥AQ1053 ♦97 ♣A		♠983 ♥KJ8 ♦65 ♣QJ1084
	♠A764 ♥6 ♦AK84 ♣7653	

Long Term Plan (Board 4)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	6	3	3	9	7
S	6	3	3	9	7
E	6	8	8	3	6
W	6	8	8	3	6

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	5♠X-1 W	♦Q	200		+9.70	-9.70
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♥-2 W	♠5	200		+9.70	-9.70
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♥-1 W	♠5	100		+7.80	-7.80
Tony French & Jon Ward	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	2♠+1 W	♦Q		140	+3.80	-3.80
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3♥= W	♠5		140	+3.80	-3.80
Sarah Street & Mary D	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠= W	♦Q		620	-5.80	+5.80
jayne randall & graham randall	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠= W	♦Q		620	-5.80	+5.80
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠= W	♦Q		620	-5.80	+5.80
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= W	♦Q		620	-5.80	+5.80
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠= W	♦Q		620	-5.80	+5.80
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠= W	♦Q		620	-5.80	+5.80

- Every time the Queen of Diamonds was led against 4 Spades, South failed to take charge and overtake and switch to their singleton Heart.
- When a defender sees a winning defence, they must take control.

Controlling the Trump Suit Gives Us Extra Chances

Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ J 10 9 8 7 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ K 10 ♣ Q J 3	
♠ A 3 ♥ K Q 8 6 4 ♦ A 8 5 ♣ 10 6 2	N W E S	♠ 5 4 ♥ 10 7 ♦ 9 7 6 ♣ K 9 8 7 5 4
	♠ K Q 6 2 ♥ A J 9 ♦ Q J 4 3 2 ♣ A	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	Pass	1 ♦
1 ♥	1 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

The spotlight is on WEST for board 21.

East leads the 10 of Hearts, which is obviously a short suit lead.

Declarer should cover with the Jack and West wins with their Queen of Hearts.

It looks 'Suicidal' for West to now return a Heart straight back into dummy's A9, however, we are holding the Ace of trumps, which means we are guaranteed to get the lead back very soon.

Therefore, playing a second round of Hearts at trick 2 is the winning defence.

When South leads a small Spade West must jump up with the Ace of Spades to give their partner a Heart ruff.

Any other defence will result in declarer being able to establish dummy's Diamonds to discard their losing Heart.

Board 21
Dealer N
NS Vul

♠ J10987
♥ 532
♦ K10
♣ QJ3

♠ A3
♥ KQ864
♦ A85
♣ 1062

♠ 54
♥ 107
♦ 976
♣ K98754

♠ KQ62
♥ AJ9
♦ QJ432
♣ A

Long Term Plan (Board 21)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	7	9	7	9	5
S	7	9	7	9	5
E	3	3	6	3	7
W	3	3	6	3	7

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠= N	♥10	620		+9.80	-9.80
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠= N	♥10	620		+9.80	-9.80
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3♠+1 N	♥10	170		+1.10	-1.10
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3♠+1 N	♥10	170		+1.10	-1.10
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3♠= N	♥10	140		+0.20	-0.20
jayne randall & graham randall	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3♠= N	♥10	140		+0.20	-0.20
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3♠= N	♥10	140		+0.20	-0.20
Sarah Street & Mary D	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠-1 N	♥10		100	-5.60	+5.60
Tony French & Jon Ward	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠-1 N	♥10		100	-5.60	+5.60
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠-1 N	♥10		100	-5.60	+5.60
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠-1 N	♥10		100	-5.60	+5.60

- Brian Sharkey was card perfect on this board, by returning a Heart at trick 2 and hopping up with his Ace of trumps to give their partner a Heart ruff.
- Some declarers went off, when they rose with the Ace of Hearts, which is ‘Throwing in the Towel’ seeing that they are always now going to lose 4 tricks.
- Declarer’s only hope is that the lead is not a singleton, so declarer should play the Jack and rely on the fact that they have an ‘Essex Defender’ sitting on their right?

Quick Overview

- Let us just pause for a moment whilst I tell you about my observations so far.
- I think the last three boards typify what is going wrong with our defences.
- When we are declarer, when dummy goes down, we formulate a plan.
- It appears that when we are defenders and dummy goes down, all we are preparing to do is follow suit.
- I cannot stress too much that the first two tricks of any defence are so important.
- Just like declarer, the defence should be formulating a plan.
- If the contract is Four Spades, just as declarer has 10 tricks in their head, we as defenders should have 4 tricks in our heads.
- The problem that we have of course is that 90+% of the time we are down at our local bridge clubs playing pairs bridge, where preventing overtricks is our major concern, whereas this form of bridge requires a completely different mindset.
- The transition from one method of scoring to the other is not an easy task.
- However, the concept of constructing a long-term plan should be relevant in both forms of bridge for the defenders.
- The key is being able to interpret dummy and anticipate what dangers lie ahead.
- It is not just about the trick that we are currently playing to, but also the rest of the hand. This is exactly what declarers do, so the defenders should do the same.

Quick Overview

- A good example was board 14 against South's 4 Spade contract.
- Only 5 Easts switched to a Diamond at trick 2, when we can see that by returning a passive Heart, which most people did, declarer was always going to make their contract.
- It is as if East had not noticed dummy?
- East has not taken in the entire hand and instead, just played to the next trick in a 'Trance'.

Board 14
Dealer E
None Vul

	♠AJ85 ♥5 ♦1075 ♣AKJ94	
♠76 ♥1098 ♦A862 ♣8532		♠42 ♥AQJ762 ♦KJ9 ♣106
	♠KQ1093 ♥K43 ♦Q43 ♣Q7	

- Similarly, with the last three boards, all we have done at trick 1 is to follow suit.
- It appears that we are in a 'Trance', not capable of looking beyond the current trick?

If We Are Going To Switch To A Singleton, Win With The Ace

- If our partner leads a suit that we hold the Ace and King in, it is standard practice to play the King, so that when our King wins the trick our partner knows that there is every chance that we are also holding the Ace.
- Following through with this logic, when our partner leads a suit and we play the Ace, our partner knows that we do not possess the King.
- Simple so far.
- However, there is an exception to this rule.
- The exception is that even when we are holding the Ace-King of a suit, that our partner leads, we should win with the Ace, if we are planning to switch to a singleton on the next trick.
- The idea being that seeing that we are ‘Pretending’ that declarer has the King, our partner is more likely to continue our singleton suit and give us a ruff.
- Bearing this ‘Rule’ in mind let us look at this concept in action on boards 22 and 12.

Win the First Trick With the Ace, If Switching to a Singleton

Board 22
East Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ J 6 4 ♥ 7 6 3 2 ♦ 10 7 ♣ A K 8 5	
♠ Q 7 2 ♥ A 5 ♦ K 6 5 ♣ 9 6 4 3 2	N W E S	♠ A K 9 8 5 ♥ K Q 10 9 8 ♦ J ♣ Q 7
	♠ 10 3 ♥ J 4 ♦ A Q 9 8 4 3 2 ♣ J 10	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♠	3 ♦
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

The spotlight is on NORTH for board 22.

With the given auction, South should be leading the Jack of Clubs at trick one.

North has to plan the defence very carefully.

North can more or less assume that their partner holds the Ace of Diamonds for their bid, so, for the defence, North can count the Ace, King of Clubs and the Ace of Diamonds and then there is the possibility of a trump promotion with the third round of Clubs, however the tricks must be cashed in the correct order.

If North tries to give their partner a Club ruff too early, declarer will discard their losing Diamond on the third round of Clubs, so the defence must be precise in that North wins the first trick with the KING of Clubs, plays a Diamond to South's Ace, who then then returns a Club back to North's Ace, who now plays that third round of Clubs which guarantees a trump trick for the defence.

Let's look at the defence through the eyes of South. They see their partner partner switch to the 10 of Diamonds at trick two. The 10 of Diamonds is obviously a short suit switch and could easily be a singleton and the correct defence could easily be to continue and give North a Diamond ruff?

But hold on, if North was going to switch to their singleton Diamond at trick two, then the strategy is that they win the first trick with the Ace?

So North, by winning the first trick with their King of Clubs has told their partner that they will not be switching to a singleton at trick 2 and that the Diamond switch must be from a doubleton.

Board 22
Dealer E
EW Vul

	♠ J64 ♥ 7632 ♦ 107 ♣ AK85	
♠ Q72 ♥ A5 ♦ K65 ♣ 96432		♠ AK985 ♥ KQ1098 ♦ J ♣ Q7
	♠ 103 ♥ J4 ♦ AQ98432 ♣ J10	

Win First Trick Correctly (Board 22)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	3	3	3	8	4
S	3	3	3	8	4
E	10	9	10	5	8
W	10	9	10	5	8

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Sarah Street & Mary D	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠-1 E	♣J	100		+10.80	-10.80
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♠-1 E	♣J	100		+10.80	-10.80
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3♠= E	♣J		140	+7.40	-7.40
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠= E	♥J		620	-2.80	+2.80
jayne randall & graham randall	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠= E	♣J		620	-2.80	+2.80
Tony French & Jon Ward	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠+1 E	♦A		650	-3.90	+3.90
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠+1 E	♦A		650	-3.90	+3.90
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠+1 E	♦A		650	-3.90	+3.90
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠+1 E	♦A		650	-3.90	+3.90
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠+1 E	♦A		650	-3.90	+3.90
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠+1 E	♦A		650	-3.90	+3.90

- Unfortunately, too many Souths were leading their Ace of Diamonds to not put North under the 'Spotlight', however, if North had played their 10 of Diamonds at trick one, there was still a chance that the Jack of Clubs switch would defeat the contract with a trump promotion.
- When North plays the 7 of Diamonds, as they often did, South thinks that this must be a singleton.
- When the Jack of Clubs was led, no North cashed their tricks in the correct order, however, quite often declarer erred on the third round of Clubs by not discarding their losing Diamond.

Win the First Trick With the Ace, if Switching to a Singleton

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ 2 ♥ 4 3 2 ♦ A Q 9 8 2 ♣ J 10 9 8	
♠ A K Q J 6 4 ♥ Q J 7 ♦ J 6 5 ♣ Q	N W E S	♠ 10 9 8 ♥ K 10 9 8 6 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ 7 5
	♠ 7 5 3 ♥ A 5 ♦ 10 4 ♣ A K 6 4 3 2	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	3 ♣
4 ♠	All pass		

The spotlight is on NORTH for board 12, with a little help from their partner. North should lead their Jack of Clubs at trick one and South should win with the KING of Clubs.

It is very tempting for South to just go through the motions and continue with the Ace of Clubs and wait for something good to happen, however, dummy's Heart suit looks menacing. Whenever we see a long side suit in dummy, we have to get active and attempt to take our tricks in other suits.

We certainly cannot make any more Club tricks, so the Diamond suit is our only hope. South must switch to the 10 of Diamonds at trick 2.

Through the eyes of North, the 10 of Diamonds is a short suit switch and could easily be a singleton and the correct defence could be for North to give their partner a quick ruff in Diamonds.

However, the fact that South won the first trick with the KING of clubs suggests that the switch at trick 2 is not a singleton.

If South had been switching to a singleton, they would have won the first trick with their Ace of Clubs.

North must now play low (If West plays the Jack, then North inserts the Queen). It is important that North does not win with their Ace of Diamonds.

North must now wait for South to win with the Ace of Hearts, so that South can play the second round of Diamonds, so that North can now take two more Diamond tricks and defeat the 4 ♠ contract.

Board 12
Dealer W
NS Vul

	♠2 ♥432 ♦AQ982 ♣J1098	
♠AKQJ64 ♥QJ7 ♦J65 ♣Q		♠1098 ♥K10986 ♦K73 ♣75
	♠753 ♥A5 ♦104 ♣AK6432	

Win First Trick Correctly (Board 12)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	7	3	3	9	10
S	7	3	3	9	10
E	5	9	8	2	2
W	5	9	8	2	2

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3♠= W	♣J		140	+2.80	-2.80
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	2♠+2 W	♣J		170	+1.70	-1.70
Sarah Street & Mary D	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3♠+1 W	♣J		170	+1.70	-1.70
Tony French & Jon Ward	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3♠+1 W	♣J		170	+1.70	-1.70
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3♠+1 W	♣J		170	+1.70	-1.70
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3♠+1 W	♣J		170	+1.70	-1.70
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3♠+1 W	♣J		170	+1.70	-1.70
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3♠+1 W	♣J		170	+1.70	-1.70
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠= W	♣J		420	-4.90	+4.90
jayne randall & graham randall	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♠= W	♣J		420	-4.90	+4.90
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= W	♣J		420	-4.90	+4.90

- All eleven Norths led their Jack of Clubs, and all eleven Souths won the first Club and continued with a second Club. (Because it was the simplest thing to do).
- This illustrates what I was saying earlier about not reacting to dummy.
- Dummy is a threat with the long Hearts; South must attack the Diamond suit.
- If Declarer is ‘Messing Around’, holding doubleton Queen of Clubs, we can always cash our Club later, but we must get active in the suit where our winners could disappear.

Do Not Overruff When We Have A Strong Holding In The Trump Suit

- Very simple 'Guideline' is that when we are defending a suit contract, it is not normally a good idea to overruff, when holding good trumps, especially if these are trumps that are going to win anyway.
- The best way to illustrate this idea is to look at this concept in action on boards 13 and 24.

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

	♠ K 9 3 ♥ 9 7 ♦ 9 5 4 3 2 ♣ J 10 9	
♠ A Q J ♥ Q 5 ♦ K J 6 ♣ Q 5 4 3 2	N W E S	♠ 8 7 6 5 4 2 ♥ 8 6 2 ♦ A Q ♣ A K
	♠ 10 ♥ A K J 10 4 3 ♦ 10 8 7 ♣ 8 7 6	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

The spotlight is on NORTH for board 13.

South leads the King, Ace and Jack of Hearts for the first three tricks with dummy ruffing with the Jacks of Spades on the third trick.

Unless North has something urgent to do for the next trick, which is certainly not the case here, North should refrain from overruffing with the King of Spades. (Our King of Spades is not running away).

If North overruffs at trick 3, then declarer has the rest of the tricks and the game contract is made.

Look what happens when North refrains from ruffing.

Declarer will enter their hand to take the Spade finesse and when you win with the King of Spades, amazingly your 9 of Spades is now also a winner.

Board 13
Dealer N
All Vul

	♠K93 ♥97 ♦95432 ♣J109	
♠AQJ ♥Q5 ♦KJ6 ♣Q5432		♠876542 ♥862 ♦AQ ♣AK
	♠10 ♥AKJ1043 ♦1087 ♣876	

Do Not Overruff (Board 13)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	4	2	6	5	3
S	4	2	6	5	3
E	7	9	7	7	9
W	7	9	7	7	9

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠-1 E	♥A	100		+12.00	-12.00
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠= E	♥K		620	-1.20	+1.20
Sarah Street & Mary D	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠= E	♥A		620	-1.20	+1.20
Tony French & Jon Ward	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠= E	♥A		620	-1.20	+1.20
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠= E	♥A		620	-1.20	+1.20
jayne randall & graham randall	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠= E	♥A		620	-1.20	+1.20
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♠= E	♥K		620	-1.20	+1.20
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♠= E	♥A		620	-1.20	+1.20
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠= E	♥K		620	-1.20	+1.20
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= E	♥A		620	-1.20	+1.20
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠= E	♥K		620	-1.20	+1.20

- One ‘Superhero’ on this board, who did not overruff and that was Albert Kitchin.
- Several Souths did not continue with a third round of Hearts, which is a bit baffling.
- However, apart from Albert, all the other Norths fell into the trap of overruffing with their King of Trumps, which was always going to win anyway.

Do Not Overruff When You Have a Strong Trump Holding

Board 24
West Deals
None Vul

♠ —
♥ A K Q 8 6 3
♦ 8 6 4 3
♣ Q J 9

♠ A 8 6 5 4 3
♥ 9 7 2
♦ Q J
♣ A 10

♠ K 10 9
♥ J 10
♦ A K 9 7 5
♣ K 3 2

♠ Q J 7 2
♥ 5 4
♦ 10 2
♣ 8 7 6 5 4

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 ♠	2 ♥	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

The spotlight is on SOUTH for board 24.

North is in a final contract of 4 Spades and North leads their top three Heart tricks, with East (Dummy), ruffing with the 9 of Spades on the third trick.

It may look tempting for South to overruff with their Jack of Spades, however this will be the last trick for the defence as declarer will have the simple task of playing a Spade to the King and what with North showing out in Spades, declarer will just run the 10 of Spades, taking the marked finesse against South's Queen of Spades.

If South refrains from overruffing (They should discard a Diamond), then South must now make two more Spade tricks.

When declarer plays a Spade to the King, then all that South needs to do is cover the 10 of Spades and wait for their two Spade tricks and defeat the 4 ♠ contract.

Board 24
Dealer W
None Vul

♠ –
♥ AKQ863
♦ 8643
♣ QJ9

♠ A86543
♥ 972
♦ QJ
♣ A10

♠ K109
♥ J10
♦ AK975
♣ K32

♠ QJ72
♥ 54
♦ 102
♣ 87654

Do Not Overruff (Board 24)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	4	3	6	3	7
S	4	3	6	3	7
E	7	9	6	10	6
W	7	9	6	10	6

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Sarah Street & Mary D	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠-1 W	♥A	50		+6.90	-6.90
Tony French & Jon Ward	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠-1 W	♥A	50		+6.90	-6.90
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3♦-1 E	♥5	50		+6.90	-6.90
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3♦= E	♥5		110	+3.10	-3.10
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3♠= W	♥K		140	+2.60	-2.60
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠= W	♥A		420	-4.40	+4.40
jayne randall & graham randall	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠= W	♥A		420	-4.40	+4.40
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠= W	♥K		420	-4.40	+4.40
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠= W	♥A		420	-4.40	+4.40
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠= W	♥A		420	-4.40	+4.40
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠= W	♥K		420	-4.40	+4.40

- Although a couple of declarers failed to make their contract, that was not down to any brilliant defence.
- Several Norths again decided not to continue with a third round of Hearts, however, whenever they did, it was too tempting for South not to overruff dummy.
- So, no ‘Superheroes’ on this board.

Desperate Times Require Desperate Measures

- Desperate times require desperate measures.
- The best way to illustrate this idea is to look at this concept in action on boards 3 and 11.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ Q J 10 5 4 ♥ K Q ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ K Q J	
♠ 8 ♥ J 5 4 3 ♦ A K Q J ♣ 7 4 3 2	N W E S	♠ K 9 2 ♥ 8 7 6 2 ♦ 10 9 8 ♣ 8 6 5
	♠ A 7 6 3 ♥ A 10 9 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ A 10 9	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

The Spotlight is on WEST for board 3.

West wins the first three tricks with their three top Diamonds.

Like all conscientious defenders as soon as dummy goes down, West adds the number of points in dummy to the number of points that they originally started with.

That is 14 + 11 = 25.

So the two unseen hands total 15 points of which South has at least 12 of those points.

So things are looking 'Bleak' as East cannot hold any of the Aces.

Where is our all important fourth trick coming from?

It can only come from one suit, which is the Spade suit.

Look what happens when in 'Desperation' we lead our fourth Diamond.

We have been told from childbirth to never give declarer a 'Ruff & Discard' as this will always end in tears for the defence, however, desperate times, require desperate measures.

If declarer ruffs with the 10 of Spades in dummy, providing East has read up on the previous theme, which is not to overruff with a strong trump holding, declarer must now lose a Spade to East's 9 of Spades.

Board 3
Dealer S
EW Vul

♠ QJ1054
♥ KQ
♦ 765
♣ KQJ

♠ 8
♥ J543
♦ AKQJ
♣ 7432

♠ K92
♥ 8762
♦ 1098
♣ 865

♠ A763
♥ A109
♦ 432
♣ A109

Desperate Times Requires Desperate Measures (Board 3)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	9	9	7	8	9
S	9	9	7	8	9
E	2	2	6	5	4
W	2	2	6	5	4

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠= S	♦K	420		+1.70	-1.70
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠= S	♦A	420		+1.70	-1.70
jayne randall & graham randall	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠= S	♦A	420		+1.70	-1.70
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= S	♦A	420		+1.70	-1.70
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠= S	♦K	420		+1.70	-1.70
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠= S	♦K	420		+1.70	-1.70
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠= S	♦K	420		+1.70	-1.70
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠= S	♦A	420		+1.70	-1.70
Tony French & Jon Ward	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT= N	♦10	400		+0.70	-0.70
Sarah Street & Mary D	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3♠+2 N	♠2	200		-4.70	+4.70
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠-1 S	♦A		50	-9.60	+9.60

- One ‘Superhero’ on this board and that was John McCoy, the only defender to lead out their top *four* Diamonds.
- Marcia, John’s partner, also rose to the occasion by not overruffing dummy’s 10 of Spades.
- Well done to the both.
- The key to this one is to do the sums with the points and realise that there are no more tricks coming other than in trumps and that a ‘Ruff and Discard’ does not help declarer.

Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

	♠ A 6 4 3 ♥ K Q 6 2 ♦ K Q ♣ 9 8 7	
♠ Q 9 2 ♥ 9 7 5 3 ♦ 10 8 6 2 ♣ A 3	N W E S	♠ 8 5 ♥ J 8 ♦ J 9 4 3 ♣ K Q J 10 2
	♠ K J 10 7 ♥ A 10 4 ♦ A 7 5 ♣ 6 5 4	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
Pass	2 ♣	Dbl	2 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

The spotlight is on EAST for board 11.

East makes a lead directing double of North's 2 Club Stayman bid.

West dutifully leads their Ace of Clubs and continues the suit. East now cashes their King and Queen of Clubs.

It is time for East to do some maths.

Dummy Points + Our Points (East):

14 + 8 = 22

This leaves the unseen hands having 18 points, of which our partner has already shown us 4 of those at trick 1.

Our partner can only have, at maximum, two more points left.

We are certainly 'Desperate'.

We must do something desperate.

Let's try playing a fourth round of Clubs.

If South ruffs with the 10 of Spades, providing West does not overruff as per the previous theme, the defence will come to a trump trick. If declarer ruffs with their seven, West can overruff with their 9 and hence promoting their Queen.

Board 11
Dealer S
None Vul

	♠A643 ♥KQ62 ♦KQ ♣987	
♠Q92 ♥9753 ♦10862 ♣A3		♠85 ♥J8 ♦J943 ♣KQJ102
	♠KJ107 ♥A104 ♦A75 ♣654	

Desperate Times Requires Desperate Measures (Board11)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	8	9	10	7	8
S	8	9	10	7	8
E	2	2	2	6	5
W	2	2	2	6	5

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠= S	♣A	420		+3.00	-3.00
Tony French & Jon Ward	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♠= S	♣A	420		+3.00	-3.00
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	4♠= S	♣A	420		+3.00	-3.00
jayne randall & graham randall	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♠= S	♣A	420		+3.00	-3.00
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	4♠= S	♣A	420		+3.00	-3.00
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠= S	♥7	420		+3.00	-3.00
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= S	♣A	420		+3.00	-3.00
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠= S	♣A	420		+3.00	-3.00
Sarah Street & Mary D	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠-1 S	♥9		50	-8.00	+8.00
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♠-1 S	♣A		50	-8.00	+8.00
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠-1 S	♣A		50	-8.00	+8.00

- No Easts were brave enough to play that fourth round of Clubs, so no ‘Superheroes’ here.
- The key again is to do the maths and realise that a ‘Ruff & Discard’ will not help declarer.
- Well done to all those declarers who came to the correct conclusion that, what with Clubs being 5-2, the length in Spades should be with West and took the finesse in Spades the correct way.

Our Only Hope (Board 10)

- This next board does not quite come under the category of ‘Desperation’, but it is ‘Our Only Hope’.
- The great thing about this form of scoring is that overtricks do not matter so much.
- So, whilst there is still a possibility that we can defeat declarer’s contract, then we must hope that the cards lie favourably for us.
- It is very easy to deploy this tactic, when we can see that if we do nothing, declarer will make their contract anyway.
- Let us see this idea in action on board 10.

Our Only Hope

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

	♠ K 8 2 ♥ J 10 9 4 2 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ J 2	
♠ 9 6 5 ♥ A K Q 6 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ 9 7 3	N W E S	♠ Q 10 4 ♥ 8 3 ♦ A Q 6 5 3 ♣ A K 5
	♠ A J 7 3 ♥ 7 5 ♦ K 4 ♣ Q 10 8 6 4	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 NT	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

The spotlight is on SOUTH for board 10.
South will presumably lead a Club and when declarer wins the trick and enters dummy to run the Jack of Diamonds, it is time for some observations from South.

It is so important that for the first few tricks that the defence communicate their lengths in the suits that declarer plays.

So when our partner plays their 2 of Hearts at trick 2, they must be holding a 5 card Heart suit, so declarer must be holding at least 8 cards in the Minors.

Our partner played the 2 of Diamonds and this can only be from a 3 card Diamond suit.

Remember that we play our cards upwards with an odd number and peter with an even number.

Next the maths:
Dummy Points + South Points: 10 + 10 = 20, so the unseen hands=20 points;
Our partner having shown us the Jack of Clubs at trick one can only have a maximum of 4 points left and one of those is likely to be the Jack of Hearts. Anyway, our partner would have risen with their Ace of Diamonds, if they had held it.

So let us count declarer's tricks. 4 Diamonds, 2 Clubs and 3 Hearts and that makes 9.

When we know that declarer will make their contract utilising three suits, we have no choice but to try the fourth suit. We must now lead a LOW Spade and hope. Our partner knows that we want Spades continued, because if we wanted our original suit led back to us, we would be playing back a high Spade as discouraging in that suit.

Board 10
Dealer E
All Vul

♠ K82
♥ J10942
♦ 872
♣ J2

♠ 965
♥ AKQ6
♦ J109
♣ 973

♠ Q104
♥ 83
♦ AQ653
♣ AK5

♠ AJ73
♥ 75
♦ K4
♣ Q10864

Our Only Hope (Board 10)

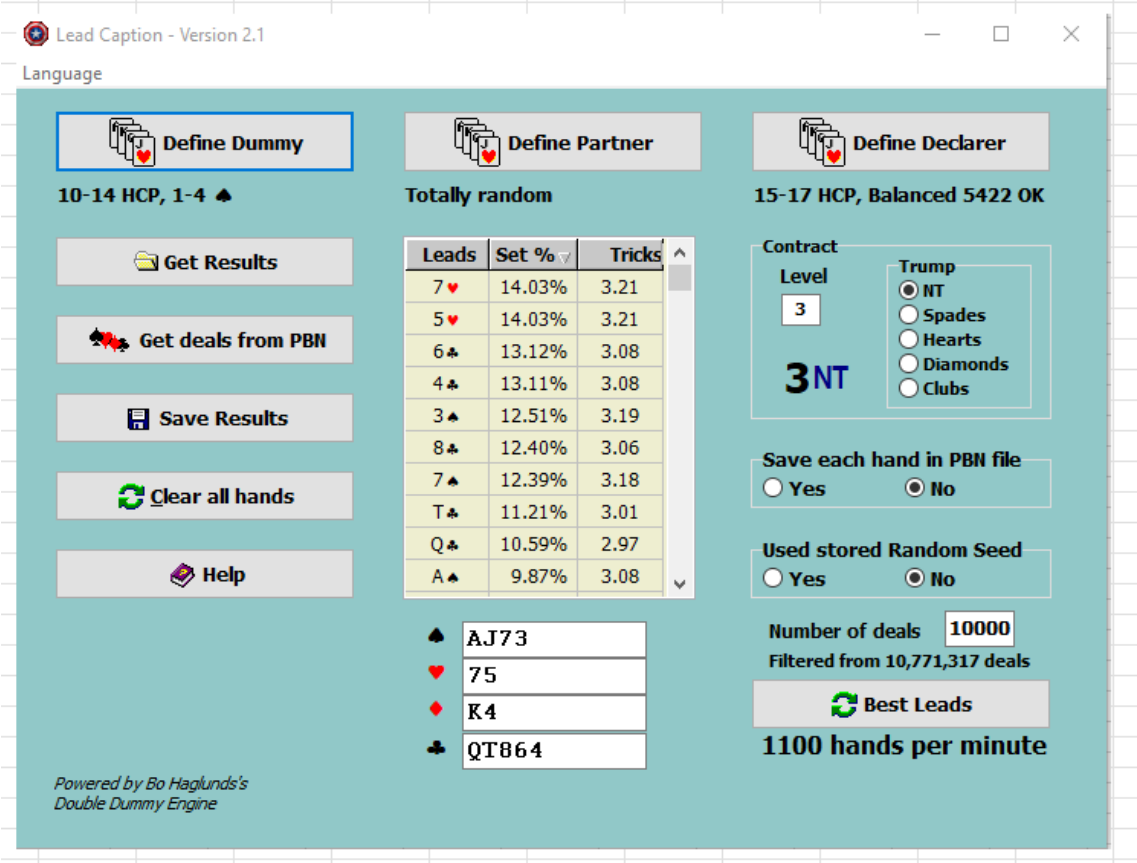
	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	5	7	6	4	7
S	5	7	6	4	7
E	8	6	7	9	6
W	8	6	7	9	5

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
jayne randall & graham randall	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT-1 E	♠3	100		+9.00	-9.00
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3NT-1 E	♠3	100		+9.00	-9.00
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3NT-1 E	♠3	100		+9.00	-9.00
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	1NT+2 E	♣6		150	+5.20	-5.20
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3NT= E	♣6		600	-4.50	+4.50
Sarah Street & Mary D	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3NT= E	♣6		600	-4.50	+4.50
Tony French & Jon Ward	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3NT= E	♣4		600	-4.50	+4.50
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT= E	♣6		600	-4.50	+4.50
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3NT= E	♣6		600	-4.50	+4.50
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3NT= E	♣4		600	-4.50	+4.50
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3NT+1 E	♣6		630	-5.20	+5.20

- Three Souths led an inspired Spade, which defeated the 3NT contract in double quick time and you cannot argue with success.
- Meanwhile, the remaining eight Souths led a Club and failed to find the Spade switch.
- The key here to finding the correct defence is to realise that, when we win with our King of Diamonds, declarer has their 9 tricks, unless we find our partner with that King of Spades.

Our Only Hope (Board10)

- Just out of curiosity I have just run this hand through the Lead Captain Software, which tells us the mathematical correct lead.
- When there has been a Stayman sequence on the board, the percentage lead is a Heart.



May The Forcing Defence Be With You

- Next comes the most powerful defence that is available to the defence.
- It is where we try to make declarer run out of trumps.
- Normally this is not going to be possible because declarer is always going to play in a suit contract where the declarer has many trumps, however when the person on lead has say four trumps or they suspect that their partner to be holding many trumps, then it is certainly worth the risk of leading our longest and strongest suit.
- The hope is that we will force declarer to have to shorten their trumps to the point where one of the defenders ends up with more trumps than the declarer.
- This is known as the 'Forcing Defence'.
- Let us see it in action on board 5.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ J 10 9 6 3 ♥ J 10 9 8 5 ♦ A ♣ A K	
♠ 8 ♥ A 6 4 2 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ Q 10 5 3 2	N W E S	♠ A 7 4 2 ♥ 7 ♦ K J 9 4 2 ♣ 9 6 4
	♠ K Q 5 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ J 8 7	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

The spotlight is on EAST for board 5.

The clue to the correct lead for this hand is that we are holding length in the trump suit.

Whenever we are holding length in the trump suit or we suspect that our partner is holding length in the trump suit, then a FORCING defence should be considered.

The forcing defence is probably the most powerful defence that exists.

The objective is to try and make declarer run our of trumps.

This can only be achieved if one of the defenders has extra length in the trump suit and we have a side suit which will produce tricks once the declarer has run out of trumps.

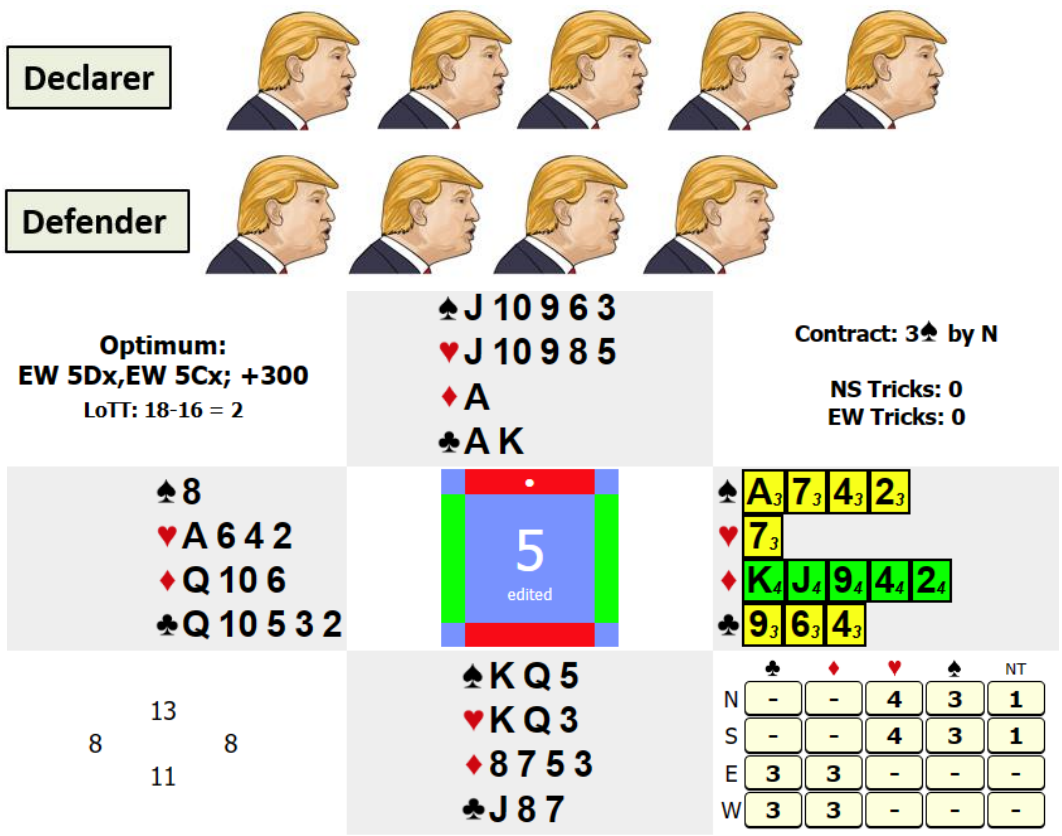
East certainly has length in the trump suit and they have a suit that can potentially be a source of tricks.

The Diamond lead is the killer. It looks like a risky lead, however, this adventurous lead at this form of scoring is much easier to find. At pairs, there is a risk that the defence could be giving an expensive overtrick away, however at Teams/Imps scoring the risk of the lead producing exactly the tenth trick for declarer is offset by the massive reward for defeating declarer's game contract.

Let us see how this defence plays out.

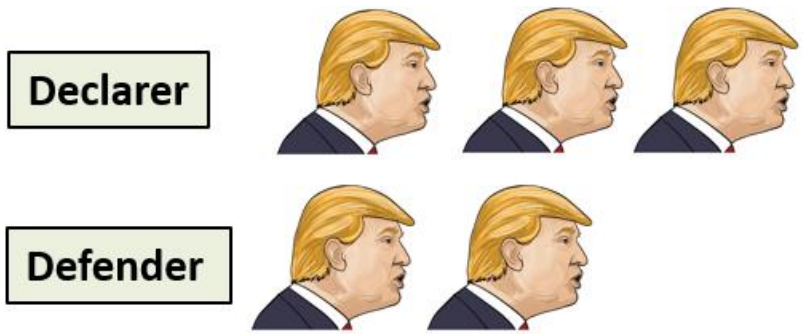
May The Forcing Defence Be With You

- Looking at the North-South hands there appears to be just two tricks to lose in a 4 Spade contract by North, namely the Ace of Spades and the Ace of Hearts.
- East could lead their singleton Heart at some stage and receive a ruff, but that only leaves the defence with three tricks.
- Let us see what happens, when East makes the attacking lead of a small Diamond.
- Let us keep a track of the trumps that North and East hold.



May The Forcing Defence Be With You

- After a Diamond lead, declarer will win with the Ace and lead a Spade towards the Queen and continue with a Spade to East's Ace.
- At this stage, two rounds of trumps have gone, and this is the situation.



- East must continue to play Diamonds and force declarer, North to ruff.

Optimum:
EW 5Dx,EW 5Cx; +300
LoTT: 18-16 = 2

♠J 10 9 6 3
♥J 10 9 8 5
♦A
♣A K

Contract: 3♠ by N

NS Tricks: 2
EW Tricks: 1

♠8
♥A 6 4 2
♦Q 10 6
♣Q 10 5 3 2

5
edited

♠A 7₂ 4₂ 2
♥7₃
♦K₄ J₄ 9₄ 4 2₄
♣9₂ 6₂ 4₂

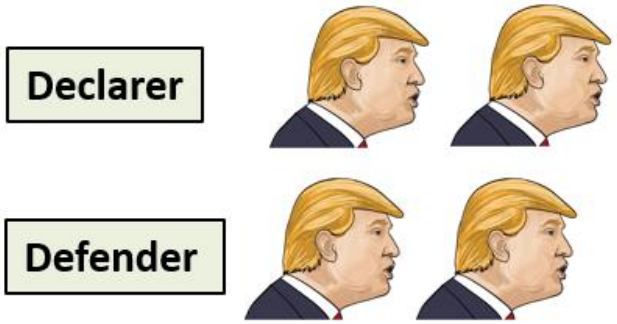
13
8 8
11

♠K Q 5
♥K Q 3
♦8 7 5 3
♣J 8 7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	4	3	1
S	-	-	4	3	1
E	3	3	-	-	-
W	3	3	-	-	-

May The Forcing Defence Be With You

- North must ruff and they will then lead a Heart to dummy's Queen, which West will win with their Ace of Hearts.



- Note that it is of no use, at this stage, to give East a ruff in Hearts.
- West must continue with the Diamond suit.

Optimum:
EW 5Dx,EW 5Cx; +300
LoTT: 18-16 = 2

♠J 10 9 6 3
♥J 10 9 8 5
♦A
♣A K

Contract: 3♠ by N

NS Tricks: 3
EW Tricks: 2

♠8
♥A 6_3 4_3 2_3
♦Q 10_4 6
♣Q_2 10_2 5_2 3_2 2

5
edited

♠A 7 4 2
♥7
♦K J 9 4 2
♣9 6 4

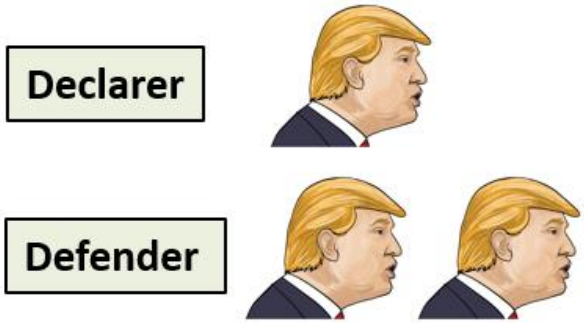
13
8 8
11

♠K Q 5
♥K Q 3
♦8 7 5 3
♣J 8 7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	4	3	1
S	-	-	4	3	1
E	3	3	-	-	-
W	3	3	-	-	-

May The Forcing Defence Be With You

- North must ruff this third round of Diamonds and declarer has lost control.



- East will now ruff a Heart and lead their Jack of Diamonds and therefore making their 7 of Spades for the setting trick.

Optimum:
EW 5Dx,EW 5Cx; +300
LoTT: 18-16 = 2

♠ J8 10 9 6 3
♥ J9 10 9 9 8 9 5
♦ A
♣ A9 K9

Contract: 3♠ by N

NS Tricks: 4
EW Tricks: 2

♠ 8
♥ A 6 4 2
♦ Q 10 6
♣ Q 10 5 3 2

5
edited

♠ A 7 4 2
♥ 7
♦ K J 9 4 2
♣ 9 6 4

13
8 8
11

♠ K Q 5
♥ K Q 3
♦ 8 7 5 3
♣ J 8 7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	4	3	1
S	-	-	4	3	1
E	3	3	-	-	-
W	3	3	-	-	-

Board 5
Dealer N
NS Vul

	♠ J10963 ♥ J10985 ♦ A ♣ AK	
♠ 8 ♥ A642 ♦ Q106 ♣ Q10532		♠ A742 ♥ 7 ♦ KJ942 ♣ 964
	♠ KQ5 ♥ KQ3 ♦ 8753 ♣ J87	

May The Forcing Defence Be With You (Board 5)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	7	9	10	3	4
S	7	9	10	3	4
E	6	3	3	9	9
W	6	3	3	9	9

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	4♥+1 N	♥7	650		+2.50	-2.50
Tony French & Jon Ward	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	4♠+1 N	♠2	650		+2.50	-2.50
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	4♠+1 N	♥7	650		+2.50	-2.50
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	4♠+1 N	♣6	650		+2.50	-2.50
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	4♠+1 N	♣6	650		+2.50	-2.50
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	4♠+1 N	♠2	650		+2.50	-2.50
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	4♠+1 N	♥7	650		+2.50	-2.50
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	4♠= N	♥7	620		+1.60	-1.60
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	4♠= N	♥7	620		+1.60	-1.60
Sarah Street & Mary D	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	2♠+2 N	♠2	170		-8.10	+8.10
jayne randall & graham randall	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT-2 N	♦2		200	-12.60	+12.60

- This was probably an error by me to possibly expect someone to lead dummy's suit.
- It is risky enough to lead a suit headed by the King, Jack, so to lead that kind of suit, when it has been bid, is probably asking a bit too much.
- But, hopefully, the power of the 'Forcing Defence' has been highlighted here.

When To Lead A Trump

- Let us now look at some opening leads.
- When to lead a trump.
- The next three boards, namely boards 15, 17 and 20 will identify three situations where it is correct to lead a trump.

When Partner Passes Our Take-Out Double at the One Level - Lead a Trump

Board 15
South Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ Q 8 7 4 ♥ 5 3 ♦ 9 7 6 3 2 ♣ 6 3	
♠ K 10 6 2 ♥ K Q 10 8 ♦ K Q J 10 ♣ 2	N W E S	♠ A ♥ J 9 6 ♦ 8 5 4 ♣ Q J 10 9 7 4
	♠ J 9 5 3 ♥ A 7 4 2 ♦ A ♣ A K 8 5	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 ♣
Dbl	All pass		

The spotlight is on WEST for board 15.

This auction requires us to lead a TRUMP.

We have all read this advice in bridge books, but do we know why we should take this advice?

When To Lead A Trump

- Just imagine that East was declarer in a One Club contract.
- What would they be doing?
- Would one of their priorities be to lead the King of Diamonds?
- Of course not. Their priority, seeing that they cannot utilise dummy's trump, would be to draw trumps and only once all the trumps had been drawn would they go about collecting tricks in the other suits by knocking out the two red Aces.
- When our partner passes our take-out double of One Club, they are effectively saying that they think that they can make One Club themselves, because they have a strong Club holding.

Optimum:
EW 2H; -110
LoTT: 15-15 = 0

♠Q 8 7 4
♥5 3
♦9 7 6 3 2
♣6 3

Bridge Solver Online:
John Goacher

Double Dummy Solver Module:
Bo Haglund

♠K 10 6 2
♥K Q 10 8
♦K Q J 10
♣2

♠A
♥J 9 6
♦8 5 4
♣Q J 10 9 7 4

2
14 8
16

♠J 9 5 3
♥A 7 4 2
♦A
♣A K 8 5

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	1	1	2	-	1
W	1	1	2	-	1

When To Lead A Trump

- The great news about being a defender to effectively our own contract of One Club, is that we get to do what we want to do first, which is start drawing trumps.
- Leading a Club on this hand gives us +800.
- The trump leads gives us two extra tricks over the people leading the ‘Safe’ King of Diamonds.

Optimum:
EW 2H; -110
LoTT: 15-15 = 0

♠Q 8 7 4
♥5 3
♦9 7 6 3 2
♣6 3

Contract: 1♣-3 by S

NS Tricks: 0
EW Tricks: 0

♠ K_8 10_9 6_9 2_9
♥ K_7 Q_7 10_7 8_7
♦ K_7 Q_7 J_7 10_7
♣ 2_9

15
edited

♠A
♥J 9 6
♦8 5 4
♣Q J 10 9 7 4

2
14 8
16

♠J 9 5 3
♥A 7 4 2
♦A
♣A K 8 5

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	1	-
S	-	-	-	1	-
E	1	1	2	-	1
W	1	1	2	-	1

Board 15
Dealer S
NS Vul

	♠Q874 ♥53 ♦97632 ♣63	
♠K1062 ♥KQ108 ♦KQJ10 ♣2		♠A ♥J96 ♦854 ♣QJ10974
	♠J953 ♥A742 ♦A ♣AK85	

When To Lead A Trump (Board 15)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	5	7	4	5	4
S	5	7	4	5	4
E	7	5	8	7	7
W	7	5	8	7	7

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Tony French & Jon Ward	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	1♣X= S	♦K	140		+4.80	-4.80
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3NT-2 W	♥5	100		+3.80	-3.80
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT-2 W	♣6	100		+3.80	-3.80
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT-2 W	♥5	100		+3.80	-3.80
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3♣-1 E	♦A	50		+2.10	-2.10
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3NT-1 E	♠3	50		+2.10	-2.10
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	1♦-1 N	♠A		100	-1.50	+1.50
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3♣= E	♦A		110	-1.60	+1.60
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	2♥= W	♠4		110	-1.60	+1.60
Sarah Street & Mary D	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	1NT+2 E	♣5		150	-2.70	+2.70
jayne randall & graham randall	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	1♣X-3 S	♣2		800	-13.00	+13.00

- Probably another error by me, seeing that many Souths opened this hand 1 Heart, so not too many people were under the ‘Spotlight’.
- However, congratulations to Brian Sharkey who did end up defending 1 Club doubled and did lead the Club and was rewarded with a score of +800, which equated to +13.00 well deserved Imps.

Board 17
North Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 2
♥ 6 4 3
♦ A K 9 2
♣ 8 7 6

♠ K 9 8 7 5
♥ A 8 7 5 2
♦ Q
♣ A 2

♠ J 10 3
♥ J
♦ 8 7 6 5 3
♣ K 5 4 3

♠ 6 4
♥ K Q 10 9
♦ J 10 4
♣ Q J 10 9

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 NT	Pass	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠	All pass

The spotlight is on SOUTH for board 17.

North opens a weak No Trump and West should make a bid to show both majors.

East has no choice but to bid 2 Spades.

Here is the logic process that should be going through South's head:

We certainly hold the majority of points, however our opponents are expecting to make eight tricks.

We have more Aces and Kings than them, so they must be expecting to make tricks from their small cards.

The easiest way for declarer to do that, especially with distributional hands, is to make a number of trump tricks through ruffing.

We must lead a trump; every time we can lead a trump, we remove two trumps of declarer.

Board 17
Dealer N
None Vul

♠AQ2
♥643
♦AK92
♣876

♠K9875
♥A8752
♦Q
♣A2

♠J103
♥J
♦87653
♣K543

♠64
♥KQ109
♦J104
♣QJ109

When To Lead A Trump (Board 17)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	9	4	7	7	7
S	9	4	7	7	7
E	4	7	6	5	5
W	4	8	6	5	5

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Tony French & Jon Ward	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3♠X-2 E	♠6	300		+9.00	-9.00
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	2NT+2 S	♥2	180		+6.60	-6.60
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3♦-2 N	♥J		100	-0.90	+0.90
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	2♠= E	♣Q		110	-0.90	+0.90
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	2♠= E	♣Q		110	-0.90	+0.90
jayne randall & graham randall	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	2♠+1 E	♠4		140	-2.00	+2.00
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	2♠+1 W	♦K		140	-2.00	+2.00
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	2♠+1 E	♣Q		140	-2.00	+2.00
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	2♠+1 E	♣Q		140	-2.00	+2.00
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	2♠+1 E	♣Q		140	-2.00	+2.00
Sarah Street & Mary D	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	2♠+2 E	♣Q		170	-2.90	+2.90

- Several tables had the auction that I had hoped for, but the ‘Safe’ Club lead was too tempting to resist.
- This is ‘Living Proof’ that the auction is more important than what we hold in our hand.
- Ideally, when we are required to make a blind lead, we should not be tempted by what is in our hand, but instead, listen to the bidding and make the appropriate lead.
- Congratulations to Jon Ward and Tony French, who did make the correct lead and they were rewarded with +9.00 Imps

When Declarer Plays in Their Second Suit - Lead a Trump

Board 20
West Deals
Both Vul

	♠ K J 10 8 ♥ 10 9 7 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ A 7 3	
♠ A Q 9 7 4 ♥ 5 ♦ K 8 3 ♣ K J 10 6	N W E S	♠ 3 ♥ K J 6 4 2 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ Q 9 5 2
	♠ 6 5 2 ♥ A Q 8 3 ♦ J 7 5 4 ♣ 8 4	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 ♠	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♣	All pass		

The spotlight is on NORTH for board 20.

The key to finding the correct opening lead is to listen very carefully to the auction and try to visualise what dummy will look like and anticipate how declarer is going to make their tricks.

One thing that we know about dummy is that it has very few Spades, so declarer will be ruffing their long Spades at every opportunity.

We must lead trumps at every opportunity. Every time we can lead a trump, we will remove two of declarer's trumps.

When holding 3 trumps, it is usually best to lead the smallest of the 3 trumps, so that when either of the defenders wins a trick, the defence will be able to draw two more rounds of trumps.

Board 20
Dealer W
All Vul

♠ KJ108
♥ 1097
♦ A92
♣ A73

♠ AQ974
♥ 5
♦ K83
♣ KJ106

♠ 3
♥ KJ642
♦ Q106
♣ Q952

♠ 652
♥ AQ83
♦ J754
♣ 84

When To Lead A Trump (Board 20)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	7	7	7	8	5
S	7	7	7	8	5
E	5	6	6	5	7
W	6	6	6	5	7

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Tony French & Jon Ward	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	1♠-2 W	♥9	200		+4.30	-4.30
jayne randall & graham randall	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	1NT-2 E	♠5	200		+4.30	-4.30
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3♣-2 W	♣A	200		+4.30	-4.30
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	2♠-2 W	♥10	200		+4.30	-4.30
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3♣-1 W	♥9	100		+1.50	-1.50
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	2♣-1 W	♣3	100		+1.50	-1.50
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	1NT= E	♥3		90	-3.30	+3.30
Sarah Street & Mary D	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3♣= W	♥9		110	-3.80	+3.80
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	2♥= E	♦4		110	-3.80	+3.80
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	1NT+1 E	♥3		120	-4.40	+4.40
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	1NT+2 E	♦4		150	-4.90	+4.90

- The bidding sequences did not go as planned on this board and the final contracts were quite varied.
- However, when things did go to plan, Brian Davies found the correct 3 of Clubs lead and took the contract off.

With No Entries to Our Hand, Try to Find Our Partner's Long Suit.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

	♠ A J 9 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ A Q 6 ♣ K 9 5 4	
♠ 6 5 2 ♥ 8 6 ♦ J 10 9 5 3 ♣ 10 8 2	N W E S	♠ 10 8 7 ♥ A K J 4 3 2 ♦ 8 ♣ J 7 6
	♠ K Q 4 3 ♥ 10 5 ♦ K 7 4 2 ♣ A Q 3	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

The spotlight is on WEST for board 7.

A very common auction.

The Jack of Diamonds lead looks like a very safe opening lead, but in this form of scoring, safe leads are sometimes not good enough, seeing that all we are interested in, is to try and defeat the contract.

We could argue that seeing that it was Valentine's Day last week, that it is obvious to lead a Heart.

Alternatively, we can look at the 'Maths'.

1NT – 3NT

- Finding the correct lead against the ‘Infamous’ 1NT – 3NT auction always results in people running towards their calculators.
- The first indicator is that dummy has more minor cards than major cards, so a Major lead is preferable.

MAJOR

MINER

1NT – 3NT

- Here is a chart which backs this up.
- After the auction 1NT-3NT, the average defender's total Major Suit Length = 7.18.

As dummy has declined to use Stayman, the expectation of dummy's major suit lengths is reduced.

West	North	East	South
		1N	Pass
3N	Pass	Pass	Pass

Dummy

♠	2.44
♥	2.44
♦	4.06
♣	4.06

AVERAGE Suit Lengths (After a 1NT – 3NT auction).

♠	3.59
♥	3.59
♦	2.91
♣	2.91

Declarer

♠	3.38
♥	3.38
♦	3.12
♣	3.12

♠	3.59	
♥	3.59	Declarer + Dummy
♦	2.91	
♣	2.91	Defenders

Major Suit Lengths

Declarer + Dummy	5.82
Defenders	7.18

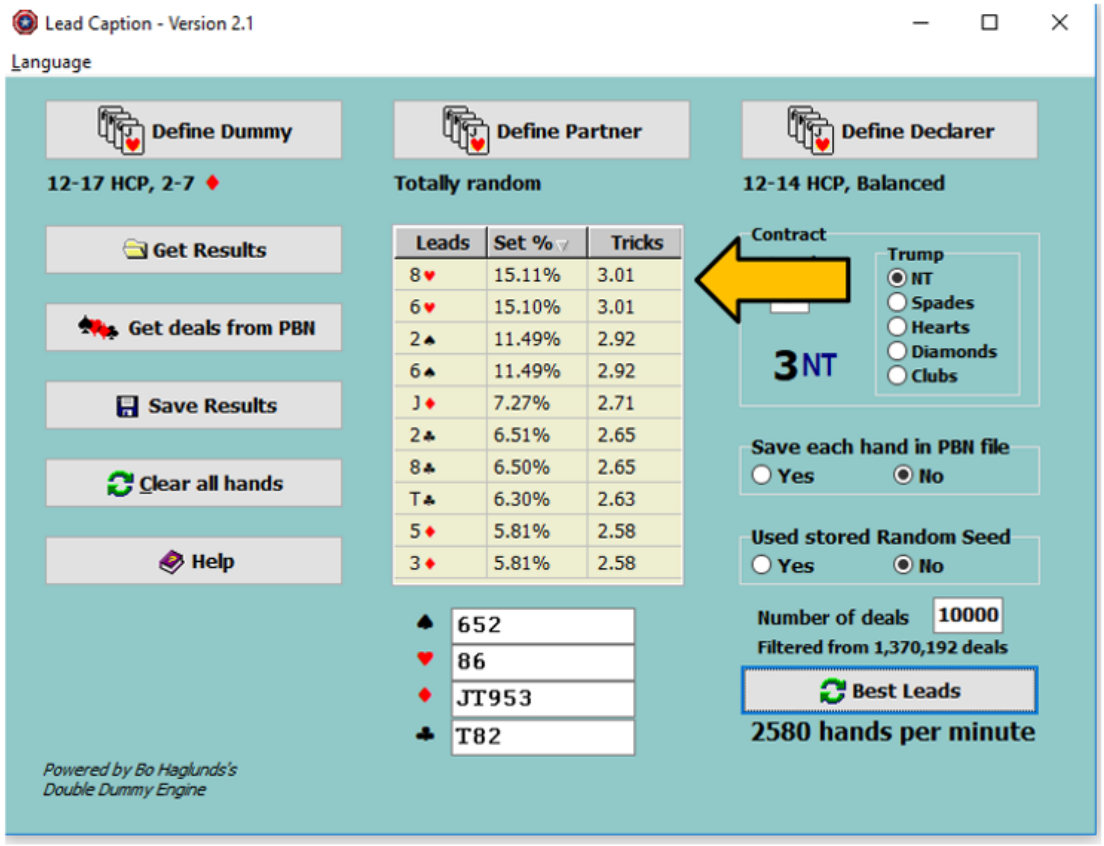
1NT – 3NT

- Now that we have decided that we should be leading a Major, let us see which Major.
- The chart below is telling us that if we are looking to find a suit of length in our partner's hand, we are more likely to find that suit opposite our doubleton rather than our 3-card suit.
- On average opposite our 3 card Major, our partner will hold 4.0 cards in the suit, whereas opposite our doubleton Major, our partner, on average, will hold 4.7 cards in the suit.

South's Suit Length	1	2	3	4	5	6
North's Expected Length (In a MAJOR)	5.4	4.7	4.0	3.3	2.6	2.0

1NT – 3NT

- Finally, the 'Mathematical Simulator' is telling us that the Heart lead is our best chance of defeating the contract.



Board 7
Dealer S
All Vul

	♠ AJ9 ♥ Q97 ♦ AQ6 ♣ K954	
♠ 652 ♥ 86 ♦ J10953 ♣ 1082		♠ 1087 ♥ AKJ432 ♦ 8 ♣ J76
	♠ KQ43 ♥ 105 ♦ K742 ♣ AQ3	

Try to Find our Partner's Long Suit (Board 7)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	11	11	8	9	10
S	7	11	7	9	10
E	2	2	5	3	2
W	2	2	5	3	2

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Sarah Street & Mary D	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3NT+2 S	♦J	660		+5.20	-5.20
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT+2 S	♦J	660		+5.20	-5.20
jayne randall & graham randall	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT+2 S	♦J	660		+5.20	-5.20
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT+2 S	♦J	660		+5.20	-5.20
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3NT+2 S	♦J	660		+5.20	-5.20
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	3NT+2 S	♦J	660		+5.20	-5.20
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	3NT+2 S	♦J	660		+5.20	-5.20
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3NT-2 S	♥8		200	-9.10	+9.10
Tony French & Jon Ward	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3NT-2 S	♥8		200	-9.10	+9.10
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	3NT-2 S	♥8		200	-9.10	+9.10
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3NT-2 S	♥8		200	-9.10	+9.10

- Four 'Superheroes' found the 8 of Hearts lead, namely, John McCoy, Brian Sharkey, Pascaline Mower and Bernie Hunt.
- Everyone else led the 'Safe' Jack of Diamonds.
- In this form of bridge, the concept of 'Safe' takes a back seat. We are never going to be able to set up our Diamonds.
- We must try our hardest to find our partner's suit to set up.

The Emperor’s Coup

- At first glance, this last hand is usually only found in ‘Fantasy Bridge Books’.
- Thinking about it, on second glance as well……..
- However, this strategy does come up more often than you think.
- It is just that people don’t recognise it until it’s too late.
- The idea of this strategy is where one player has set up their long suit in a No-Trump contract and the defence are struggling to find an entry to all those running tricks. (Partner has run out of the suit).
- The idea is that the partner of the hand with all the running tricks will do anything to generate an entry to their partner’s hand and I mean anything.
- Let us see the ‘Emperor’s Coup’ in action on board 8.

Emperor's Coup

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ K J 7 5 4 2
♥ 3 2
♦ 8 4
♣ J 3 2

♠ A 10 6
♥ K 6
♦ A 7 2
♣ K Q 10 6 5

N
W E
S

♠ 9 8
♥ A Q 7 5
♦ K 9 6
♣ 9 8 7 4

♠ Q 3
♥ J 10 9 8 4
♦ Q J 10 5 3
♣ A

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 NT	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

The spotlight is on SOUTH for board 8.
North leads the 5 of Spades and West, the declarer, ducks South's Queen and likewise plays small on South's 3 of Spades continuation.

Now North returns the TWO of Spades and now South has to play the part of Inspector Clouseau.

First Question: What suits will declarer make their 9 tricks from?

Well, looks like 1 Spade, 3 Hearts and 2 Diamonds, so that is THREE tricks short, so declarer must be planning to make quite a few Club tricks?

Second Question: Out of the FOUR Spades that North is known to have remaining, they made a conscious decision to play back the TWO of Spades, their LOWEST Spade.

It is customary at this stage for the player who has just set their suit up to indicate where their entry is to their hand. (A low card indicating the lowest suit etc).

Our usual maths says:
Dummy Points + Our Points: 9 + 10 = 19, so 21 points in the remaining two unseen hands, which we have seen our partner contribute 4 already, seeing that we can see all the red suit points, we can confidently say that our partner has either 0, 1 or 2 points in Clubs.

We must DISCARD our Ace of Clubs which creates an entry to our partner's hand, if they either have Jxx or Qx of Clubs.

Board 8
Dealer W
None Vul

	♠ KJ7542 ♥ 32 ♦ 84 ♣ J32	
♠ A106 ♥ K6 ♦ A72 ♣ KQ1065		♠ 98 ♥ AQ75 ♦ K96 ♣ 9874
	♠ Q3 ♥ J10984 ♦ QJ1053 ♣ A	

The Emperor's Coup (Board 8)

	NT	♠	♥	♦	♣
N	2	6	4	5	2
S	2	6	4	5	2
E	10	6	8	7	11
W	10	6	8	7	11

NS	EW	Contract	Lead	Score		IMP	
Christine Wood & Chris Hart	Gemma Fewster & Steve Abbott	3NT-2 W	♠5	100		+8.90	-8.90
Brian Davies & Annie Davies	Gary Waller & Bernie Hunt	3NT-1 W	♠5	50		+7.60	-7.60
Audrey Hartley & David Embleton	Chris Martin & pascaline Mower	2NT+2 W	♦8		180	+2.30	-2.30
Albert Kitchin & Mike Harbour	Sheena Millins & Richard Glasby	2NT+2 W	♠5		180	+2.30	-2.30
Martin Smith & Sandy Smith	Ray Clarke & Petra Bromfield	1NT+3 W	♠5		180	+2.30	-2.30
Linda Fleet & Paul Stevens	marcialevan-harris & John McCoy	3NT+1 W	♣2		430	-3.90	+3.90
Sarah Street & Mary D	GARY HOWCHEN & Renee Flanagan	3NT+1 W	♣J		430	-3.90	+3.90
Tony French & Jon Ward	Peter Richardson & Brian Sharkey	3NT+1 W	♥3		430	-3.90	+3.90
jayne randall & graham randall	Alan Bryant & Geoff Webber	3NT+1 W	♠5		430	-3.90	+3.90
June Brown & Cathryn Fox	Chris Chorley & Patrick Murray	3NT+1 W	♠5		430	-3.90	+3.90
George Vede & Maureen Vede	Barry Capal & Hazel Capal	3NT+1 W	♠5		430	-3.90	+3.90

- Surprise, surprise, no one discarded their Ace of Clubs.
- Mind you, having read the analysis on the previous page, it seems such an obvious discard?

The Emperor's Coup is named after the last Vietnamese emperor Bao Dai, who supposedly executed the play many years before Besse. That deal is recounted in Victor Mollo's book, "The Other Side of Bridge".

"Introducing an opponent of impressive weight and strength, meet Jacques Blaizot, one of France's greatest players in the immediate post-war period. The Emperor Bao Dai was still on Indo-China's throne when Blaizot cut him as partner during a rubber at the Dalat Palace. Blaizot, West, dealt, with his side a game up.

	North ♠95 ♥AKQ ♦J83 ♣K8653	
Blaizot ♠J42 ♥— ♦Q2 ♣AQJT9742		Bao Dai ♠AT3 ♥JT865432 ♦AT ♣—
	South ♠KQ876 ♥97 ♦K97654 ♣—	

Blaizot	North	Bao Dai	South
3♣	Double	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT
All pass			

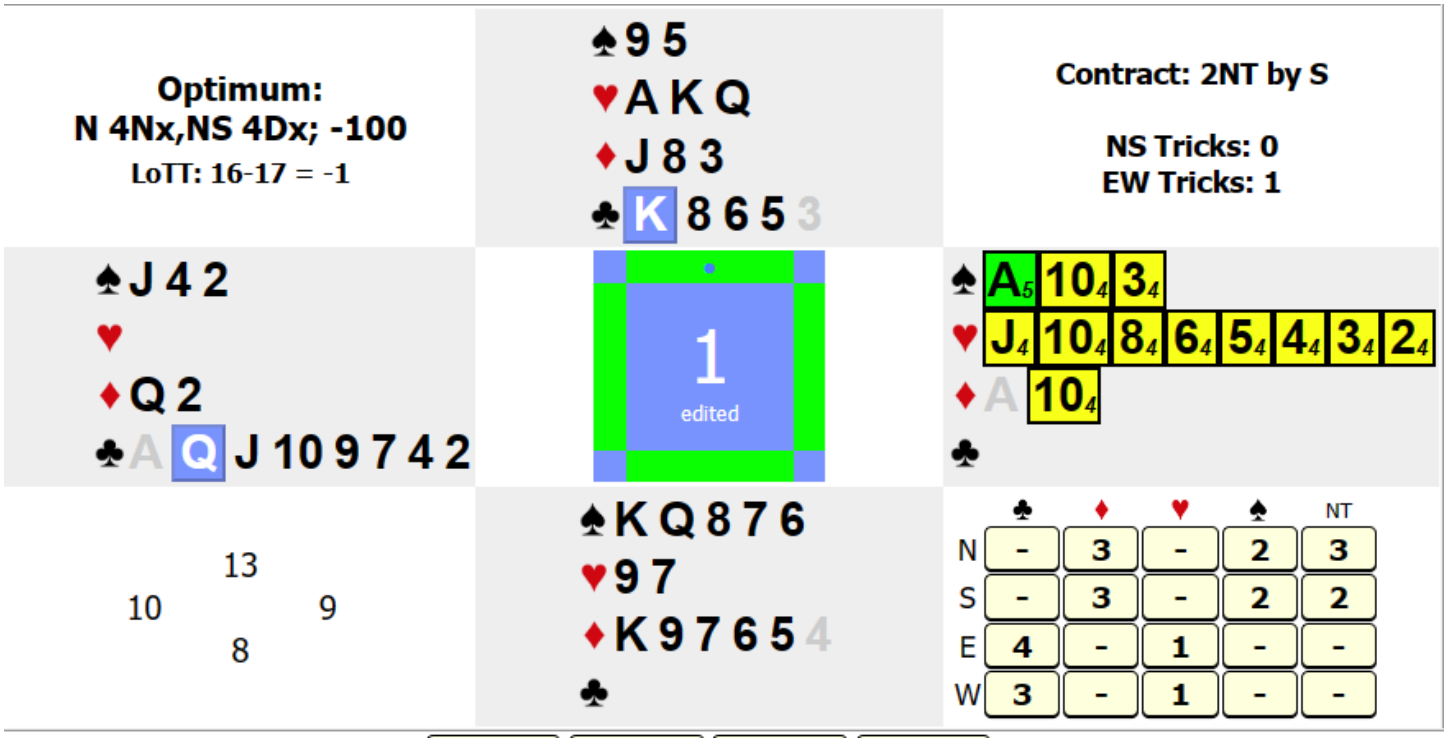
"'I led the ♣A', said Blaizot, 'and to the stupefaction of the spectators Bao Dai discarded the ♦A! I continued with the ♣Q and he threw the ♠A.'

"The bystanders looked at each other incredulously. Had the emperor lost his senses?

"On the contrary, he had found the only defense to beat the contract. So long as he held those aces, whether declarer played on spades or diamonds, he could hardly fail to come to ten tricks. Finding Blaizot with stoppers in both suits was the only hope."

The Emperor's Coup

- As we can see the only defence to defeat South's 3NT contract is for East to first discard their Ace of Diamonds on their partner's Ace of Clubs lead and then to discard their Ace of Spades on their partner's Queen of Clubs continuation.



Extra Defence Homework for Everyone

- Just don't stop thinking for the first *120* seconds of a defence.
- We as defenders *must* produce a plan.
- Scrutinize partner's lead; What initial plan has my partner come up with and how are we going to help our partner implement this plan?
- Scrutinize dummy; Are there any long suits in dummy which could be used for discards, if so, let's get active and take our tricks before they disappear.
- If our partner has led a top honour, consider overtaking their honour to dictate the defence.
- Now the difficult bit:
- I know this is like going back to school, but on *every* hand, we must add the number of points in our hand to the number of points in dummy to calculate the total points of the two unseen hands. If declarer has quantified their hand, then calculate how many points we can expect from our partner.
- So easy for me to say, but so difficult to implement.

- All being well, the next 'Boot Camp' containing another 24 *random* hands will take place on Sunday 2nd April.
- Be there, if you dare……

Finally