

ENTRY MANAGEMENT

ABOUT THE DEALS

You may be either Opener or Responder, but you will always be in the South position.

The first page of each Deal shows your hand, dummy's hand, the bidding, the opening lead and early play. You are asked to study the Deal and mentally devise a Plan to make the contract. When you have your Plan in your mind click **NEXT**.

The subsequent page will then appear telling you what you should have done and perhaps giving you a chance to continue with the Plan by again clicking **NEXT**.

On the final page of each Deal all four hands will be shown.

ENTRY MANAGEMENT LESSON

There may be nothing more frustrating in Bridge than looking across at dummy and seeing three good tricks sitting there - and you have no way to reach them.

Entry Management may sound classy, but it just means being in the right place at the right time.

Plan Early and Wisely:

The contract is 3NT and West leads the ♠7.

♠ A 8 3 2

♥ A J 6 4

♦ A Q 5 3

♣ A



If you play low from dummy you will be forced to win your ♠K immediately, or at trick 2 after East wins trick 1 and returns another ♠.

Now you will go down because after unblocking dummy's ♣A you have no entry back to your hand.

♠ K 6

♥ 7 5 3

♦ 6 4 2

♣ K Q J 10 3

You may have planned early, but you didn't play wisely. The contract is absolutely cold as long as you win the first trick with dummy's ♠A. Then you unblock the ♣A and you still have the ♠K entry to your hand.

Simple enough, right? Just use common sense and think **before** you play, not after.

And the good news is that most of the entry problems you encounter will be just that easy to solve.

But there are a few tougher cases, and a few strategies to get around them, which is why you decided to read this lesson.

Cheap Tricks, and when not to take them:

Bridge players realize early that it is obviously a good idea to win a trick with the smallest card that they can, thereby keeping their higher cards for later. It's hard to ignore that principle, even when you should.

Here's another 3NT contract. (Yes, Bridge writers love to use 3NT contracts.)
West leads the ♠3. East plays a low ♠.

♠ Q J 10
♥ 7 3
♦ K J 10 9 8
♣ 8 6 4

Suppose you let dummy's ♠10 win the trick.

When you try to establish the ♦ suit East will take the second ♦ and return a ♠.

If you play low from your hand West will take the ♠A and play another ♠ to your ♠K.

You will never reach dummy's good ♦s.

♠ K 7 5
♥ A Q 3 2
♦ Q 5
♣ A K 7 2

If instead you play your ♠K when East leads that second ♠ West will allow your ♠K to hold the trick.

You will never reach dummy's good ♦s.

It is easy to now see where things went wrong.

Get your ♠K out of the way by using it to win the first trick and dummy's ♠ Q J will guarantee an entry to the ♦ suit.

Unblocking intermediate cards:

Sometimes a hand looks so simple that you don't spot the danger until too late.

The contract is 6NT. West leads the ♠6.

East takes the ♠A and returns the ♠J.

♠ 5 3 2
♥ 6 2
♦ 8 5 4
♣ A K Q 5 3

This looks like a cinch as long as the ♣s don't split 4-0.

You win the second trick with your ♠K, play the ♣4 to dummy's ♣Q, and breathe a sigh of relief when both defenders follow suit (it turns out they split 3-1).

♠ K 7 4
♥ A K Q
♦ A K Q
♣ 8 7 6 4

A few minutes later that sigh of relief turns into a cry of anguish when you discover that you can only win 4 ♣ tricks because after taking ♣ A K Q you will take the next ♣ in your hand!

Try it again from trick 2. This time play the ♣8 to dummy's ♣Q, and play the ♣7 and ♣6 under the ♣K and ♣A. Then, when you play dummy's ♣5 you can slip your ♣4 underneath it!

Overtaking to save an entry:

There is another way the sacrifice of a high card may pay off as an entry.

The contract is 3NT. West leads the ♠Q.

♠ 6
♥ 8 4 3
♦ A Q 10 9 8 7
♣ K 5

Outside the ♦ suit you have 5 winners and no chance of creating any more.

So you need to get at least 4 ♦ tricks.

Suppose you win the first trick, play your ♦K, then go to dummy with

♠ A K 4 2
♥ A 7 6 2
♦ K
♣ A 8 6 4

the ♣K and start running the ♦s. All will be well if they split 3-3 but a 4-2 split is more likely with one defender holding ♦ J x x x.

Now try it this way. Win the first trick, play your ♦K, **OVERTAKE IT WITH THE ♦A**, then continue with ♦Q, ♦10. Somebody will win their ♦J but you still have that precious ♣K dummy entry to those other good ♦s.

The ♦K was worth more as an entry than it was as a high card.

Finessing for an entry:

That title doesn't sound like much of a daring strategy - of course there are times when you will have to finesse to get the entry you need.

Ahh, but here we are talking about a finesse that would otherwise be completely unnecessary, one which, if it loses, will actually throw a sure trick away.

The contract is 6♣. West leads the ♥Q.

♠ K Q 9 7 6 3
♥ 6 4 2
♦ A J
♣ 4 2

You have 2 ♥ losers. A 3-3 split in the suit would allow you to set up your fourth ♥ but West's opening lead makes you think he probably has 4 or 5 ♥s.

You decide you must establish some ♠ tricks in dummy, but you need two entries for that play, one to get over there the first time and the second to get back after you have dislodged their ♠A. Unfortunately you have only one sure entry, the ♦A.

♠ --
♥ A K 5 3
♦ K 8
♣ A K Q J 9 8 7

Win the first trick. Pull trumps in 2 or 3 rounds. Play a small ♦ and when West plays low finesse the ♦J - the unnecessary finesse. Today it wins. Now play the ♠K and when East plays a low card discard a ♥ loser. West can win the ♠A but you win his return, enter dummy with the ♦A and discard your other ♥ loser on the ♠Q.

Now ask yourself this: How good would West have to be to put his ♦Q on your first ♦ play to deprive you of that entry?
Pretty good, I'd say.

There are other scenarios, many involving the sacrifice of a winner to gain an entry, and while we could go on and on and on . . .

. . . 20 examples should be worth more than another 2000 words.

Deal 1