The Complete Book of

BOLS

# Bridge Tips

edited by Sally Brock

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The person who put in all the work over the years acting as a liaison between BOLS and the bridge world has been Evelyn Senn Gorter. She has become a well-known personality at international bridge events. Apart from her assistance in setting up this project, she also spent hours sorting through early IBPA (International Bridge Press Association) Bulletins to find the original entries. Patrick Jourdain was also helpful in a similar way, providing the IBPA Bulletins that contained the more recent tips.

I searched far and wide to come up with as many photographs of the tipsters as possible. I was helped to quite a large extent by the tipsters themselves, many of whom sent in both photographs and autobiographical details. However, special thanks must be given to Tony Sowter at *International Popular Bridge Monthly*, Jan van Cleeff of the Dutch *IMP* Magazine and Mark Horton at *BRIDGE Magazine*, several of whose photographs were taken with Kodak's new digital camera.

As mentioned above, many of the autobiographical details were supplied by the players themselves but the *Official Encyclopædia of Bridge* was also an indispensable aid in this respect.

Finally, there is everyone who has read through this book in an attempt to make it error-free. No doubt we will not have succeeded totally in this aim, but my thanks anyway to: Mark Horton, Raymond Brock, David Mills, Norman Selway and Steve and Georgia Ray. Every error is my fault; but for their help there would be more.

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## Part Two – TIPS ON DEFENCE

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# Foreword to this edition

We are proud and delighted to be associated with the North American publication of one of the most interesting and important bridge collections ever compiled. For a fledgling company to be able to claim as authors the contributors to this volume is heady wine indeed! 'The Complete Book of BOLS Bridge Tips' is a welcome addition to the *Master Point Press* list of bridge titles.

*Ray Lee*
*Linda Lee*
Toronto, 1998

# Foreword to the original edition

This is Chess & Bridge's first venture into the world of book publishing.

What better way to start than with the definitive collection of the outstanding advice of the world's leading players and writers in the famous 'BOLS Bridge Tips' series? World Champion Sally Brock co-ordinates and links the ideas together to form a unique work of reference with something for everyone, from beginner to expert.

*Malcolm Pein*
*Henry Mutkin*
London, 1997

# Introduction

When BOLS launched their first competition in 1974 I was twenty-one years old and an enthusiastic and ambitious young player. I was a voracious reader of bridge books, magazines and newspaper columns. I still remember the excitement I felt when I read something new and that was the case with many of the first crop of BOLS tips. The one that made a particular impression on me was Chagas's 'The intra-finesse' (see page 115). This seemed like magic to me. Here were holdings, say A8x facing Q9xx where I had always thought two losers inevitable if the king lay over the queen. Suddenly there were so many new possibilities. I probably lost an awful lot of tricks in my next few duplicates by trying out the intra-finesse at all available opportunities!

I was disappointed when the competitions ceased at the end of 1976 but it was interesting how often they were referred to over the next ten years or so. I was delighted when they started up again in 1987 and greatly honoured when, in 1988, I was actually asked to provide a tip. I felt I was being invited to join some bridge players' 'Hall of Fame'. They continued until 1994 and the standard of tips was remarkable even at the end when it may have been thought difficult to come up with anything original. Many of them have been adopted so universally that the plays themselves are now considered commonplace; some of them are put into practice every day. You can't watch a bridge match on VuGraph without hearing expressions such as: 'If he doesn't cover he hasn't got it', 'The five level belongs to the opponents', 'Eight never – nine ever' and so on.

The first three years of tips have been published previously as *Bridge Tips by World Masters*, edited by Terence Reese. Then the years 1988–90 were covered in *The Second BOLS Book of Bridge Tips*, edited by André Boekhorst. The years 1991–4 have not been published in book form. In my view all the tips contain such useful advice that they deserve to be published together, all in one volume, and here it is.

They have been divided into four sections: Tips on Bidding, Tips on Defence, Tips on Play and General Bridge Tips. Wherever possible I have also included some autobiographical material and a photograph of each tipster. In the main body of the book I have made very little reference to what year each tip was written or where it finished in that year's competition. I have tried to turn a series of articles into one book. However, the information about each year's competition is provided at the end of the book along with a simple index.

## Part One

# Tips on Bidding

## Contributors to Tips on Bidding



*Since the bidding precedes the play, it seems a good place to start. The 'Tips on Bidding' cover a wide range of subjects: some general, some more specific; some for inexperienced players and some for old hands.*

*The first few tips all deal with the issue of whether or not to bid on marginal hands.*

*The very first, by Mark Horton, deals with the thorny problem of how strong a hand you need in order to respond to a one-level opening bid.*

# Don't be afraid to respond

## Mark Horton *(England)*

*MARK HORTON is in his mid-forties and of no fixed abode, such is the extent of his travel because of bridge. Originally of a legal background, he is now Editor of* BRIDGE Magazine *and no international tournament is complete without his presence as Bulletin Editor. As a player he has won most English tournaments and represented England in several Camrose matches; now he dashes all over the world, playing in and reporting on international tournaments.*

ALL the textbooks tell you that you need six points to respond to your partner's opening bid. However, my advice is to bid as often as you can.

Why is this a good idea? Firstly, let's take a look at this deal from the 1993 Spingold Final:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ A 4 3 2<br>♥ J 4 2<br>♦ J 10 8<br>♣ A Q J | |
| ♠ 7<br>♥ A K 9 8 3<br>♦ Q 7 6<br>♣ K 8 7 5 | *N-S Game*<br>*Dealer W* | ♠ Q J 10 9 5<br>♥ 10 7<br>♦ 5 4 3<br>♣ 10 6 2 |
| | ♠ K 8 6<br>♥ Q 6 5<br>♦ A K 9 2<br>♣ 9 4 3 | |

In the Open Room the bidding followed a predictable course:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Deutsch* | *Nickell* | *Lall* | *Freeman* |
| | 1♥ | Pass | Pass |
| 1NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

Nickell made a good start with his opening lead of the ace of hearts but then continued with a low heart. Deutsch won with the queen and took a club finesse. He returned to hand with the king of spades and repeated the club finesse.

Now he cashed the ace of clubs and overtook the jack of diamonds with the ace. When a spade to the ace saw West discarding a heart, he exited with a heart to endplay West into leading away from the queen of diamonds, and so scored +600.

Had Nickell continued with king and another heart after cashing the ace, declarer would not have been able to throw him in and would have had to go down.

When the board was replayed West was not called upon to find the killing defence.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Meckstroth* | *Martel* | *Rodwell* | *Stansby* |
| | 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ |
| Pass | 2♣ | All Pass | |

East's decision to respond One Spade left one of the world's best pairs with no obvious way into the auction. A misdefence allowed Martel to score seven tricks but with undertricks costing only 50 points a time he was on to a winner in any event.

So you can see that by responding on a sub-minimum hand you may make it very difficult for your opponents to enter the bidding – and even if they do they may not reach their best contract.

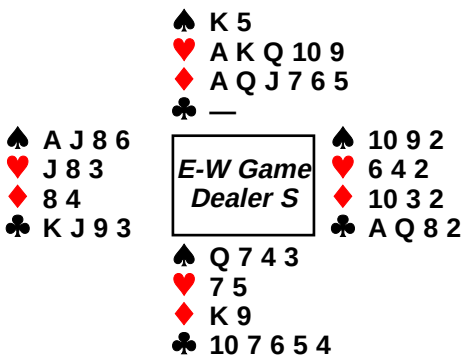
THERE is another compelling reason why you should strain to respond when your partner opens the bidding; it may enable to you to reach your own best contract. Here is a simple example:


Here, 3NT and Five Clubs are playable contracts and Five Diamonds has its chances. On a good day you might even make Six Clubs! However, this all becomes mere speculation if North fails to respond to South's opening bid of One Diamond.

On many hands a sub-standard response will allow you to reach a better partscore. Here's a typical example from a Wales v England match:


North-South can reach a heart contract only if North responds to South's One Spade opening.

Still not convinced? Here is an example from an international tournament in Holland:




After two passes, both Norths opened One Diamond. At one table South was happy to pass but less cheerful when twelve tricks were made.

His opposite number responded One Spade and North rebid Three Hearts, in their methods showing a very strong hand with at least four hearts. South gave preference with Four Diamonds and North continued with Four Hearts. When South bid Five Diamonds, North reflected that his partner hadn't bid 3NT over Three Hearts and had failed to make a cue-bid in clubs. Having decided there were no wasted values in clubs, he went on to Six Diamonds.

So, there you are, as a steady and sometimes spectacular, points earner, my BOLS bridge tip is:

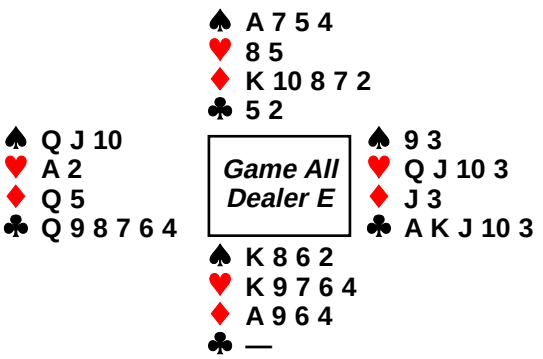
**Don't be afraid to respond to an opening bid.**

*This tip refers to the very specific case of responding to an opening bid. In more general situations opinion differs as to how much you should bid. The following advice suggests caution initially, but later…*

# Let the opponents tell the story

## Aavo Heinlo *(Estonia)*

IT sometimes happens that you have a hand that is too weak to enter the auction on the first round, or maybe there are other reasons for an initial pass. Nevertheless you would like to know if you have a fit with partner. Often the opponents' bidding will provide useful clues and you can enter the auction later on.



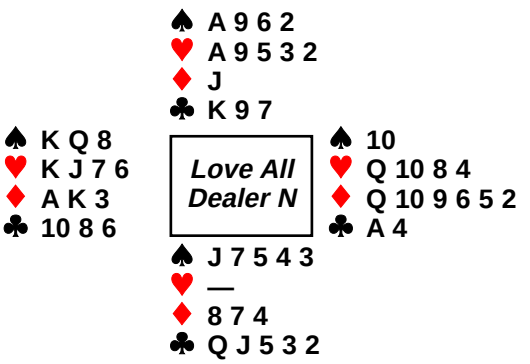

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♥[1] |
| Pass | 1NT | Pass | 2♣ |
| Pass | 2NT[2] | Pass | 3♣ |
| 4♠! | Double | All Pass | |

[1] canapé [2] club fit

Inspecting my cards as South I found good distribution and some good controls but, with length in East's suit, there was no reason to bid on the first round. So I passed for two rounds to hear what East-West had to say. Well, West showed fewer than four spades and East probably only one or two, so the 4-4 fit for us was established. It seemed that West had some stopper in spades as he made a game-try of 2NT, but what were they really afraid of? No doubt their real concern was diamonds so we must have a good fit in that suit as well. This left our side with only three possible losers, one in each suit except clubs.

My jump to game was a real shock to West and he was very quick to double. I ruffed the opening club lead, crossed to the ace of spades, ruffed another club, cashed the king of spades and started to cash diamonds. West ruffed the third diamond in anger and gave an overtrick by leading hearts. There were only a few positive scores on the North-South side of the scoresheet, mainly for defending against no-trumps, so +990 was really off the scale.

HISTORY repeated itself eleven years later. My partner, a guest from Finland, and I had agreed to bid naturally with four-card majors. This was the deal:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♥ | Pass |
| Pass | Double | Pass | 2♦ |
| Pass | 2NT | Pass | 3♦ |
| 3♠ | Double | All Pass | |

Maybe 5-5 distribution and four high-card points are worth positive action in a natural system but I didn't like it at Pairs with a void

in partner's suit. What could I have bid after partner rebid Two Hearts? I preferred to hear the opponents' story.

They showed good hearts and enough strength to play no-trumps but they refused to do so. Learning from my previous experience, I bid only Three Spades. After all, why give the opponents the opportunity to double you at a high level when they will almost certainly do so a level lower. As you can guess I finished up with an overtrick, having taken advantage of the trump position.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**If you choose to pass on the first round but want to find a fit, listen to the opponents' bidding and sometimes you can later emerge out of the blue.**

*The advice from a successful Icelandic player is to throw caution to the wind and bid regardless. You never know what good might come your way…*

# Don't be a pleasant opponent – bid

## Jon Baldursson *(Iceland)*

*JON BALDURSSON of Reykjavik is Iceland's most successful and well-known player. In 1991 the structure of the Bermuda Bowl was altered and for the first time Europe was to be represented by four countries rather than the previous two. Iceland crept into that final qualifying spot and from then on proved that they were a team of destiny as they went on to become one of the most popular Bermuda Bowl winners in the history of the game. It was the first time that Iceland had won a World Championship in any discipline and they became national heroes. Indeed, Icelandair diverted a plane that was scheduled from Honolulu to Tokyo to stop off at Yokohama to pay tribute to the new World Champions.*

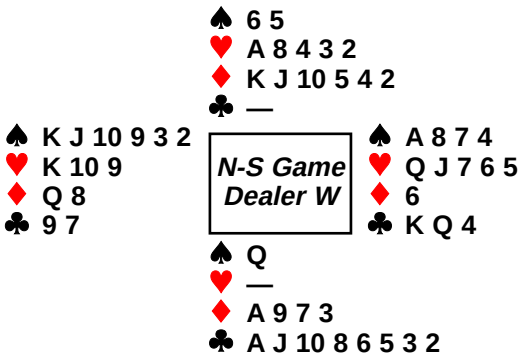
*In 1994 he further made his mark on the game by winning the Second Generali World Individual title in Paris.*

*In 1996 the Icelandic team lost in the quarter-finals of the World Team Olympiad. Having drowned their sorrows in the bar, four of the Icelanders, including Jon, joined forces with two British women, Heather Dhondy and Liz McGowan, in the Transnational World Mixed Teams. They won the qualifying Swiss tournament by a substantial margin and then went on to take the gold medal despite none of the pairs having played a board together before the event.*

IN most textbooks on competitive bidding we are advised not to bid without good reason. To bid with weak hands on bad suits, the theory says, will cost in the long run, misleading partner when we end up defending, and risking severe penalties otherwise.

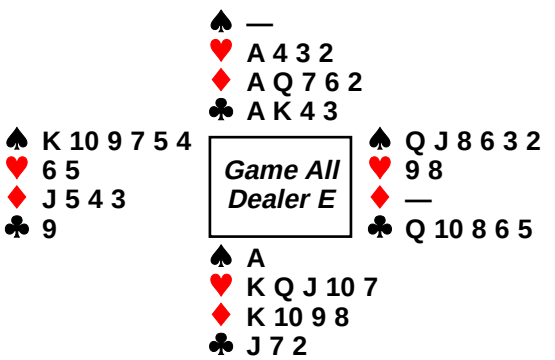
This sounds like sensible advice and is likely to produce consistently fair results in intermediate competition. But experience has taught me that exactly the opposite is needed to do well in top-class teams tournaments. It is better to bid at the first opportunity, even if the hands or the suits do not meet the standards the textbooks require. Indeed, it can often be less dangerous to bid right away than to wait and hope to get a second chance. Contrary to what some may believe these tactics are not as effective at Pairs, where –200 is a terrible score.

Consider this example from the Bermuda Bowl in Yokohama:




This deal was played at sixteen tables and West usually opened a weak Two Spades or Multi Two Diamonds. Where North overcalled Three Diamonds, South had an easy Six Diamond bid, but where North passed, as happened at some tables, North-South were in trouble and some played in Five or Six Clubs which couldn't be made.

SOMETIMES declining to overcall can have strange effects on the defence. This deal occurred last year in the Spingold, a top teams tournament in the USA.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Kantar* | *Zia* | *Sontag* | *Rosenberg* |
| | | | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 5NT | Pass |
| 7♥ | Pass | Pass | Double |
| All Pass | | | |

East's double was obviously lead-directing, showing a void somewhere. Not unreasonably, the great Zia Mahmood led his longest suit, a spade, so the grand slam made. If Rosenberg had opened Two Spades or if Zia had overcalled One or Two Spades, this problem would not have arisen. North-South would have had to deal with a high-level spade bid from East, and if the final contract were then Seven Hearts doubled by East, the diamond lead would be automatic.

IT is standard practice that a one-level overcall promises a good suit so that partner knows what to lead if your side ends up defending. But if overcalling on a bad suit can be misleading for your partner, it can also be misleading for declarer, causing him to play the overcaller for missing honours in the suit he bid. There can also be negative inferences when a usually aggressive player does not overcall. If his partner is on lead against no-trumps, he knows that it is no use trying to find him with a suit he could have bid at the one level.

There is also a psychological advantage in being a busy bidder. We all know that it can be irritating when opponents are constantly entering the bidding, even if the intervention makes no difference in the end. We often find that opponents have been skating on thin ice, but managed to escape unharmed. This can allow them to gain a psychological edge and affect your concentration, maybe resulting in a losing board later in the match.

Of course, they are right in the textbooks. You can help declarer to make contracts with light overcalls and you sometimes go for big numbers. But I am sure that in the long run you will gain more with this style than you lose, and when you lose, just smile and bide your time. The Icelandic team used this approach in the 1991 Bermuda Bowl and, to quote Eric Kokish from the World Championship book discussing the prospects for the final, 'The Icelanders' busy competitive style had so far brought in lots of points. Would this style prove effective against the Poles who like to defend?'

So my BOLS tip is:

**Don't just sit and watch your opponents. Bid at the first opportunity.**

*These tactics have worked well for the Icelandic team, but as Jon says, this is a tip for top-level play. At lower levels maybe the textbooks are right. The following advice is almost the complete opposite. You will have to make up your own minds.*

# Not obliged to say anything

## David Bird *(England)*

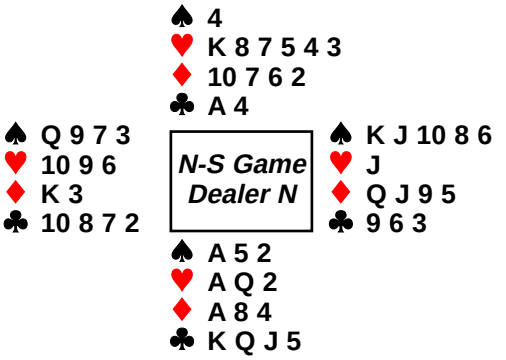
*DAVID BIRD is one of England's most popular bridge authors. He has written over thirty books on the game, some twenty of them in collaboration with the late Terence Reese. Best known for his humorous bridge fiction, his stories of the cantankerous Abbot and the bridge-playing monks of St Titus appear regularly in magazines around the world. David is bridge correspondent of the* Mail on Sunday *and the* London Evening Standard.

TOURNAMENT play is a macho business, with most players regarding it as an affront if they give the opponents a free run. Suppose a vulnerable opponent opens a weak Two Hearts in front of you and, non-vulnerable, you hold:

♠ K J 10 8 6
♥ J
♦ Q J 9 5
♣ 9 6 3

You should leap in there with Two Spades, of course.

Or should you? When the deal arose, the player to your left was the famous 'Rabbi' created by Australian maestro, Ron Klinger. The occasion was the 24th Israeli Congress in Tel Aviv.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2♥ | 2♠ |
| 4♥ | 4♠ | Pass | Pass |
| 4NT | Pass | 5♥ | Pass |
| 7♣ | All Pass | | |

The Rabbi, sitting South, had no reason initially to think that any contract beyond game would be possible. When West bid Four Spades, though, it became a near certainty that North held at most one spade. The Rabbi came to life again with Roman Key-Card Blackwood, hearing a response that showed two 'aces', here the ace of clubs and the king of the agreed trump suit. He was about to bid Six Hearts when a strange thought occurred to him. If clubs were trumps, surely he could score four clubs, six hearts, two aces and a spade ruff!

He bid the grand slam in clubs, received a trump lead, and the play went without a hitch.

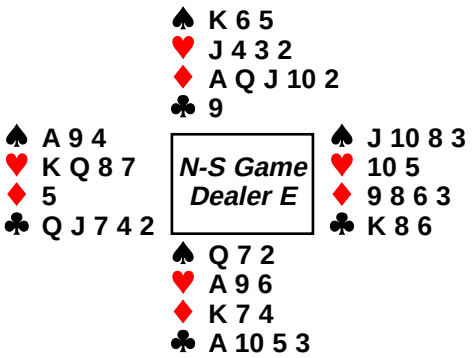
SUPPOSE now that you are competing in the final of the 1994 London Trophy. Again at favourable vulnerability, partner passes and your right-hand opponent opens a weak no-trump. You look down at:

♠ A 9 4
♥ K Q 8 7
♦ 5
♣ Q J 7 4 2

Playing Astro, it is clearcut for any red-blooded bridge player to compete with Two Clubs, showing hearts and a minor, isn't it?

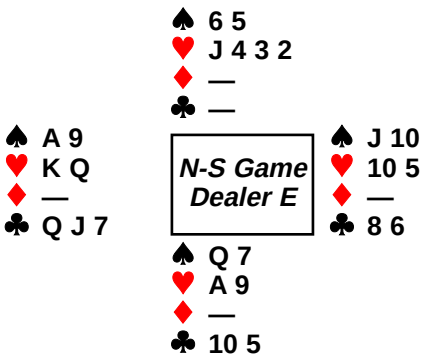
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Pass |
| 1NT | 2♣ | 3♦ | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

The full deal:




South ended up in 3NT and a low club was led to East's king, declarer taking his ace immediately. West's intervention marked him with the rest of the outstanding high cards and declarer's next move was a low spade from hand. West could not afford to rise with the ace and dummy's king won the trick.

Now came five rounds of diamonds, declarer throwing a heart and a club. West released two hearts and a club but then had to find one more discard in this position:




If he threw another club, declarer would throw him in with ace and another heart; he would then have to give South a second spade trick. So West decided to bare the ace of spades but it was not difficult for declarer to read his distribution. He ducked a spade to the bare ace, setting up his queen for a ninth trick.

Hats off to declarer, but would he have succeeded without the information yielded by West's overcall? I don't think so.

UNDENIABLY, there are great advantages to be gained from overcalling. You may:

- reach a making contract
- find a worthwhile sacrifice
- rob the opponents of bidding space
- suggest a good opening lead

Look back at the two disastrous overcalls and measure them against these four possible advantages. Neither rates at all highly in any category. So, there was very little to weigh against the ever-present risk that the opponents would take advantage of the information gained.

Next time you sit down for a game, read yourself the official bridge player's caution and my BOLS bridge tip:

**When the opponents open the bidding you are not obliged to say anything. Anything you do say will be noted down and ... may be used in evidence against you.**

*How high to bid in competitive situations is one of the most difficult areas of bidding judgement. The following tip has probably had more impact on the game than any other in the history of the BOLS competition. The Law of Total Tricks has become simply 'The Law' and most experts follow its guidelines.*

# Eight never – nine ever

## Larry Cohen *(USA)*

*Now in his late thirties, LARRY COHEN of New Jersey, USA, is best known for his rediscovery of the Law of Total Tricks which was explored in his* To Bid or Not to Bid*, the best selling bridge book of 1992–3. His theory has been taken up by experts the world over. Although he has not won any world titles, he has represented the USA on several occasions and won most domestic competitions, the most recent being the 1996 Blue Ribbon Pairs with his regular partner, David Berkowitz.*

WHEN I was a young kid, just learning the game of bridge, my grandfather told me 'Larry, just follow a few simple maxims and you will go far.' Second hand low, third hand high, buy low sell high (oops, wrong game), and 'eight ever, nine never' were amongst his favourites.

Little did he know that I would twist that last maxim around and use it as one of the keys to my success. What he taught me was always ('ever') finesse for the queen with eight trumps, and 'never' finesse with nine. I went on to learn the Law of Total Tricks, and that is when I discovered 'eight never and nine ever'!

In this new 'golden rule' the numbers eight and nine refer to the number of trumps in the combined hands of a partnership. If there is a 6-2 fit there are eight trumps, a 5-4 fit means nine trumps. The words 'never' and 'ever' refer to the act of competing (or bidding) at the three level on partscore hands.

'Eight never' means that you should *never* outbid the opponents at the three level if your side has only eight trumps. Conversely, 'nine ever' suggests that in the same circumstances with nine trumps you should '*ever*' and always compete to three of your trump suit.

LET'S try a couple of hands. At Love All, with:

♠ K Q 9 8 7
♥ A 8
♦ A 9 2
♣ 10 7 2

playing five-card majors, you deal and open One Spade. After a Two Heart overcall, your partner raises to Two Spades. Your right-hand opponent bids Three Hearts, and it is your call.

You have a nice opening bid, but you should not be tempted to bid Three Spades. Your side rates to have only eight trumps – so *never* bid three over three. If partner has four trumps, giving your side nine, he will know to bid Three Spades. The full deal rates to be something like:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ A 6 3<br>♥ 7 6 3<br>♦ K 8 6 4<br>♣ J 9 4 | |
| ♠ 10 4<br>♥ K Q 10 9 5<br>♦ 10 5 3<br>♣ A Q 3 | *Love All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ J 5 2<br>♥ J 4 2<br>♦ Q J 7<br>♣ K 8 6 5 |
| | ♠ K Q 9 8 7<br>♥ A 8<br>♦ A 9 2<br>♣ 10 7 2 | |

The opponents were due to fail in Three Hearts, losing five top tricks. You'll also fail if you bid Three Spades, as you have five sure losers after the obvious heart lead.

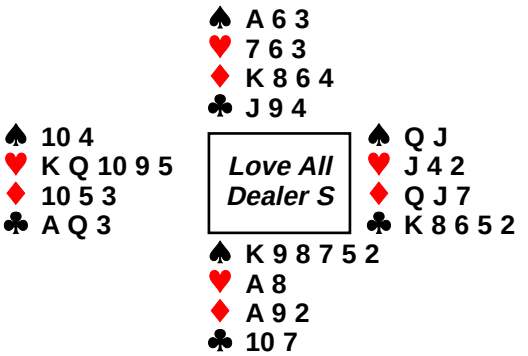
Does this full deal contain anything surprising? No, it is a very typical layout for this everyday auction. Both partnerships have

an eight-card fit, and both sides can take only eight tricks. Why should you go minus when they are going minus?

If you were to give yourself a sixth spade you would have a clear reason to compete to Three Spades. Let's even take away some high-card points to illustrate that possession of nine trumps is crucial – not possession of an extra jack or queen. Holding:

♠ K 9 8 7 5 2
♥ A 8
♦ A 9 2
♣ 10 7

you are faced with the same auction as above. Your partner has raised spades, and the opponents have competed to Three Hearts. This time your side has nine trumps: nine *ever* – so you bid Three Spades, expecting the full deal to resemble:




Three Hearts is still one down, but now you can make Three Spades. Your ninth spade translates into a ninth trick. What if the spades were 3-1? You'd go down, but then Three Hearts would make.

WHY does this 'eight never, nine ever' work out so well? The reason is simple if you know the Law of Total Tricks, a concept that has only recently received the attention it deserves. The Law states that the number of total trumps (add the number of cards in North-South's best fit to the number of cards in East-West's best fit) is approximately equal to the number of total tricks (add the number of tricks that North-South can take in their best fit to the number of tricks East-West can take in their best fit). If the high cards are evenly split eight trumps leads to eight tricks, and nine trumps usually leads to nine tricks.

This is an oversimplification, but the concept is a sound one.

Over and over again, throughout the bridge world, people bid three over three with only eight trumps, and find that both three-level contracts fail. Instead of going +50 or +100, players go minus the same number.

I have given my self-learned advice to my grandfather and now he's the king of the senior circuit. He simply follows the reversed golden rule: 'Eight never, nine ever'.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When considering bidding at the three level over the opponents' three-level contract, always bid when your side has nine trumps but never when it has only eight.**

*Of course, for every rule there is an exception. While Larry Cohen's tip contains excellent advice and works out well most of the time, the following tip concentrates on the times when you should downgrade your hand…*

# Look out for minus points

## Bep Vriend *(Netherlands)*

*BEP VRIEND, a bridge teacher, has the best record of any Dutch woman player. She has won gold medals in the European Pairs in 1993, the European Mixed Teams in 1994 and the World Pairs, also in 1994. Then there were silver medals in one Venice Cup and two European Championships as well as bronze medals in two European Championships, one European Mixed Championship, a Teams Olympiad and another World Pairs.*

*She has also competed successfully in Dutch open bridge, usually in partnership with her husband, Anton Maas. She has won the Dutch Open Pairs twice.*

THE minus points in the title of this article refer to the well-known Milton Work point count. Bridge novices learn on page three of *Bridge for Beginners* the valuation of four points for an ace, three for a king, two for a queen and one for a jack to determine the strength of a bridge hand. Later on they find out that:

♠ K Q J 10 x x x
♥ K Q J 10 x x
♦ —
♣ —

has much more playing power than:

♠ K Q J
♥ Q J
♦ A x x x
♣ J x x x

The authors solve this problem by introducing the concept of plus points for long suits and ruffing values, and minus points for a blank honour. It's remarkable that bridge literature pays very little attention to similar illustrative examples for advanced players.

In this article I will discuss two situations in which the vast majority of players go wrong.

***Rule 1:*** Be aware of minus points in competitive bidding if your side has a fit. In this situation minus points are dangerous, particularly:

- at favourable vulnerability
- if you have a spade fit

For example, take a look at a hand that was played in a team-of-four match:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 6 5 4 3<br>♥ Q J 9 2<br>♦ Q 7<br>♣ J 10 5 | |
| ♠ Q 10 7<br>♥ A K 8 6 3<br>♦ 6<br>♣ A 7 6 2 | *E-W Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ J<br>♥ 10 7 5<br>♦ A 10 9 3 2<br>♣ K 9 8 3 |
| | ♠ A K 9 8 2<br>♥ 4<br>♦ K J 8 5 4<br>♣ Q 4 | |

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | 2♥ | 2♠ | 4♥ |
| 4♠ | Double | All Pass | |

The defence was accurate: West ruffed two diamonds and –500 had to be accepted. But the fact that East-West wouldn't have made more than nine tricks in their Four Heart contract was very annoying. No doubt North wasn't very surprised about this when he tabled the dummy. Of course, a more friendly

break in spades and diamonds would have resulted in only –100, but, in that case, North-South would score three vulnerable undertricks against Four Hearts.

So, not a great result for North-South. What went wrong?

South's decision to save in Four Spades can't be criticised; he has a rather weak, distributional hand. That puts North in the spotlight. Well, he has the standard 6-9 points and three or more spades, so no problem with North. Wrong!

North is a point-count addict. Of course, he has six high-card points but he also has a lot of minus points.

(1) honours in hearts and no points in his side's suit (spades)

(2) with secondary values outside spades the hand is better suited to defence

(3) this vulnerability will inspire his partner to make a phantom sacrifice

Deduct these minus points and North has a clear pass. If South has length in hearts North is delighted to defend; if South has shortage in hearts he will re-open with a double and then North can bid Two Spades. Compare this North hand with:

♠ Q J x x
♥ x x
♦ x x
♣ x x x x x

With this 'clean' hand you bid Two Spades without any hesitation, because you welcome partner's sacrifice.

IN the next example we will see that sometimes it isn't enough to deduct points, it might also be necessary to give some honours a negative value.

***Rule 2:*** Be aware of minus points if your overcall is a close one

Let's compare two hands. It is Love All, partner is a passed hand and your right-hand opponent opens One Heart:

(1) ♠ x x
♥ x x
♦ x x x x
♣ A K J 10 x

(2) ♠ Q x x
♥ Q x
♦ K J x
♣ A J x x x

The second hand is five high-card points stronger and at first sight qualifies as a Two Club overcall. However, taking into account the minus points, a totally different view arises.

With a passed partner a game is most unlikely. You make your overcall:

(1) to compete the partscore

(2) to get a good lead

Although Hand (2) has a slightly better chance of winning a partscore fight, Hand (1) scores much better in terms of attracting the lead.

Taking the dangers of an overcall into account I would say that making an overcall with the 'stronger' hand is more risky because of the presence of minor points. If an opponent doubles Two Clubs, then with Hand (2) the punishment might be very severe, lacking so many club honours and intermediates. What's more, your major-suit queens might even prevent opponents making a game. Do not count these as two points each – no, in evaluating your hand you should give them a negative value (minus points). It makes a lot more sense and it's less dangerous to bid with the first hand, a 'clean' hand.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Bid more with a 'clean' hand. Don't get busy if you have minus points.**

*We move on to a different topic now. The next few articles are concerned with trying to keep the true nature of your hand a secret.*

# Don't cry before you are hurt

## Jeremy Flint *(England)*

*When JEREMY FLINT died in 1990 at the tender age of 62 it was a great loss to British bridge. His career spanned a good many years: he won the European Teams in 1963 and was runner-up in 1987; he was second in the World Teams Olympiad in 1960 and the Bermuda Bowl in 1987. During a 1966 tour of the United States he became a Life Master in eleven weeks, a record that stood for twenty-three years. He was also a great bridge theorist, being co-inventor of the Multi-coloured Two Diamonds, the Little Major and the Flint-Pender system. It was said that he was the instigator of many innovations that were developed by other people but he never minded that others took the credit for his ideas. He was bridge columnist of the London* Times *for ten years until his death. In addition, he wrote several books about bridge as well as one on horse-racing. He was married to Honor, also a British international, who still plays regularly in London's rubber bridge clubs.*

IT is generally considered an insult to call someone a poker player at our game. Where the implication is that his bidding relies on bravado rather than science, the description is indeed pejorative. But against that there are times when a bridge player would be wise to adopt the poker player's inscrutability.

Here is an elementary example. As West, at unfavourable vulnerability, you pick up this motley collection:

♠ J 6 5 4 3
♥ Q 6 5
♦ 2
♣ 10 8 4 3

Your partner deals and opens One Diamond, which South doubles. What do you bid? The only sensible call is pass. Naturally you are nervous that North will pass and that the final contract will be an expensive outing in One Diamond doubled. In practice this very seldom happens. Even where North holds five diamonds, experienced players don't pass an informatory double for penalties unless their trumps are sequential. If North should pass, East is still there. If he holds poor diamonds, he can redouble or introduce a second suit of his own. To bid One Spade on that miserable West hand is doubly wrong. Firstly, it undermines any sensible constructive bidding understanding after an informatory double; secondly, it exposes your side to a real rather than an illusory danger.

North might be reluctant to pass One Diamond doubled, but with four spades, a suit for which his partner has promised support, he will be quick to pounce. Once the North-South guns have opened fire it might be difficult to find a safe haven. Bidding One Spade may be likened to the over-cautious driver who slows down sharply at the crossroads even when the lights are green, and is surprised when the car behind runs into his rear.

MANY players who use the weak no-trump fail to appreciate that it is essentially a tactical weapon. Imagine that at favourable vulnerability you hold, as West:

♠ J 6
♥ 4 3
♦ Q 6 5 4 3 2
♣ 8 7 2

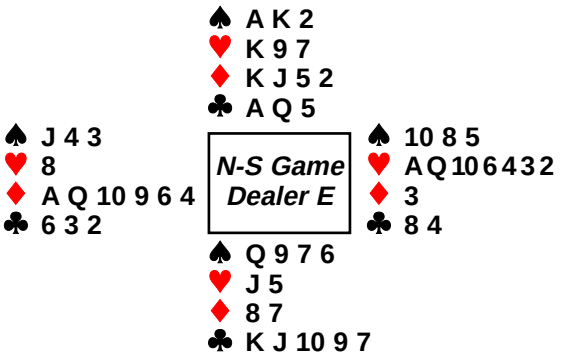
East deals and bids 1NT. South passes. What do you say now? There is something to be said for 3NT. Pass is all right, Two Diamonds dreadful. Frequently, when the opponents' points are equally divided, you will be allowed to play peacefully in 1NT. Bidding Two Diamonds is

an invitation to them to enter the bidding, discover their major fit and float into game.

ONCE again you are West, at Game All in a Pairs contest. East deals and opens Three Hearts. You hold the following unsuitable hand:

♠ J 4 3
♥ 8
♦ A Q 10 9 6 4
♣ 6 3 2

Admittedly the prospects are bleak. Pass is certainly the book bid. But you don't have to be a crystal gazer to foresee the likely outcome. If North is short in hearts he will double, offering South the choice of a penalty or game somewhere. If North has good hearts, he will probably try 3NT which, as you can see, will almost certainly succeed. So what can you do? Bid Four Hearts. This is a possible scenario:




If you pass Three Hearts, North will bid 3NT or double and rebid 3NT over South's Three Spades. Over Four Hearts he will double and South will usually bid Four Spades, which on this occasion you will defeat. Dangerous, you object? Not really. You risk a possibly irrelevant extra undertrick on the occasions when you are in trouble. More frequently, you disguise your discomfiture, forcing your opponents into a difficult guess. Remember, at poker it isn't always the best hand that wins the pot.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When you are outgunned, don't let your opponents know.**

*If the last tip was concerned largely with keeping out of trouble, the next one sets out deliberately to mislead.*

# Falsies

## George Havas *(Australia)*

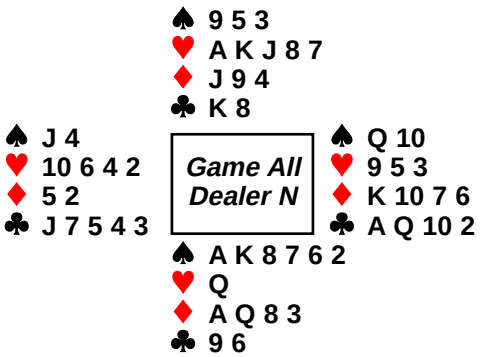
*Hungarian by birth, GEORGE HAVAS now lives in Brisbane, Australia. A computer scientist and theoretical mathematician by profession, he has represented Australia in four World Championships and two Far East Championships. His best result was to win the Far East Open Pairs in 1971. He has been a bridge columnist of* The Australian *for more than twenty years.*

FALSE-CARDS both by defenders and declarers are well understood and practised in bridge. False-bids ('falsies') are not so well appreciated, but they sure can give you a substantial uplift.

By falsies I do not mean those outrageous psychic opening bids on virtually no values that cause all kinds of trouble to both sides of the table. Rather I refer to bids aimed at deceiving the defenders, but with little risk to the declaring side. An ideal falsie will cover your deficiencies and hide your weak holdings while retaining credibility. If you think that you might enjoy misleading your innocent opponents, give falsies a try.

Good situations for using a falsie arise when you have a pretty fair idea of where you want to end up. You do not really need much more co-operation from partner so he cannot

be misled in a damaging way. Such opportunities most frequently occur when partner's hand is already limited. Consider the following deal from the Mixed Championship at the World Pairs Tournament held in Biarritz.




When Jim and Norma Borin of Australia sat North-South this was the bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♥[1] | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♠[2] | Pass |
| 3♣[3] | Pass | 4♠ | Pass |
| 4NT | Pass | 5♦ | Pass |
| 6♠ | All Pass | | |

[1] Precision, 5+ hearts, less than 16 points
[2] even playing natural methods this rebid limits North's hand
[3] the falsie, a long-suit trial bid in their system

Jim Borin knew that he was going to play in spades and he knew from his hand that a club lead was surely the most damaging one. With a limited partner, it could not cost to try a falsie, showing length in clubs, to discourage a club opening lead. When Norma accepted the game try Jim simply asked for aces. He leapt to the small slam once he knew that his side held three aces.

The falsie worked. West believed that declarer held long clubs so led a diamond and Jim wrapped up all the tricks. This earned North-South 377/388 matchpoints, a shared top with ten other pairs.

Note that, without the Three Club bid by South, West may well lead a club. This gives the defence two quick tricks, a poor score for North-South in Four Spades but a disaster in Six. However, confronted by the falsie, West's view was misguided and he was induced into a poor opening lead for the defence.

As with false-carding by defenders, there is a risk that you could mislead partner with an ill-chosen falsie. However, do contemplate using a falsie in the bidding, especially when partner has shown limited values so that you cannot lead him too far astray, in order to divert your opposition's attention.

It is not always right to make a clean breast of your holdings in the bidding. Add some titillation to your game.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Consider a falsie. It could give you a top.**

*We now move on to a subject where rubber bridge players tend to be far superior to those who only play duplicate – the penalty double. Generally speaking rubber bridge players believe the cards that they hold and, sometimes erroneously, trust partner to have what he has said he has and double when they think contracts are going down. Duplicate players, on the other hand, are often overcome with doubt: perhaps partner has nothing for his bidding, perhaps the distribution is freakish, perhaps partner will think the double is for take-out, etc, etc. When it comes down to it, they do not double enough. The following tip contains useful advice to encourage all bridge players to double when the cards lie badly for declarer.*

# The panther double

**Zia Mahmood *(Pakistan)***

*Pakistani by birth, ZIA MAHMOOD is now best described as cosmopolitan with homes in both London and New York. He is one of the leading personalities of the bridge world. He has represented Pakistan several times in world competition and was a major contributor to that country's silver medals in the 1981 Bermuda Bowl and 1986 Rosenblum Teams. Zia now plays on the US circuit and has won most national titles several times. He was the winner of the Omar Sharif World Individual which was held in 1990 with the largest total purse ($200,000) in the history of bridge. He has appeared on many TV programmes about the game and has issued a bet with a stake of a million dollars that no computer will beat him at bridge. Regular columnist of* The Guardian, *he has also written two books, the highly successful* Bridge My Way, *described by Omar Sharif as the best bridge book ever, and his latest* Ask Zia: Your Top 50 Bridge Questions Answered.

YOU love bridge, just like the rest of us addicts. But have you ever thought about which part of the game excites you most? It could be a delight in fine bidding, the indulgent pleasure of a well-played hand, the artistic beauty of a killing defence, or perhaps a combination. They do all have an irresistible charm.

Actually, for myself, there is a fourth, even greater, attraction: the psychological game. I find it fascinating. Surprisingly, although countless books have been published on bidding and play, almost nothing has appeared on this subject. Which is a good introduction to my BOLS tip, one which comes straight from the heart.

Psychological bridge can come in many guises but the satisfaction from a successful coup is always jumbo-sized. Just ask any declarer who ever deflected the opponents from attacking his weakest suit by playing it first. Or any adventurer on his way to slam who cue-bid a control he didn't have and successfully stopped the killing lead.

What bliss, an incomparable ecstasy that lingers on long after the event. The great advantage of these plays, unlike improvements to cardplay technique which can take years to perfect, is that they can be adopted instantly by any average player. Take my tip: I call it the Panther Double. This is a psychological penalty double, based not on the evidence of your cards but on 'other' factors: the timing, the opponents' bidding or their table action.

You can use the double whenever the following situations exist, and you have the slightest excuse.

## 1 The impossible-sounding auction

As West you hold:

♠ 9 7 6
♥ A Q J 10 3
♦ 8
♣ 10 8 4 2

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| *RHO* | *you* | *LHO* | *partner* |
| | | | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass |
| Pass | 3♥ | Pass | Pass |
| 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | Pass |
| Pass | DOUBLE | | |

The opponents stopped in Two Spades and now North has punished South for competing. Something went wrong: double them. You have a great lead and the one time in ten they make will be compensated amply by the juicy penalties of the other nine.

## 2 You want your opponents to run

This is great for poker players. It starts with a familiar auction where the opponents struggle into a contract where you know they are about to get lucky and make: DOUBLE. The fear of a large number will help remove them to a 'safer' resting place.

I was playing with David Berkowitz, the American champion, in the Vanderbilt tournament. He held:

♠ J 4 3
♥ K 10 3
♦ J 10 4
♣ J 10 9 5

Sitting East, with South the dealer, he heard the following auction:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | *me* | | *David* |
| 1♣ | 1♥ | 2♥[1] | Double |
| 2♠ | Pass | 3♣ | Pass |
| 3♥[2] | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | Pass | Pass | Double[3] |
| 5♣ | Pass | Pass | Double[4] |
| All Pass | | | |

[1] club fit, forcing but denies 4 spades
[2] looking for 3NT
[3] a complete bluff
[4] much happier

David could see that Four Spades on the 4-3 fit would make with the friendly trump break. He also knew that the opponents did not know this, so he doubled. A bad break might mean declarer losing control and conceding a large penalty, so South reasonably ran to the 'safety' of the known club fit.

Brilliant – yet all he needed to do was listen carefully to the auction and have the courage to make a Panther Double. You don't need to look as sleek as a panther to bid like one. *(Berkowitz is a little on the large side. SJB)*

## 3 Invitational auctions

This is my personal favourite. Whenever a limited hand accepts an invitation, the Panther should be ready to pounce at the slightest excuse. That excuse may be as flimsy as the fact that the last bid was made after a lengthy hesitation, strongly suggesting an overbid, or at least a tight contract.

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *you* |
| 1NT | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 3NT[1] | Pass | Pass | Double |
| All Pass | | | |

[1] after a pause

The double, by increasing the stakes, places considerable pressure on the declarer who will proceed to misplace the high cards. In addition, his mind, filled with images of ghosts and bad breaks, will be unable to function clearly.

If the sequence above is for the more adventurous, the more common limited auction where the defender can foresee bad lies or breaks for declarer, is impossible to resist. Now the prey is helpless; it almost feels unsporting to pounce.

Armed with your new toy you decide to sit in on a high-stake rubber bridge game. Naturally you pick up your typical hand:

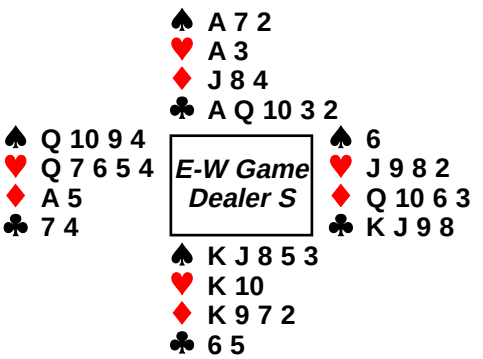
♠ 6
♥ J 9 8 2
♦ Q 10 6 3
♣ K J 9 8

and hear this auction:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | *you* |
| Pass | Pass | 1♣ | Pass[1] |
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | 3NT | Double[2] |
| 4♠ | Double | All Pass | |

[1] the boring collection becomes a little less boring when North bids clubs
[2] the Panther Double: the auction is limited and more, both suits break badly. It's time to pounce, maybe they will run.

This is fun because the complete hand is:



Partner leads the seven of clubs and declarer finesses, losing to the king. South wins the heart return in hand to play the ace of spades and another spade. When you show out he wins the king while you throw a diamond. He now tries the ace of clubs and a club ruff and partner overruffs. West cashes the queen of spades and exits with a heart to dummy's ace. Declarer, desperate, and with no more entries to dummy, tries a diamond to his king. West wins and South's only other trick is his last trump.

South ends up making three spade tricks, two hearts and one club; down four and +800 for East-West. Perhaps declarer could have done better but most humans don't perform well under pressure.

Now be honest. If you had picked up that insignificant looking East hand before reading this article would you have allowed your 800 to slip by? Life has no guarantees and I admit that sometimes the Panther Double can backfire. But you don't have to worry. If your partner screams at you after such a disaster, blame me.

So, my BOLS tip is:

**When the opponents have an impossible-sounding auction, or when you want them to run or when they have an invitational auction and the cards do not lie well for them, try a Panther Double.**

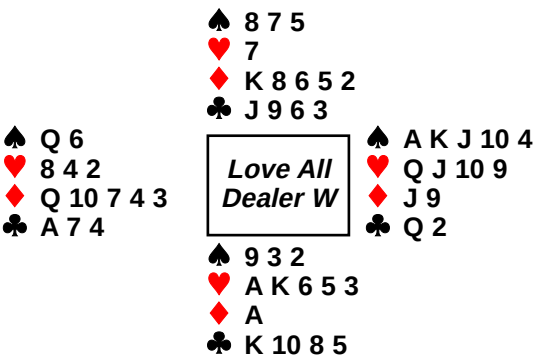
*Next is some sound advice on what to do if you are doubled – although it may be unwise if you are playing against Zia!*

# Take the hint

## Paul Marston *(Australia)*

*PAUL MARSTON was born in New Zealand in 1949 but emigrated to Australia in the early 1980s. He has represented both countries several times. He now lives in Sydney where he is a bridge professional and club manager as well as being the columnist for* Financial Review *and the author of several books. He is considered to be one of the world's leading authorities on strong pass and relay methods.*

IF they double you for penalties, take the hint and consider changing suit – especially if your partner has had no say in the choice of trumps. Shopping around like this will seldom make matters worse and will often improve your outlook dramatically.



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pass | Pass | 1♠ |
| 2♥ | Double | Pass | Pass |
| ? | | | |

Passing is no success. West leads the queen of spades; East takes three spades and continues with a fourth spade to ensure three trump tricks. Declarer will eventually go three down.

At the table South bid Three Clubs, West doubled, as defenders are prone to do, and the contract made without trouble. After three rounds of spades declarer crossruffed for nine tricks. 'What luck,' cried the defence, 'four trumps in dummy!' But the point is that this is quite likely since partner figures to be short in hearts and therefore long in everything else.

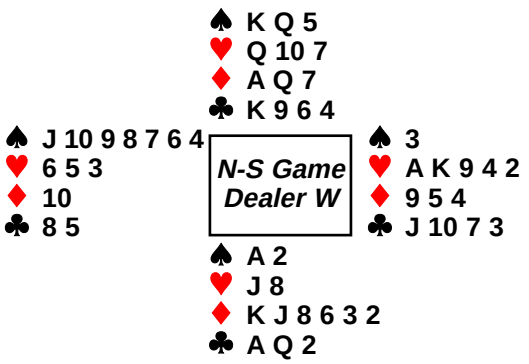
It would be wrong for North to run, fearing the double might be converted for penalties. Only by passing does North put East on the spot.

Sometimes, of course, there is no good contract. If the defenders don't lose their nerve and bid, your escape action has put you one level higher. This may not be good, but it is not so bad. At Pairs a bottom is a bottom and at IMPs the scale thins out at the top.

It also pays to take the hint from opponents who double at higher levels. In the Venice Cup in Perth in 1989 an American woman doubled Seven Diamonds with a trump trick and her opponents settled into an unbreakable 7NT.

Recently, a defender doubled 3NT (which in Australia is for a spade lead). Instead of accepting an outcome of –300, declarer ran to a four-card club suit and played in a 4-3 fit which made.

The argument also applies to slams.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 3♠ | 3NT | Pass |
| 6NT | Pass | Pass | Double |
| 7♦ | Pass | Pass | Double |
| All Pass | | | |

While West's pre-empt is pushy, North's 3NT and South's 6NT are fairly routine. East's double, however, is greedy and he paid. From South's position, what else can the double be except the ace-king of hearts? Accordingly, South moved to place West on lead. Against Seven Diamonds doubled, West had to find the winning lead. Faced with a guess, he tried a club and that was that.

Declarer ran six diamonds and three spades and East found himself unable to hold on to four clubs and a top heart, so the grand slam made.

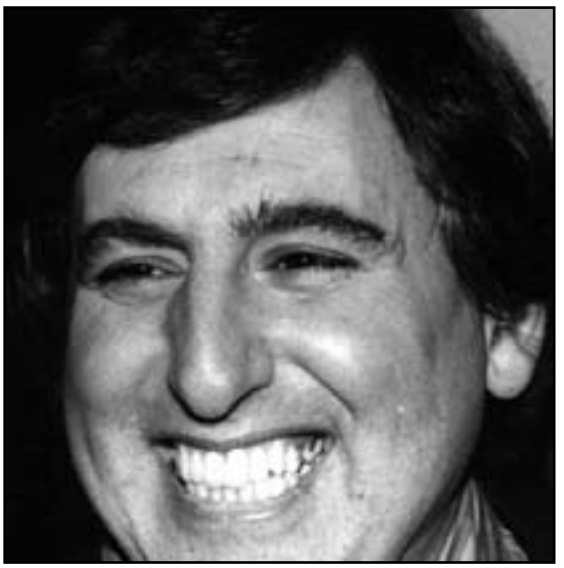
So my BOLS bridge tip is:

**When they double you,**
**don't just sit there –**
**try a sensible alternative.**

*We move on to a different sort of double but this is most definitely not to be confused with the Panther Double. The advice given is excellent and if you can make explicit agreements with your partner it is bound to improve your game – but that is a big 'if'. It is a certain disaster when one of you doubles to 'stop partner bidding' if it has the opposite effect. It does not take many such disasters before the strength of a partnership begins to be undermined.*

# Make the 'one for the road' a double

**Eric Kokish *(Canada)***



*ERIC KOKISH is generally considered the 'expert's journalist'. He is a bridge professional, writer, teacher and coach. His high spots as a player were a silver medal in the World Open Pairs in 1978 and then another silver medal in the 1995 Bermuda Bowl in Beijing. He specialises in detailed analytical reports of major championships and is a regular contributor, particularly on bidding theory, to many bridge magazines worldwide. Another aspect of his work is to coach and prepare national teams for international events and in that respect he has travelled widely. Teams that he has coached that have gone on to exceed the world's expectations include: China, the Netherlands, Iceland and Indonesia. Eric is in his late forties and married to Beverly Kraft with whom he lives in Montreal. They have a son, Matthew, who was born in 1987 and already seems to have big league potential in baseball or basketball. He also has a golden retreiver named Lady. In what little spare time he has he enjoys collecting rock 'n roll records and baseball cards. He also enjoys cooking – is that what keeps him cuddly?*

BRIDGE has changed a great deal in recent years. Not only have new 'destructive' systems gained in popularity, but also the basic philosophy of the game has taken a definite turn toward the aggressive. Undisciplined pre-empts, overcalls on four-card suits, pathetically weak jump raises: these are simply a few of the highlights. With more ways to get into the bidding, there are more contested auctions, and there is a high premium for each side to make the winning final decision. Should we bid on or have we done enough? If we do sell out, should we double?

In the field of competitive bidding, there has been considerable progress. We find ourselves turning to analytical techniques (the evolution of deal generators and the resurgence of the Law of Total Tricks, to name two) to help us solve delicate bidding problems where not so long ago we might have relied solely on our intuition and experience. Can we do more?

**(1)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 10 7 6 3<br>♥ A 9 2<br>♦ 5<br>♣ 10 9 7 4 3 | |
| ♠ K 9 5<br>♥ Q J 6 5 3<br>♦ J 10 2<br>♣ A 8 | *Love All*<br>*Dealer E* | ♠ 4<br>♥ K 10<br>♦ K 8 7 6 4 3<br>♣ K Q 6 5 |
| | ♠ A Q J 8 2<br>♥ 8 7 4<br>♦ A Q 9<br>♣ J 2 | |

**(2)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K 7 6 3<br>♥ 5<br>♦ 10 7 2<br>♣ 10 9 7 4 3 | |
| ♠ 10 9 5<br>♥ A J 9 6 3 2<br>♦ 5 3<br>♣ A 8 | *Love All*<br>*Dealer E* | ♠ 4<br>♥ K Q 10<br>♦ K J 8 6 4<br>♣ K Q 6 5 |
| | ♠ A Q J 8 2<br>♥ 8 7 4<br>♦ A Q 9<br>♣ J 2 | |

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♦ |
| 1♠ | Double | 3♠ | Pass |
| Pass | 4♥ | Pass | Pass |
| ? | | | |

West might well bid Two Hearts at his first turn, but many players would double. North's pre-emptive jump to Three Spades is typical of the way the game is played today. When the bidding reverts to West, he has paid the price for his first bid. He is forced to guess what to do and he guesses to bid Four Hearts, his spade length suggesting that East will be short there and thus potentially fairly long in hearts.

Now it is quite logical and indeed almost routine for the bidding to end with three passes at this point. North-South have pushed their opponents around. When South passed Three Spades, he judged for the partnership that game was both intrinsically unlikely and an unsound tactical venture. It is bad bridge for North or South to bid Four Spades now, in effect allowing West a 'free shot'. Significantly often, West will have done the wrong thing. It is far more attractive tactically to double for penalties in this sort of situation, making East-West pay for their four-level stab.

In practice, however, a pure 'I know I've got them' double is very unlikely to occur or to be correct even if it does occur (the opponents might easily have a better spot and realise it). The actual South hand-type – fairly good offence and promising defence – will occur with far greater frequency. Should South take further action with this 'two-way' hand, or should he simply let it go?

Even if both sides own a nine-card fit (and East-West could easily have found only a seven- or eight-card fit in hearts), there is a good chance that nine tricks will be the limit for each side in this scenario. The mathematics of the game suggest that South will gain by taking further action. If Four Hearts is cold, North-South should sacrifice; if Four Hearts is going down, North-South should double.

South thinks it is correct for his side to take further action, but he wishes to leave the final decision between declaring and defending to North. I suggest that a double should carry this specific message.

In Lay-out (1), North has maximum defence. In fact, he'd like to make the same sort of double over Four Hearts himself, but it is dangerous to act at the four level when the partnership may own just eight combined trumps (the price of the 'modern' approach). North is pleased to pass South's 'one for the road' double, however, and a diamond lead nets a quick +300. Four Spades doubled would, in all likelihood, have gone one down, –100. That's a difference of 9 IMPs for the winning choice between two 'busy' decisions. Passing out Four Hearts would have yielded +100; better than bidding Four Spades, but appreciably worse than doubling.

In Lay-out (2), North's orientation is more offensive than defensive. He is closer to bidding than passing. The result would depend on the opposing lie and the defence, but on balance it would be right to bid Four Spades.

SOME other examples:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| Pass | 2♠ | Pass | Pass |
| ? | | | |

[1] 15-17

South holds:

♠ A x x x
♥ A x x x
♦ A J x
♣ K x

South should not pass. Indeed, many would have acted directly over Two Hearts. While South has a fine hand for hearts, he also has good defence against a spade contract. West has gambled. Should South bid 'one for the road' and concede that West has done the right thing? Or should he solicit the opinion of his partner, who might not have been in a position to act directly over Two Spades because he lacked the security of a proven fit? North might hold:

♠ J 10 x
♥ J x x x x
♦ Q x
♣ J x x

Now Three Hearts figures to be at least one down while Two Spades might be two or three down off the top. A double allows North to pass when it is best to do so. Give North:

♠ x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ Q 10 x x
♣ x x x

and he will gladly remove the two-way double (sure, he might have bid directly over Two Spades).

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♠ | 4♥ |
| ? | | | |

Give South:

♠ A K J x x
♥ K x x
♦ A J x
♣ Q x

He has the strength to bid Four Spades but there is a mild defensive (vs offensive) bias. He'd like to double, but not if North will feel obliged to pass with:

♠ Q x x x
♥ x
♦ Q x x
♣ J 10 x x x

If the double says, 'I could bid Four Spades, but I have a relatively balanced hand and perhaps it would be better to defend at this level,' North will pass with:

♠ x x x
♥ J x
♦ K x x x
♣ K x x x

but remove to Four Spades with the first hand. Mission accomplished.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**If you are considering 'unusual' further action on a competitive deal, double to announce that you'd like some help from partner, whose assets might be only imperfectly defined by his previous bidding.**

It follows that when you're sure you wish to defend in such situations, you must pass.

If you do adopt these doubles, you will need to define them carefully. If you do not do your preparation, you will be better off doubling for penalty all the time!

The competitive jungle is filled with crazies, most of them ruthless. Fortify yourself when you go out to face them. Make the 'one for the road' a double.

*Of course, in practice, the higher the level of the competitive auction, the less likely it is that you should bid on. If you have forced the opponents to guess then you should hope they have guessed wrong … hence the following advice.*

# The five level belongs to the opponents

## Ed Manfield *(USA)*

*Born in 1943, ED MANFIELD of Hyattsville, Maryland, is an economist and professional bridge player. His high spot was in 1986 when he won the Rosenblum Teams in Miami Beach, having been second in the previous Rosenblum four years earlier in Biarritz.*

MOST players have a tendency to resolve difficult competitive decisions by 'bidding one more'. This is often good strategy at low levels – in part, because defence against low-level contracts tends to be very difficult. However, at high levels it pays to exercise caution. In particular, it is seldom right to compete over the opponents' five-level bid.

Many factors combine to make it usually unwise to bid five over five:

a) Even though your hand might be quite distributional, the opponents' hands are often much more balanced. Therefore, you will frequently have more winners against their contract than you might expect.

b) Partner might have minor honours in the opponents' suits. It is difficult to envisage

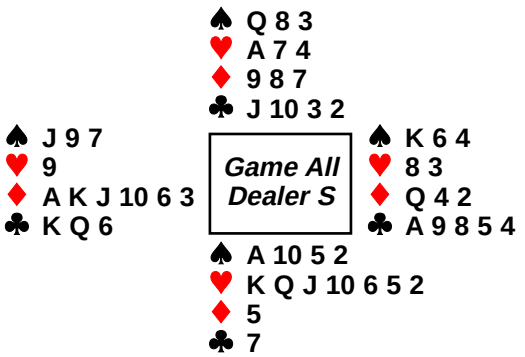
the defensive power of stray queens, jacks and tens. However, such cards can often help defeat the opponents' five-level contract. Other times your five-level bid will not fare well because the opponents have minor honours in your suits.

c) In defending high-level contracts there are relatively few combinations of cards that need to be considered. Therefore, defenders are much less likely to err against five-level contracts than they are against lower contracts.

d) Unless the deal is a distributional freak, the combined trick-taking potential of the hands (i.e. the number of tricks you can take in your best trump suit added to the number the opponents can take in theirs), seldom exceeds 20. Therefore, even if your five-over-five bid works out well, your profit will tend to be small. For example, suppose the opponents bid Five Diamonds with both sides vulnerable, and you successfully save in Five Spades. If Five Diamonds makes, and you go two down doubled, your gain will be only 100 points (–500 versus –600).

e) The combined trick-taking potential of the hands is often 19 or less. In these cases five-over-five bids are often disastrous.

On the following deal South had exciting distribution, and he succumbed to the temptation of bidding five over five:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | 2♦ | 2♥ | 3♦ |
| 4♥ | 5♦ | Pass | Pass |
| 5♥ | Double | All Pass | |

South knew that his partner had a weak hand, and that Five Diamonds might well make. In addition, if partner produced a suitable dummy (such as ♠Kx ♥Axxx ♦xxx ♣xxxx) Five Hearts might also make. Reasoning that one contract or the other was likely to make, South chose the aggressive course and competed to Five Hearts.

Unfortunately, five over five met its usual fate. South had to go two down in Five Hearts. Meanwhile (thanks to the spade ten and the club jack-ten), Five Diamonds would have also gone down. Therefore, although the Five Heart bid seemed reasonable at the time, it produced a huge loss. (Note that if North had not held the jack-ten of clubs, then Five Diamonds would make. However, in that case the Five Heart save would have shown only a small profit.)

This result is more the rule than the exception. Time and again I have seen players suffer 300 or 500 at the five level when they would have gone plus against the opponents' five-level contract. I challenge you to keep track for several months of every hand on which you compete over the opponents' five-level bid. I am quite sure that the points you gain from such competition will be far outweighed by the points you lose.

You will find that when the opponents bid at the five level, it will usually be best to defend. Therefore, my BOLS bridge tip to you is:

**Think twice before you bid five over five: the five level belongs to the opponents.**

*We now leave the competitive arena and look at how to bid our hands constructively. The tips that follow all contain good advice.*

# Play the hand yourself

## Marijke van der Pas *(Netherlands)*

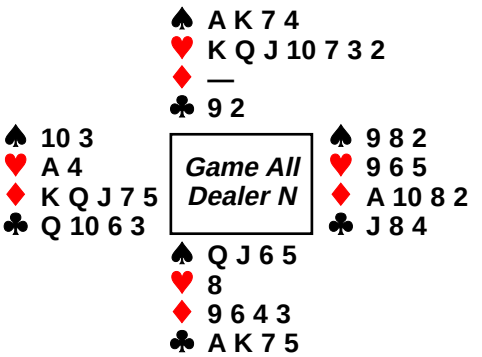
*MARIJKE VAN DER PAS, of Utrecht, is a professional bridge journalist. One of the top women players in the Netherlands and a regular member of the team for many years, she won the European Pairs in 1980 in partnership with Elly Schippers. The Dutch women's team were a powerful force in women's bridge throughout the 1980s but never quite managed to win anything, hence Marijke's international team record: second in the Venice Cup in 1989, second in the European Championship in 1983 and 1989, third in the Team Olympiad in 1984, third in the European Championships in 1979 and 1991.*

THE playing strength of a seven-card suit is enormous. Even a 7-0 fit is manageable. Get that into your head and don't put your seven-carder down in dummy.

If you started bridge with lessons, you will remember the ones about the 4-4 fit in a major. Time after time the teacher hammered home this point. The first convention you learnt was Stayman, to be sure none of those 4-4 fits would be missed. After a few lessons you even saw 4-4 fits in your dreams.

You didn't realise it at the time, but you had been completely brainwashed; so effectively that, even at a very high level, many bridge players can't give up the idea of the holy 4-4 fit.

HERE is an example:

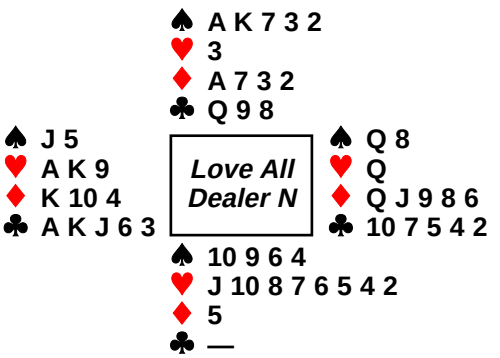



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♥ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 4♦ | Pass |
| 5♣ | Pass | 5♦ | Pass |
| 6♠ | All Pass | | |

After the lead of the king of diamonds, ruffed in dummy, West was on lead again with the ace of hearts. After another diamond declarer was in trouble. Six Spades went down despite a friendly trump break; Six Hearts, even with the heart suit 4-1, is laydown.

THE attraction of a good fit is amazing. Did you ever ignore a 5-4 fit?

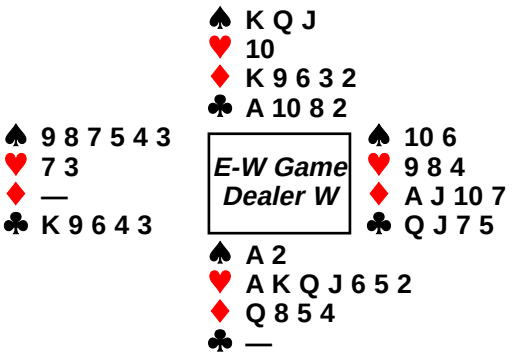
It is November 1991. The ten top teams in the Netherlands are playing 27 matches to determine the 1991 Dutch champions. All the tables are playing the same hands. On the deal below, all Norths opened One Spade (some promising five cards), East passed, and almost all Souths raised to Four Spades.



West doubled Four Spades and East bid 4NT for the minors. Four South players then bid on to Five Spades. Even after the lead of the queen of hearts there are no entries to develop the heart suit. Whatever you do there are no more than eight tricks in a spade contract. Only two players remembered the playing strength of their own suit and bid Four Hearts over the One Spade opening bid. As you can see, even my aunt Annie would make Four Hearts.

The ten North-South results were: one each of +590, +420 and –100; three –300s; and four –500s. Surprised?

ANOTHER place, another time: Denmark, Easter 1992. The national teams of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands are playing a competition as part of their training for the Olympiad in Salsomaggiore.




North opens One Diamond. Which contract do you want to play as South?

One pair bid:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| | 1♦ |
| 2♥ | 2NT |
| 3♦ | 3♠ |
| 5NT | 6♦ |
| Pass! | |

One brainwashed South even managed a pass after a double of Six Diamonds ... ! If your partner has a void in hearts, Six Hearts is still a contract without any problem.

Results: –100 once, –50 five times, +980 four times. Are you astonished?

My BOLS bridge tip is very simple:

**Remember the playing strength of a long suit and don't try too hard to find or support another fit.**

*The following advice should be considered together with Marijke's suggestion. It should help you decide when to opt for the 4-4 fit.*

# Consider the discard

## Patrick Jourdain *(Wales)*

*Born in 1942, Patrick Jourdain, of Cardiff, is a professional bridge journalist and teacher. He is Wales's most successful player, having represented that country more than fifty times in Camrose matches. He is perhaps best known as editor of the IBPA (International Bridge Press Association) Bulletin, though he is also bridge correspondent of the* Daily Telegraph. *He was President of the British Bridge League from 1995–7.*

YOU discover during an auction that your partnership has a 5-4 fit in one suit, and a 4-4 fit in another. Which should you select as trumps at, say, the slam level?

Traditional advice says choose the 4-4 fit: a ruff in either hand may gain a trick, whereas with the 5-4 fit the ruff only gains if taken in the short trump hand.

But this advice directs players' attention to the wrong priority. Instead of thinking about the ruff, or blindly assuming that the 4-4 fit is better, you should concentrate on whether the discard on the long suit will prove useful when it is not trumps.

TO illustrate the point, suppose that you pick up the following hand:

♠ K Q 6 5 2
♥ K Q 5 2
♦ K Q J
♣ 8

You open One Spade. Partner responds a Jacoby 2NT, showing game values with four-card support. Is there any reason to seek another fit? No. If partner has four hearts there is a club ruff, but it will not help as you have nothing useful to discard on the fifth spade. Suppose partner has:

♠ A 8 4 3
♥ A 8 4 3
♦ A 4
♣ Q 6 5

then Six Spades is superior to Six Hearts because on the third diamond you can discard a heart and not worry about a 4-1 heart break. By contrast, suppose your hand is:

♠ K Q 6 5 2
♥ K Q 5 2
♦ A 7 5
♣ 8

Again, the auction starts: 1♠–2NT. Now hearts can gain as trumps. A losing diamond may go on the fifth spade. If dummy has:

♠ A 8 4 3
♥ A 8 4 3
♦ K 4 2
♣ 6 5

Six Hearts is excellent and Six Spades has no chance.

THE Jacoby 2NT is a popular convention, but many players follow it up with highly artificial sequences which prevent them locating a different trump fit. This deal arose in the 1991 British Trials:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K Q 9 6<br>♥ K 8 4 3<br>♦ J 5<br>♣ K 7 4 | |
| ♠ 8 7<br>♥ 7 5<br>♦ K Q 6 4 3<br>♣ A Q 10 5 | *N-S Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ J<br>♥ J 9 2<br>♦ 9 8 7 2<br>♣ J 9 6 3 2 |
| | ♠ A 10 5 4 3 2<br>♥ A Q 10 6<br>♦ A 10<br>♣ 8 | |

At every table bar one, spades were trumps. The exception was:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♠ | 2NT |
| 3♥ | 4♥ |
| 4NT | 5♦ |
| 6♥ | |

2NT was game-going, with spade support, Three Hearts and Four Hearts were natural, 4NT was Roman Key Card Blackwood with hearts as trumps (though it would have been helpful if both major-suit kings had counted).

In the auction given North was known not to hold the ace of clubs as he would have shown it with a cue-bid over Three Hearts. (The cue agrees hearts, as without heart support North's first move would be to bid Three Spades.) Five Diamonds showed the king of hearts, without reference to the king of spades.

Relying on the spades to run, South bid Six Hearts which proved to be an easy contract. After trumps were drawn, dummy's diamonds went away on the spades, and a minor-suit ruff was the twelfth trick.

Now, suppose South's hand had been:

♠ A 10 5 4 3 2
♥ A Q 7 6
♦ A K
♣ 8

If the auction starts 1♠–2NT, it is pointless to suggest hearts as trumps. The only useful discard on the spades would be a heart. With the same dummy Six Spades would be superior to Six Hearts because you can survive a 4-1 heart break by setting up the king of clubs as the twelfth trick.

THIS deal, written up by Alan Truscott, won the IBPA Romex Award in 1990–1 for the Best Bid Hand:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ A Q 8 6 5 2<br>♥ 5<br>♦ A K 7 6<br>♣ 10 4 | |
| ♠ —<br>♥ 9 8 7 6 4 3<br>♦ J 5<br>♣ K 9 5 3 2 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ J 4 3<br>♥ K Q 10<br>♦ 10 9 2<br>♣ Q J 8 7 |
| | ♠ K 10 9 7<br>♥ A J 2<br>♦ Q 8 4 3<br>♣ A 6 | |

Brian Glubok (South) and Edgar Kaplan (North) bid unopposed:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♦ | 2♠ |
| 3♠ | 4♦ |
| 5NT | 6♣ |
| 7♦ | |

Six Clubs showed two of the top three honours in diamonds.

Glubok knew they had at least nine spades but could see that his club loser would go on the fifth spade (or he could discard two hearts if partner's shape was 6-2-4-1). So he wisely selected diamonds as trumps and was rewarded when Seven Diamonds proved easy and Seven Spades unmakeable.

But suppose South's hand had been:

♠ K 10 9 7
♥ K Q 2
♦ Q 8 4 3
♣ A K

After the same start, 1♦–2♠–3♠–4♦, South can see that the only useful discard on partner's spades is a diamond (the suit may break 4-1). With the same North hand as before, Six Spades (or 6NT) would be better than Six Diamonds.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When choosing between trump suits, imagine running the long suit, and ask what you expect to throw from the other hand. The answer will often tell you which trump suit will serve you best.**

*The next tip is designed for aspiring partnerships and suggests that they should think of a useful meaning for bids that cannot be natural.*

# Use the free space

## Dirk Schroeder *(Germany)*

*DIRK SCHROEDER of Wiesbaden, Germany, works in the field of plastics production – synthetic leather and film in particular. He is also a professional bridge teacher, journalist and travel organiser. He has won many national titles, three Common Market Championships and represented Germany on numerous occasions. He was responsible for developing the first European Youth Camp in 1979 and has been a member of the European Bridge League Executive and its Youth Committee since 1989. He has been Chairman of Appeals at many Junior Europeans which he conducted with typical German discipline. He is married to Kareen, a member of the team that won the European Women's Championship in 1989.*

IN comparison to chess, bridge theory is still in its infancy. There is much complex development in bidding that is of no interest to the great mass of bridge players. I would like to show you a different approach to perfecting the bidding, a method which could be integrated into every natural bidding system. The basic idea is simple: make use of bids which cannot be explained logically, to express what cannot be shown in a natural way.

In examining natural systems we find a number of bids that are not used because

they lack a natural, logical meaning, for example:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♦ | 1♥ |
| 2♣ | 2NT |
| 3♠ | |

The Three Spade bid cannot be natural as South did not bid One Spade over One Heart. Thus the Three Spade bid can be used for something else. Perhaps to show 5-5 in the minors with enough strength for game. Then Three Clubs can be used as a sign-off.

THERE are a number of 'free space' bids in most natural bidding systems and I would like to acquaint you with one in particular.

First we must assume that when a major-suit fit has been found at the three level, then no other denomination can be considered for the final contract. For instance:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 2♣ | 2♥ |
| 3♥ | |

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♠ | 3♠ |

In these situations a new suit at the four level must be a cue-bid, investigating the possibility of a slam. But what is the meaning of a 3NT bid?

My proposition is that 3NT should be a trump cue-bid, showing better trump quality than has already been shown. Conversely, avoiding this 3NT bid shows poor trump quality.

Slams frequently fail, even when all other suits are perfectly controlled, because of trump quality. Using a 3NT cue-bid the slam investigation can be stopped early when the poor trump quality is discovered. Here are some examples:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ A | *N-S Game* | ♠ K J 9 6 2 |
| ♥ A K 7 4 3 | *Dealer W* | ♥ 10 8 5 |
| ♦ K Q J 4 | | ♦ A |
| ♣ K Q 9 | | ♣ 10 7 5 3 |

| WEST | EAST |
|---|---|
| 2♥ | 3♥ |
| 3♠ | 4♦ |
| 4♥ | |

East's Four Diamonds tells West that, firstly, he has poor trumps and, secondly, that he does not have a club control. There is no further reason for West to look for a slam and the partnership can stop safely at the four level.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ A K | *Love All* | ♠ 10 9 7 4 2 |
| ♥ A Q 10 8 4 2 | *Dealer W* | ♥ K J 9 |
| ♦ A | | ♦ 8 3 2 |
| ♣ A K 7 3 | | ♣ 10 4 |

| WEST | EAST |
|---|---|
| 2♣ | 2♦ |
| 2♥ | 3♥ |
| 3♠ | 3NT |
| 4♣ | 4♥ |
| 5♦ | 5♥ |
| 5♠ | 6♣ |
| 7♥ | |

A longer sequence this time. Clearly East is very weak but has excellent heart support which he shows with his 3NT trump cue-bid. Knowledge of good trumps opposite makes it safe for West to investigate the grand slam. Once East has signed off twice more, with Four Hearts and Five Hearts, he can afford to own up to his third-round club control which is just want West wanted to hear.

Whenever this 3NT trump cue-bid is used, it is important to think what trumps have been promised already.

Of course, when a minor-suit fit has been established, this agreement does not apply as a 3NT bid must be to play.

This is my BOLS bridge tip:

**Examine your natural bidding system step by step, looking for free spaces which are of no natural use. Try to work with your partner to see how these spaces can best be used.**

*Next we have some thoughts from two great players of the past, who died in the early 1990s. Both of them were often scathing about modern trends in bidding and these tips reflect their views.*

# Idiocies in the modern game

## or 'Careless talk costs lives'

### Terence Reese *(England)*

*TERENCE REESE was probably the all-time great name in British bridge, both as a player and a writer. Born in 1913 he won the Bermuda Bowl in 1955 and the World Par Contest in 1961. He also won four European Teams Championships. Tragedy struck in the Bermuda Bowl of 1965 in Buenos Aires when he and his partner Boris Schapiro were accused of cheating. The British inquiry found them not guilty but Reese's enthusiasm for playing bridge never really recovered. However, his writing thrived and he was the author of more than twenty books on the game,* Reese on Play *and* The Expert Game *being considered classics. He died in his home in Hove, Sussex in 1996 leaving a widow, Alwyn.*

*His manner was marked by a supercilious, sometimes humorous, sometimes malevolent, attitude. This expressed itself in the frequent (disapproving) comment, 'Lovely bidding! Lovely play!' His expressions had an acid quality as during a radio commentary when a player opened Two Spades on a hand far from qualifying for the bid, 'Picture a woman who calls a spade two spades.'*

MUCH effort is spent on devising new conventions. The American *Bridge World* always has some cute little novelty on offer. Meanwhile, some of the silliest styles imaginable are universally accepted.

LET me start with one of the silliest practices of all:

### 1 Weak jump overcalls

Round about the 1950s, someone had the idea that it would be clever to overcall, say, One Club with Two Spades on such as KJxxxx and a side queen.

There may have been some sense in this before negative doubles were universally played. Since about 1970, when Sputnik doubles became standard procedure throughout the world, the advantage of such overcalls has been greatly reduced, because they no longer embarrass a responder to the opening bid who holds a moderate balanced hand of the 7-9 HCP variety.

Meanwhile, what are the disadvantages attached to such actions?

Consider these:

(1) You cannot make a strong or intermediate jump overcall on a hand with a good six-card suit and three or four quick tricks. You may have to double with unsuitable shape. Thus take-out doubles lose much of their normal sense and value.

(2) The weak jump overcall gives the opening (and usually stronger) side important information. This is a theme that will recur. Instead, perhaps, of bidding too high because the unbalanced distribution has not been revealed, they will take note of the hazards and may either penalise the overcall or stay at a safe level in a contract of their own.

### 2 Weak distributional overcalls

Of much the same kind are those two-suited distributional overcalls when it is obvious that your side is outgunned.

The bidding begins:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pass | 1♦ | Pass |
| 1♠ | 2NT(??) | | |

West holds:

♠ 5
♥ K J 8 6 3
♦ 3
♣ Q 10 7 6 4 2

Now I don't say this is particularly dangerous, but you are telling your opponents that they will run into bad distribution.

It is the same when you hold just one long suit. The bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | 2♦(?) | | |

West holds:

♠ 8
♥ Q 10 8 5
♦ A Q J 9 6 2
♣ 9 5

Again, it is unlikely that Two Diamonds will be hit on the head, but the bid is worse than pointless. Your side will be outbid, so why tell them anything?

## 3 Those pointless doubles

Opponents are proceeding slamwards and one of them makes a cue-bid at the four level in a suit where you hold fair strength, such as KJxxx. It is absurd to double, though many of the best players do it (eg both Meckstroth and Rodwell in the Naturals v Scientists match). By doubling you extend the options of the next player from just one call to a selection of three – pass, redouble or a free bid that will have additional meaning (eg not minimum at this point).

## 4 That 4-4 myth

Sometime around 1930, it was realised that on occasions a 4-4 major suit contract might be better than 3NT. But … to make Four Spades you need to make two more tricks than the man in 3NT (to gain you need to make ten tricks while he can only make eight), and sometimes the trumps break 4-1, which may be fatal.

Bidding four-card majors is preposterously overdone. Partner opens One Diamond and you hold:

♠ Q 10 8 6
♥ A 9 5
♦ Q 4
♣ K 7 4 3

Now I would respond 2NT (the best bid in the game at rubber bridge) and don't mind Two Clubs, or even One Heart; but One Spade is dreadful.

Keep quiet about such holdings and they will often lead the suit, which is nice when partner puts down Axx.

## 5 Conventions that have had their day

On their card for the Naturals v Scientists match, Wolff and Hamman had the Blue Club Two Diamond opening, 17-24 with 4-4-4-1 distribution. Laborious study of the Encyclopædia convinces me that this is about a 500 to 1 chance, and the type presents no problems anyway. Another popular convention is the Flannery Two Diamonds: 4-5 in the majors, 11-15. Again, very rare and completely unnecessary.

You don't agree? Well, next time you use one of these conventional styles, study the effect and see how much good it does you.

So my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Careless talk costs lives.**

*There is much truth in Reese's views about some modern bidding ideas but it is only fair to point out, as Reese himself has hinted, that he was often in disagreement with mainstream expert thought. This tip is less a tip than an opinion.*

*Rixi Markus shared many of Terence Reese's opinions that are outlined above but the emphasis of her advice is to keep the bidding simple.*

# Keep it simple

## Rixi Markus *(England)*

*RIXI MARKUS, who died in 1992 aged 82, was one of the greatest woman players of all time and the first to become a WBF Grand Master. Born in a remote part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, she spent much of her childhood in Vienna. Having helped Austria win three European Championships before the war, she fled to England in 1938 and subsequently helped that country to win seven Europeans, the last of which was in 1975. She won five World titles in total; her World Pairs win with Fritzi Gordon in 1974 was by a margin of more than seven boards, a feat unparalleled in the history of the game. In 1975 she was awarded an MBE for her services to the game, among which was the organisation, for charity, of the annual match between the British Houses of Parliament. She was the author of several books and bridge columnist of* The Guardian *from 1955 until her death.*

*Impetuous, imperious, passionate are some of the adjectives one might apply to Rixi who was a tigress at the table. Opponents, shaking with fear, have been known to drop their cards when playing against Rixi. She was loyal, too, and always proud of her adopted home. At one European when the British women rallied from an unlikely position to win the event, she was asked to what she attributed the team's success. She said in her heavy accent, 'Ve British are at our best vith our backs to ve wall.'*

I HAVE been a member of the bridge community for a great number of years and have played very many different bidding systems, some by choice and some that were forced upon me. I eventually opted for the Acol system, which I still enjoy playing. I have added one or two simple gadgets or agreements to the basic system, but I find that Acol leaves enough freedom to the players while being at the same time based on a number of clearly defined principles. I maintain that if your bidding system is simple but effective, it leaves you enough brain power to cope with the more important aspects of bridge: dummy play and, above all, defence.

As you will have gathered, my BOLS bridge tip relates to bidding and it is:

**Keep it simple.**

HERE are my specific recommendations:

**1** When you are the dealer you have an advantage which you should not waste. Try to open the bidding as often as you can, particularly if you have a good suit which you can rebid and which you want your partner to lead. Thus with:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ A 10 6 | or | ♠ Q J 10 |
| ♥ 8 | | ♥ K J 9 5 4 |
| ♦ K 9 3 | | ♦ A 8 7 6 |
| ♣ K J 9 8 6 2 | | ♣ 10 |

do not hesitate. You should open as dealer on both hands.

**2** Consider playing a strong no-trump at all vulnerabilities. My 1NT opening promises 16-18 points, but I count AJ10 as six points, QJ doubleton as two points and the doubleton Qx as one.

**3** Do not hesitate to open a four-card major suit, which can sometimes be a good pre-emptive weapon. For example:

♠ K Q J 9
♥ 10 9
♦ K J 10 6
♣ Q J 10

I would open One Spade on this hand. As I play strong no-trump, I can rebid 2NT over Two Hearts, and I am well prepared for any other response from partner.

**4** Use your two bids to show strong but not game-forcing hands. My Acol two bid shows a hand either with one long, strong suit or with two good suits, and I can assure you that my various partners and I have bid very many games and slams that were missed by our opponents.

**5** Use Herbert responses to Acol two bids, whereby a bid of the next higher-ranking suit is the negative. This is an idea which I helped to popularise, and it has two advantages over traditional methods. First, it

means that any eventual no-trump contract is almost always played by the strong hand, which makes the opening lead and subsequent defence more difficult. And second, it can save valuable bidding space. If, for example, the opener has a strong hand with diamonds and spades, the auction will start 2♦–2♥–2♠ and not 2♦–2NT–3♠ as before.

**6** Play Stayman and transfer bids in response to 1NT. I find transfer bids most useful, because they allow the final contract to be played by the strong hand and because they allow the responder to describe his hand more accurately.

**7** If your partner's opening bid of 1NT is doubled for penalties, redouble if you have a strong hand but ignore the double if you are weak. This is my own special idea, and I find that it works very well. It means that transfer bids will permit all two-level contracts to be played by the stronger hand, and it also means that responder will be able to try to wriggle out of trouble by bidding Two Clubs (Stayman) even after a double, say with:

♠ J 9 4
♥ 10 7 5 2
♦ J 8 6 4
♣ 9 3

After 1NT–Dble, you can bid Two Clubs, intending to pass whatever partner replies.

**8** Agree some way of showing both major suits over the opponents' weak no-trump. I personally like to use a conventional bid of Two Diamonds for this purpose, for it deprives the opponents of two bids (Two Clubs and Two Diamonds) which would otherwise be available to them.

**9** Only make a game-forcing jump shift in response to partner's One of a suit if you have either a very good suit of your own or a very good fit for partner. On all other strong responding hands, you will need as much bidding space as possible and it will work out better to take things slowly.

**10** Unless the opponents are obviously sacrificing, only double a high-level contract if you have a good holding in trumps: aces and kings do not always take tricks.

**11** Retain a penalty double for low-level contracts. I find that to play negative doubles gives up the chance of obtaining too many profitable penalties, and I have never come to much harm through bidding my suits instead of showing them by way of a double.

**12** Never make 'trap' passes. If my right-hand opponent opens One Spade and I hold:

♠ A Q 10 4
♥ K 9 3
♦ A Q
♣ J 10 9 5

I am happy to overcall 1NT. Any other course of action is likely to put pressure on partner at a later stage, and this is contrary to my advice that you should keep it simple.

**13** At rubber bridge, keep it simple for partner. If you want him to bid again, for example, do not make a bid which he might pass. For example, with:

♠ A 10
♥ A K Q 6 4
♦ K 7
♣ K Q 7 5

If you are game and 40 below and your partner opens One Diamond and rebids Two Diamonds over your response of One Heart, bid either 4NT or 6NT. Do not bid Three Clubs, which he might pass in an effort to settle for the rubber.

**14** If your partner makes a take-out double and your right-hand opponent redoubles, do not speak unless you have something useful to say. Do not bid for the sake of it, for you may choose the wrong suit and go badly astray. Use the opportunity to pass and tell partner that you have nothing worthwhile to say.

*To round up this section on tips on bidding, we have two suggestions that seek to improve on the way that a couple of everyday conventions are treated.*

# Search for the eggs of Columbus

## Svend Novrup *(Denmark)*

*SVEND NOVRUP was born in 1945 and has been active in an extraordinarily wide variety of fields. With a degree in Nordic philology from the University of Copenhagen, he nearly decided to pursue a university career but instead started up as a journalist with the Copenhagen newspaper,* Politiken. *His first assignment was the pound-a-point rubber bridge match between the Omar Sharif Bridge Circus and Flint-Cansino in London. Since then he has been a correspondent of bridge, chess and games but has also covered travelling, literature, theatre, music (in particular opera, as he spent seven years voice training and has participated in several operatic competitions), and sports.*

*He is the author of 67 books in six languages on a variety of subjects: a five-volume encyclopædia of chess, several handbooks on bridge, a book on the Tour de France, others on backgammon, poker, snooker …*

*In 1996 he was recruited by Eurosport as commentator for Denmark. His main subjects are cycling, snooker and winter sports, but he covered many other sports during the Atlanta Olympics.*

YOU pick up a good hand as dealer, much better than your usual garbage:

♠ A K 7 4
♥ K 4
♦ A J 10 7
♣ K Q 6

and open 2NT showing 20-21 HCP. Your partner bids Three Diamonds, a transfer to Three Hearts, and when you have obeyed he passes … again! At least you will be playing the hand, but on this occasion it is no particular pleasure.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 5 2<br>♥ 9 8 6 5 3 2<br>♦ Q 6 3<br>♣ 8 7 | |
| ♠ J 10<br>♥ A J 7<br>♦ K 8 5<br>♣ 10 9 4 3 2 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ Q 9 8 6 3<br>♥ Q 10<br>♦ 9 4 2<br>♣ A J 5 |
| | ♠ A K 7 4<br>♥ K 4<br>♦ A J 10 7<br>♣ K Q 6 | |

West leads the jack of spades, giving nothing away, and some time later you concede one down. You can't avoid three losers in trumps and one in each minor.

How annoying. If only you had been able to play in Two Hearts instead. But this is the disadvantage of having to open 2NT with 20-21 HCP while opening Two Clubs with stronger balanced hands.

When you have this sort of problem, hopefully you try to think of possible solutions or you will never cut the Gordian knot or find any Columbus eggs. Maybe you would come to the same conclusion as some Danish players: on balanced hands, you could exchange the Two Club and 2NT openings without losing anything. On the contrary. Now, when you open Two Clubs, partner will relay Two Diamonds, after which 2NT will show 20-21 HCP while an opening 2NT will show 22-23 HCP, almost like in the very old days.

What do you gain?

Now if partner deviates from the relay this also needs a meaning. There are, of course, several possibilities, but a very obvious one is to let it mean: partner – if you have the 20-21 HCP balanced hand, then I would prefer to play in my long suit at this level. On the hand above South would open

Two Clubs, and when North responded Two Hearts he would pass, saving a level … and the contract.

There are many new possibilities. As opener's 2NT rebid would now be meaningless(!), it could show that you didn't have the balanced hand, but a forcing hand with clubs. And three-level bids could be trial bids inviting partner to bid game in his suit. An example:

♠ 5 2
♥ 9 8 6 5 3 2
♦ Q 6 3
♣ 8 7

***Game All***
***Dealer S***

♠ K 6
♥ A K 7 4
♦ A J 10 7
♣ K Q 6

The bidding would go: 2♣–2♥–3♦–4♥.

When North hears the trial bid in diamonds, he suddenly knows that his queen of diamonds is super-active and that Four Hearts will be odds on.

My Bols bridge tip is:

**When you are dissatisfied with some aspect of your bidding system, don't accept that there is nothing you can do.**

*While there is much merit in some of the above ideas, care must be taken to ensure that what is gained in one situation is not lost from another. To say that nothing is lost by swapping the 2NT and Two Club opening ranges is doubtful. For example, in Svend's suggested amendment, the normal useful positive response to an Acol Two Clubs would be lost. Also, in standard methods a 2NT opening facing a very weak hand with a long major would result (usually) in a contract of Three of a major played by the strong hand; it is not clear that it is such an improvement to play in only Two of the major when it must be from the weak hand.*

*The final tip in this section makes a suggested improvement to the increasingly popular area of 'splinter' bids.*

# Reversed splinter bids

## Anton Maas *(Netherlands)*

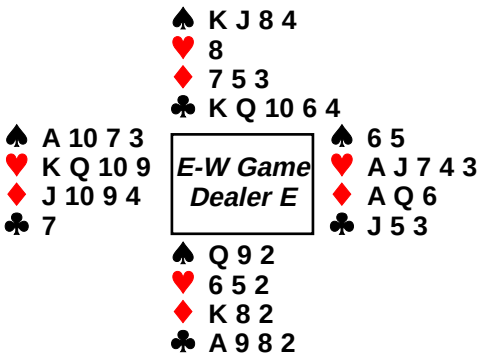
*Anton Maas, aged 44, is a bank manager in Amstelveen, Netherlands. He won a gold medal in the European Mixed Teams in 1994. Other than that, the highest and lowest spot of his bridge career was in 1982. He and his partner, Max Rebattu, were announced as the winners of the World Pairs. However, shortly afterwards, a scoring error came to light and he was demoted to the silver medal position. He has won bronze medals in the 1980 Teams Olympiad, the 1992 European Mixed Teams and the 1994 Olympiad Pairs. He is married to Bep Vriend, the most successful Dutch woman player of all time.*

DURING the last two decades bridge has made much progress in bidding theory. Each month magazines publish new conventions, many of which cover the very difficult field of slam bidding. Not new, and very common, are methods to show a short suit after a fit is

established, for example fragment and splinter bids. Although splinter bids can be extremely useful, the method has a serious drawback. It can make it easy for the opponents to find a fit. Who has not experienced opponents saving in Five Clubs/Five Diamonds, not vulnerable against vulnerable, after doubling your splinter bid? Very nasty, especially at Pairs. All they have to do is to double a bid at the four level with KQ109xx and an ace; not very risky.

The examples are numerous, and I will present only two that cropped up recently.

My first hand occurred in the Dutch Open Teams Championship:

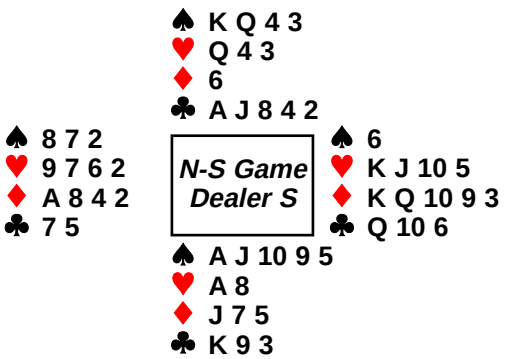



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♥ |
| Pass | 4♣[1] | Double | 4♥ |
| 5♣ | Double | All Pass | |

[1] splinter

To some extent East-West did well. West doubled to show minimum values and East decided not to push on to Five Hearts, but +300 did cost 8 IMPs.

The next deal, from a Pairs tournament, shows that things can turn out even worse:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠[1] | Pass | 4♦[2] | Double |
| Pass | 5♦ | Pass | Pass |
| 5♠ | All Pass | | |

[1] 5-card major
[2] splinter

North passed over Five Diamonds to show a maximum hand and South, with no wasted values, accepted the push. Although the contract is quite reasonable (even a slam is not that bad), in practice it had no chance; West led the ace of diamonds and made the obvious heart switch. Collecting +500 from Five Diamonds doubled would also not be a great result for North-South.

Awful, so should we drop splinter bids altogether? No, the answer is, in fact, extremely simple, and leads to my BOLS bridge tip:

**Do not play splinter bids;**
**play reversed splinter bids.**

After a One Heart opening:
3♠ = singleton club
4♣ = singleton diamond
4♦ = singleton spade
After a One Spade opening:
4♣ = singleton diamond
4♦ = singleton club
4♥ = natural
You will lose nothing in the subsequent cue-bidding if you play that:
1♥/1♠ 4♣ (singleton ♦)
4♦ = cue-bid in ♣!
and
1♥ 3♠ (singleton ♣)
4♣ = cue-bid in ♠

Of course, there is a defence to the reversed splinters: a double still shows the short suit. So, 1♥–Pass–4♣–Double shows a diamond suit, etc.

However, firstly opponents have to make such an agreement, and secondly, doubling has become a bit more dangerous.

*To play reversed splinter bids may indeed make it harder for opponents to find a sacrifice, but if that is not an issue (say they are vulnerable) it may make it easier for them to double to direct the lead.*

## Part Two

# Tips on Defence

## Contributors to Tips on Defence



*After the bidding the defence starts, so, logically, that is what our next group of tips is about. And, of course, the first step in defence is the opening lead … or is it? Our first tipster argues that the defence begins in the bidding.*

# Direct the opening lead during the auction

## George Rosenkranz *(Mexico)*

*GEORGE ROSENKRANZ has been the leading Mexican player over the last thirty years. Born in 1916, he is a chemist by profession and has made significant contributions to scientific knowledge in the field of the birth control pill. He has represented Mexico in world championships since 1962 and represented North America in the Bermuda Bowl of 1983 where his team reached the semi-finals. He plays much of his bridge in the USA where he has won just about every national title there is. He is a well-known bridge theorist and writer, particularly in the field of bidding. His best known contribution to bidding theory is the invention of the Romex System.*

For all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'
*Maud Muller, Barbara Frietchie*

THE fate of many contracts hinges upon the opening lead. Strolling through the playing area at a major bridge tournament, you pick up fragments of conversations, such as: 'If only you had led a…' or 'Sorry, partner, I made the wrong lead, but…' or 'How could I tell that a … lead would beat the contract?'

Yet, did you ever examine your conscience after a catastrophic lead by your partner? Did you ever wonder whether some of the blame was yours, not all his? Had you done your best to steer him away from the lurking perils and to guide him on to the road to success?

HERE is an example which will eloquently illustrate the point I am trying to make. It occurred in a Swiss Teams.

Sitting East with North-South only vulnerable, I held:

♠ K J 10 6 4 2
♥ 4 3 2
♦ A Q 2
♣ 5

The bidding proceeded:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2♠ |
| 3♥ | 4♠ | 4NT[1] | ? |

[1] Roman Key Card Blackwood

Reflecting upon North's bidding, I decided that if he were good enough to use Blackwood, he must possess heart support and first- or second-round controls in all side suits This seemed to mark him with the king of diamonds, so I made the lead-directing bid of Five Diamonds, hoping there would be two tricks to take in that suit.

South elected, maybe erroneously, to bid Five Spades, showing two key cards and the queen of trumps in their methods. This resulted in a final contract of Six Hearts.

My partner obliged by leading a diamond, and these were the four hands:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 9<br>♥ K 9 8 6<br>♦ K 10 9<br>♣ A Q J 8 7 | |
| ♠ Q 7 5 3<br>♥ 5<br>♦ 6 5 4 3<br>♣ 10 9 4 3 | *N-S Game*<br>*Dealer E* | ♠ K J 10 6 4 2<br>♥ 4 3 2<br>♦ A Q 2<br>♣ 5 |
| | ♠ A 8<br>♥ A Q J 10 7<br>♦ J 8 7<br>♣ K 6 2 | |

Grateful for partner's lead, I cashed two diamond tricks for one down.

At the other table, the bidding was less imaginative:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2♠ |
| 3♥ | 4♠ | 4NT | 5♠ |
| 6♥ | All Pass | | |

In the absence of other information, the opening lead was the three of spades, and our team-mates scored their vulnerable slam, two losing diamonds being discarded on dummy's clubs. +1430 gave us a swing of 17 IMPs.

The moral of this story can be summed up in my BOLS bridge tip:

**Wherever possible, direct the opening lead during the auction.**

Instead of complaining about bad luck or your partner's leads, be aware of the opportunities to put in a lead-directing overcall in order to steer partner on to the right road needed for a successful defence. You will be amazed how your scores will improve and your partnership confidence will soar to imposing levels.

*Partner does not always have the opportunity to make a lead-directing bid for us. More often we have to decide what to lead on our own and the next few tips are aimed at helping us choose.*

# Trump leads

## Sandra Landy *(England)*

*SANDRA LANDY, now in her fifties, lives in Hove, Sussex, where she is head of the Information Systems Division at the University of Brighton. Although computing is now a rather commonplace subject, Sandra led the way, having enrolled on one of the first postgraduate computing courses at Cambridge in 1961, having just graduated from Oxford. Sandra's father, Alex Ogilvie, was a bridge writer. He contributed to the first IBPA selection of articles in 1964, surely the forerunner of the BOLS Bridge Tips.*

*Sandra is a WBF Grand Master and the top British woman in the WBF rankings, a list she has headed at various times over the last twenty years. Although best known as a player, having won two Venice Cups and three European Championships, she has also had success as a captain – she led the British open team to victory in the 1991 European Championship. Heavily involved in bridge administration, Sandra is a member of the Board of the English Bridge Union as well as a trustee of the Educational Trust for British Bridge.*

*She is well known for her direct, aggressive, no-nonsense approach to the game, hence the 'Landy game try' is an expression used for a sequence such as 1♠–2♠–4♠!*

DECIDING whether or not to lead a trump against a suit contract is never easy. Apart from picking a trump because every other lead looks worse, the main reason is to try to cut down the number of ruffs declarer can get in dummy or to prevent the hand being played on a cross-ruff. An auction like 1♠–1NT–2♣ almost demands a trump lead, as does one where one hand has shown a three-suiter and they appear to have found a 4-4 fit.

However, a problem arises when, having decided a trump is the right lead, you look at your trump holding and decide it is the last holding you would wish to lead from, something like KJx or Q10x or Kx. But you should not automatically be put off, because usually if a trump is the right lead the lost trick comes back in some other way.

On this example, the bidding, with East-West only vulnerable, went:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | 2♥ | Double | 3♥ |
| 3♠ | 4♥ | Pass | Pass |
| Double | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

One Spade was a limited opener with a five-card suit, Precision style; the double of Two Hearts was negative; the double of Four Hearts was explained as a hand that is good in context. What should West lead from:

♠ Q 3
♥ A 10 9 6 4 3
♦ A Q 6
♣ J 2

It sounds like dummy is not strong for his negative double as he has removed the double of Four Hearts. He is therefore likely to hold only two spades or he would have raised spades straightaway. To remove the double he is likely to be short in hearts so a trump looks a good lead. David Price of Great Britain found this lead and was pleased to see dummy come down with:

♠ J 10
♥ 7
♦ 10 8 5 4 3
♣ K Q 10 9 8

Declarer won the jack of spades but couldn't believe the lead could possibly be away from the queen, so at trick two David found himself winning a trick with the spade queen. Now that dummy was out of spades it was safe to play hearts.

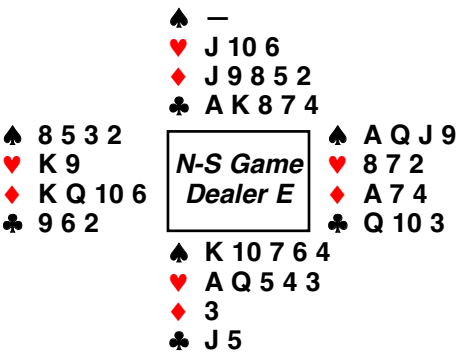
My second hand also comes from a Common Market Pairs Championship. As West I held:

♠ 8 5 3 2
♥ K 9
♦ K Q 10 6
♣ 9 6 2

My partner, East, started the bidding with One Diamond. This was Precision and showed an opener of sixteen or less points that contained a long minor or was a weak balanced hand. The auction went:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♦ |
| 2♦ | Pass | 3♣ | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

South's Two Diamonds showed both majors. North's Three Clubs showed genuine clubs and at most three hearts. My partner might hold five or more diamonds but in that case we were unlikely to have many winners in the suit. I had to hope my partner was balanced with spade values or we would have no defence, so it looked right to cut down on dummy's ruffs. I led the king of hearts. When you see the full deal it looks a disaster but in fact an early trump lead is essential to beat the contract. Look at the whole lay-out:




South can duck a club and make five hearts and four clubs, or can ruff two spades in dummy using a club ruff to get back to hand, but try as he may there are only nine tricks. On the lead of king and another diamond, declarer can make three trumps in dummy, five trumps in hand and the ace and king of clubs.

The contract can be beaten on the lead of the king of diamonds followed by a heart switch won with the jack, but great care is needed. South must duck a club and East has to win and return a club, otherwise South will make five trumps in hand, one ruff in dummy and four clubs. Of course, East could make it easy by overtaking the king of diamonds with the ace and switching to a heart … but it is not easy for him as it would be very wrong if declarer had a doubleton diamond.

So my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Always have a good reason for leading trumps. If you have decided that a trump lead is right do not worry too much if your trump holding looks unsuitable.**

*But, having decided to lead a trump, which trump should you lead?*

# The first trump

## Derek Rimington *(England)*

*DEREK RIMINGTON, English Grand Master and international player, managed Greater London's computer operations until 1981, a memorable year for him for that was when he captained the British women's team to victory for the triple crown – Common Market, European and World Championships. He now spends much of the year with his wife Barbara as the bridge host on worldwide cruises. He is also a bridge author, editor and writer, contributing to many magazines and newspapers as well being columnist for* The Field *magazine.*

*In a rubber of bridge he once overcalled One Heart on QJ42 with nine solid spades. When his partner raised him to Two Hearts he bid 5NT (Josephine). When the response of Seven Hearts located the two top honours in that suit, he 'escaped' to Seven Spades.*

IN English, the phrase 'The Last Trump' is the sound of a bugle at a military funeral. In contract bridge, its apparent converse, 'The First Trump', may refer to the initial lead by a defender.

If that lead is to sound the death-knell of a contract it is sometimes essential that it be the lowest one held.

Obviously, with the following trump combination it is vital to lead the eight if a trick is not to be lost.

*Dummy*
♠ Q 9 3 2

*West* ♠ J 10 8 — *East* ♠K

*Declarer*
♠ A 7 6 5 4

There are other situations, however, where it can cost if a high trump is led. Hence my BOLS tip is:

**When leading a trump, always choose the lowest card.**

ANOTHER example:

*Dummy*
♠ 6 5 3

*West* ♠ 7 4 2 — *East* ♠ J

*Declarer*
♠ A K Q 10 9 8

Here the seven, if led, could cost if it allows South to ruff twice in dummy with the six and five, even though West is also short in the same side-suit.

Look at this one:

*Dummy*
♠ Q 7 2

*West* ♠ 9 8 6 5 — *East* ♠ —

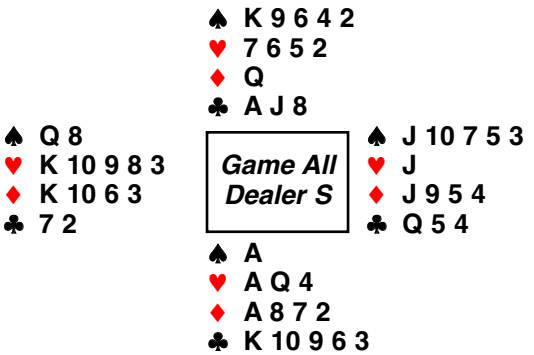
*Declarer*
♠ A K J 10 4 3

The nine or eight of trumps, if led, surrenders a second entry to dummy with the seven. This may enable declarer to establish a side suit for discards.

Another reason for leading the lowest trump is that it informs partner that all the lower unseen trumps are held by declarer. This facilitates the counting of his hand and may indicate a successful line of defence in preference to an alternative which is doomed to fail.

THE board which led to my adopting the idea of leading the lowest trump occurred over

forty years ago when I was playing with Albert Dormer in a British Championship match:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 4♣ | Pass |
| 5♣ | All Pass | | |

Declarer will always make his game on a red-suit lead; a spade is more challenging but he can still survive. A trump lead is essential to ensure defeat of the contract. Being of mean disposition, I led the two of clubs although the textbooks in those days gave no guidance on this subject. When declarer played the jack, Albert naturally withheld his queen. If it had been surrendered, declarer could have succeeded by ruffing two diamonds in dummy.

Lastly, note that the seven of clubs lead allows declarer to succeed, even with Albert's good play. South simply crossruffs spades and diamonds. In the ending he cashes the ace of hearts and exits with a heart. He has nine tricks and the other two must come from the lead of a defender because he holds the king-six as a tenace over East's queen-five.

Serendipity gave me the correct technique all those years ago. Now BOLS has enabled me to pass on the message in my bridge tip.

*There is a great deal of sense in this tip. Often intermediate trumps can be of inestimable value later in the hand. However, when leading equal or truly insignificant trumps, there is a trend among experts to try to help partner by choosing a card that indicates suit preference.*

*The next suggestion is also about leading an unorthodox card, this time not in trumps but from a suit headed by an honour.*

# Consider whether to lead an honour

## Jeremy Flint *(England)*

IT is normal in bridge to lead low from a suit of three or more cards headed by an unsupported honour card. There are, however, some basic situations where the lead of the high card may produce better results.

The most common of these occurs when there has been a competitive auction. Suppose that the defender on lead has, say, Kxxx of his partner's suit and scarcely any other assets. It may very well be good play to start with the king in order to retain the lead and find the killing switch through the dummy.

Experienced players will recognise that kind of situation readily enough. Here is a case where a little more thought is required. The bidding has been:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♣ | 1♠ |
| 2♦ | 2♠ |
| 2NT | 3NT |

West has to lead from:

♠ K 10 7
♥ Q 10 4
♦ Q 3 2
♣ J 9 7 6

The opponents' bidding suggests that they have little to spare. Furthermore, South has displayed lukewarm enthusiasm for his partner's suit. For that reason it is good play to attack with a spade. No other lead appeals and

declarer may well be embarrassed by an early assault on dummy's entry.

Having reached that conclusion, the best card to lead is the king. Declarer may misjudge the lie of the suit – or the king may even score a trick by force. In play this was the full deal:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ A J 9 8 4 3<br>♥ J 3 2<br>♦ J 7<br>♣ 10 2 | |
| ♠ K 10 7<br>♥ Q 10 4<br>♦ Q 3 2<br>♣ J 9 7 6 | *N-S Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ Q 6 5<br>♥ K 7 6 5<br>♦ K 8 6 4<br>♣ 5 3 |
| | ♠ 2<br>♥ A 9 8<br>♦ A 10 9 5<br>♣ A K Q 8 4 | |

Not unnaturally, declarer allowed the king of spades to win. On the next trick he received a nasty shock when the jack of spades lost to the queen. He elected to discard a heart. Now, after a heart switch and continuation, he was limited to six tricks.

At the other tables, after a heart opening lead, South succeeded in scrambling home with two heart tricks, four clubs, two diamond tricks and a spade.

ANOTHER situation that frequently confronts a defender is to possess practically all of his side's assets and yet to have no attractive opening lead at his disposal. Here is a typical example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K 7 4<br>♥ A 10 4<br>♦ A 8 7 4 3<br>♣ 7 2 | |
| ♠ Q 10 2<br>♥ Q 9 5<br>♦ K J 9 6<br>♣ A Q 3 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♥ 8 6 5<br>♥ J 7 3 2<br>♦ 10 5<br>♣ 8 6 5 4 |
| | ♠ A J 9 3<br>♥ K 8 6<br>♦ Q 2<br>♣ K J 10 9 | |

The bidding has been:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♣ | 1♦ |
| 1♠ | 2♥ |
| 2NT | 3NT |

North's Two Hearts is artificial, fourth-suit forcing. With no attractive alternative, West decides to lead this suit. It is easy for West to appreciate that East can have at most one or two points. Unless East has an honour in hearts it will be immaterial which heart West chooses to lead. However, if East happens to have the jack, the queen will be the superior lead for three reasons. Firstly, declarer may well misjudge the lie of the suit. Secondly, the presence of the nine in West's hand means that declarer's options in the play of the suit will be restricted. Finally, if declarer does go wrong the effect will be to create a vital entry in East's hand. This last consideration is of prime importance, since in this type of hand West is all too likely to find himself repeatedly on play.

In our example, declarer wins the lead of the queen of hearts in his own hand, goes to dummy with the king of spades and leads a club, losing the nine to West's queen. West continues with a heart which East wins. Appreciating that his own hand is dead, East switches to a diamond and now the contract is doomed.

It is clear that if West starts with a low heart instead of the queen, East will never gain the lead and declarer is likely to come home a winner without ever being seriously threatened.

My BOLS bridge tip, therefore, is:

**Instead of stolidly pushing out an unimaginative small card from three or four to an honour, you should consider whether to lead the honour.**

*When you are on lead against a slam contract and have in your possession what is clearly a key honour, the next advice is to consider a deceptive opening lead.*

# Guard your honour

## Hugh Kelsey *(Scotland)*

*One of the most respected and prolific of bridge writers, HUGH KELSEY of Edinburgh died in 1995, in his late sixties. He had represented Scotland in twelve Camrose matches, won the Gold Cup twice and every major Scottish title many times. Two of his books,* Advanced Play at Bridge *and* Killing Defence at Bridge *are considered by* The Official Encyclopædia of Bridge *to be 'mandatory requirements for a modern technical bridge library'. In total he wrote forty-five books.*

MANY stories are told about that legendary giant of former days, P Hal Sims, who disliked taking losing finesses. Once, when faced with a two-way finesse, Sims turned his formidable gaze on his left-hand opponent and declared: 'You look like a lady with the queen of spades.'

'Oh, Mr Sims,' gushed his victim. 'Aren't you wonderful!'

Players made of sterner fibre than the anonymous lady often have difficulty in concealing the queen of spades when defending against a high-level contract. By 'the queen of spades' I mean any vulnerable trump holding which may be worth a trick if the play develops favourably. There is an art in deflecting declarer from the winning path in such situations.

South is the dealer at Game All and the bidding proceeds:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♦ | 1♥ |
| 1♠ | 2♣ |
| 3NT | 4♠ |
| 4NT[1] | 5♠[2] |
| 6♠ | |

[1] Roman Key Card Blackwood
[2] 2 key cards plus the ♠Q

Suppose you are West with these cards:

♠ J 6 4 3
♥ 9 8 2
♦ A 10 5 2
♣ 9 5

You have hopes of defeating the slam in your own hand, but declarer is likely to have a two-way finesse position in spades. How can you point him in the wrong direction?

A lead that can be ruled out straight away is the ace of diamonds. Cashing the ace could persuade South that you have hopes of a trump trick, and this is the last impression you want to give. What about a heart? Any heart lead through dummy's suit will suggest shortage. Reasoning that if you are short in hearts you may be long in trumps, declarer will probably take the right view in the trump suit.

That leaves clubs. Most players would select the lead of the club nine. This, again, is less than satisfactory, for it suggests short clubs and long trumps. You want to give the impression of long clubs (and therefore short trumps), and the way to do that is to lead the five. No risk is involved since you do not need anything from partner in the club suit. The full hand might be:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K Q 9 7<br>♥ A Q J 7 3<br>♦ 8 6<br>♣ K 4 | |
| ♠ J 6 4 3<br>♥ 9 8 2<br>♦ A 10 5 2<br>♣ 9 5 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ 5<br>♥ 10 5 4<br>♦ J 7 3<br>♣ Q J 8 7 3 2 |
| | ♠ A 10 8 2<br>♥ K 6<br>♦ K Q 9 4<br>♣ A 10 6 | |

Your lead goes to the jack and ace, and you naturally put in the six when declarer plays the two of spades to dummy's queen. Placing you with long clubs, declarer may go wrong by continuing with the king of spades from the table.

My BOLS tip, is:

**Leading Unorthodox Cards Against Slams Brings One Lasting Satisfaction.**

This tip is particularly effective when you have a potential but uncertain trump trick.

*Lucas Bols was the founder of Bols Royal Distilleries.*

*In the early days of bridge it was considered normal to lead the king from ace-king. Modern thought has turned towards the ace, but the next tip suggests there is still room for the king, albeit on special occasions.*

# The king lives, long live the king!

## Derek Rimington *(England)*

'MY Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury, you have been chosen to try the case of the king versus the ace. An advocate from a sovereign country is in this instance associated with BOLS of The Netherlands, a famous firm which enjoys royal patronage. You may find it surprising therefore that you will be asked to find against the king – such is the impartiality of the law.

'The majority of average players lead the ace from ace-king at trick one, except when they are doubleton. Despite the technical superiority of Roman leads, most expert players do likewise, except against a small slam.

'Our forefathers, however, led the king. This is obviously the correct card to lead once dummy is exposed, but at trick one it posed a problem for the third player. Holding, say, J72, he had to play the discouraging two. The encouraging seven would have been better if he knew that his partner held the queen, but he didn't. This ambiguity, highlighted by writers, was largely responsible for the demise of the king. I propose to resuscitate him on special occasions.

'As already stated, against a small slam and other high-level contracts attained pre-emptively, experts lead the king from ace-king combinations. This is to allow partner to signal count: high with an even number and low with an odd number. The opening leader will then know whether to play his ace at trick two.

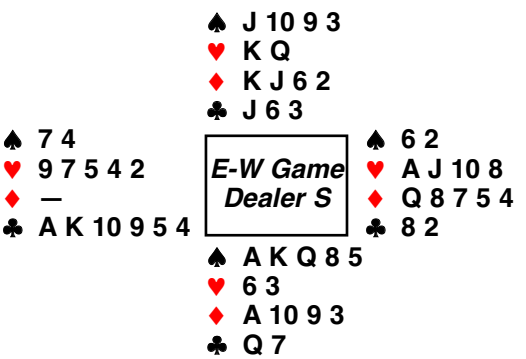
'Conversely the ace when led will be unsupported and partner should signal high if he holds the king. This is to prevent an absurd slam from being made when declarer has two top losers in a side suit.

'Against a game or partscore contract, the king should occasionally be led as a messenger. When the king holds and another side suit is led at trick two, partner is alerted – this must be a singleton. He will therefore play his ace and return the suit for a ruff.

'I cite the case of Soloway-Goldman v Robson-Forrester, The Hague, January 21, 1990. Andrew Robson opened 1NT with a five-card diamond suit and eventually became declarer in Four Hearts. Paul Soloway led the ten of diamonds but Bobby Goldman played low from AJ84 when dummy's seven was played from K97. The contract was made. If Soloway had first cashed the king of hearts at trick one (he held AK2) as a messenger, before leading the ten of diamonds, Goldman would have known to play his ace and give his partner a ruff.

'Expert players may contend that this is not original. Maybe so, but have average players been made aware of the method? I intend to spread the gospel.

'Here is a unique situation:



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

'Bob Rowlands led the king of clubs, three, eight, seven. Vive le Roi! Alert, I was not elated as I held the wrong ace. Bob continued with the ace of clubs in case my eight was a singleton. Expecting a diamond switch, I was surprised when he led the nine of hearts. I took my ace and reviewed the position.

'Neither a singleton heart nor a doubleton ace-king of clubs was possible. South could not have six cards in either suit. The coin dropped – Bob was improvising. He could not lead a void, but the king of clubs was his messenger. I led a diamond to give him a ruff.

'Without a diamond return, declarer would make Four Spades. He draws trumps, ruffs a club and leads a heart. Ten of West's cards are known but only seven of East's. The missing queen of diamonds is therefore more likely to be with East, confirmed when the king is played.

'Give East the ace of spades instead of the ace of hearts and the defence is similar for the first two tricks. An astute declarer at trick three will win in dummy and lead the jack of spades. East, however, cannot be fooled; he has seen the king's proclamation. The ace is played immediately and a diamond led.

'My Lord BOLS, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury, I rest my case. I submit that I have proved that the ace is superior as an opening lead, but only if used in conjunction with my BOLS bridge tip.'

**At trick one watch out for the king, he may be sending a message.**

*At the beginning of his article Derek touched upon the idea that against a slam you should lead the king from ace-king and that partner should give you a distributional signal. An alternative method of choosing between the ace and king is an extension of that idea: you lead the ace when you would like an attitude signal and the king when you want to know how many cards partner has in the suit.*

*The next article addresses the particular problems of leading against a slam.*

# Against a slam contract, attack!

## Benito Garozzo *(Italy)*

*BENITO GAROZZO, former owner of a jewellery store in Rome, now lives in Florida, having become an official US resident in 1994. When I was at university the ultimate compliment you could receive at the bridge table was 'you played it like Garozzo'! In many people's opinion the world's greatest player in the 1960s and 1970s, he did not join the Blue Team until 1961 but thereafter was not on the losing side in international competition until 1976. His main partnerships were with Forquet until 1972 and then with Belladonna until 1976. Both were the most feared in the world at that time. He won three World Team Olympiads and ten Bermuda Bowls. In 1990 he showed that he still had what it takes when he won the individual PAMP Par Contest in Geneva. For all his legendary skill at cardplay, his main enthusiasm is for scientific bidding. If his aim of 100% accuracy were ever to come to pass he might lose his skill at cardplay which would be a pity!*

HEROIC measures are rarely needed when leading against a game contract. The defenders can expect to get the lead again after dummy has been exposed, and the early play will offer further clues to what they should do.

Not so against slams. Unless two tricks can be cashed at once, the defence must strike a telling blow to develop the setting trick by the opening lead. Later is too late.

The one factor that works in favour of the defence is that declarer is rarely willing to risk immediate defeat if any alternative seems attractive. And sometimes such an alternative can be created by the lead itself. For example, your right-hand opponent has become declarer in Six Diamonds after this auction:

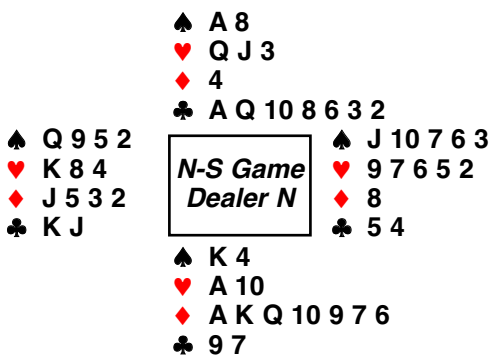
| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| | 1♣ |
| 2♦ | 3♣ |
| 3♦ | 3♠ |
| 4NT | 5♥ |
| 5NT | 6♣ |
| 6♦ | |

You hold:

♠ Q 9 5 2 ♥ K 8 4 ♦ J 5 3 2 ♣ K J

Obviously defensive prospects are poor. Not only is partner broke, but the cards are well placed for declarer. But do not despair. Take advantage of what you know that declarer doesn't: trumps aren't breaking!

Lead the jack of clubs. The fact that you let him see the jack of clubs makes it even more likely that he will be able to establish the suit with no more than a single loser. In fact, if you had three clubs you should deliberately choose the jack as your lead. The full hand:




Declarer knows he can establish the clubs by giving up a trick to the king, but why should he risk doing so immediately where there is a chance you may ruff? He goes up with the ace of clubs and by the time he finds out he must lose a diamond trick it is too late.

NOT quite so clear is how to attack South's slam contract after the following bidding:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♦ | 1♠ |
| 2♣ | 3♦ [1] |
| 3NT | 4♣ |
| 4NT | 5♥ |
| 6♦ | |

[1] forcing

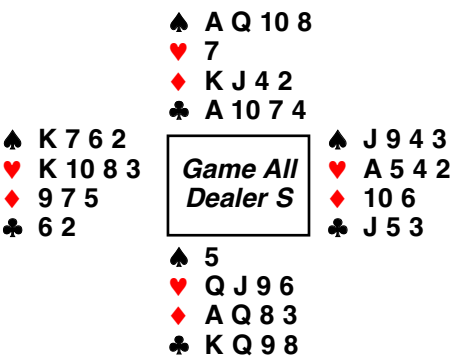
Your hand:

♠ K 7 6 2 ♥ K 10 8 3 ♦ 9 7 5 ♣ 6 2

It sounds as if the opponents may have reached a 'momentum' slam, which may not be reached at the other table. So it is even more important for you to defeat it with your lead. How much do you know?

North is surely short in hearts and declarer has few spades, so a trump lead seems promising. But wait. Neither opponent has indicated long trumps and both seem long in clubs. With such deals it is rarely necessary to stop a cross-ruff because declarer is unable to cash enough tricks in his long side suit – in this case, clubs. However, if he needs to pick up a twelfth trick, you know that a spade finesse is going to succeed. How can you point him away from that line of play?

What is partner going to contribute to the defence? From the fact that South didn't bid 5NT, you consider the possibility that his side may be missing an ace – if so, it is probably the ace of hearts. If not, you must hope for the queen of hearts, because … yes, you are going to lead the king of hearts. The full deal:



When your king of hearts holds the first trick, you shift to a spade. Declarer may decide that your lead has made it unnecessary for him to rely on the spade finesse. He can count twelve tricks if he can establish a heart trick via a ruffing finesse against your 'marked' ace, because he can ruff two spades and throw a third spade on the established heart trick… But when he ruffs a spade and runs the queen of hearts, partner produces the ace to defeat the slam.

On any other lead, South has no real option but to take the winning spade finesse.

My final example of an attacking lead against a slam contract is more difficult because it requires that you look a long way ahead and visualise the probable layout.

A strong auction takes the opponents to Six Hearts:

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| | 1NT |
| 2♣ | 2♥ |
| 3♠ | 4♦ |
| 5♣ | 5♥ |
| 6♠ | |

Your lead is from:

♠ 8 5 3 ♥ K J 9 8 ♦ 8 2 ♣ K J 8 5

Clearly you hold most, if not all, of the defensive assets. Very likely the king of clubs will score one trick, but the king of hearts is almost surely ill placed. And if, after a winning heart finesse, declarer is still short a trick, you are vulnerable to a heart-club squeeze. Can this threat be successfully countered? Maybe. Lead a heart now, and again when you come in with the king of clubs. Which heart? A low one may (it does) allow declarer too cheap a trick if he has the ten of hearts. An honour is preferable, and the king is best. This is the layout:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K 10 2<br>♥ A Q 7 5<br>♦ A K<br>♣ 10 7 3 2 | |
| ♠ 8 5 3<br>♥ K J 9 8<br>♦ 8 2<br>♣ K J 8 5 | *Love All*<br>*Dealer N* | ♠ 7 6<br>♥ 6 4 3<br>♦ 10 7 6 5 4 3<br>♣ 9 6 |
| | ♠ A Q J 9 4<br>♥ 10 2<br>♦ Q J 9<br>♣ A Q 4 | |

Declarer is helpless after the lead of either heart honour. By continuing with the other honour when you gain the lead in clubs you destroy dummy's heart entry and South can no longer squeeze you. As a result, in good time you come to two club tricks and, hopefully, the congratulations of the other players at the table.

So, my BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Games may be quietly defended, but slams must be attacked.**

*I mentioned in relation to Derek Rimington's article 'The first trump' that many experts now give a suit-preference signal with their small trumps. That idea can be taken further…*

# Suit preference on opening lead

## David Birman *(Israel)*

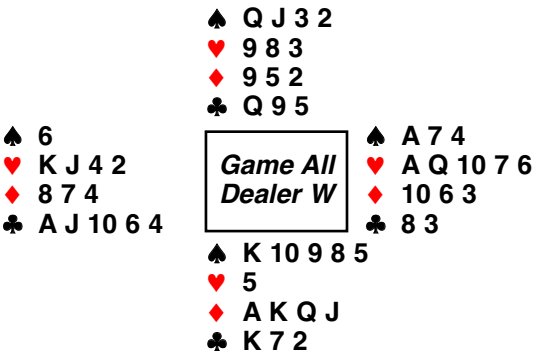
*David Birman was born in 1948 in Poland but now lives in Tel Aviv. He is a consultant engineer in logistics and transport. His best bridge moments came in 1985 with a silver medal in the European Championships followed by a bronze in the Bermuda Bowl.*

*He now spends much of his time helping youngsters, being chairman of the Israeli Youth Committee and captain and coach of the junior team. He has been editor of Israel's bridge magazine since 1983.*

THERE are many situations where partner is going to win the first trick in a suit where declarer is likely to have a singleton, and partner's play to the next trick is critical. It can be important to use your first card (the lead) to help partner make the right decision. Most of the time the number of cards you hold in the suit is known from the bidding, or the number of cards in declarer's hand is known (when he has made a splinter-bid, for example).

In my opinion, suit-preference on lead (SPL) can be more important than just leading a systemic third or fourth highest.

MY first example is from the Israel v Poland match in the 1992 Junior European Championship.



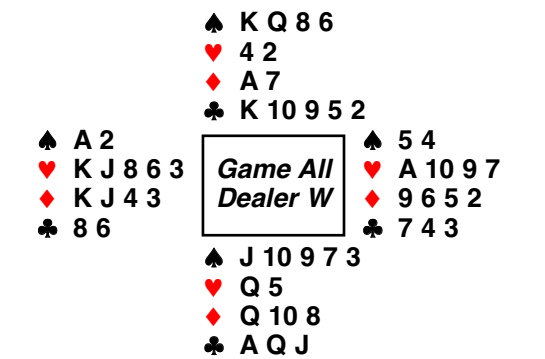

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pass | Pass | 1♥ |
| 1♠ | 3♠ | Double | 4♥ |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

West led the four of hearts (third highest) and East, after winning the ace of hearts, switched to a diamond, playing partner for the queen of diamonds and king of clubs when this return would have been the winning play. The South hand might be:

♠ K 10 9 8 5
♥ 5
♦ A K J
♣ A 10 6 2

Had West led the two of hearts, as a suit-preference lead, East would win the ace of hearts and switch to the eight of clubs, beating the contract.

THE second deal is from the Israeli Pairs Championship.



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♥ | Double | 2♥ |
| 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

West was on lead and, in accordance with their agreed leading style, led the fourth-best six of hearts. East took the ace and continued with hearts as he was afraid declarer might be able to discard a heart from dummy on his diamonds. His hand might be:

♠ J 10 9 7 3
♥ Q 5
♦ K Q 8
♣ Q J 6

in which case a heart return is essential to beat the contract.

Had East-West been playing suit-preference opening leads, West would have been able to lead the eight of hearts, showing interest in the higher of the two remaining suits – diamonds – in which case East, after winning with the ace of hearts, knows that there is no danger of an immediate discard. He will switch to a diamond and beat the contract.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When your side has found a fit, or you know there is a singleton in dummy or declarer's hand, your lead in that suit is suit-preference to help your partner find the right continuation after winning the first trick.**

In these situations, avoid using your normal methods, and lead instead the card that will show your partner which of the other two suits you prefer.

*The following idea is quite difficult to put into practice on opening lead but there are many opportunities to put it to good use once you have seen the dummy.*

# Lead low from a doubleton honour

## Rixi Markus *(England)*

WHEN you, as a defender, are about to attack a suit in which you have a holding such as Jx, Qx or Kx, do you invariably lead the high card?

Most players do, but this is sometimes quite a costly mistake.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

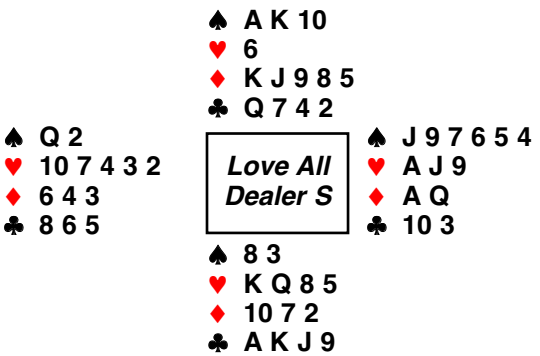
**When you have to open up a suit in which you have a doubleton honour, consider the possible advantage of leading the low card.**

This is particularly likely to work when the hand on your left is marked with strength in this suit, and especially when you have no re-entry to your hand.

Suppose, for example, that at some point during the defence you lead the king from Kx and the next hand wins with the ace from AJx. Now, if you yourself cannot regain the lead, your partner will be stymied, even if his holding is as strong as, say, Q109x, for he will be unable to continue the suit except at the cost of a trick. Had you led low instead, the suit could have been cleared. (I am assuming, of course, that your partner has plenty of entries.)

I WAS able to put this tip to good use in a recent rubber. South opened with a weak no-trump, showing 12-14 points, and was raised to 3NT after the sequence below.

What would you have led from the West hand?




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT | Pass | 2♣ | 2♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Double | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

As South was unwilling to pass his partner's penalty double of Two Spades, it seemed clear that the spade strength was likely to be in the dummy. Accordingly, in view of the absence of any re-entry to my own hand, I decided to lead the two of spades rather than the queen.

Declarer could no longer cope with his task. He won with the ace, entered his hand with a club, and led a diamond, losing to my partner's queen. Declarer ducked the spade return, allowing my queen to hold, but I was able to put partner in with the ace of hearts to clear the spades. Now South could take only eight tricks.

It is easy to see that if West leads the queen of spades initially, declarer will win with the ace and make the contract, as East will be unable to attack spades effectively.

These situations occur quite frequently during the middle game, when it often pays to lead a small card from a doubleton honour. This is especially so where you can see three or four cards smaller than your honour in dummy – provided that your partner is an intelligent player who can interpret the meaning of your action.

*That concludes our tips on opening leads. We now move on to those other important aspects of the defensive game, signals and discards. If the first idea seems a little old hat nowadays, that is because it was such good advice that it has been adopted more or less universally.*

# Extend your distributional signals

## Pierre Jaēs *(France)*

*PIERRE JAÏS, a Parisian doctor, died in 1988, aged 75. A WBF Grand Master, he and his partner, Roger Trézel, were the first players to win the triple crown of Bermuda Bowl (1956), World Teams Olympiad (1960) and World Pairs (1962). His partnership with Trézel, one of the world's strongest in the 1950s and 1960s, demonstrated the effectiveness of canapé, a bidding style where short suits are bid first. He is the author of more than a dozen books on the game, perhaps the most famous of which is* How to Win at Rubber Bridge.

My BOLS tip concerns the vital subject of signalling. You can effect quite an improvement in your defensive play by increasing the use of suit-length signals to cover new situations.

Practically everybody knows how to use standard count signals on the first round of a suit: you play high-low to show an even number of cards and low-high to show an odd number.

In the following diagram you are East and your partner leads the king of hearts.

*Dummy*
♥ J 8 4

*Partner*
♥ K Q 9 7

*You*
♥ 6 5 3 2

*Declarer*
♥ A 10

On the lead of the king you start an echo with the six, showing an even number.

So far, so good, but what happens when the cards are divided like this:

*Dummy*
♥ J 3 2

*Partner*
♥ K 9 5 4

*You*
♥ Q 8 7 6

*Declarer*
♥ A 10

This time West leads the four, dummy plays low and your queen loses to the ace. Later your partner gains the lead in another suit and lays down the king of hearts. In certain circumstances it could be vital for West to know that South started with only two hearts. In fact, if there is no outside entry to dummy, West will be able to switch to another suit and declarer may never come to a second heart trick.

My suggestion is that, as East, you should echo – or not echo – with your remaining cards in order to show how many you still have. In the above example, where East has three cards left, he should follow suit with the six on the second round. With Q76 originally, East would follow with the seven on the second round, starting an echo to show two cards remaining.

THE use of this signal enabled my partner to produce a nice defence to beat a game contract in a recent match:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K J 8 6 3<br>♥ Q 10<br>♦ J 4<br>♣ J 10 4 2 | |
| ♠ A 9 7 2<br>♥ K 4<br>♦ Q 6 5 3<br>♣ Q 8 7 | *Love All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ Q 10 5 4<br>♥ 8 7 3 2<br>♦ K 8 7 2<br>♣ 6 |
| | ♠ —<br>♥ A J 9 6 5<br>♥ A 10 9<br>♣ A K 9 5 3 | |

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 3♣ | Pass | 4♣ | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

West led the three of diamonds and my king lost to South's ace. Declarer led a small heart towards the dummy, my partner winning with the king.

My partner had good hopes of defeating the contract by taking one trick in each suit. The bidding had marked South with at least five hearts and five clubs. If South had two diamonds and one spade, the contract was sure to fail. However, if South held three diamonds and no spades the defenders would have only three fast tricks and my partner would need to think again … which is just what he did.

At the third trick my partner led the queen of diamonds, on which I played the two. Declarer false-carded with the ten but my partner of course decided to believe me. My play of the lowest diamond showed an odd number of cards remaining in the suit, and South was therefore known to have started with three diamonds. My partner now knew that the ace of spades would be ruffed if he led it.

Accordingly, West switched to the two of spades. Declarer, who was faced with a difficult guess, finessed the jack in dummy and was forced to ruff my queen. Declarer now needed all his trumps to draw mine, and when West eventually came in with the queen of clubs he was able to cash the ace of spades for down one.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Arrange with your partner to play length signals from the remaining cards in a suit when you have not been able to start such a signal on the first round.**

You will find that this extra exchange of information enables you to defeat many more contracts.

*These days most tournament players do extend their distributional signals in the way Pierre Jaïs suggests, perhaps influenced by his tip. However, there are some occasions when these rules have to be broken and some of these are covered in the next suggestion.*

# Tip for the pip

## José le Dentu *(France)*

*José le Dentu won five French Open Team Championships before retiring from tournament play in 1957. He died at the end of 1996 as this book was being compiled. Born in Madagascar, he lived most of his life in Paris. He was the author of many magazine articles and newspaper columns, including* Le Figaro.

I ALWAYS feel surprised when no-trump contracts are not defeated because the defenders' suit is blocked after a fourth-best lead in a suit where dummy has a singleton and partner five cards. I am convinced there is, indeed, a very simple rule to avoid such accidents but I think it has never been explained.

Here is an example chosen by Rosenkranz in his book, *Tips for Tops*:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ A J 10 5 2<br>♥ J<br>♦ K J 10<br>♣ J 8 6 4 | |
| ♠ 9<br>♥ A 10 8 2<br>♦ 9 8 6 3<br>♣ Q 9 7 5 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ K 8 7 6 4<br>♥ Q 9 7 4 3<br>♦ 5 2<br>♣ 10 |
| | ♠ Q 3<br>♥ K 6 5<br>♦ A Q 7 4<br>♣ A K 3 2 | |

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♦ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

West led the two of hearts, to the jack, queen and king. Declarer tried the spade finesse, won by the king. Which card should East play in order to help West avoid a blockage and beat 3NT?

At Table 1 East returned the four, declarer played the five, West the eight and the suit was blocked.

At Table 2 Rosenkranz (East) returned the seven, declarer played the five and West (Wold) could have won the trick cheaply with the eight but he knew from the bidding that South could not have five hearts. So he won with the ten, cashed the ace and returned the eight to defeat the contract.

THIS seems to me an unnecessarily convoluted solution to a straightforward problem. A less alert West may well have blocked the suit anyway. But if East simply plays his smallest pip when he has five cards and dummy a singleton there would not be a problem even if West is only an average player.

The point is this. Suppose the lay-out is slightly different:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Dummy*<br>♥ J | |
| *West*<br>♥ A 8 4 2 | | *East*<br>♥ Q 9 7 3 |
| | *Declarer*<br>♥ K 10 6 5 | |

West leads the two, covered by the jack, queen and king. When East gains the lead he cannot afford to return his fourth-highest three because he knows that declarer will just cover this card, preventing the run of the suit. He would have to lead his highest card (in this instance the nine), forcing South to cover (with the ten).

If partner would return his highest card from an original four-card holding when dummy is out of the suit, when he returns his lowest card the only explanation is that it is from an original five-card holding and West must be alert to possible blockage problems.

LET us conclude with this typical case. The contract is 3NT, reached after South opened 1NT.

*Dummy*
♥ 2

*West* ♥ K Q 9 6 — *East* ♥ A 10 5 4 3

*Declarer*
♥ J 8 7

West lead the six of hearts, East takes the ace and returns the three. South plays the eight of hearts and West … the queen because he knows that South has only one heart left (the jack or the ten).

So here is my BOLS tip for the pip:

**Against no-trump contracts, when partner has led his fourth best in a suit where dummy has a singleton, you should return your smallest pip if you have five cards in the suit.**

The corollary, of course, is that partner must unblock on the second round of the suit when he sees your small card.

*The following tip makes a suggestion that is now widely played by international players the world over, many of whom do not realise to whom they are indebted. Any tournament players out there who do not yet play Smith peters should seriously consider taking them up.*

# Show attitude to the opening leader's suit

## Dorothy Truscott *(USA)*

*DOROTHY HAYDEN TRUSCOTT, of New York City, is a bridge teacher, author, and mathematician. She has spent most of the last 15 years working on a historical novel about early Manhattan under the Dutch. Nevertheless she is one of the greatest women players of all time. Her record in open bridge is unparalleled by any other woman: she was runner-up in the 1965 Bermuda Bowl and bronze medallist in the World Open Pairs in 1966. In the women's game she has won four world titles. The author of several bridge books, her many contributions to bidding theory include splinter bids and DOPI (Blackwood responses after interference).*

*Dorothy comes from a family of bridge players. Her parents had a wonderfully happy bridge partnership lasting over 65 years until her mother died aged 92 (her father is still very alert at 96). Three of her four children have been fascinated by the game, but it is too early to tell about the eight grandchildren.*

*She is married to the British-born international player-writer Alan Truscott who moved to the USA in 1962. He has been bridge editor of the* New York Times *for more than thirty years.*

THE last major innovation in signalling came forty years ago when suit-preference signals were introduced. But in all that time there has been a serious gap in the signalling methods available to the defenders.

My BOLS tip, a modification of a suggestion by T R H Lyons of England, is an attempt to fill that gap.

Suppose West leads the spade four against 3NT, and sees this:

*Dummy*
♠ 9 7

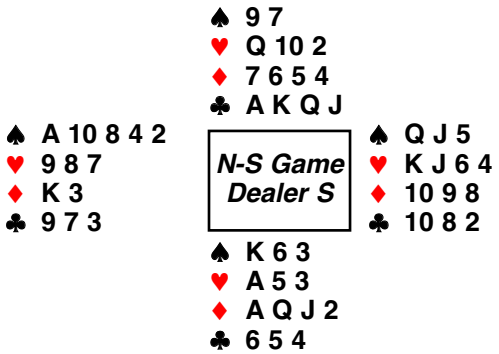
*West* ♠ A 10 8 4 2 — *East* ♠ J

*Declarer*
♠ K

Dummy plays the seven, East the jack and declarer wins with the king. Who has the queen? West can't tell. If he gets the lead in some other suit, should he try to cash his spades or should he wait for partner to lead the suit?

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

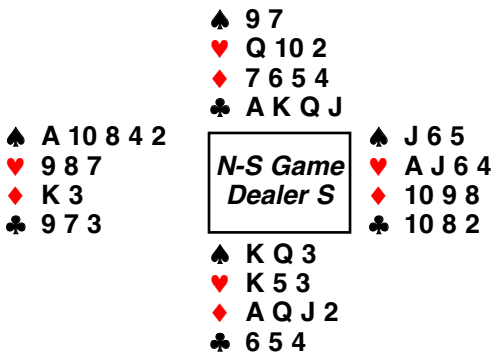
**Against no-trumps, defenders' first spot card, unless it is essential to give count, should indicate attitude toward the opening leader's suit.**




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♦ | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

West leads the spade four against 3NT and declarer wins East's jack with the king. Declarer leads a club to dummy. East should play the ten of clubs on this trick, meaning: 'I love your lead, partner. Please continue.' (Note that a count signal in clubs would hardly be of much use here.) Declarer takes a diamond finesse and when West wins the king he cashes four spade tricks for down one.

Now suppose that the East and South cards had been slightly different:

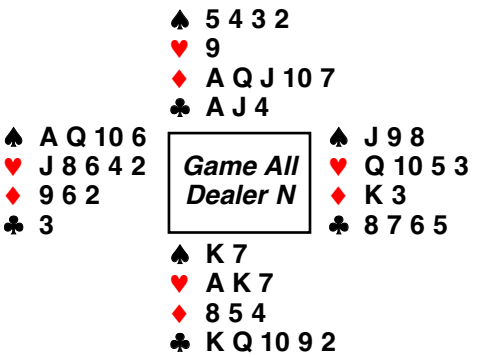



The bidding is the same and West, who has the same hand as before, makes the same opening lead and sees the same dummy. Again declarer wins the spade jack with the king and leads a club to dummy. This time, however, East can't stand a spade continuation from partner so he contributes the club two.

Declarer takes a diamond finesse, losing to the king. West now knows he can't afford to continue spades from his side of the table, and he exits with the nine of hearts. East grabs the trick, returns the spade six, and the contract fails by two tricks.

Note that in both these cases West would have been on a complete guess without the 'attitude' signal. And if he had guessed wrong, declarer would have made both games.

THE opening leader should also use the same attitude signal. In the situations already given he should play the club nine at the second trick to emphasise that he wants his suit continued. But sometimes West will want to discourage his own suit:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♦ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

West elects to lead the heart four against 3NT. Declarer takes East's queen with the king and tries a diamond finesse. If West wanted hearts returned he would play the diamond nine on this trick. If he were lukewarm about the matter he might play the six.

With his actual hand, however, West is most anxious for a shift and should play the two. East wins with the king and can beat the contract with a spade shift. If he blindly continues hearts, declarer will make eleven tricks.

*The next contribution deals with signalling in a more general way. It also makes a suggestion of a useful way to improve your game.*

# Avoiding the gong

## Dick Cummings *(Australia)*

*DICK CUMMINGS of Sydney was born in 1932 and is one of Australia's greatest players. He had a long and successful partnership with Tim Seres and together they helped Australia finish third in the Bermuda Bowl in 1971 and 1979. In 1980 he won the player's prize in the annual BOLS Brilliancy competition. He is now a bridge teacher and writer with columns in two Sydney newspapers, the* Morning Herald *and* Sun-Herald. *For a long time he was editor of* World Bridge News.

MOST people can recall some pleasant turning point in their lives. For me, a maiden overseas trip to Europe in 1958 partnering Tim Seres was such an occasion. The timing was good. Basing ourselves in London during a vintage period for British bridge, we were fortunate to get to know players of the calibre of Plum Meredith and Pedro Juan. To this day, Tim rates Meredith the most knowledgeable player of his acquaintance.

At that time, Juan was hosting a unique series of sessions at Lederer's Club called 'The Coffee House'. Its format was broadly this: four promising players would be invited to come along for a night's bridge at the club. Juan was master of ceremonies, co-opting a panel of experts who gave their time simply because they enjoyed the concept, the concept of 'gong play'…

The guests occupied the four playing seats. Behind each player was an appointed expert, wielding a little brass bell. Random-dealt hands would be bid and played normally.

The twist was that whenever an expert considered his charge had made a mistake, he would ring the bell. 'Gongs' were noted by the MC but not discussed until the conclusion of play. (Nearly all related to play and defence. A bid had to be atrocious to be crimed.) Each deal was followed by a debate on the gongs, chaired by Juan, all present being welcome to contribute. Yes, it was a democracy.

Having been gonged, you had the right to defend yourself. If the gong was upheld the guest was fined two shillings. If the gong was dismissed the expert was fined the same amount.

All proceeds went to charity. Some nights the charity did quite nicely, even at two bob a time.

The most vivid memory of 'The Coffee House' is the very favourable effect it had on the group's card perception. If you led or signalled with the wrong spot, the gong would come, as night follows day. Holding bells in their hands, Terence Reese, Nico Gardener, Plum Meredith, Leslie Dodds and company were merciless.

Naturally, those guests who could cope with their egos being bruised improved sharply. Which brings me to my BOLS bridge tip:

**In defence, when leading a new suit mid-hand, be careful to show attitude with your choice of spot cards.**

THIS is an area of the game where the average defender makes lots of errors. Partnerships are advised to work hard on developing an acute sense of spot consciousness. 'The Coffee House' was a great fillip in that direction. Fear of the gong just worked wonders for your concentration.

Here is an example from a knockabout duplicate:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 9 5<br>♥ 9 6 3<br>♦ A Q 10 9 8<br>♣ Q J 2 | |
| ♠ Q 10 6 4 2<br>♥ K J 8 2<br>♦ 4 3<br>♣ K 5 | *E-W Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ J 8 3<br>♥ A 7 4<br>♦ 7 6 5 2<br>♣ 7 6 3 |
| | ♠ A K 7<br>♥ Q 10 5<br>♦ K J<br>♣ A 10 9 8 4 | |

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

The opening lead was the four of spades to the five, jack and king. Declarer overtakes the jack of diamonds with the queen, East furnishing the seven, then runs the queen of clubs, three, four, king.

Trick one marks South with the ace of spades. (True, occasionally, when West is short of entries, it is right for East to try the jack from AJx in third seat. That cannot be the case here.) The next two tricks give a pretty fair picture of the minor-suit lay-out. A thinking West can diagnose the necessity of a heart switch. It is nearly certain East has the ace. Accordingly, our West switches to the two of hearts and is delighted to see partner's ace hit the table. The Lord has smiled again. Alas, pleasure quickly turns to pain. East returns a spade! Declarer claims the balance for +460.

What happened? In a nutshell, East ignored the basics of mid-hand attitude leads. Partner's switch to a small card, in this case the two, asks for the return of the new suit. A switch to a big card says: 'Don't play back this suit, return my original suit or try something else.'

To reinforce the point, let's change the hand:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 9 5<br>♥ 9 6 3<br>♦ A Q 10 9 8<br>♣ Q J 2 | |
| ♠ A 10 6 4 2<br>♥ Q 8 5 2<br>♦ 4 3<br>♣ K 5 | *E-W Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ J 8 3<br>♥ A 7 4<br>♦ 7 6 5 2<br>♣ 7 6 3 |
| | ♠ K Q 7<br>♥ K J 10<br>♦ K J<br>♣ A 10 9 8 4 | |

Now the correct card to return in hearts is the eight. It means, 'Don't send this one back please.' East gets the message and puts through a spade. Bob's your uncle.

So, the next time you are in danger of being lazy about your own spot lead, or about reading a card from partner, pause awhile. Try to imagine the distinguished figure of Plum Meredith poised over the chair, gong in hand. That should help you do the right thing.

*Perhaps any group of players who wish to improve could follow the 'gong' method. It is not necessary to have real experts manning the 'gongs' – after all, if the gong is struck when it shouldn't have been the gong-striker must pay up.*

*The advice that follows warns about paying too much attention to any sort of signal that partner plays. If you already know how to defend the hand, go ahead and do it, after all, you may be in possession of more information than he is.*

# Don't follow partner's signals blindly

**Berry Westra *(Netherlands)***

*Now in his mid-thirties, Berry Westra lives in Rotterdam where he is the editor of a monthly Dutch bridge magazine called* Bridge Beter. *It is a magazine for improving players and has a circulation of 17,000. He also writes bridge books that are very popular in the Netherlands.*

*His biggest triumph as a player was being part of the Dutch team that won the 1993 Bermuda Bowl but before that he had won a European Junior Championship in 1986, a World Junior Championship in 1987 and was placed third in a World Team Olympiad in 1992. He has had a longstanding bridge partnership with Enri Leufkens for some fifteen years now.*

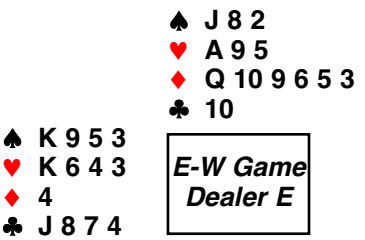
*Where:* A bridge tournament anywhere in the world.
*When:* Just after a beatable game has been allowed to make due to defensive error.

*Possible conversations:*
*A:* 'There's no point in signalling with a partner like you! I ask for a heart and you play a club. What's the point?'
*B:* 'Partner, why didn't you play back a club?' 'But you signalled for a heart.' 'That doesn't mean you have to play one! Why don't you think for yourself?'

Which conversation is more likely? Ten to one says it's 'A' for obvious reasons. If your partner obeys your signal and it turns out wrong, you go easy on him. You might even take part of the blame. However, when partner ignores your signal and that is the wrong thing to do, oh boy, you hit him with everything you've got!

It is therefore very understandable that many players tend to see partner's signals as a command (who needs a scolding?) rather than a suggestion. This is the wrong way to handle signalling. Signals are indispensable in solving many of the difficult problems that come up, for any partnership. However, they should be an aid to the right defence and nothing more. Defence starts with analysis.

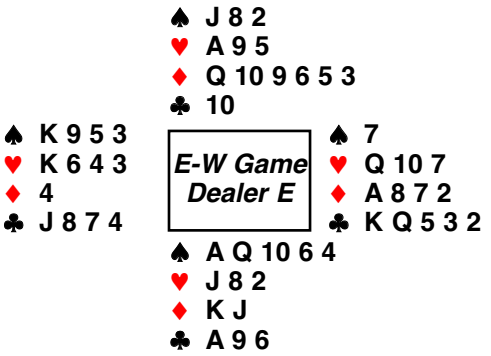
AN example is the next board which was played in a local Dutch tournament. Here it clearly paid off to use your own judgement rather follow partner's signal.




After East opened the bidding with One Club, South reached Four Spades, doubled by West.

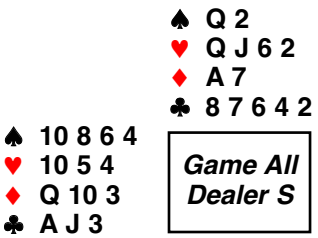
At several tables West led the four of diamonds to the three, ace and king. East played back the two of diamonds and West ruffed South's jack. Of course East's two of diamonds asks for a club return and in fact some Wests fatally followed their partner's signal.

Huub Bertens, one of Holland's most talented players, realised that a club return could wait. However, if East held the queen of hearts, then a heart switch was needed immediately and this is what he proceeded to do. This was the full deal:




Declarer went two down whereas the club return would have allowed the contract to make. Perhaps East should have played back a more neutral diamond, but he wanted to show West that underleading his hypothetical ace of clubs would be safe.

THE next deal shows that partner's signal can never be the sole guidance for the defence, simply because it sometimes happens that you know more about the hand than he does.



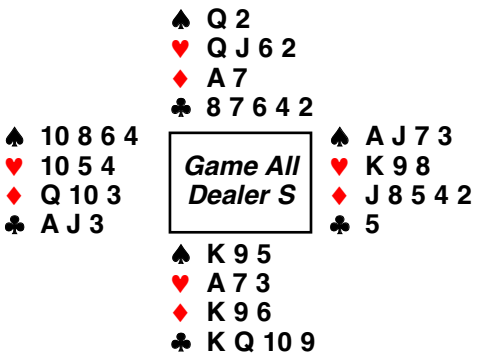

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 2NT | All Pass |

[1] 15-17

Against 2NT West led the four of spades to the queen, ace and five. East returned a spade to the nine and ten. A third spade went to declarer's king, dummy pitching a heart and partner producing the jack. Declarer next led the king of clubs which held, East contributing the five. The queen of clubs was taken by the ace and this time East discarded the two of diamonds, a discouraging signal. Before automatically cashing his high spade West decided to analyse the situation. He had seen the king of spades and king-queen of clubs in the South hand, eight points. Considering South's pass over 2NT, he was very likely to have exactly 15 points. That could be either the king of hearts and king-jack of diamonds or the ace of hearts and king of diamonds. In the first case, the defence held six certain tricks, so West focused on the second possibility.

It would seem that with these cards declarer should always have eight tricks (three clubs, two hearts, two diamonds and a spade). However, things are not always what they seem!

South's holding in clubs was KQ109 so the suit was potentially blocked. If the defence could succeed in driving out the ace of diamonds before declarer unblocked the club suit, they could prevent the eight of clubs taking a trick. Therefore, despite partner's two of diamonds, a diamond switch was mandatory. Furthermore, West realised he could not even cash his spade trick as that would allow declarer to pitch the blocking club. Here is the whole hand:




West played a diamond at trick six and another one when he won the jack of clubs. East completed the good defence by not covering the queen of hearts.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Don't stop thinking when partner signals.**

Work out the hands and base your defence on that analysis in conjunction with partner's signal.

*The next tip is not directly about signalling, rather it suggests a really good way of working out and remembering the distribution of the whole hand.*

# Picture the original shape

## Matthew Granovetter *(Israel)*

*MATTHEW GRANOVETTER and his wife Pamela, both in their forties, were born and bred in the USA but have recently emigrated to Israel. They now co-edit* Bridge Today, *one of the most respected bridge magazines in the world. Matthew has written two children's musicals as well as several bridge books. He is also bridge editor of the* Jerusalem Post.

THIS bridge tip has to do mainly with the most difficult part of bridge: defence, though it can be applied to declarer play (and bidding) as well. Try to picture the original shape of declarer's hand as quickly as possible. (As a declarer, try to picture one of the opponents' original hands.) By forming some kind of picture early in the deal, you will be laying the groundwork for problems that lie ahead.

Not this tiresome counting business again, you say. The sad fact is you cannot get around the chore of counting high-card points, but you can eliminate the far more tedious chore of counting cards simply by picturing the shape instead. I discovered this method myself only recently. What a relief after counting cards for over twenty years!

There are only ten common shapes to remember. If you haven't memorised them through experience, if you are a beginner or intermediate, it would help to sit down and commit them to memory.

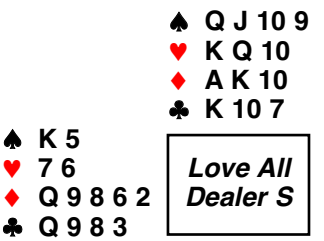
| *Balanced* | *Unbalanced* |
|---|---|
| 4-4-3-2 | 4-4-4-1 |
| 4-3-3-3 | 5-4-3-1 |
| 5-3-3-2 | 6-3-3-1 |
| 6-3-2-2 | 5-5-2-1 |
| 5-4-2-2 | 6-4-2-1 |

There are also a few rare patterns that are useful to memorise: 7-2-2-2, 7-3-2-1, 6-5-1-1, 5-4-4-0, 6-4-3-0, 5-5-3-0, 7-3-3-0, 6-5-2-0.

Every good player knows these patterns by heart – backwards, forwards and inside out. If you name any three digits of a single pattern in any order, you should be able to come up with the fourth digit instantaneously – without counting to thirteen.

The point is that in the middle of a hand you do not want to have to sit there and say to yourself: 'Three rounds of spades were played, partner followed once, that's four, then three, then three, equals ten, leaves two in my hand, so declarer has one, on to hearts, let's see, declarer followed twice, etc, etc.' Instead, you form a picture of a single, familiar pattern on your mind: 'Declarer was known to be balanced from his bidding: in spades, hearts and diamonds he has shown up with 4-3-2 ... ahh 4-4-3-2 shape; he has four clubs.'

LET'S utilise this tip in a hand. Put yourself in the West seat, defending a slam.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♣[1] | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 1NT | Pass | 6NT | All Pass |

[1] North-South play a strong no-trump, and South would open 1♣ whenever he had four in a balanced hand or when he had three and was 4-3-3-3 with a four-card major or 4-4-2-3 with both majors

Before you make your lead, you try to imagine the shape of declarer's hand. He has opened One Club, thus he has at least three clubs, and has rebid 1NT over One Spade. He is probably balanced with two or three spades. If he has three spades, his hand is unlikely to contain a small doubleton or he might have raised spades rather than rebid 1NT. There are only three or four balanced patterns that fit his bidding: 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, (5-4-2-2). Nothing more to go on as far as shape; but point-wise you subtract your seven from the 40-point deck and realise that partner is likely to hold one or two jacks at the very best. Therefore you lead the suit least likely to give anything away, which is a heart.

Declarer wins in dummy and leads the queen of spades to your king. You exit with a spade and declarer wins in his hand with the ace. He leads a third spade to dummy and cashes the fourth, discarding a diamond. Next, he cashes the king of hearts and leads the ten of hearts to his jack. Partner has done nothing but follow suit.

Declarer now leads the ace of hearts. Dummy's minor suits are intact and you have Q98 in both minors. What do you pitch? What are declarer's minor-suit cards? The best way to reason what declarer now holds is to look back to the bidding and picture his original shape.

Your early 'footwork' should help you. Remember that declarer held one of these balanced patterns: 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2, 5-3-3-2, (5-4-2-2). Now that he has shown up with three spades and four hearts, you can eliminate the five-card club suit. He must have started with one of the first two patterns.

If he was 4-3-3-3 shape, his original hand looked like this:

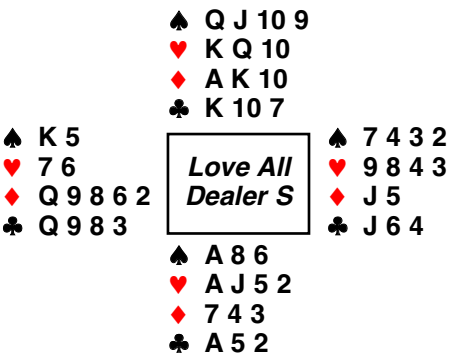
♠ A x x
♥ A J x x
♦ x x x
♣ A x x

Since you started with five diamonds, the diamond shape around the table was originally 5-3-3-2, partner holding two. So you must discard a club to guard the diamond suit.

If he was 4-4-3-2 shape, his original hand looked like:

♠ A x x
♥ A J x x
♦ x x
♣ A x x x

– wait, no, he's not likely to hold that small doubleton in diamonds (back in the bidding we analysed he would have raised spades with an outside small doubleton). You therefore play for 4-3-3-3 shape and discard a club. There is no way to be 100% positive, but at least your play is based on a reasonable deduction. The actual 52 cards were:




This was a tough end-position that was made less difficult by knowing your patterns before you sat down at the table, and doing your 'mental footwork' in the bidding. Actually my BOLS bridge tip is basic to all players of all levels:

**Count the high cards, but try to picture the original shape – as early as you can.**

*The next couple of tips concern themselves with the play of small cards. Too often small cards are just represented as 'x's, both on paper and in players' minds. They are not all equal and which ones you play when can have a significant bearing on the outcome of a hand.*

# Don't play idle cards thoughtlessly

**Jean Besse *(Switzerland)***

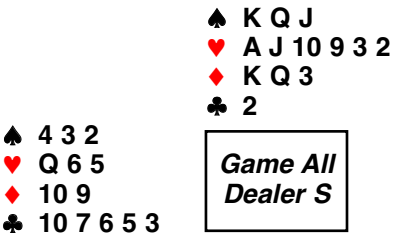
*Jean Besse of Geneva died in 1995 aged 81. Although he represented Switzerland in European and World Championships on numerous occasions, the high spot of his playing career was to win the* Sunday Times *Pairs Championship in 1969 in partnership with John Collings. He was renowned as a theoretician and bridge columnist and for his high-pitched giggle.*

IDLE cards are those that can neither make tricks nor prevent the enemy from making tricks, nor act as guards to important cards. Indeed, they appear to have no practical use at all.

And yet idle cards can exert an influence, even though it may be hard to pin down. They are like the neutrinos of nuclear physics, which are of minute mass and seem not to affect other particles but which have mysterious powers.

There is only one way you can penetrate the mystery. Before playing an idle card, you should consider what the effect of playing it may be.

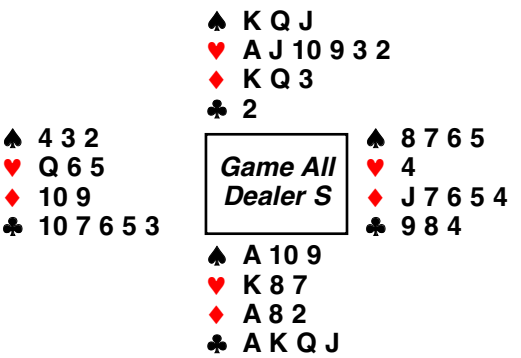
We begin with an ordinary hand, where the bidding was simple and direct: South opened 2NT and North raised to 7NT.




You lead the ten of diamonds and dummy's king wins the trick, East and South following low. Declarer cashes the queen of diamonds and leads a diamond to the ace in his hand. What is your discard?

Clearly, a heart would be suicidal; a club, too, might be dangerous. So it seems safe to throw a spade, an idle card.

Safe? You have just killed the defence! This is the full deal:

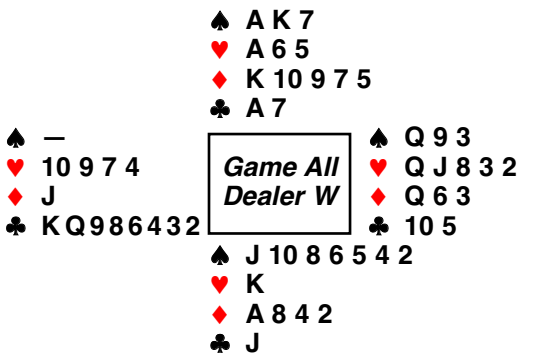



After the first three tricks, declarer intends to run four clubs and three spades. When West shows out on the third spade he will know that he started with three cards in the suit; when East shows out on the fourth club he will know that West started with five. He already knows that West had two diamonds. So now he will know that West had exactly three hearts. South will easily pick up your unfortunate queen.

To give yourself a chance, you had to keep your spades intact, instead discarding a club on the third diamond and leaving South with a complete guess. East, too, had to take care. When the fourth round of clubs was played, he had to discard a diamond, not a spade. A

discard of a spade from either defender allows declarer to find out the spade distribution, and hence the distribution of the entire hand. Those 'idle' spades had mysterious and unexpected powers.

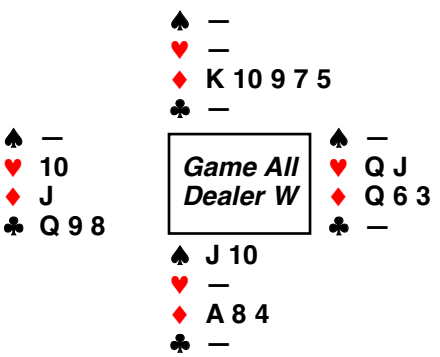
NOW take a hand from the 1994 Macallan/*Sunday Times* Pairs Tournament:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 5♣ | Double | Pass |
| 5♠ | Pass | 6♠ | All Pass |

West led the king of clubs. Robert Sheehan as South was one who found a successful line of play. He won with the ace of clubs, ruffed a club, noting East's echo, and played a spade to the king, West discarding a club.

Faced with a trump loser, Sheehan set out to partially strip the hand before putting East in. He played a heart to the king, crossed to a top trump, cashed the ace of hearts, ruffed a heart, and then exited with a trump, leaving East on lead in this position:




East had no more clubs and clearly did not want to open diamonds, so he led a heart, a 'neutrino', thereby disclosing West's fourth heart!

Sheehan could now place West with 0-4-1-8, so he called for dummy's king of diamonds and continued with a finesse against the queen to complete the good work.

Again, the play of the 'idle' heart sabotaged the defence. East must return a low diamond, accepting the risk of leading into the tenace, should South hold the jack of diamonds.

Had East done so, South would have had to guess. And if you look at the hand closely, you will find that he will go for the losing line more often than not.

So, my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Don't play an idle card thoughtlessly.
Consider what the effect
of playing it may be.
If played at the wrong time,
an idle card may betray
your whole hand.**

*The next tip is not exclusively concerned with small cards but it gives several good reasons why you should not automatically play your lowest card to any trick that you do not intend to win.*

# Defenselectivity

## Barry Rigal *(England)*

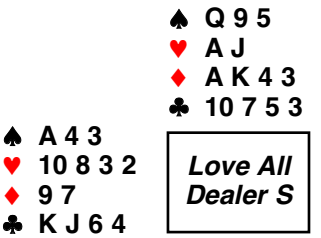
*Barry Rigal has lived most of his life in London where he worked as a tax accountant and played bridge on the British tournament scene. In 1994 his company relocated to Aberdeen and he declined the offer to accompany them. Instead he moved to New York where he now lives with Sue Picus, Venice Cup winner of 1991 and 1993. No longer working as an accountant, he earns his living as a professional bridge writer and commentator.*

BRIDGE beginners soon learn that the simplest way to win tricks is to keep high cards until they need them. Subsequently the idea of signalling – attitude, count or Lavinthal – persuades them to play a card other than their smallest on some occasions. In addition they discover tactical plays to gain tricks in a suit in isolation, such as false-carding. These plays would merit an article on their own, but that is not my theme.

There are many other reasons for not following with your smallest card. Here are some examples (on all occasions you are playing fourth highest leads).

## 1 Avoiding the endplay

South opens 1NT (12-14) and is raised straight to game by his partner. You lead the two of hearts:




When dummy plays small, your partner wins his king and returns the five, declarer following with the four and nine. At this point you might automatically play the three of hearts; but you know your partner has four hearts from his return of the five, and would you not prefer your partner to win the fourth round of the suit?

If declarer has, for example:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ K J 2 | or | ♠ K J 7 2 |
| ♥ Q 9 4 | | ♥ Q 9 4 |
| ♦ Q 6 2 | | ♦ J 6 2 |
| ♣ A Q 8 2 | | ♣ A Q 8 |

then he can succeed if you fail to unblock in hearts. He can knock out the ace of spades and then take all his side-suit winners before attempting the losing club finesse. You may take your winning heart, but will still be on lead to concede the ninth trick in clubs.

## 2 The unblock


| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | 2♥[2] |
| 2♠ | 3NT |

[1] 12-14
[2] transfer to spades

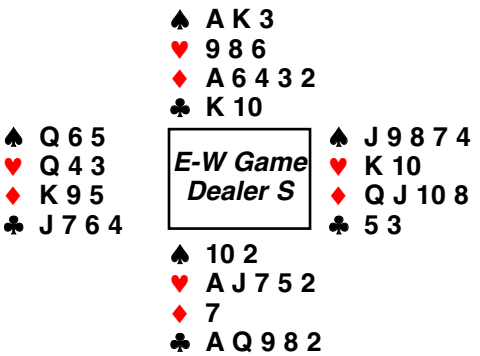
Your partner leads the three of clubs. Declarer plays the eight from dummy and your king

loses to the ace. Declarer then plays a spade to the jack. Plan the defence.

Do not duck – that could well be declarer's ninth trick. Having won your king, the normal card to return from your remaining club holding is the four, but this will be fatal if partner has Q6532, as the suit will be inextricably blocked. So you return the nine. But that is not all; what if partner has QJ532? Remember to unblock the seven on the next round and all will be well.

## 3 Disruption of declarer's timing

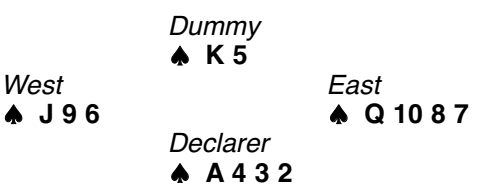
My third example is from the 1983 World Championship, everyone reaching a game or slam in hearts on a spade lead.




As you can see, left to their own devices all our declarers would surely have made twelve tricks. After winning the spade and playing a heart to the ten, jack and queen, they would have later drawn a second trump, and ruffed a club. However, the Easts were not going to make it so easy; they all played the king of hearts on the first round, giving declarer a choice of losing options. If he carried on drawing trumps the defence would play a third round, and declarer would, unless psychic, lose a club. If declarer tried to ruff a club before drawing trumps he would be overruffed and still have a trump loser.

## 4 Prevention of the avoidance play

Space prevents me from showing full hands for my final two categories, but let us simply look at this suit in isolation:




Watch what happened to my team-mate sitting West.

With an otherwise entryless hand he had led his semi-solid hearts against 3NT. Declarer (who knew from the bidding that East had only one heart) won the first trick and innocently advanced the four of spades. When West played the six, declarer could safely duck and later endplay East with the fourth round of the suit to concede the ninth trick. But if West had played the nine of spades at his first turn declarer could not follow this line, or West would remain on lead for an avalanche of hearts.

The moral: when declarer may want to keep you off lead, for whatever reason, the logical riposte ought be to try and prevent him from doing so by playing whatever high or intermediate cards you feel you can afford.

## 5 Protecting your partner's entry

Finally, when dummy leads a low card it feels unnatural to play an unsupported honour in second seat. One feels perhaps that it is taking declarer's finesses for him, or that you may crash your partner's high cards. As against that, in general your honour would be finessable anyway; it is particularly relevant to consider rising with an honour when you are trying to establish partner's suit and you think he may be short of entries. Any time that you hold a doubleton (or even tripleton) ace or king it might be right to rise with your honour when the suit is led from dummy.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Never automatically follow suit with your lowest card; consider playing an intermediate or an honour card.**

*The next advice pertains to just one situation, when you have the queen in a key suit, and discusses how to utilise its full potential.*

# Hide and seek

## Clement Wong *(Hong Kong)*

*CLEMENT WONG, professional engineer, university lecturer, political advisor and writer, is a well-known bridge personality in Asian bridge circles. Born in 1951, he learnt bridge at the age of ten. In his first bridge tournament, at the age of eighteen, he won a Hong Kong open pairs championship. Since then he has won many national bridge championships and represented Hong Kong in several international competitions. In 1991 he captained the Hong Kong open team which won the qualification for the Bermuda Bowl.*

*He started writing about bridge in the early 1980s and in 1989 started a bridge column in the* Hong Kong Economic Journal. *A special feature of his columns is that before each bridge hand, he writes a short essay which touches on various topics of general interest, for example, current affairs, art, engineering or social issues. He then links that to the bridge article. These esssays have been formed into a book which has won high acclaim among intellectual and bridge circles.*

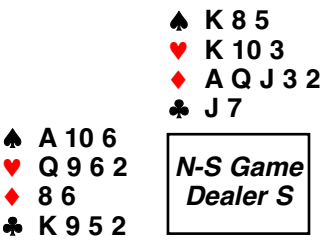
IN chess, queening your pawns is the key to winning a game. Has anyone thought about queening your defence in bridge?

With Qxx in a key suit in a two-way finesse position, a good defender will try to induce the declarer to guess wrong. On the other hand, if the queen is doomed, playing it prematurely may work well. This is what this article is about.

Say you are defending a contract of Four Spades and hold Qxx in the trump suit. Dummy has Kxx. Declarer is marked with at least five cards in the suit. If you are in front of declarer, a simple finesse to his ace-jack will see him home. If you are over declarer your queen will be much safer, but now you must be careful not to persuade him to take a backward finesse in your direction.

In the first case your partner can help save your queen if he holds 10x or 9x. He drops the ten or nine when declarer plays the king, hoping to persuade him to play for the drop.

In the second case, a different tactic is required. Look at this example:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

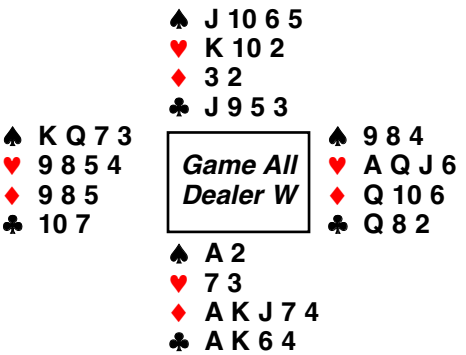
You were brave enough to lead a small club from your king. Your partner won the ace and returned the four of clubs to your king. You were almost certain to score a trump trick. Would you cash your spade ace now?

That was what the Bermuda Bowl defender did. Declarer was the American star, Bobby Wolff. Sensing that West must hold the trump queen to defend like that, he led the jack (covered) towards the king and later finessed against West's nine to land the contract.

YOU must now get the idea. When your queen is doomed try abnormal play to mislead declarer into the wrong play. When your queen is in a favourable position do not play as though you have a sure trick with it. The defender in the above example should wait for his trump trick before cashing the ace of spades. Then the declarer will play normally and go down.

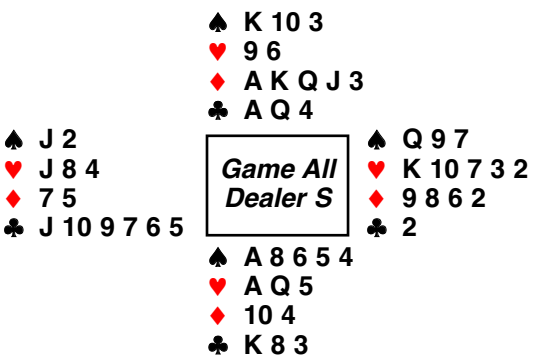
HERE is another example:


South showed good diamonds and played in 3NT. West led a small spade and dummy's jack won. Declarer next played a diamond from dummy. What do you play? Here is the full deal:




In the Sweden-Hong Kong match in the 1991 Bermuda Bowl, Karic Chu of Hong Kong, sensing there was no way to beat 3NT because of the favourable diamond position, played the queen! This persuaded declarer to switch to clubs. When Karic got in with the queen of clubs, he returned a spade. Now declarer thought his only chance was to lead up to the king of hearts for his ninth trick. He ended up two down.

NOT convinced? The next hand was first reported by Jeremy Flint. South is in Six Spades and West leads the jack of clubs:




Do you see any way for declarer to go down? Georges Theron of France was East. When declarer led a spade to the king, he dropped the queen! Fearing that West held J9xx, declarer came back to his own hand to lead a trump towards dummy. West scored the jack and gave Georges a ruff to beat the impregnable contract!

ANOTHER well-known position is in an endgame where declarer has K10x opposite A9x and has thrown you in to broach this suit. If you hold Qxx it is standard practice to lead the queen, trying to hide your partner's jack.

My BOLS bridge tip is therefore:

**When defending with Qxx in trumps or in a key suit, play hide (in favourable positions) and seek (in unfavourable positions) with declarer.**

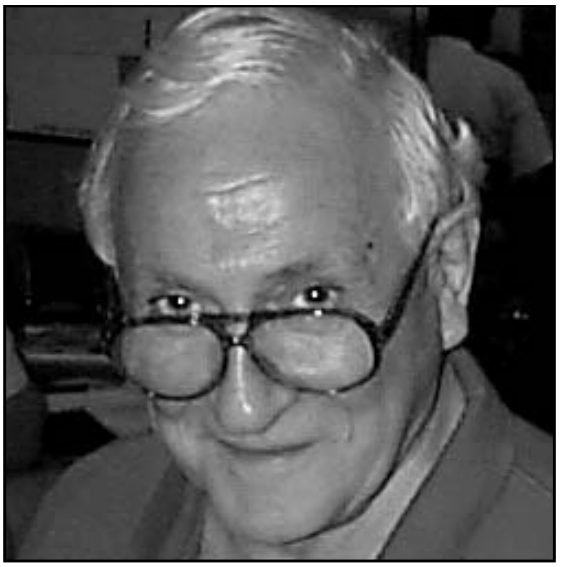
The tip is equally applicable to holding Qxxx or Qx and I will leave it to the reader to have some more fun with it.

*Clement's first hand is also mentioned later on by Jim Jacoby in his tip 'Beware bridge players bearing gifts'.*

*The theme of deception in defence continues in the next few tips.*

# Practise the art of camouflage

## Tony Priday *(England)*



*TONY PRIDAY lives in London and was the columnist for the* Sunday Telegraph *for over 35 years. He won the European Teams in 1961, playing with Alan Truscott, and went on to win the bronze medal in the 1962 Bermuda Bowl. He won the* Sunday Times *Pairs in 1970 and the bronze medal in the 1976 World Team Olympiad playing with his partner of long standing, Claude Rodrigue. Recently he has been captaining British open and women's teams and helped Britain gain a silver medal in the 1987 Bermuda Bowl. He has lost little of his playing skills, reaching the semi-finals of the 1996 Gold Cup.*

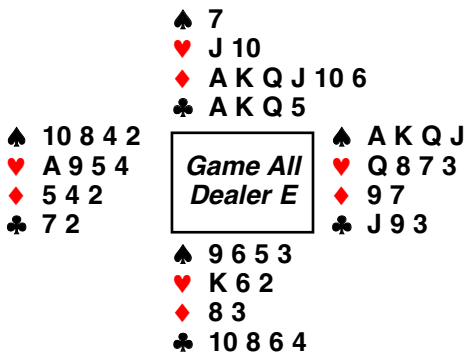
*Tony was married for many years to Jane, who won three European Championships. She also won the World Women's Teams in 1964 and the World Women's Pairs in 1966. Tragically, she died suddenly in 1994, but he has since remarried. His new wife, Vivian, accompanied him on his recent adventure as captain of the British open team in the 1996 Olympiad.*

*Tony has a reputation, not always justified in his opinion, for being the perfect English gentleman. At one championship an elderly lady was heard to remark, 'That is Mr Priday. I'm surprised he is playing for Britain. He is much too polite to be a bridge player.'*

MILITARY men give much thought to camouflage. Thus a general, when planning a defensive battle, will pretend to be strong in a part of the line where he is weak. He will also try to appear vulnerable in a place where he is strong.

Defenders at bridge have many opportunities to do the same. When you are strong in a suit, you aim to conceal the fact. There is then a good chance that declarer will misread your strength in another – and perhaps vital – suit.

This hand was played in a Camrose match between England and Northern Ireland:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♠ |
| Pass | 2♠ | Double | Pass |
| 3♣ | Pass | 4NT | Pass |
| 5♣ | All Pass | | |

West led the two of spades against Five Clubs and East quickly saw that the defenders had to try to take two heart tricks. East had opened the bidding, so South would surely place him with most of the strength. On the other hand declarer would still expect West to have one high card, because of his raise to Two Spades.

If East had won the first trick with the jack of spades, declarer would have had little difficulty in placing the vital cards. To camouflage the position, East won with the ace of spades, switching to a low heart. Placing West with the king of spades – and East therefore with the ace of hearts – declarer rose with the king of hearts and was defeated.

IN that example, camouflage took the form of concealing the strength in a vital suit. Equally

effective is to pretend to more strength than you actually possess.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 10 6<br>♥ J 8 4<br>♦ Q 10 8<br>♣ Q 10 9 7 4 | |
| ♠ Q 7 4<br>♥ 7 5<br>♦ A 6 5 3<br>♣ A 6 5 2 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ A 5 2<br>♥ 6 3<br>♦ K J 7 4<br>♣ K J 8 3 |
| | ♠ K J 9 8 3<br>♥ A K Q 10 9 2<br>♦ 9 2<br>♣ — | |

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 2NT | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

You may not approve of North's bidding, but that is the way the auction went in the final stages of Britain's Gold Cup some years ago.

West led the ace of diamonds and, when his partner encouraged with the seven, continued with the three of diamonds. East took the second trick with the jack and realised that South's shape was almost certainly 5-6-2-0. In that case declarer might well have to take a vital guess in spades. East therefore set out to camouflage his spade holding.

At the third trick East laid down the king of clubs! Declarer ruffed with a high trump and entered dummy with a heart to lead the ten of spades. Convinced that East must hold the ace of clubs, declarer placed West with the ace of spades and so ran the ten. West won with the queen of spades and East's ace in due course provided the setting trick.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**When you are defending,
remember the art of camouflage.
If you can mislead declarer in one suit,
he may well jump to
a wrong conclusion in another.**

*Even if you cannot come up with a deceptive play, you may be able to give declarer a losing option. And if you give him enough of them he will surely go wrong sometimes.*

# Give declarer enough rope

## Tim Seres *(Australia)*

*Generally considered the best player Australia has ever produced, Tim Seres describes himself as a horse-racing investor. Whether this is a euphemism for betting at the races, or whether he owns racehorses, this is an extremely precarious way to earn a living and success needs similar qualities as at the bridge table – a sound knowledge of odds and percentages coupled with nerves of steel! Now in his seventies, Tim's high spots were in 1971 and 1979 when Australia finished third in the Bermuda Bowl. A contributor to several magazines, he has been awarded the Order of Australia for services to bridge.*

IN the long haul you win at bridge by avoiding error rather than by being brilliant. The expert may display an occasional glimpse of genius or elegance, but he owes his pre-eminence to the fact that he makes fewer mistakes than his fellow players.

Because bridge is a game of errors, you should try to develop the knack of giving an opponent the chance to go wrong. One way of doing this is by providing the declarer with a choice of plays in a situation where he would otherwise be bound to make a winning play.

*Dummy*
♠ A Q 10 3

*West* ♠ J 9 7 5 — *East* ♠ 4

*Declarer*
♠ K 8 6 2

This is the trump suit and declarer starts by laying down dummy's ace. If West follows small, declarer will play low to the king on the next round, exposing the finesse against the jack. (Declarer has no way to succeed if East has J9xx.) West, however, should drop the nine on the first round. Now declarer may continue with dummy's queen, playing East for Jxxx.

THE next example is also well known:

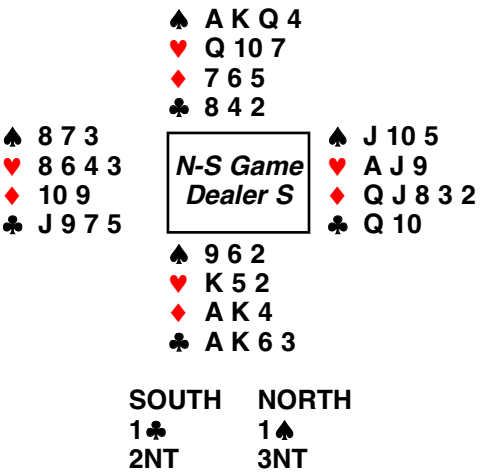
*Dummy*
♠ Q 10 9

*West* ♠ 7 5 3 — *East* ♠ K J 6

*Declarer*
♠ A 8 4 2

South plays low to the ten. If East wins with the jack, declarer has no choice but to enter dummy and finesse against the king on the next round. East therefore should win the first trick with the king. This affords declarer a losing option, as he may finesse the nine on the next round, playing West for Jxxx.

OPPORTUNITIES for such plays come along much more frequently than many players realise. The following hand occurred in a top-class Pairs event:




| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♣ | 1♠ |
| 2NT | 3NT |

At this table South won the diamond lead and tested spades. On the ace and king of this suit East dropped the jack and ten! Not surprisingly, declarer assumed that the spades were 4-2 and he continued by playing low to the nine, hoping to re-enter dummy with a heart. But East of course ducked the king of hearts when it was led. The contract could now have been made only on double-dummy lines and in actual play South finished one down.

The hapless declarer had fallen victim to a defender who followed the very profitable adage, 'Give declarer enough rope…'

My BOLS bridge tip is just this:

**When you can see that declarer is bound to succeed by normal play, look for a chance to give him a losing option.**

It stands to reason that if you consistently give your opponent a chance to go wrong, he will sometimes take it!

*If you can't think of a way to camouflage your whole hand, at least you may be able to be deceptive in a single suit – the following suggestion should give you some ideas.*

# Unfriendly play

## Terence Reese *(England)*

DECEPTIVE plays with jack-nine, king-jack-nine or ace-jack-nine are fairly well known, for example:

| | *Dummy* ♠ Q 10 6 4 | |
|---|---|---|
| *West* ♠ A J 9 | | *East* ♠ 7 5 2 |
| | *Declarer* ♠ K 8 3 | |

When South leads low to dummy, the jack from West may induce declarer to win with the queen and finesse the eight on the way back. This would be the successful line if West had the doubleton ace-jack.

THERE are other plays of this nature where the object is not only to win a non-existent trick, but also to create an entry problem for declarer:

| | ♠ 8 5 3<br>♥ 10 8 4<br>♦ 9 7 4 2<br>♣ J 6 5 | |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ J 7 6 2<br>♥ 6 5<br>♦ 10 8 6<br>♣ A K 9 4 | *N-S Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ Q 10 9 4<br>♥ J 9<br>♦ K 5 3<br>♣ Q 8 7 2 |
| | ♠ A K<br>♥ A K Q 7 3 2<br>♦ A Q J<br>♣ 10 3 | |

South battles his way to Four Hearts and the defence begins with three rounds of clubs. South ruffs and lays down the ace of hearts. If all play low he draws trumps, enters dummy on the third round and tries to pick up a doubleton king of diamonds. No luck, but he has ten tricks.

A simple jack of hearts from East on the first round of trumps might have a surprising result. Seeing the chance to finesse twice in diamonds, South plays low to the eight … and goes one down.

ON the next deal East must have his wits about him at trick one:

| | ♠ J 8 6<br>♥ K 6 2<br>♦ 10 7 3<br>♣ Q J 8 4 | |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ 5 3<br>♥ A 10 7<br>♦ Q 8 4 2<br>♣ K 9 5 3 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer W* | ♠ Q 10<br>♥ J 8 5 3<br>♦ K J 9<br>♣ 10 7 6 2 |
| | ♠ A K 9 7 4 2<br>♥ Q 9 4<br>♦ A 6 5<br>♣ A | |

Defending against Four Spades, West begins nervously with a low trump. Dummy plays low, East the queen, and declarer the ace. Taking the queen of spades to be a singleton, South sees a safe way to ten tricks: ace of clubs, spade to the eight, run the queen of clubs, discarding a diamond. He expects this to produce six tricks in spades, two in clubs and one each in the reds.

But alas! East produces the ten of spades on the second round and advances the jack of diamonds. That's one down, and if the ace of hearts had been on the other side South would have been two down.

WHAT about the king from king-jack? Look at this:

| | ♠ 8 5 2<br>♥ Q 10 3<br>♦ A K J 3<br>♣ J 7 2 | |
|---|---|---|
| ♠ A 9 3<br>♥ 8 4<br>♦ 9 7 4 2<br>♣ Q 10 5 3 | *Love All*<br>*Dealer E* | ♠ Q J 10 4<br>♥ K J<br>♦ 10 8 6<br>♣ K 9 6 4 |
| | ♠ K 7 6<br>♥ A 9 7 6 5 2<br>♦ Q 5<br>♣ A 8 | |

Playing in Four Hearts, South wins the club lead and lays down the ace of hearts. When East's jack falls, South plays three rounds of diamonds, discarding a club, and a fourth diamond, which East has to ruff with the king of hearts; contract just made.

Now suppose that East drops a friendly king of hearts under the ace. Seeing eleven tricks on top, possibly twelve, South leads a heart to the ten … and this time finishes two down.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**There are times when the jack from jack-nine, the queen from queen-ten and the king from king-jack may achieve a brilliant result in defence.**

When you know that the cards lie well for declarer, you should be on the look-out for the chance to deceive

*We leave the area of deception behind and move on to look at the exceptions to that common bridge adage 'second hand low'.*

# Danger hand high

## Eric Rodwell *(USA)*

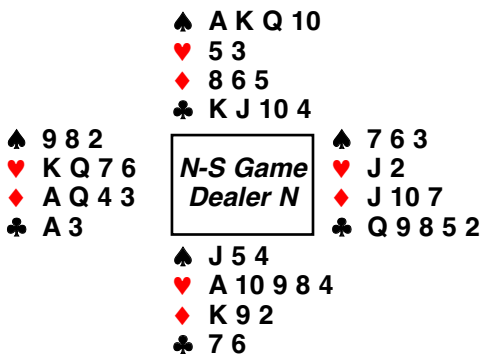
*Eric Rodwell and Jeff Meckstroth, otherwise known as Meckwell, are generally considered to be the best pair in the world at the moment. This is partly because of their bidding system, which is awesome in its complexity. This partnership has won the triple crown: the Bermuda Bowl (in 1981 and 1995), World Pairs (1986) and World Teams Olympiad (1988).*

*Born in 1957, Eric is the younger half of the partnership (but not by much) and is also the chief theoretician. He is also an extremely accomplished pianist and can often be persuaded to entertain the guests at post-final-banquet celebrations. When he is not travelling the international bridge circuit, he lives in Indiana with his wife, Donna.*

THE adage 'second hand low' is good general advice, but, as we all know, there are many exceptions. Some of the better known include:

- taking the setting trick
- splitting honours to promote a trick for self or partner
- winning a trick to return partner's lead
- unblocking to avoid being endplayed

Playing second hand high can also destroy declarer's communications – if declarer ducks your honour he surrenders an extra trick; if he wins he loses a crucial entry. If dummy has only small cards in declarer's suit, it is often right to play high from holdings like Jx or even Kxx…



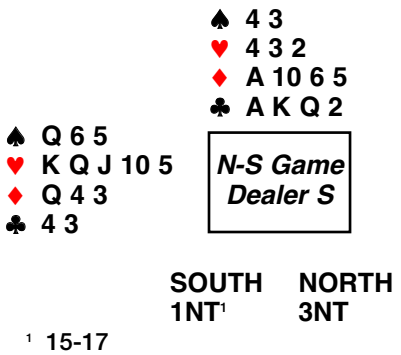

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| | 1♣ |
| 1♥ | 1♠ |
| 1NT | |

West leads a passive nine of spades against South's 1NT. Declarer wins the ace in dummy and leads a heart. If East plays 'second hand low', as most would, declarer plays the ten and West has to win. The spade continuation will be won by the king and declarer clears the heart suit. Declarer wins the third spade with the jack, runs hearts and leads a club to the king to make his contract (the king is the right play since declarer wants to keep East off lead and only one minor-suit trick is needed).

If East plays the jack of hearts at trick one, declarer must win the ace. Declarer's natural options include either continuing hearts (hoping the king of diamonds is a re-entry), or finessing clubs, both of which fail.

In this deal, East was the 'danger hand', able to lead through the king of diamonds, so he was especially eager to put up his unsupported jack of hearts.

By now you should be in the swing of things. Try this defensive problem:




| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | 3NT |

[1] 15-17

You lead the king of hearts, ducked, and follow with the queen and jack of hearts to declarer's ace, partner pitching a spade on the third round. Declarer leads the two of diamonds to trick four. Plan your defence.

Partner has at most two high-card points, so declarer has the ace and king of spades, ace of hearts and king of diamonds for eight tricks. Thus, partner must have Jxxx in clubs if you are to have a chance. Declarer should also have either the jack of spades or jack of diamonds; if the jack of diamonds then you have no chance because he will play dummy's ten (finessing into the safe opponent) and take ten tricks.

Thus you must hope declarer has something like:

♠ A K J x
♥ A x x
♦ K 9 x
♣ x x x

and try to fool him. Start by playing 'danger hand high', the queen of diamonds, to deny him the avoidance play in diamonds. Now he will probably cash the ace of spades followed by three rounds of clubs, on which you pitch a diamond. Now he has to finesse the diamond to make 3NT, but you have given declarer two losing options:

(1) finessing in spades;

(2) trying to drop the jack of diamonds, then trying to drop the queen of spades.

If you had played low on the diamond lead, declarer would play dummy's ten, losing to partner's jack. Declarer would then win the spade return and test diamonds, claiming his nine tricks.

In summary, my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Consider playing an unsupported honour, second in hand, especially if you are the dangerous opponent.**

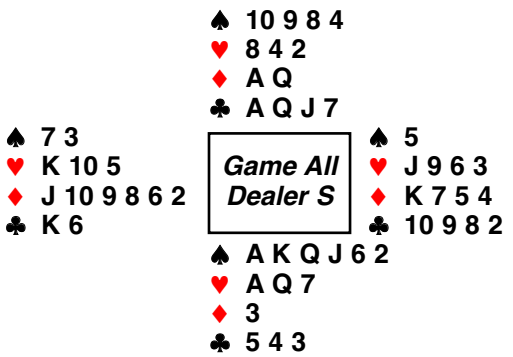
At the least, it will give declarer a guess and may defeat the contract legitimately.

*The theme of playing honours in unorthodox positions continues, even if that is by accident!*

# Play your honour early if it is of no use

## Qi Zhou *(China)*

THIS is a hand I played years ago in a Pairs game:




Against Six Spades I led the jack of diamonds. After quite a while declarer played the ace and queen of diamonds and ruffed in hand. I couldn't figure out what took him so long to make the decision. With a doubleton I'd finesse; with a singleton I'd play the ace. It was simple enough. I was new to the area but my partner Dick seemed to know everyone. He told me that both North and South were grandmasters so declarer must have had some reason for his thought. Then came two rounds of trumps and a club from hand.

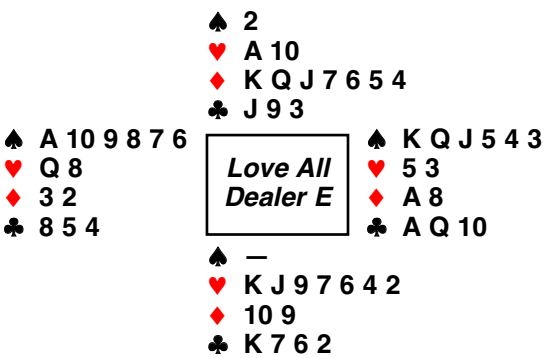
While I was following, whether I was a little bit too excited because I had had a few good scores or whether I was a bit nervous facing two grandmasters, a few cards dropped on to the table. Quickly I covered them with my hand and said to myself: 'Calm down' and put them back into my hand. The king of clubs was right side up on top of the fallen cards. If it had been seen by anyone it would have to be played. I was not sure, so I played it as if it was an exposed card. I didn't want complications later. Declarer seemed somewhat astonished. Reluctantly he covered with the ace.

After the queen and jack of clubs came a heart from dummy. My partner followed with the nine of hearts. Declarer didn't finesse. He put on the ace. Then came a small trump to dummy and another heart. This time he put on the queen. I made two heart tricks. Declarer said, 'One down, good defence.' I thought my partner's nine of hearts was good but it was not a difficult book play.

Later, while I was waiting at my table, Dick told me we were first in our section and that that hand had been nominated for a Best Defence prize. Some players came over to congratulate me. I thought they were mistaking me for East.

It was only on our way home that I found that some Souths had made Six Spades on that hand. The first four tricks were the same. Then a club from hand: West small, dummy the jack. Now a trump to hand and another club. West played the king and dummy ducked. West was endplayed. Declarer made his contract and his play was nominated for a Best Play prize. At my table, South was planning to play like that but my early king of clubs sabotaged him. So he recommended my king of clubs as Best Defence. Of course I didn't deserve the honour. But from then on I noticed that playing an otherwise useless honour earlier than necessary can often get some unexpected results. It seemed that all experts know this but occasionally forget.

THE following hand was from a Pairs tournament in Naples:

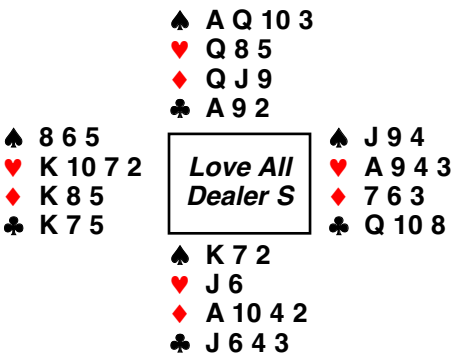



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♠ |
| 4♥ | 4♠ | 5♥ | Double |
| All Pass | | | |

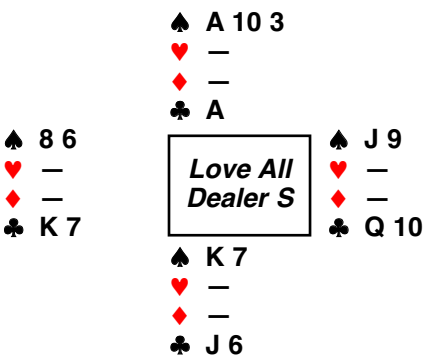
West was the famous Pietro Forquet of the Blue Team. If a club is led then East's ten would force out declarer's king. Later East can take the ace of diamonds and two club tricks to defeat the contract. Unfortunately, Forquet led the three of diamonds. East, Benito Garozzo, took the trick with the ace and played the ace of clubs. Seeing West's discouraging four, he switched back to diamonds and South won with the ten. Declarer played the king of hearts.

The defence seemed hopeless but Forquet quietly followed with the queen of hearts. Declarer assumed East had the two remaining trumps so overtook the king with dummy's ace and played a diamond. He thought that East would ruff and he would overruff and still have the ten of hearts as an entry to dummy. East discarded a spade, declarer a club and Forquet made his eight of hearts.

MY LAST EXAMPLE is taken from the 1994 Far East Championship:




At one table South played in 3NT. West, Ruey-Lun Ling, led the two of hearts to declarer's jack. Then came a spade to the queen and the queen of diamonds to West's king. The defence took three heart tricks and exited with a diamond. After two more diamonds, the position was:




Declarer played the six of clubs and Ling smoothly played the king. If this was a singleton then West must have three spades. Declarer came back to the king of spades and finessed the ten. The contract was defeated.

So, my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Play your honour early if it is of no use.**

*The idea that you should be prepared to take chances if you can see no straightforward way to beat a contract is popular with the tipsters. There are several variations on a similar theme, as the next suggestion demonstrates.*

# Be bold when you are defending

## P-O Sundelin *(Sweden)*

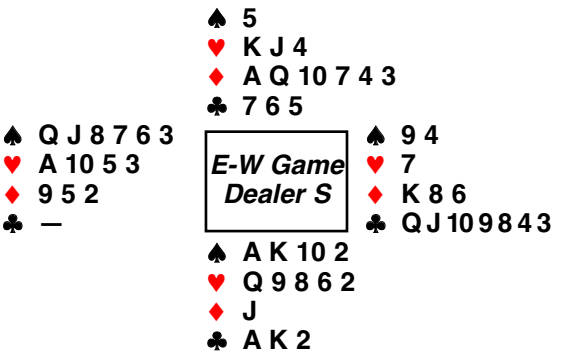
*P-O Sundelin, now in his late fifties, is a computer analyist and consultant. He is Sweden's best known player, having won two European Championships and been placed third in three Bermuda Bowls. He has won the* Sunday Times *twice, in 1978 and 1981, both times in partnership with Tjolpe Flodqvist. He lives in Stockholm and is married to Jill Mellstrom, a frequent member of the Swedish women's team.*

You are all familiar with the situation where you sit over dummy's KQ10 with Axx. When declarer leads up to the king, you play low smoothly. On the next round, declarer may go wrong, and at least you have spread uncertainty.

Some of you have even fooled declarer by ducking with the king behind the AQJxx the first time the suit is led. Perhaps the declarer then wasted an entry or a stopper in order to re-enter his hand and finesse again.

These are valuable, indeed essential, stratagems. But they are seldom very risky or unexpected. In this field you haven't really 'arrived' until you are willing actually to sacrifice a winner; you have to be prepared deliberately to give away a trick just for the possibility of leading declarer astray.

This type of play is exclusively for the bold and courageous. In this diagram you are East:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | 1♠ | 2♦ | Pass |
| 3♣ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

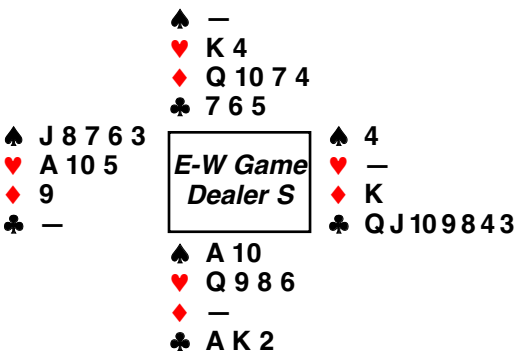
West leads the queen of spades and South's problem is to take care of his losers in the black suits. West's overcall makes ruffing spades in dummy look a trifle risky, so South naturally thinks about the diamond finesse. If the jack loses to the king, it should still be possible to hold the trump losers to two.

As East you ought to have a perfect picture of the hands. South surely has the three missing clubs – think of his bidding. Your partner's lead of the queen of spades marks South with the ace and king, and South surely has one or two small spades in addition, as West did not pre-empt. Finally, you should assume that South has Qxxxx in hearts. With the ace and queen he would have bid more strongly; with the ace the contract is unbeatable; with no honour West's bidding is impossible. (Note that the declarer himself seldom has the privilege of working out the unseen hands as accurately as this.)

To resume: South wins the first trick and leads the jack of diamonds. West plays the two, showing three cards or one, and dummy the three. Your count is confirmed. You rightly decide, quickly and without a flicker, that declarer will wrap up his ten tricks if you take the king and give your partner a club ruff. The defence will then score the trump ace only.

So you duck. You don't know what will happen next – but you do know that with normal defence the declarer would make his contract.

South now plays a trump to the jack, and cashes the diamond ace, shedding a spade. The position:




South now wants to enter his hand for a spade ruff. As the cards lie, he can play a diamond, but this could be risky. South 'knows' that West has the king of diamonds, and he doesn't want to give East a possible spade discard. South therefore tries a club. This turns out to be fatal when West ruffs and continues with ace and another trump. As the diamonds are not established, South is left with two black losers.

My BOLS bridge tip, therefore, is this:

**Be bold when you are defending. If you can't see yourself beating the contract by winning the trick, duck it – even at the cost of a trick.**

By deceiving declarer you may yet cause his house of cards to collapse.

*Another exhortation to ignore early bridge lessons; we have read about 'second hand high', now it is time for 'third hand low'.*

# Third hand low

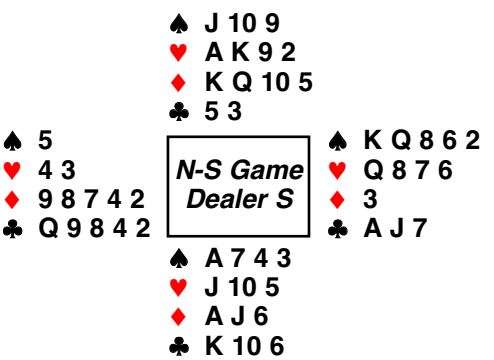
## Sam Lev *(USA)*

*SAM LEV was part of the Israeli team that came third in the Bermuda Bowl in 1976 and 1985. However, he emigrated several years ago and now has residential qualification to play for the USA, all he has to do is qualify through their trials system.*

One of the maxims that bridge inherited from whist was 'third hand high'. Another slogan that expressed the same idea was 'never finesse against your partner'.

Since the early days, of course, a great deal has been discovered. My tip describes some quite frequent situations where it may be good play for third hand to finesse against his partner – that is to play the lower of non-touching honours even when dummy has a worthless holding in the suit led.

A common situation occurs at trick one in no-trumps. :

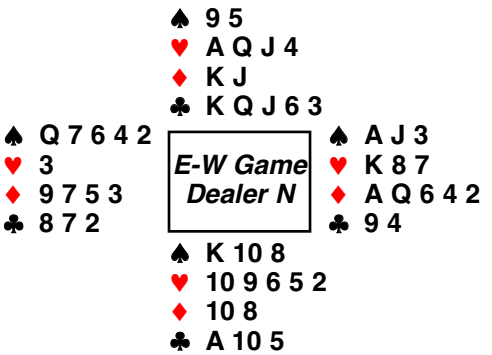


West leads the four of clubs against South's contract of 3NT. If East puts up the ace (third hand high!) South will duck the next round of clubs and West's suit will be dead. South will be able to develop his ninth trick by taking a heart finesse into the safe hand.

But if East plays the jack of clubs on the first round, it will be too dangerous for South to duck. He would look very foolish if West's clubs were AQ9xx and a simple heart finesse would have made the contract.

Of course, there is sometimes an element of risk when you finesse against your partner. Here, East will be giving declarer an unnecessary trick if his clubs are Qxx. But East can afford to take this risk, for he has control of the major suits and can see that the contract will be defeated if West's club suit can be brought in. East also knows that West cannot possibly have a side entry, so it is essential to establish a lifeline between the defending hands.

AGAINST a suit contract, a finesse at trick one may create an entry for a vital switch later in the play:



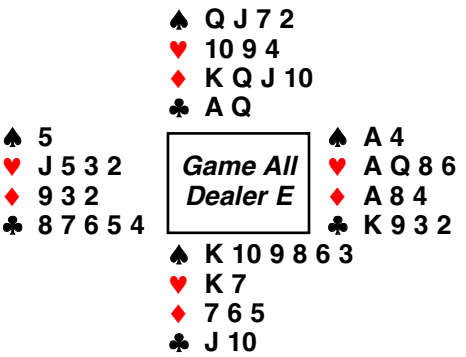

North-South are playing Precision and the bidding goes:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♣[1] | Pass |
| 1♥[2] | Pass | 1NT[3] | Pass |
| 2♦[4] | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

[1] strong, 16+ points
[2] natural, positive
[3] asking for controls
[4] 3 controls

West leads the four of spades and East, in view of the bidding, can gauge the hand very accurately. He knows that South must hold an ace and a king, so there can be no advantage in playing the ace of spades. On the contrary, East must insert the jack, to drive out South's king. When East comes in with the king of hearts he leads a spade to his partner's queen. The obvious diamond switch then defeats the contract.

A DEFENDER who has bid a suit may often have an opportunity to finesse against partner when this suit is led:




South becomes declarer in Four Spades after East has opened One Heart.

West leads the two of hearts, showing an honour in the suit. East therefore finesses the queen, forcing the king. When East comes in with the ace of spades it is quite safe for him to underlead the ace of hearts, because he knows West holds the jack; in any case, there is no other hope of defeating the contract. When West obtains the lead with the jack of hearts he naturally switches to a club, establishing a trick in this suit before the ace of diamonds has been forced out.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**When you have a holding such as ace-queen or ace-jack in the suit led by partner, do not automatically play third hand high.**

By playing the lower honour you may be able to create a vital entry to your partner's hand.

*The advice given above relates only to a very specific situation but the next two tips, by two household names of American bridge, refer to the more general subject of ducking.*

# Try the duck

## Charles H Goren *(USA)*

*CHARLES H GOREN died in 1991 aged 90. He was the world's foremost authority on the game for most of this century. He was known to millions simply as 'Mr Bridge'. They bought his books, attended his lectures, took lessons from his accredited teachers, collected cards and accessories imprinted with his logo, travelled on his bridge cruises and read the articles he wrote for* Sports Illustrated *and* McCalls.

*Starting in 1937 when he retired from the bar and concentrated on bridge, he won so many tournaments that he headed the top of the masterpoint winners list continuously from 1944 to 1962. His best single result was to be a member of the US team that won the very first Bermuda Bowl in 1950. He was responsible for the development of Standard American and, because his methods were easy to learn, many millions of new bridge players were nurtured, giving the game a boost it had not enjoyed since the Culbertson years. He even appeared on the front cover of* Time *magazine. It is estimated that his books have sold over ten million copies. Although he lived to a ripe old age, poor health kept him out of the public eye for the last twenty years or so of his life.*

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**If you aren't sure how to continue after you win a trick, you should consider ducking it.**

But there are many cases when you will not have time for consideration when the opportunity arises; the duck will be effective only if you execute it smoothly, leaving declarer in doubt where the high card is. Examples occur when you, as defender, see only these cards:

**(1)**

*Dummy*
♥ **K Q 10**

*You*
♥ **A x x**

**(2)**

*Dummy*
♥ **K Q 10**

*You*
♥ **A x x**

Declarer leads low toward dummy and when he plays the queen it holds the trick. Who has the ace?

Returning to his hand, he leads the suit again. West once more playing low. Which of dummy's cards should declarer play?

Obviously, unless the ace is the setting trick and you are in danger of losing it, it must be right for both defenders to duck the first time and for West to play low the second time as well. The alternatives – for East to take the ace the first time, or for West either to take the ace the second time or to go into a brown study – leave the declarer no problem.

THE next and only slightly more difficult stage of the same situation is this one:

*Dummy*
♥ **x x x**

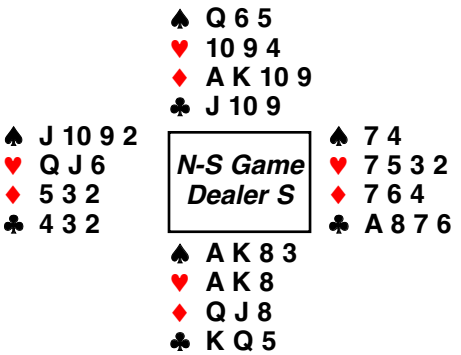
*You*
♥ **A x x**

Declarer, South, leads low from dummy and plays the king. If he makes this play early, it would be a mistake to take the ace unless you have reason to believe that the king is alone. Declarer is unlikely to have chosen to lead up to an unsupported king at such an early stage of the play; he probably has KQ10 or KQx. Suppose declarer has KQ10; if you take the first trick with the ace, he will later finesse the ten, with no need to guess who holds the ace.

Even if declarer has KQx, it will still pay to duck whenever dummy is at all short of entries. If you win the first trick, declarer will use dummy's re-entry to find some other play that may gain a trick. If you withhold the ace, he may use that entry to repeat his 'successful' first play.

THERE are also many less obvious opportunities for ducking plays. Among them is the situation where you can save your partner from a squeeze if you refuse to win a trick. In most squeezes declarer must be able to get within one trick of his required number. To reach this position, he may endeavour to lose a trick while still retaining control, a process known as 'rectifying the count'.

Here is a unique but by no means difficult-to-fathom opportunity for East to thwart declarer's plan:




South bids 2NT, North raises to 4NT and South goes on to 6NT, against which West leads the jack of spades. Declarer wins in his hand with the ace, which should not fool you. He leads the king of clubs and you duck. Next he leads the five of clubs. It is apparent that he began with only three clubs and cannot be attempting to establish a third trick in the suit. Unless this gives him his twelfth trick – and you cannot prevent that by taking your ace – he must be trying to lose a trick in order to rectify the count so that he can effect a squeeze. So you duck the trick once again! Now he cannot surrender a club trick without letting you cash another. He is forced to abandon clubs and look for his twelfth trick in spades or via a more complex squeeze. But when he runs off four diamond tricks, discarding a club from his hand, West is able also to discard a club. You will never make your ace of clubs, but partner will make a trick in hearts and a trick in spades.

Observe what happens if you take the second club. The count has been rectified. Declarer is able to cash a third round of clubs and the ace-king of hearts. Later, when he leads the fourth diamond from dummy, West cannot discard. If he lets go a heart, declarer wins the twelfth trick with dummy's ten of hearts. If he lets go a spade, declarer makes four spade tricks.

Not every ducking play is as difficult, although some are even more so. But at the bridge table, as at the dining table, the duck can be a spectacular success. Especially, à l'orange. Topped off, of course, with a liqueur by BOLS.

*One of the problems in executing any kind of defence that aims to deceive declarer is one of tempo: by the time you have worked out what you want to do you have given the game away. The following advice should help with this problem.*

# Don't think

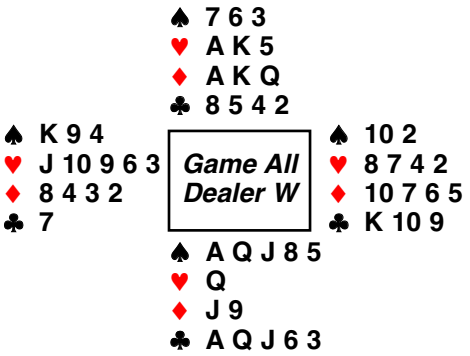
## Alfred Sheinwold *(USA)*

*ALFRED SHEINWOLD was born in London in 1912 but later settled in the USA, first in New York and more recently in Los Angeles. During World War II he was chief code and cipher expert of the OSS. Although he was successful on the North American circuit, his greatest triumph was in captaining the US team to victory in the 1985 Bermuda Bowl. He was editor of* Bridge World *from 1934 to 1963 and of the* ACBL Bulletin *from 1952 to 1958. He is currently syndicated bridge and backgammon columnist for* Los Angeles Times. *He was also responsible for the development of Autobridge and has written many bridge books, the most famous of which is* Five Weeks to Winning Bridge *which has sold more than a million copies.*

For fifty years I've been advising bridge players to *think.* Study technique and *think.* Count to thirteen and *think.* Work out the make-up of the hidden hands and *think.* Always and forever: *think.*

Now, at last, I have a different song to sing: *Don't think!* Just in one clear situation, of course. But when you recognise that situation, you must *not* think.

The recognition is easy: you're a defender and declarer takes a repeatable finesse that is doomed to lose. Don't win the trick. Don't even think of winning the trick. Just play low with normal speed – not too quickly and not too slowly.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | Pass |
| 6♠ | All Pass | | |

You are West and lead the jack of hearts. Your job is to beat Six Spades rather than sniff at South's somewhat simplistic bidding.

After some thought, South takes the first trick with dummy's king of hearts, dropping the queen from his hand, and leads a trump from dummy. Your partner follows with the deuce, declarer plays the queen and you win with the king.

No matter how you continue the defence, South is sure to make his slam. Suppose you switch to a diamond (as good a defence as any). Declarer wins in dummy and tries the club finesse. He draws trumps and returns to dummy with a diamond to repeat the club finesse. He then runs the clubs and makes the slam without using the ace of diamonds or the ace of hearts!

Since you didn't think, you managed to follow half of my advice. But if you go back to the third paragraph, you'll see that you're advised not to win the trick. Don't think, but also play low.

When declarer tries the first spade finesse, play the four of spades as though you had never heard of the king.

If your play is convincingly casual, South will assume that his finesse has succeeded. He will return to dummy with a diamond to repeat the finesse.

Your mission has now been accomplished. You take your king and lead your last trump (or perhaps a diamond, but certainly not a heart). South can get to dummy just once, with a diamond, so must lose a club trick. Your score is +100 instead of –1430.

Not a bad return for a very small effort.

WHAT'S all this hullabaloo about not thinking? Simply that your success may depend on convincing declarer that his finesse has succeeded. In our example, if declarer thinks you have the king of spades he will use his two entries to take club finesses.

Of course, there are hands where you must win when your opponent tries the first finesse. For example, win the setting trick as soon as you can. When your partner has made an opening lead in a decent suit against no-trumps, win a trick as early as possible to return partner's suit before his entries get knocked out.

There are a few similar situations, but don't worry about them. Unless you absolutely must win the first available trick, play low without thinking when declarer takes a repeatable finesse in your direction. You may gain nothing; declarer's contract may be unbeatable. You'll often gain one or more tricks – perhaps even the setting trick. Only once in a blue moon will you lose by not taking your trick promptly. But if you take time to think matters over, you'll lose far more often.

One last word: train your partner not to reach for the trick when a finesse is taken in your direction. Reaching for the trick unmasks you no matter how casually you've produced a low card.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Unless you absolutely must win the first available trick, play low without thinking when declarer takes a repeatable finesse in your direction.**

*There has been much good advice about ducking when you hold the ace over dummy's (or sometimes declarer's) holding. The real expert play is to duck when you don't have the ace!*

# Duck when you don't have the ace!

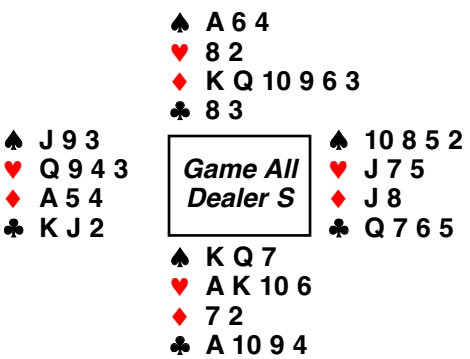
**Michel Lebel *(France)***

*MICHEL LEBEL was born in 1944 in Romania but now lives in Nantes, France. A WBF Grand Master, he has won the World Teams Olympiad twice, the European Teams twice and the European Pairs once. He is bridge columnist of* Le Point *and the author or co-author of many books.*

SUCCESSFUL defence often requires that you should take all possible measures to shut out dummy's long suit. You must do all you can to spoil declarer's communications.

Sitting over dummy's KQ109x, you will, as a matter of course, hold off with AJx when dummy's king is played. But when the ten is finessed? The position is essentially the same; to kill the suit it may be necessary to hold off, persuading declarer to finesse the nine next time. If you win the ten with the jack he will have better communications, obviously.

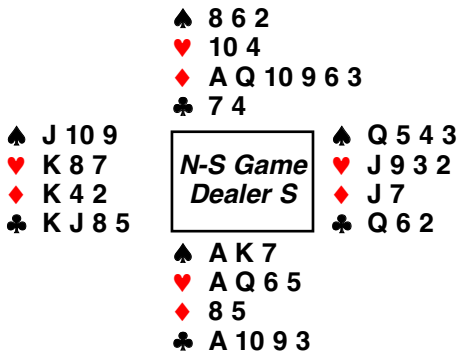
My tip is that you should sometimes hold up the jack even when you do not possess the ace. You will find that quite remarkable results can be obtained. On the following deal I held the East cards:




South opened 1NT, North raised to 3NT, and West led the three of hearts, East's jack losing to declarer's king. South played a low diamond to dummy's nine and East, without any hesitation, allowed the nine to win!

South quite naturally came back to his hand with a spade and repeated the finesse. When the ten lost to the jack he could no longer make nine tricks as he was short of entries to bring in the diamonds.

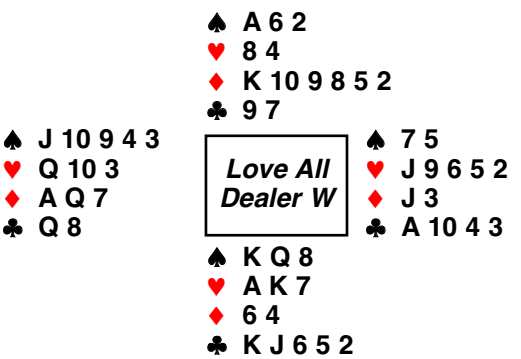
In the next example, after the same bidding, West led the jack of spades against South's 3NT:




South won the first trick with the king of spades and ran the eight of diamonds … which held the trick! South continued with the five of diamonds and paused when West produced a low diamond. Either West held KJxx, thought South, in which case the contract was bound to fail, or East had tried a desperate measure, holding up the king from Kx.

South decided to go up with the ace, believing this was the only chance to make the contract … and he nearly fell off his chair when the jack appeared. Once again, it is clear that holding up the jack is the only way to lead declarer astray.

Extending the same principle, observe how the hold-up makes declarer's task more difficult on this deal:



West leads the jack of spades against 3NT and South wins with the king. He leads the four of diamonds to the second trick, West plays the seven and dummy the eight.

If East wins with the jack, the contract will surely be made, as South will easily establish the diamonds, with the ace of spades for entry. But if East ducks the first diamond, South will come back to his hand with a heart and lead his second diamond. When West produces the queen, the declarer may conclude that East has held up the ace and that the suit is distributed in this fashion:

*Dummy*
♦ K 10 9 8 5 2

*West* ♦ Q J 7 — *East* ♦ A 3

*Declarer*
♦ 6 4

If South forms this opinion he will duck on the second round. It is true that East's hold-up, with Ax, would be a mistake, but it is not so unlikely a mistake.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Whenever dummy has a suit such as AQ109x or KQ109x, and appears to be short of entries, be willing to hold off with Jx.**

You may well find that this daring manoeuvre offers the only real chance of preventing declarer from bringing in the long suit.

*Excellent advice but rather difficult for the average player. Of rather more practical use is….*

# Hold up the ace of trumps

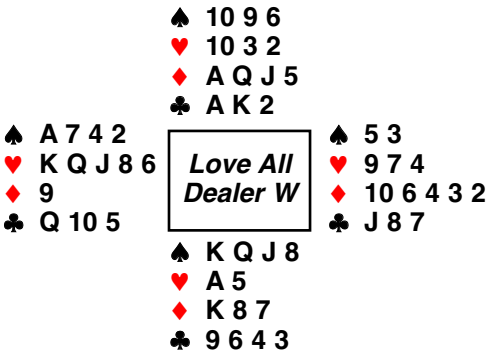
## Giorgio Belladonna *(Italy)*

*GIORGIO BELLADONNA is one of the all-time great names in the game of bridge. Born in 1923, he unfortunately died in 1995, and the game lost not only a great player but also one of its great gentlemen, both at and away from the table. He won the World Teams Olympiad three times and the Bermuda Bowl no less than thirteen times. He is the only player to have participated in all sixteen Italian world victories.*

*He was a charming man and one of my heroes ever since I started to play the game. Dorthy Francis, frequent bulletin editor, tells a nice story about him. Following a slight altercation after which Giorgio felt he owed Dorthy an apology, a large bouquet of flowers arrived at Dorthy's door with the simple note: 'Bella Donna Belladonna.'*

The most powerful card in bridge is the ace of trumps. When you, as a defender, are fortunate enough to hold this card, you must be sure to put it to the best possible use.

A general does not necessarily commit his crack troops to the battle right at the start, and you too should quite often hold back the ace of trumps until it can play a decisive role. In this deal you are West:



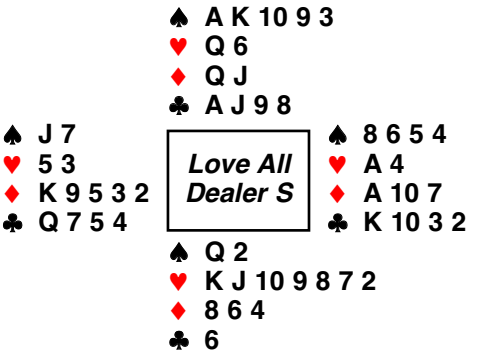

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♥ | Pass | Pass |
| Double | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

You lead the king of hearts and South wins with the ace. If South can force out the ace of trumps he will have ten easy tricks. A resourceful declarer will not lead trumps from his own hand, for this would make it plain that he had a strong sequence. South is likely instead to cross to dummy with a club or a diamond and lead a low spade to the king.

Suppose that you release the ace. In this case the contract will be made. You can cash the queen of hearts and continue with the jack, but South simply discards a losing club. Now he can win any continuation, draw trumps and claim the contract.

Now suppose instead that you hold up the ace of trumps on the first round. Declarer continues with a second trump but you duck this also. South is helpless. If he plays a third trump, you win and play hearts, forcing South to ruff with his last trump. In this case you beat the contract by two tricks. If South abandons trumps after two rounds you eventually make your small trump by ruffing and South winds up with nine tricks.

It is not only when you are long in trumps that you should be reluctant to part with the ace. In the next deal you are East:




South opens Three Hearts and North raises to Four Hearts. West leads the three of diamonds and you win with the ace.

As the three of diamonds is presumably your partner's fourth highest, you can place South with three diamonds. The opening pre-empt suggests a seven-card suit so South can have only three cards in the black suits – all taken care of by dummy's ace-king of spades and ace of clubs. Unless you can take three diamond tricks you are unlikely to beat Four Hearts.

If you were to return the ace and another trump, with the object of preventing a diamond ruff, South would easily take the balance. To keep control you must hold on to the ace of trumps and return a low trump. Now South must go down.

My BOLS bridge tip is simple:

**Whenever you, as a defender, include the ace of trumps among your assets, you should consider whether to hold up this card when trumps are first played.**

After all, the ace of trumps is the one card in the pack that you are always sure to make!

*The next advice goes further and exhorts you to nurture all your trump tricks – you may be surprised at how powerful they can be.*

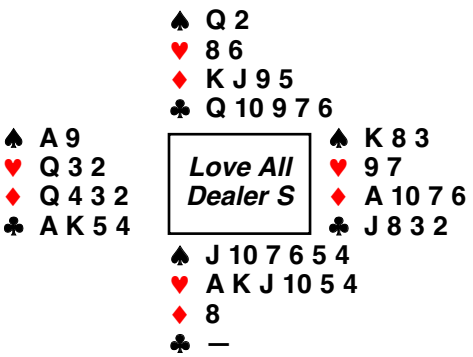
# Nurture your trump tricks

## Jean Besse *(Switzerland)*

BOBBY Fischer once said: 'You have found a very good move. Fine! This is the time to think again: there probably exists a better one!'

Bobby, of course, was talking about chess. His advice, however, applies also to bridge, and especially to the situation where a defender sees an opportunity to make an easy trump trick. Surprisingly often, it will pay him to look for better things.

Players soon learn that by not overruffing the queen when they have K102 over declarer's AQJ987 they can ensure two tricks. The following situation, however, is less obvious:

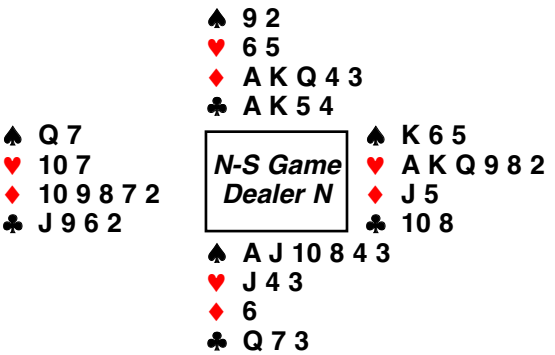



The contract is Four Spades. South ruffs the opening club lead and sets out to establish his side suit: he takes two top hearts and ruffs a heart in dummy with the queen of spades.

If East yields to the temptation of overruffing with the king, South loses only one other trump trick and makes his contract.

But if East refuses to overruff, the declarer is bound to lose three trump tricks no matter how hard he tries. With a diamond loser in addition, he is defeated.

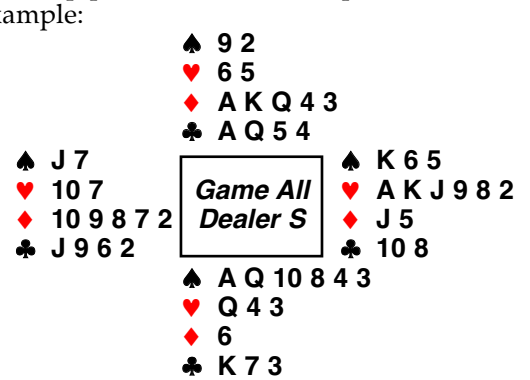
THE idea of not overruffing soon becomes familiar whenever you hold either length or strength in the trump suit. Somewhat less well known are those cases where the defender with the shorter or weaker trump holding may gain a trick for his side by employing the same tactics.




South plays in Four Spades after East has overcalled in hearts. West leads the ten of hearts and East plays off the three top cards in the suit.

If, on the third round of hearts, West jumps in with the queen of spades, declarer will discard from dummy and thereafter will have no trouble picking up East's trumps. Instead, West should rise to the occasion by discarding a diamond! After ruffing this trick in dummy South will have to lose two trump tricks – and his contract.

IN that example, refusal to ruff with the queen in front of dummy's 92 was no more than good technique. Dare you go one step further? It is possible to blend the technique of trump promotion with deception, as in this example:




Again the contract is Four Spades and West leads the ten of hearts, East playing off ace, king and a small one. On the third round West ruffs declarer's queen with the seven of spades!

Declarer overruffs with dummy's nine and continues with the two. When East follows with a small trump declarer is confronted with a problem. If he goes up with the ace he may lose two trump tricks to East's possible KJx. If he plays the queen he may lose to West's possible Kx (for with this holding West would certainly ruff low, not with the king).

Declarer may very well decide that his best chance is to play the ten, which seems to take care of both possibilities. It will be a shock to him when it loses to the now singleton jack and he has to lose to the king as well.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Take care of your trump tricks.**
**When you see a chance**
**for an easy overruff,**
**don't be in too much of a hurry to take it.**
**You may gain more tricks**
**by holding back.**

*Everything you have ever learnt about defence so far and all you will ever learn in the future will be easier to apply if you manage to follow the next piece of advic*

# Take your time at trick one

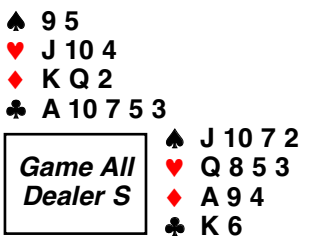
## Howard Schenken *(USA)*

*Howard Schenken, who died in 1979 aged 74, was some people's candidate for the title of 'Best Player of All Time'. He was a bidding theorist, many of whose ideas are now widely played in North America and the rest of the world – the weak two bid and forcing two-over-one response are but two examples. He founded the Four Aces bridge team in the mid-1930s and contributed towards their success, in particular the victory over the French European Champions in 1935 for the first World Championship. He was a member of the team that won the first Bermuda Bowl in 1950 and successfully defended his world title in 1951 and 1953. He took over the Four Aces bridge column in 1943 and in 1957 merged it with Richard Frey's and in so doing created the longest continuously running, nationally syndicated bridge column.*

MUCH has been written about the careful thought required of declarer before he plays to the first trick. But little has been said about the player on the declarer's right, East in the normal diagram.

When you are in this position you often have a difficult but vital role to play. Unlike declarer you cannot see your partner's hand, but by reviewing the bidding and observing the lead you may be able to visualise it.

While South is thinking over his plan of attack, you may have a chance to plan your defence. Even if South plays quickly to the first trick, you should not allow yourself go to be hurried. For example:




| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | 3NT |

[1] 16-18

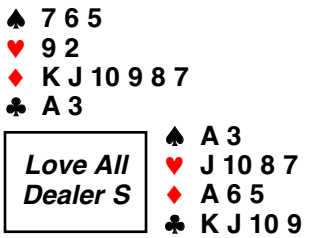
West leads the two of hearts. Declarer quickly plays dummy's ten and of course you cover with the queen automatically. Or do you? Not unless you have been lulled into following suit without thinking!

So I will assume you are concentrating and are ready to begin the chore of counting points. You and dummy each have ten, South has at least sixteen, so your partner has at most four. His fourth-best lead shows a four-card suit with (a) no honours, (b) the king, or (c) the ace.

If partner has (a) you lose a trick by covering; with (b) you break even. So you focus your attention on (c), which gives declarer king doubleton. In this case, of course, you must duck, and when sooner or later you come in with the king of clubs your heart return will defeat the contract.

EVEN when you have an automatic play to the first trick, you can still pause and say, 'Sorry,

I'm not thinking about this trick.' This may help you prepare for a vital decision at the next trick, as in this example:



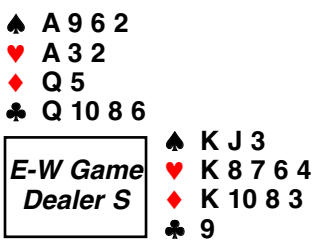

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | 3NT |

[1] 15-18

Partner leads the queen of spades. Counting points presents no problem. You have thirteen, the dummy eight, and partner's lead has shown three. The total is twenty-four, and since declarer surely has fifteen and more likely sixteen, you are on your own as sole defender.

Now you turn your attention to tricks. If declarer can bring in the diamond suit, he will romp home. But as you gaze at the dummy you notice that the club ace is only once guarded. The light dawns! Triumphantly you win the first trick with the ace of spades and play the king of clubs. As Mohammed Ali would say, 'The ace will fall in two rounds.'

THE next hand is difficult and requires careful planning:




| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♥ | 1♠ |
| 1NT[1] | 3NT |

[1] 12-14

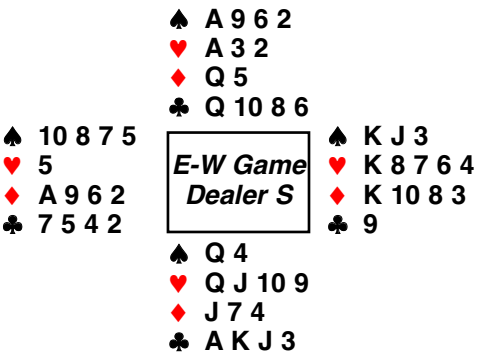
West leads the two of diamonds and declarer plays dummy's five. Plan the defence in detail.

From the bidding and lead you deduce that partner's distribution is probably 4-1-4-4. If his lead is from the jack your ten will force the ace. But if partner had the jack, declarer would have played dummy's queen, hoping to hold the trick!

So you conclude that your king will win and that you can establish three diamond tricks. You can certainly expect to make the king of hearts, but you will still need at least one trick in spades. With this in mind, you win the king of diamonds and return the eight, thereby deceiving partner into thinking that South started with J1074!

This produces the desired result as partner wins the ace of diamonds and switches to a spade. Declarer perforce plays low from dummy and you win with the king. Now you shift back to diamonds and are ready to take the setting trick when you get in with the king of hearts. You apologise to partner for your deceit, but he forgives you readily since no other defence would have set this contract.

The full deal:



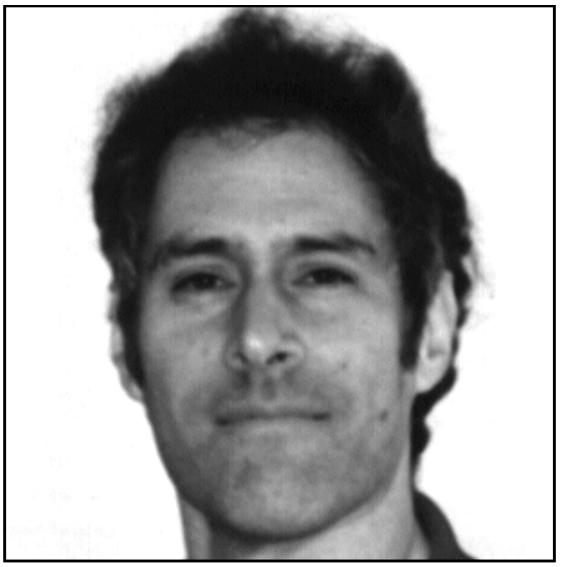

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When on defence in third position, cultivate the habit of playing slowly to the first trick. Careful thought will help you defeat many more contracts.**

*The next suggestion also refers to an aspect that is relevant on every single hand and one that most of us are guilty of neglecting from time to time.*

# Honour thy partner

## Jeff Rubens *(USA)*



*Born in 1941, JEFF RUBENS has been co-editor (with Edgar Kaplan) of* The Bridge World *since 1967. A recently retired mathematics professor based just outside New York, he is author and co-author of several well-received bridge books as well as being contributing editor to the* Official Encyclopedia of Bridge. *In the sixties and early seventies he won several national titles and played for North America in the 1973 Bermuda Bowl. However, shortly thereafter he gave up competitive bridge for family (he has three children all now in their early twenties) reasons and has not played in a tournament for over twenty years.*

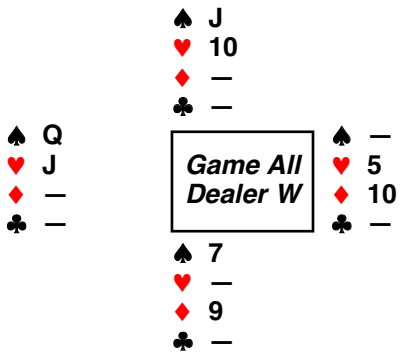
CAR A signals for a left turn but starts to turn right then suddenly brakes to a stop. Whereupon Car B, travelling behind A at a normal distance and speed, crashes into a tree.

Bridge 'crashes' are often of this sort. One defender makes a losing play but his partner was at fault. There is not only a loss on the deal, but also a drop in partnership morale. We seem to mind more when partner causes us to make the fatal move than when he makes it himself.

A player should be alert to partner's problems as well as his own. Everyone tries to help partner by signalling, but better players should aim to go further still.

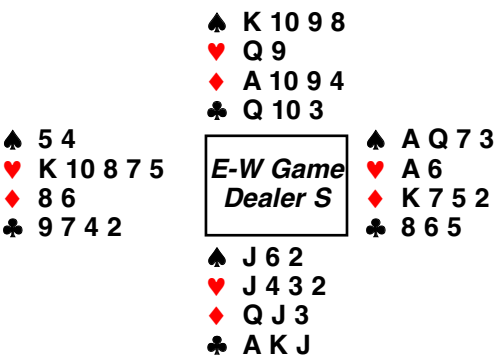
For example, a good partner tries to remove undesirable options. If you fear that partner may duck his ace in front of dummy's king-jack, you can prevent this by leading the suit yourself. If you cannot get in to lead the suit, perhaps you can discard the queen behind dummy's king-jack!

ONE measure of a defender's thoughtfulness is how he plays in this sort of situation:




East is on lead at no-trumps and does not know who has the jack of hearts. But he does know that West has the queen of spades and no diamonds. Leading the five of hearts cannot lose a trick no matter who has the spade seven and heart jack. Leading the ten of diamonds also cannot lose a trick … provided West guesses correctly which card to keep. A strong defender will not let his partner face this guess.

WHERE players fall down is in failing to notice that partner may have a problem. Once the problem is seen, protective measures are usually quite simple.



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 1NT[1] | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

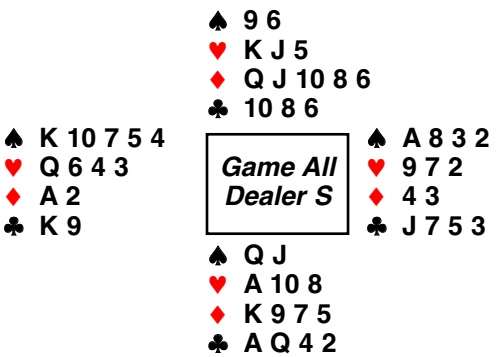
[1] 12-14

West led the seven of hearts to the nine, ace and deuce. As East, what do you return?

In play, East mechanically returned his remaining heart and it was natural for West (who needed only for East to have another heart and one entry) to duck. The defence was now separated from its five tricks and declarer made his contract.

West played the fatal card, but the king of hearts was 'lost' by East. His immediate heart return could accomplish nothing except giving West a headache. East should lead something else at trick two – the eight of clubs, for example. When East leads his remaining heart later, West knows that he is not expected to duck, and now the contract must fail. Note that nothing is lost in the unlikely event that West has the king and jack of hearts.

YOU can keep the sleepiest partner free from harm by removing his losing choice altogether.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | All Pass | | |

[1] 15-17

West led the five of spades to the six, ace and jack. East returned the two of spades to the queen, king and nine. As West, how do you plan the defence?

West can see seven tricks for the defence: five spades, one diamond and one club. But unless East leads a club early in the play South will strike first with two hearts, four diamonds and a club.

The average West, having reasoned this far, leads the spade four at the third trick. Then, East may win and unthinkingly return a spade. West will win the argument that follows, but South will make his contract.

A good defender scores points before the post mortem by playing the seven of spades before leading the four. When East wins he is out of spades and has no alternative to the winning club switch.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Honour thy partner.**
**Show that you treat his problems as your own and actively help him solve them.**

Amazingly, this will improve not only partner's defence but also his overall performance. He will be playing more carefully in order to be worthy of your respect.

*The final piece of advice in this section is also concerned with a psychological aspect of the game.*

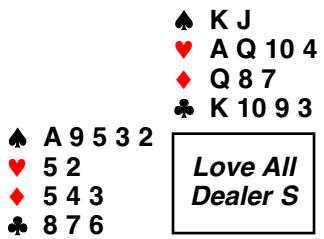
# Don't relax when dummy is strong

## Anders Brunzell *(Sweden)*

*Born in 1938, ANDERS BRUNZELL is a mathematics and physics teacher. He has represented Sweden on many occasions, his best year being 1977 when he was part of the team that won the European Championship and went on to win the bronze medal in that year's Bermuda Bowl.*

DO you recognise the following situation? The enemy has reached a game after some hesitation. You attack hopefully and dummy comes down with quite a lot to spare. It's now apparent that your left-hand opponent had been considering slam prospects and decided against, so the game seems easy enough. You doze off and wait for the next board to come.

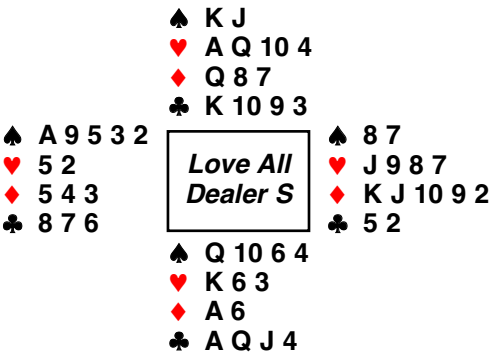
Mostly this is OK, but occasionally you let declarer make a game you could have defeated. As a matter of fact, it is easy to defend against these 'over-strong' contracts. You can't wait for declarer to go down on his own because you be waiting forever! No, most often this is a case of now or never. Try this deal:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

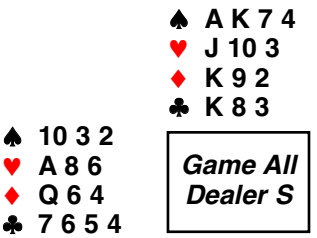
[1] 15-17

North hesitated a bit before bidding 3NT and you hope he has aimed too high. Trying to find partner's suit you lead a diamond and the impressive dummy goes down. You relax and observe, without real interest, that North follows low and South wins your partner's nine with the ace. Next comes a spade and, indifferently, you duck. Just as indifferently declarer wins the jack and cashes out exactly nine tricks. The full deal:




The strong dummy put you to sleep instead of alerting you. Let South have it his way and you will never defeat the contract, even if all his guesses are wrong. Therefore, assume, by a stroke of luck, you have found the winning lead. Jump up with the ace of spades and continue diamonds!

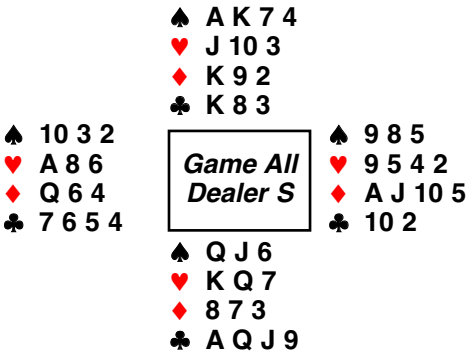
Should South have tried to take nine tricks at once? Perhaps, but when the hearts did not break you might have stopped acting the Sleeping Beauty, so he obviously played for the better chance!




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT[1] | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

[1] 15-17

South opens a 15-17 1NT which North raises to game. You start with a club and the depressing dummy is presented. North plays low and East's ten is taken by the queen. South leads the seven of hearts but now you are awake and promptly take the ace and continue clubs. This time declarer wins ten tricks. The whole layout:




It was right to take the ace of hearts immediately, but wrong to continue clubs. How could you know? East's minor-suit holdings might well have been reversed.

Yes, but you cannot take more than three tricks in clubs, whatever East's holding, as South must have at least one more card in the suit for his no-trump opening. What you do know is that East has at most five points, so you should place those points as favourably as possible, and play accordingly!

Hence the correct continuation is the queen of diamonds, and indeed ... Bingo!

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Don't get depressed by overwhelming strength in dummy**

Quite the reverse, get alerted, and play for the only chance!

*That's the end of the tips on defence. Put them all into practice on the right occasions and you will probably win your first world championship in the next few years!*

## Part Three

# Tips on Play

## Contributors to Tips on Play



*The bidding has finished, the opening lead has been made and you, as declarer, must plan your play. Advice on declarer play is always popular because you can use it without the co-operation of a partner.*

*Some of the advice on defence has considered the importance of small cards. That theme is where we start the tips on play.*

# Never play your lowest card first

**Israel Erdenbaum *(Israel)***

*ISRAEL ERDENBAUM was born in Poland in 1920 but has lived in Tel Aviv since 1935. He has been Israel's National Chief Tournament Director since 1960. His inauguration into the international directing arena came in 1974. One Sunday evening, after 10pm, he entered his local bridge club and was told to telephone David Bardach, president of the Israeli Bridge Federation, in Las Palmas where the World Olympiad was taking place. Mr Bardach told him that they were desperately short of directors and could he get there as quickly as possible. In 1974 things were not that easy, and it was already almost midnight, nevertheless he phoned his travel agent, his boss and several other necessary people. At 5.00am he left for Jerusalem to get a visa and managed to get to Las Palmas by late afternoon on the Monday. Immediately on arrival he was whisked away to direct the evening session. Needless to say, he was greeted very warmly by officials and players alike. This was the beginning of a successul international career as a tournament director – in those days it was a very voluntary affair and the organisers did not even pay his air fare.*

*He has been the Senior Tournament Director at seven European Championships and four World Olympiads.*

*Over the last several years he has curtailed his bridge activities because of his wife's ill-health.*

SHOULD one ever say 'never' or 'always' in relation to bridge? Maybe not, probably not, most certainly not. Nevertheless this is my tip. But why?

Some years ago we 'planted' the following hand in various duplicate games, in the hope of proving that the best way to illustrate a point is by way of a practical demonstration.

♠ 9 8 7
♥ 4 3 2
♦ A K 7 5 4 3
♣ 4

***Game All***
***Dealer S***

♠ A J 2
♥ A J 6
♦ 9 8 6
♣ A J 6 5

South has to play 3NT after opening a 15-17 1NT. To make nine tricks South must play the eight and nine of diamonds first. The hands of the opponents do not justify intervention.

When we examined the scoresheets we found that many pairs played the hand in diamonds, the contracts ranging between Two and Five. However, most played in 2NT or 3NT making six, seven or eight tricks.

In conversations with many of the players, it took some explaining why 3NT should be bid with 'only' 7 HCP. There was, however, no need to explain what happened in the play of the hand and why nine tricks were not made. The players involved were dismayed and even shocked by the way they blocked the diamond suit, when they automatically played the six of diamonds (the lowest) to the first trick.

Seven or eight months later we 'planted' the same hand again, exchanging only the diamond and club suits. As most of the players were playing this hand the second time and we remembered how shocked they were, we were eagerly waiting to see the scoresheets.

Well, there certainly was a difference. The number of 3NT contracts rose dramatically, so

the bidding demonstration worked. As to the play of the hand, the 'practical demonstration' and the shock it caused were apparently completely forgotten. Nobody made nine tricks, the automatic play of the lowest card blocked the suit once again.

We repeated this experiment several times, always with intervals of six to nine months, with the same results. The few times the contract was made, it was by some seasoned 'tournament' or 'championship' players as opposed to 'social' or 'duplicate' players who play for pleasure.

We did toy with the idea of introducing the same hand one week later, but did not dare to do it. What we finally did, was to introduce one week later another hand.

♠ 4 3
♥ J 7 3
♦ J 6 3
♣ A K Q 5 3

***Love All***
***Dealer S***

♠ A K Q
♥ Q 8 6 4
♦ A 9
♣ 8 7 6 4

Again South opens 1NT (15-17) and North raises to 3NT. To make nine tricks South must make five club tricks and as clubs are 3-1 he must hold on to the four which he can then overtake with the five and then cash the three for his fifth trick.

There were no problems this time; everybody was in 3NT, everybody was one down. Clearly everybody blocked the clubs by playing the four of clubs (the lowest) to the first trick.

Why were these simple hands misplayed by players who should know better; in most cases by players capable of making difficult contracts. The answer lies in the apparent simplicity of the hand which makes the player careless.

The vast majority of people playing social or duplicate bridge play simply for pleasure. They do not take the trouble to analyse every move, so when a hand looks simple they play it routinely and automatically.

So on our first hand, having AKxxxx opposite xxx they play for the suit to be divided 2-2 but do not take the trouble to examine the spot cards. The same goes for our second hand. With AKQxx opposite xxxx they are so certain that they can make five tricks that they play the lowest card automatically and sometimes block the suit.

The Laws of Duplicate Bridge say that when declarer tells dummy to play low, dummy must play the lowest card at the first opportunity, but the simple fact is that this is exactly what he does whenever he plays without thinking, and quite often with dire consequences.

When we accept the fact that the average player will play automatically in these situations, and when we accept that the automatic play of the lowest card first is bad, then all that remains is to try to make him hang on to his lowest card.

Of course, sometimes (seldom) it is absolutely necessary to play the lowest card first, but what we want to do is change the automatic behaviour. To change automatic behaviour is a tough proposition and to give it any chance at all the proposed change must be as short and as clearcut as possible. So it is not ideal, but it is definitely a step in the right direction.

Therefore, my BOLS tip is:

**Never play your lowest card first.**

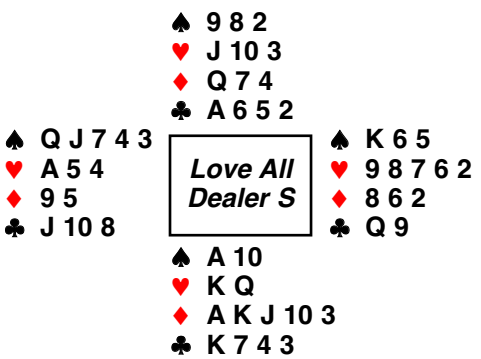
*Like Israel's tip, the following is also particularly applicable to no-trump contracts.*

# Play off your long suit early

## Patrick Jourdain *(Wales)*

OVER the years I have been surprised how frequently the long suit, even at an early stage, exerts a pressure that the defence cannot withstand. And it happens particularly often when the contract is 3NT.

Most players believe that squeezes only occur towards the end of a hand, and that you usually need to have the rest of the tricks bar one to exert the necessary pressure. However, where one defender has responsibilities in three suits, the pinch can operate much earlier, even where there is no chance of an endplay. This deal illustrates the point:

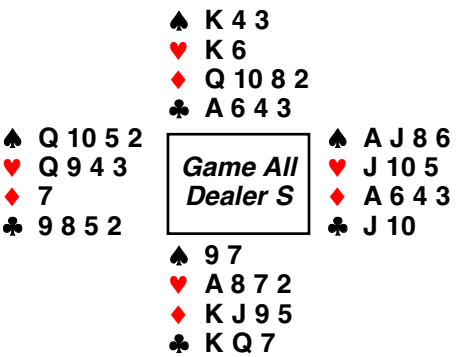



South opens 2NT, North raises to 3NT and West leads the four of spades.

Many declarers would hope to sneak the ninth trick in hearts, before the defence realised what was going on. They would cross to dummy to lead a deceptive jack of hearts. This gambit fails, and the defence cash five tricks to beat the game.

Observe, however, the effect of playing off the diamonds first. West can spare two small hearts but has no answer to the fifth diamond. When he throws a spade, the ninth trick can be set up in complete safety.

THE following example is more complex. Here both defenders guard both majors, but the pressure still arises:




South opens 1NT and North raises to 3NT. If West leads a high spade the contract is defeated at once, but the normal choice is the two of spades.

East wins with the jack of spades and returns the jack of clubs. Declarer wins in hand and sets about the diamonds. East wins and leads a second club. The key moment has arrived. Declarer should be aware that he is facing five losers and will be playing off the diamonds next. If he ever hopes to set up a long heart, he will need an entry to reach it. So the second club must be won in dummy. Then come the rest of the diamonds. West can throw the queen of spades and a small heart, but what can he spare on the last diamond? If he throws another heart, he cannot gain the lead when the suit is established. If he throws the ten of spades, the nine is good enough to promote the king. And if West releases his small spade, the suit becomes blocked. Declarer plays off three

rounds of hearts setting up his ninth trick and the defence cannot run their five.

A similar result occurs whatever East chooses to return when he is in, provided South concentrates on playing off all the diamonds before he tackles any other suit.

The pressure exerted on that deal was of an unfamiliar kind, but it is not necessary for declarer to understand exactly what is going on. It is enough to be aware of the possibilities.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**With eight winners and five losers in 3NT, play off your long suit early.**

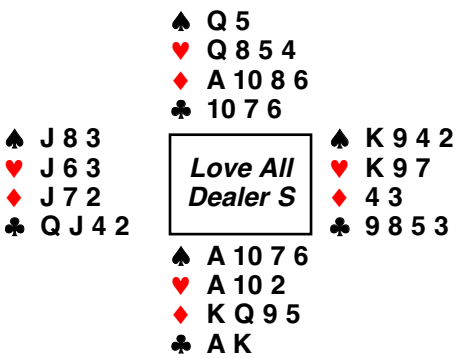
*We continue with the idea that you should first examine simple lines before considering the more complex.*

# The simplest gifts are often the best

## Eric Kokish *(Canada)*

BRIDGE experts pride themselves on their mastery of the endgame, projecting the play to a late stage, then reading the situation with the requisite accuracy to negotiate a vital trick. There are many occasions, however, when the needed trick can be obtained much earlier in the play. When you find yourself wondering how you should guess a critical suit or how you should determine which suit to broach, that is often a good moment to consider the possibility of having your opponents do your work for you. And sooner rather than later.

This deal was played in the 1991 NEC World Junior Teams Championship final:



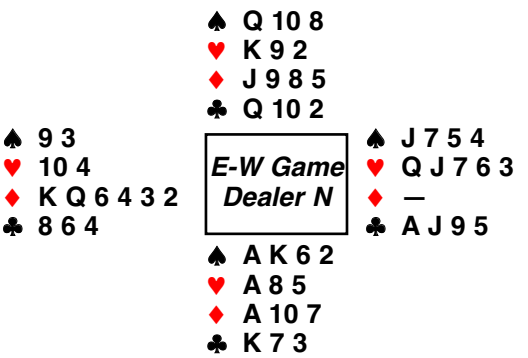

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Platnik* | *Roberts* | *Diamond* | *Gmach* |
| 1♦ | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

At both tables, South declared 3NT to the lead of the club deuce, fourth best. The Canadian declarer played on hearts at every opportunity and when the suit did not behave too badly, he established an extra trick for his ninth winner.

At the other table, Brian Platnik for USA II won the king of clubs and played the king-queen of diamonds to confirm that he had four winners in that suit. Then he cashed the ace of clubs, led to the ace of diamonds and called for the ten of clubs. West took two club winners and declarer threw a heart and a spade from his hand and a heart from dummy. Now West had to open up one of the majors for declarer to hand him his ninth trick.

No guarantees about the clubs, to be sure, but had they been 5-3 after all, declarer might still have had a chance to guess the major in which the defence eventually chose to exit.

THE next deal was played in the 1990 Canadian Invitational Pairs in Toronto:

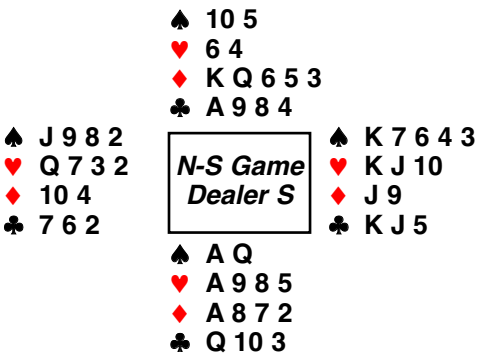



Billy Cohen declared 3NT from the South hand and was treated to a low diamond lead, East discarding a heart. That gave declarer his

eighth trick, but with clubs and spades behaving badly, the ninth might have been a problem.

Cohen played ace, king and another heart and put his cards on the table. East had to concede the game-going trick after taking his hearts, and would have had to do so even if he had kept a fifth heart. Simple but beautiful.

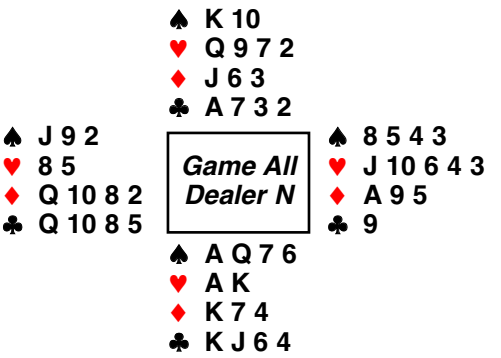
THE next deal from the quarter-finals of the Yokohama World Team Championship in 1991, is more complex and perhaps less pure, but it is no less delightful.




At most tables where West led a heart against 3NT, declarer, fearing a switch to spades, took the king with the ace immediately and advanced the queen of clubs (psychologically this is probably worth the very occasional agony of having West show out, because the queen will often hold no matter who has the king). East won, took two high hearts and switched to a spade. Forced to choose the right finesse, most declarers won the ace of spades and took a second losing finesse in clubs to fail by more than one trick.

Two declarers, Steve Weinstein of USA II and Pablo Lombardi of Argentina, did considerably better (perhaps recalling the deal played by Brian Platnick, which appeared in an early issue of the Yokohama Daily Bulletin). They ducked two rounds of hearts, which appeared to be 4-3, hoping that East would not switch to spades. They won the third heart, played three rounds of diamonds (unblocking), ending in hand, then exited with the fourth heart. West had to lead a black suit to concede a ninth trick.

AND, finally, a deal played by Zia Mahmood in 1980, first reported by Phillip Alder…




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pass | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3♣ | Pass |
| 3♠ | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

West led the eight of hearts against 3NT and Zia called for the nine to tempt a cover. He took East's ten with the king, cashed the ace of hearts, and led a low club. When West followed with the five, Zia played dummy's seven.

This innocent-looking play guaranteed his ninth trick. A heart or a spade are obviously fatal to the defence; if East has a club, the suit is 3-2 or the queen is onside; if East plays a diamond, Zia ducks and has time to develop a diamond trick lest the clubs prove unfavourable, as here. Sure, West could have played the ten of clubs, but even if he had, he would have been left on play, and his best play, a spade, would have given Zia a free finesse of the ten with lots of other options in reserve. As it went East was squeezed in the majors on the third club and Zia finished with an overtrick.

My BOLS tip is:

**The simplest gifts are often the best.**

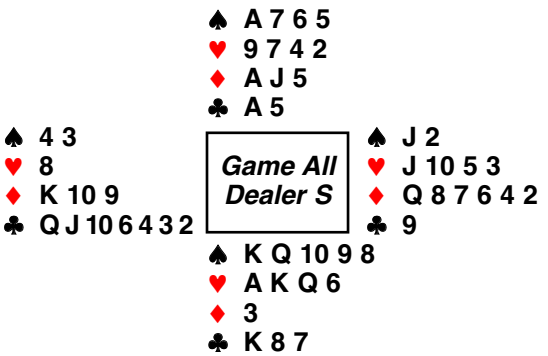
*Even in a trump contract, it is important to handle the early play properly. It is not always possible to envisage the end-position, but keeping as many options open as possible is a good habit to acquire.*

# Play trumps fluidly

## Derek Rimington *(England)*

BOLS liqueurs are liquids, albeit very famous ones. Fluidity, one of the qualities of liquids, also applies in contract bridge to the effective utilisation of the trumps. Declarer especially must ensure that his trumps remain so. This is often achieved when drawing trumps by cashing the top honours in such a way as to leave entries to both hands.

To illustrate, here is an example adapted from a rubber bridge grand slam played by the legendary Helen Sobel:

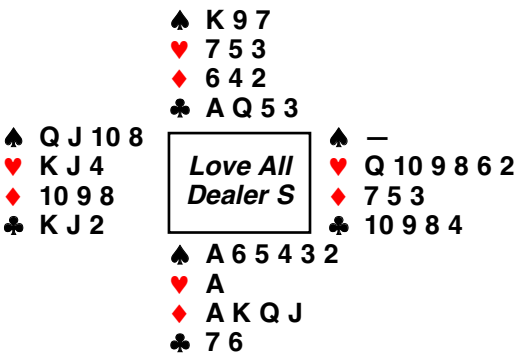



West leads the queen of clubs against Seven Spades. With the aid of a club ruff declarer apparently has thirteen tricks, barring bad breaks, just the time to take care! Primarily to guard against a 4-0 trump break in either hand, after winning the king of clubs, declarer cashes the king of spades. When both opponents follow it may not appear of any consequence which spade honour to play next. This is not so; the queen should be selected for fluidity, thus preserving the ace of spades as an entry to dummy.

Again both opponents follow, so declarer cashes the ace of diamonds and ruffs a diamond. Dummy is re-entered with a club, East showing out. Another diamond is ruffed, proving that West originally had a 2-1-3-7 or 2-0-4-7 shape. All is not lost provided West has a singleton heart other than the five or three.

Accordingly, the ace of hearts is cashed. When West contributes the eight the contract is certain. A club is ruffed and a low heart led. Declarer intended to make the spectacular play of finessing the six. Should East split his honours, fluidity saves the day. Dummy can be reached with the ace of spades for another heart play.

My next example again is a reconstruction. The original hand was used by Robert Ewen in the context of tactical bidding.




Here is my suggested auction playing five-card majors:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | 4♣ | Pass |
| 6♠ | All Pass | | |

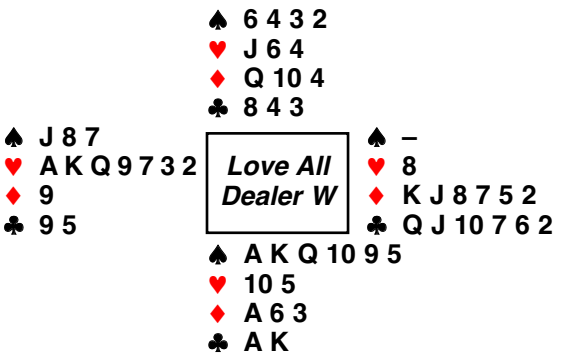
After the 'safe' lead of the ten of diamonds declarer wins and considers the problem. It is routine to finesse the queen of clubs before tackling trumps. Should it fail, trumps have to break 2-2. Technique demands, however, that the ace of hearts is cashed immediately.

When the club finesse wins, a heart is ruffed. Declarer continues with a low trump intending to cover the eight, should it appear, with the nine. This is a standard safety play which guarantees the contract, barring an unlikely ruff. When West splits his honours dummy wins with the king. Another heart is ruffed. A club is then led to the ace and a club is ruffed – another type of fluidity. All is well so three top diamonds are played. West is in trouble on the fourth. If he ruffs low, he is overruffed. If he ruffs high he is endplayed and forced to lead back a spade into declarer's split tenace.

If West had known more about fluidity he would have led the king of clubs and defeated

the contract. After all, the cue-bid of Four Clubs had pinpointed the whereabouts of the ace.

FINALLY, a wonderful, unaltered hand from the acknowledged master, Terence Reese:




After West opened Four Hearts, South became declarer in Four Spades. West led three top hearts and declarer ruffed the third round – by now you will have guessed – with the nine of trumps. He then cashed the ace of spades and was disappointed to see East discard. Otherwise he had intended to draw trumps, cash the ace-king of clubs, enter dummy with the six of spades and ruff a club. A low diamond would then probably bring forth the king from West or endplay East.

Fluidity again came to the rescue. Trumps were drawn, and the ace-king of clubs cashed. When West followed, twelve of his cards were known. If the thirteenth was the king, jack or nine(!) of diamonds the contract would be made by leading a low diamond and ducking in dummy. If West is left on lead he is endplayed. If East overtakes the nine with the jack and returns a club, declarer ruffs high. He then crosses to dummy with the five of trumps and leads the queen of diamonds for a finesse!

Have you ever seen a play of this type before? I haven't, but you now understand why I suggest you adopt my BOLS bridge tip:

**Play trumps fluidly.**

*Flexibility in how you play your trumps is certainly important but the next advice concerns the 'when' rather than the 'how'.*

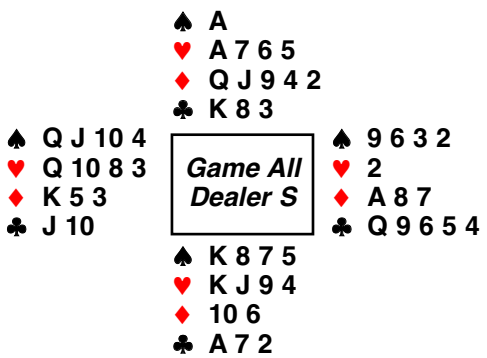
# Don't rush to draw trumps

## Anna Valenti *(Italy)*

*ANNA VALENTI, of Leghorn, Italy, is a WBF Grand Master and won five European Championships in the 1970s. Unfortunately the Italians couldn't quite overcome US strength to win the Venice Cup, but they were runners-up twice and they did win the World Teams Olympiad in 1972. She and her partner Marisa Bianchi were leading exponents of the Leghorn Diamond system.*

WHEN you have a 4-4 trump fit you should bear in mind that the outstanding trumps will break poorly (4-1 or 5-0) nearly one-third of the time. If you cannot withstand such a division, you should give serious thought to playing out the hand without touching trumps.

Provided you keep your head, you will be surprised how often this plan succeeds. Quite frequently, you will find yourself making contracts that, to a bystander, would have seemed certain to fail.

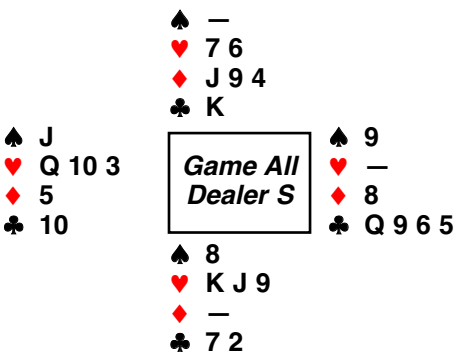



You are in Four Hearts and West leads the queen of spades. If you set about drawing trumps you will surely lose two hearts and two diamonds, for one down.

There is no great danger of an early overruff, and if the diamonds are going to break badly you won't necessarily lose by playing them early on. So, the first move

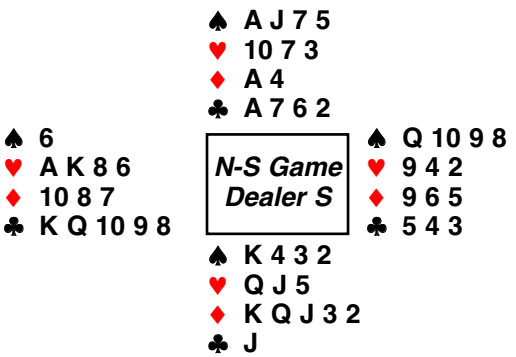
should be to lead, not a trump, but a low diamond from dummy. The ten loses to the king and West shifts to the jack of clubs. You win in hand and cash the king of spades, discarding a club from the table.

A low spade is ruffed and you lead the queen of diamonds from dummy. East wins and, observing that you have not seemed keen to play trumps yourself, leads his singleton heart, West's eight forcing dummy's ace. The position now is:




Continuing to play on cross-ruff lines, you cash the king of clubs, ruff the jack of diamonds, a winner, and ruff a spade. You refrain from ruffing the next lead and when West is forced to ruff you triumphantly make the king-jack of hearts at the finish.

WHENEVER there is danger of losing too many trump tricks, you should hesitate to launch a frontal assault on the trump suit. This is especially so when there has been competitive bidding, for a favourable break in trumps is then less likely.




You play in Four Spades after West has overcalled in clubs. West begins with the ace of hearts and switches to the king of clubs.

Because the diamonds are more or less solid, it is tempting to draw trumps. However, you lose nothing by beginning with a club ruff and setting out to establish your trick in hearts by advancing the queen. (This is safe, because if the opponents could ruff a heart they would have done so.)

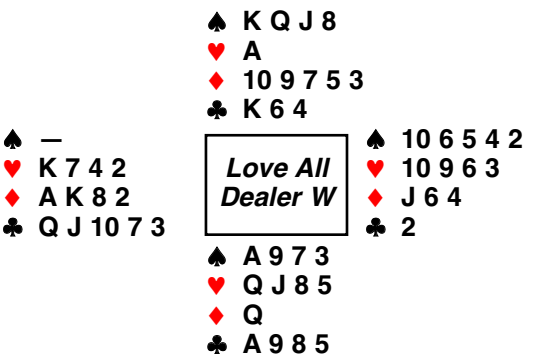
If West returns a third club you ruff, cash the heart winner, and cross to the ace of diamonds to lead dummy's last club.

Suppose that East discards a diamond. You ruff and cash the king of spades and a second diamond. You have won eight tricks, the defenders two. You ruff the next diamond with a low trump and East is endplayed.

If East elects to ruff the fourth round of clubs, you overruff, cash two diamonds and endplay East as before.

EVEN when your trump suit is solid it may still be fatal to touch this suit too early.

The next example is one of my favourite hands:




South was in Four Spades and West led the queen of clubs, won by dummy's king. Instead of testing trumps straight away, South's first move was to lead a diamond, establishing communications. West continued with the ten of clubs and East ruffed. East correctly returned a trump and West showed out, dummy winning with the eight.

After this unfavourable development declarer saw that she would need a second trick in hearts. The ace of hearts was cashed and the closed hand entered with a diamond ruff. The queen of hearts was covered by the king and ruffed in dummy. After another diamond ruff, the jack of hearts was cashed and the fourth heart was ruffed. South had taken eight tricks and still had a high trump in each hand.

If South had taken even one round of trumps early on, East would have been able to play a second trump when he ruffed the club, leaving South with only nine winners.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Don't rush to draw trumps.**

On some hands you may be unable to draw them successfully; on others, even if you can draw them, you may find that you are left with too few tricks. On all such hands you should consider whether it may be better to make as many tricks as you can by cross-ruffing.

*Of course, however good your plan is, you must always be ready to change it when the unexpected crops up…*

# Always be ready to change your plan

## Pietro Forquet *(Italy)*

*PIETRO FORQUET, a banker now in his seventies, lives in Naples. He is the holder of three World Team Olympiad titles and twelve Bermuda Bowls, from 1957 to 1974, though he won his first European Teams title in 1951. His three most effective partnerships were with Guglielmo Siniscalco, Eugenio Chiaradia and Benito Garozzo. At one time considered to be the 'expert's expert', he had a reputation for nerves of steel, always playing his best under pressure. Absent from the bridge scene for while in the 1980s, it was a pleasure to see him at the Macallan/*Sunday Times *tournament in 1993 in partnership with Giorgio Belladonna.*

EVEN if you have made a good plan, you should always be ready to change your strategy if, at a certain moment, you discover that it cannot work. Here is an example. You are South, declarer in Four Spades:

♠ J 10 5 4
♥ A J
♦ A 10 6 3
♣ 7 6 5

***N-S Game***
***Dealer S***

♠ A 9 7 6
♥ Q 3 2
♦ K 7 5
♣ A Q 8

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

West leads the five of hearts and you play the jack, which holds the trick. You then play the jack of spades and let it ride to West's queen. He continues with the four of hearts which you win and you play the ten of spades, both opponents following. On the ace of spades, West discards a small heart and East drops the king of spades. You can count nine sure tricks.

What is your plan to make an additional trick?

If the club finesse is right there is no problem but if it is wrong, you need to attack diamonds in order to create a discard for a club. If the diamonds are 3-3, everything is easy, but the correct approach is to play to the ace, then small to the king and then to dummy's ten. This will establish the ten of diamonds as a trick whenever East has honour doubleton.

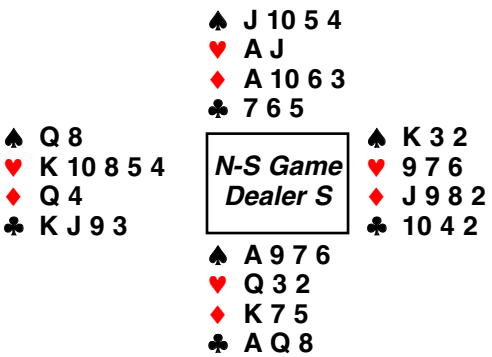
Intending to make this play, you play the ace and king of diamonds on which West and not East drops the queen.

Now you must pause. What can you deduce from West's queen? It is unlikely that he holds QJx because on the first round he would have split his honours and he also might have preferred a lead from two honours at trick one instead of leading from an unguarded king.

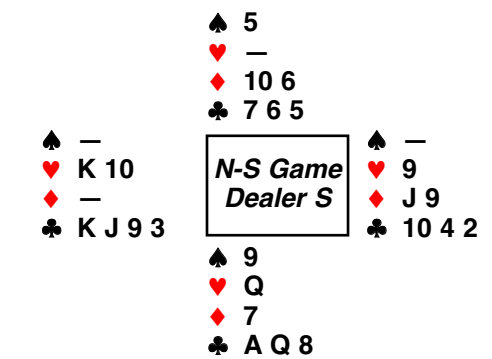
There is another possibility to consider: West may be clever enough to unblock the suit to ensure that his partner will win the third diamond trick with the jack.

However, suppose your judgement suggests that West is not of the calibre to make such an excellent defence.

Here is the full hand:




And this is the position with six tricks to go:




At this point, because you have abandoned the hope of a third diamond trick, you must change your original plan.

You decide to play the queen of hearts and on West's king you discard a club from dummy. West continues with the ten of hearts. If you ruff in dummy and play a club, intending to put in your eight, East will definitely spoil your manoeuvre by playing the ten. So, on the ten of hearts you discard another club from dummy and the losing diamond from your hand.

Now West will regret the heart discard on the third round of trumps as he must play a club giving you your tenth trick and the contract.

This example proves the value of my BOLS bridge tip which is:

**Even if you have made a very good plan, always be ready to change your strategy once you have discovered that it cannot work.**

*Terence Reese was one of the most prolific of the BOLS tipsters. Hardly a year went by without some advice from him. In general I think it is difficult to keep on producing good ideas and I think that some of his tips fail to live up to our high expectations of his writing. However, the following suggestion is excellent and has had an effect on the thought processes of many of today's champions.*

# The discard tells the story

## Terence Reese *(England)*

MY BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Study the early discards and consider this point: from what holding would the defender most readily have made those discards?**

The answer to the above question will often resolve a critical guess.

For example, a defender who holds A532 or K532 will discard from that suit more readily than if he had held Q532 or J532. That will give you a clue in situations of this kind:

**(1)**

*Dummy* ♠ J 7 6

*West* ♠ Q 9 4 — *East* ♠ A 5 3 2

*Declarer* ♠ K 10 8

**(2)**

*Dummy* ♠ J 8 6 2

*West* ♠ A 5 3 — *East* ♠ Q 9 4

*Declarer* ♠ K 10 7

This is a side suit in a trump contract and declarer needs to establish one fast trick. In (1) East has made two early discards. Conclusion: he is more likely to hold Axxx than Qxxx. In (2) West makes an early discard. Conclusion: he is more likely to have discarded from Axx than from Qxx.

**(3)**

*Dummy* ♠ A 8

*West* ♠ J 9 4 — *East* ♠ K 7 5 3 2

*Declarer* ♠ Q 10 6

**(4)**

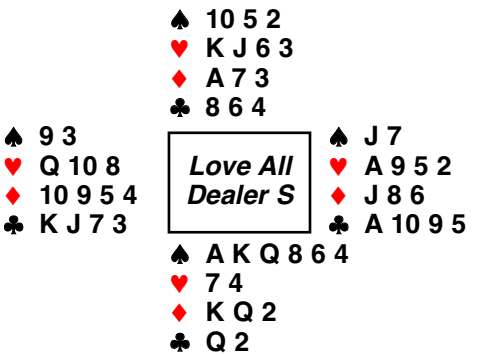
*Dummy* ♠ K 10 8

*West* ♠ A 5 3 2 — *East* ♠ J 7 6

*Declarer* ♠ Q 9 4

In (3) East makes two early discards. When you play the ace and eight he follows with the five and seven. Play him for Kxxxx rather than Jxxxx. In (4) West discards twice. He is more likely to have come down to Ax than to Jx; but if a low card to the king is headed by the ace, be inclined to play East for AJx.

SUCH inferences are especially strong when dummy has what may seem to a defender to be an establishable suit, as here:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

West leads the three of clubs and South ruffs the third round. There is something to be said for leading a heart at once, putting West under some pressure if he holds the ace, but instead the declarer plays four rounds of trumps, discarding a diamond from dummy. (It is good play to keep the heart holding intact.) West throws a club and a diamond, East a club and a heart.

After cashing three diamonds South leads a heart and West plays the eight. South should finesse the jack. Why? Because of East's heart discard. With A9xx East, expecting the contract to depend on the heart guess, would not think it necessary to keep all four. But with Q9xx he would not let go a heart, in case declarer held Ax.

*The next tip is mainly of use against suit contracts. It focuses on putting pressure on the opponents.*

# Play low from dummy

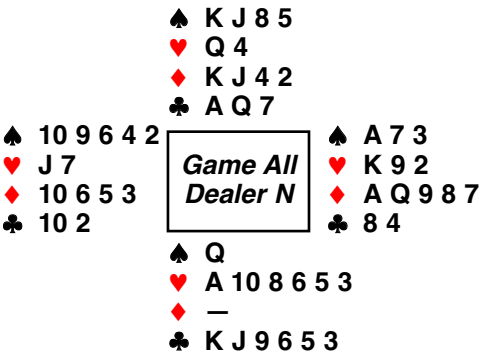
## Billy Eisenberg *(USA)*

*Now in his late fifties, BILLY EISENBERG of Florida is a true bridge professional. Known as Billy the Kid, due to his youthful appearance, he is a former professional backgammon player (he won the World Backgammon Championship in 1974) but now spends his time playing, teaching, coaching and commenting about bridge. A WBF Grand Master and early member of the Dallas Aces, he won five Bermuda Bowls in the seventies with four different partners. In recent years he has diversified: he has coached some ACBL junior teams, as well as many national teams around the world including Israel, Panama, Venezuela and the Netherlands; he is also one of the official VuGraph commentators for the WBF.*

MOST declarers realise the advantage of playing low from dummy when the queen is led through a king at trick one. The ace is almost certainly over the king and by playing low once or twice from the dummy the ace may fall on the right, establishing the king as a trick.

However, there are also many other holdings where declarer can gain a full trick by playing low from dummy in situations that are not as well known.

My first example is from the final stages of an international trial:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1NT | Pass |
| 2♦[1] | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 3♣[2] | Pass | 3NT | Pass |
| 4♣[3] | Pass | 5♣ | Pass |
| 6♣[4] | All Pass | | |

[1] transfer to hearts
[2] game force
[3] slam try
[4] we were behind at the time

When West led the five of diamonds (playing third and fifth leads) I immediately played low from dummy. Why? Why not play the jack, hoping that West had underled the queen?

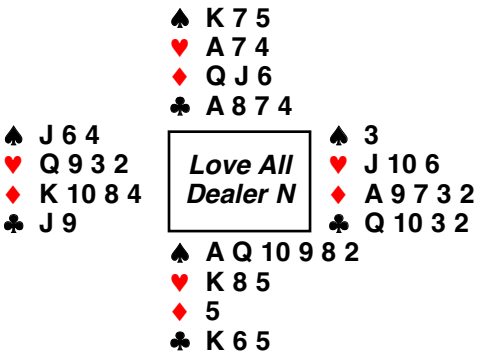
Well, if West really had led away from the queen, East was going to have to make a pretty good play of the ten from A10 if he happened to hold that card. Most players would play the ace. Besides, there was a strong possibility that East held both the ace and the queen, in which case playing the jack from dummy would be no use at all.

All in all, I felt the percentages were very strongly in my favour and that to play low from dummy was the best way to build up a diamond trick for a spade discard.

As it happened East, fearing his partner might have led from 53 doubleton, played the queen. I ruffed, entered dummy with a club and played the king of diamonds, covered by the ace and ruffed.

Dummy was re-entered with a club, the spade discarded on the jack of diamonds and a heart conceded to make the slam. Had I played the jack from dummy at trick one I would have gone down in the slam.

HERE is another example where you can put tons of pressure on your right-hand opponent by playing a low card from dummy. In this deal you are playing Pairs:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♣ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

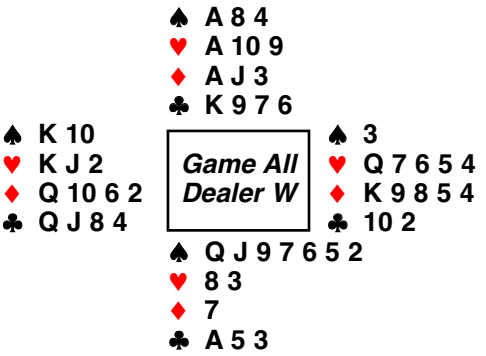
When West leads the four of diamonds (fourth highest) breathes there a declarer among us who would not put up an honour from dummy at trick one? The result of this play is that if East wins and does not return the suit (allowing South to discard and then discard again upon the established diamond honour) South will lose a trick in each suit outside trumps and make only ten tricks.

Now let's see what happens if South plays low from dummy at trick one. It is going to take a pretty brave East player to insert the nine and run the risk of losing to a singleton ten in declarer's hand, or possibly a doubleton ten if West's lead was from K84 originally.

Most East players will surely play the ace. This will enable South to make a routine loser-on-loser play in diamonds for the precious overtrick (South runs the queen discarding a club, and later discards a heart on the jack.)

The play also picks up a trick when East started with both the ace and the king but not the ten. Surely nobody (unless he has read this BOLS tip!) would insert an eight or nine from AK9x or AK8x when dummy played low. Right?

THE next hand is also from Pairs play and again resulted in declarer managing an overtrick for a top score by making an 'unusual' play from dummy at trick one.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♣ | 1NT | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

On the two of diamonds lead, South played low from dummy, knowing full well that even if East won the trick cheaply the ace would always furnish a quick heart or club discard.

What was East to do? Play the eight? Would you? Maybe partner's lead was a singleton. Maybe partner had led from Qxx and declarer had 10x, in which case the trick might not come back. In the event, East rose with the king and made the good switch to a heart.

Declarer won in dummy, discarded a heart on the ace of diamonds, ruffed a heart and led the queen of spades which was covered. He then ran all his spades, squeezing West in the minors, with the jack of diamonds the threat card. That card would not have been a threat had South played the ace of diamonds at trick one because East would have been able to guard diamonds.

PERHAPS the advantages of playing low from dummy when a small card is being led through a king can be most clearly seen by taking a look at the difficulties that are created for the defender sitting over dummy.


| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♦ | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

West leads the two of spades and declarer plays low from dummy. As East, what do you play at trick one?

Let's say you play the jack because declarer may have:

♠ 9 8
♥ K 8 7 6 4 2
♦ 3
♣ A K 6 2

Too bad. Your partner has led a singleton and declarer actually held:

♠ Q 10 9 8
♥ K Q 8 4 2
♦ —
♣ K Q 7 6

And partner is till wondering why you didn't give him an early ruff to defeat the contract easily.

Now let's say you did play the ace in order to give your partner a ruff. This time your partner thinks that you have lost your mind, because he has underled Q10x and holds the ace-queen of hearts, and the hand was beaten off the top if you had just cashed your two spade tricks.

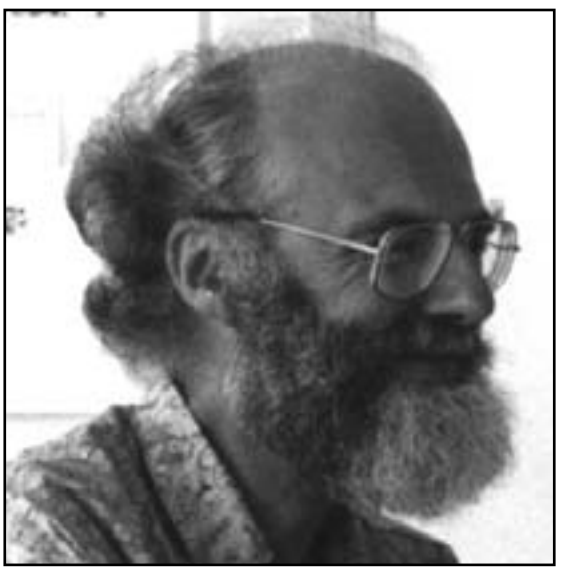
So, to drive the opponents crazy and gain extra tricks by the cartload, my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Play low from dummy when it can't cost you a trick and is likely to cause third hand to make a grievous error.**

*If the previous tip was straightforward, the mathematics of the next one are quite advanced and you will have to use your brain if you are to understand fully.*

# The high cards will be with the length

## Max Rebattu *(Netherlands)*



*Born in 1939, MAX REBATTU is a long-time bridge journalist and teacher in Amstelveen, The Netherlands. His greatest achievement in the playing of the game was to be second in the World Pairs in Biarritz in 1982; unfortunately he and his partner Anton Maas had originally been proclaimed winners because of a scoring error so his second place must have been something of a disappointment. He is the bridge columnist of the biggest Dutch newspaper* Telegraaf. *He first introduced bridge to Teletext in 1980 and continues to organise it.*

IT is well known that missing high cards will most probably be found in the hand containing most cards of that suit. If, for example, five cards including the queen are missing, and the suit is divided 3-2, the queen can be expected in the three-card holding. The probability is three out of five or 60%. This is, of course, true not only for the queen, but for any other card.

The converse is, of course, also true. The player possessing the queen has most probably the length in the suit. If five cards are missing including the queen, and the suit is divided 3-2, the chance that the player possessing the queen also has the three-card holding, is again 60%. The same goes for the other four cards in the suit.

By forcing the opponents to discard certain low cards it is possible to obtain information about the most probable distribution of the suit between both opponents. If, for example, KQ2 of a suit are missing and the ace is played, collecting an honour and the deuce, it can be concluded that the one who plays the deuce most probably has the missing honour. The chance of the two being singleton is only one out of three of the 2-1 distributions.

The same principle can be applied to other distributions. If declarer has AKQ3 opposite 54 in a suit, the opponents can be forced to show the two by playing the ace, king and queen. If both opponents follow suit three times, the position of the two indicates the most probable position of the missing card (four out of seven or 57%). What applies to the two does not apply to the six or higher cards in this case. These cards need not be shown, but may be played by choice by the owner of the four-card holding, or may be kept until the last card.

If the two and three are the only missing low cards, it applies to both cards. If they are divided there is no clue, but if both are played from the same hand the probability that this hand contains the length is very high. On the other hand nothing can be said if the two drops by only playing the ace. The opponents may false-card by playing the two from the three-card holding but keep it from four cards.

THE use of this principle is fairly rare, but I have never seen this theory in previous bridge literature. It could be applied when trying to count the opponents' hands, thinking of a throw-in or looking for the right squeeze.

In the next deal the principle can be applied twice. So the chance of success is even higher:

♠ 6 5
♥ 7 6
♦ A 9 8 7 6
♣ A K Q J

***N-S Game***
***Dealer S***

♠ A K Q 3
♥ A K Q 5
♦ K 2
♣ 7 6 2

Suppose South is playing in 7NT and West leads some middle card in clubs. There are twelve sure tricks and the thirteenth has to come from some squeeze. If the guards in the majors are divided – and that is the most probable case – the contract can be made on a double squeeze, provided declarer guesses the position of the majors right. My tip may be very useful.

North wins the club lead and South now plays his winners in the majors. North discards two diamonds. South looks, eagle-eyed, to see who plays the two of spades and the two, three and four of hearts. Suppose East plays the two of spades and three of hearts and West plays the two and four of hearts. The probability that East has four spades is now 57% and West four hearts about 60%. Now clubs are played. If clubs are 3-3, East is forced to throw a diamond on the fourth club. Now it is vital that South throws the menace that East has kept. In the example given, South has to throw the three of spades. The probability that South has taken the wrong decision is only 43% x 40% = 17%. Now there is a high probability that West is squeezed in hearts and diamonds. By using this tip declarer is able to raise his chances of success remarkably. I expect that in the near future many more hands will be found on which it is possible to use my BOLS bridge tip which is:

**Expect a missing high card to be held by the opponent possessing the most worthless low cards in that suit.**

*When bridge hands are written up and all four hands are exposed it is easy to forget that in real life the defenders can see only one hand in addition to their own. The best line of play would often be very different if the other hand were declarer. The next tip concentrates on this aspect.*

# The power of the closed hand

## Tony Forrester *(England)*

*After obtaining a mathematics degree from the University of Manchester TONY FORRESTER trained as an accountant but he is now a full-time bridge professional. A Yorkshireman by birth, he now lives in Herefordshire with his wife, Diana. He has without doubt been the best player in Great Britain over the last ten years.*

*His most notable successes have been the European Junior Teams in 1978, second in the European Teams in 1987 followed by second in that year's Bermuda Bowl, and then a victory in the 1991 European Championship. He is bridge columnist of both the* Daily Telegraph *and* Sunday Telegraph.

WE have all faced the situation on many occasions. Dummy has xxx in a suit and leads to declarer's king. We (over declarer) have Axx. Should we win or should we not?

If you win, declarer has KQ10 and now finesses against partner's jack when he would almost certainly go wrong if his king had held, and, if we duck, declarer has Kxx and needed one more trick for his contract!

Not exactly original, I agree, but that type of situation is a common variation on a theme which extends to many hands. It is the 'tip of the iceberg'.

CONSIDER these hands as declarer:


You are playing, not surprisingly, in 3NT and West leads the two of spades (fourth highest). Clearly the contract depends on the diamond suit which in technical terms should be tackled by cashing the ace, coming to hand and leading up to the queen. However, a more practical way to play is to win the jack of spades at trick one, and lead a low diamond from dummy. East is obviously under pressure with Kx; he is unaware that the entire hand depends on the suit, and even with Kxx he may be tempted to put up the king to play a spade through to partner's supposed Kxxx. Now, hopefully, you are beginning to see a common thread. On both the above positions one opponent was forced to guess the holding of a suit in the closed hand without any real clue. That is the basis of my tip. Whenever you can, use the power of the closed hand.

In positions where you can be sure of the location of the high cards, then even more can be done. Try leading from K10xxx in dummy towards a low singleton in hand, if you are sure the ace is on your right. How can he tell you do not have a singleton queen? And even if he has the ace and queen you may get him to put up the queen, giving you a chance to ruff out Jxx in his partner's hand.

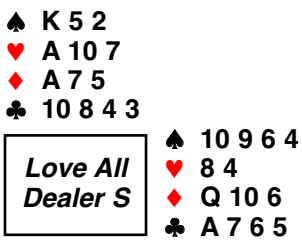
With KQxxx opposite a void, don't automatically lead the king for a ruffing finesse; it may be better to lead a low one first, testing your right-hand opponent; you may after all have a singleton jack and he may waste his ace. Also, if he plays low smoothly you have a good clue as to the location of the cards.

BE subtle also. Consider this:


In a recent pairs game I played this hand in Four Spades after a typical sequence arriving at the wrong contract. A diamond to the ace and one back left me with the problem of how to broach the spades. How would you play?

First I won the king of diamonds, then crossed to dummy with a heart and led the queen of spades. East (with K97) could not understand why I had gone to the apparent effort of crossing to dummy to lead spades unless I had something like AJ10xxx (he knew I had at least six). So he ducked and I stole a trick. How could he tell what to do? The answer was that he couldn't. You have forced a guess by giving the impression of a different hand.

SOMETIMES you set the defenders a problem which you may not have seen yourself. My final hand will hopefully illustrate exactly what I mean. Look at it from East's point of view:



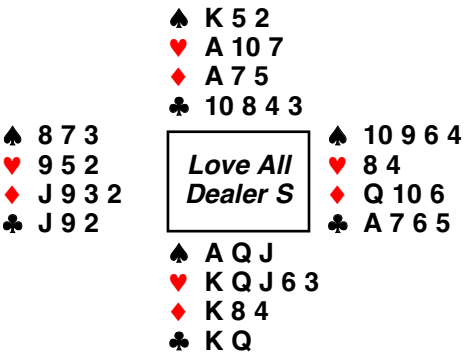

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 2NT[1] | 4NT |
| 6NT | |

[1] 20-22

Partner leads the seven of spades to dummy's king, declarer following with the jack. A club from dummy goes to declarer's king and partner's two. Now the jack of hearts, two, ace, eight is followed by another club, and you?

Declarer appears to have:


to make sense of the bidding and play, so you (as actually happened at the table) play low. However, the full hand is:




Declarer was just trying to duck a trick to attempt a squeeze or hope the jack of clubs was doubleton, but without really knowing why he arranged to lead clubs twice from dummy. His reward was obvious, but no-one could blame East.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Make use of**
**the power of the closed hand.**
**It is declarer's biggest edge.**
**Try to lead from dummy**
**as often as possible,**
**even when there may appear**
**at first sight to be little advantage.**

*This is an excellent tip and would probably have won in many years. Unluckily for Tony the following was also a contender in the same year…*

# Roll over, Houdini

## Zia Mahmood *(Pakistan)*

IT'S rare that bridge players receive compliments, but when they do come the one that strokes my ego the most is the word 'magician'. You can keep your praises for error-free bridge or the accolades given to the so-called purity of computer-like relay bids – they don't do anything for me. No, I suppose it's something in my character that has always made me thrilled by the razzle dazzle of the spectacular and excited by the flamboyant and extraordinary. Yet the world of bridge magic, like stage magic, is often no more than illusion, much simpler to perform than it appears to the watcher. Allow me to take you into that world…

Assume you are East, sitting over the dummy, North, after the bidding has gone 1NT by South on your left, 3NT on your right. Isolating one suit (let's say diamonds), you see:

*Dummy*
♦ J 2
or ♦ J 3 2

*You*
♦ Q 4
or ♦ Q 5 4
or ♦ Q 6 5 4

Declarer plays the jack from dummy. What would you do? Cover, you say? Correct. With Q4 and Q54 you would cover all of the time. With Q654 you would cover somewhere between usually to always. Good!

What if the bidding was One Heart on your left, Four Hearts on your right, and this was the lay-out:

*Dummy*
♦ Q 2
or ♦ Q 3 2

*You*
♦ K 4
or ♦ K 5 4
or ♦ K 6 5 4

Declarer played the queen from dummy. Again, what would you do? Again, the answer is easy. With K4 and K54 you would cover all of the time. With K654 you would cover somewhere between usually and always.

In both examples, you would have defended correctly, following one of bridge's oldest rules: cover an honour with an honour. Bear with me a moment longer and change seats. As declarer, needing as many tricks as possible (don't we always?), how would you play these suits?

*Dummy*
♦ J 2

*Declarer*
♦ A K 10 9 8

*Dummy*
♦ Q 3 2

*Declarer*
♦ A J 10 9 8

Run the jack, run the queen? That's normal; you would be following the simple, basic rule taught to every beginner about the finesse. But, hold it a moment. Something's wrong. How can both these plays be right? If, as in the first example, the defender over the dummy would nearly always (correctly) cover the honour played when he had it, how can it be right to finesse that honour when we know that East (RHO) almost never has it? The queen in the first example, and the king in the second are almost surely in the West hand (*mal placé* as the French say) and sometimes unprotected.

My BOLS bridge tip, therefore (and I certainly have taken my time to get there), is as simple and easy as this:

**When they don't cover,
they don't have it.**

Declarer should place or drop the relevant card offside, even when this is hugely anti-percentage. Before the critics jump, I must add a few obvious provisos:

(1) The length must be in the concealed hand.

(2) The declarer should not be known to have special length or strength in the suit.

(3) The honour in dummy should not be touching, i.e. J10, QJ, etc.

(4) The pips in the suit should be solid enough to afford overtaking your honour without costing a trick when the suit breaks badly.

I know this tip is going to revolutionise the simple fundamentals of the everyday finesse, but although it comes with no guarantees, I can assure you that it is nearly always effective and deadly. Here are two examples, both from actual play:

♠ K Q 3 2
♥ A 4 3
♦ J 2
♣ K J 6 5

***Game All***
***Dealer S***

♠ A 4
♥ 6 5 2
♦ A K 10 9 8 6
♣ 10 7

You declare 3NT after opening a slightly offbeat weak no-trump (if you weren't offbeat you wouldn't still be reading this). West leads a heart and you win the third with the ace and lead the jack of diamonds. East plays low. He didn't cover! He doesn't have it! Drop the queen offside! Magic – you might have thought so before you read this article.

♠ Q 2
♥ 5 3
♦ 10 9 4
♣ A K 10 9 7 2

***Love All***
***Dealer S***

♠ A J 10
♥ K 2
♦ A K Q 3
♣ Q 6 5 3

Finally you reach Six Clubs from the right side (well bid!) and receive a trump lead. How would you play? The scientists would carefully look at this hand and see that the percentage line would be to draw trumps and play out the top diamonds. If the diamonds were 3-3 or the jack came down they would discard a heart from dummy. Now they could play up to the king of hearts and, if that lost, finally try the finesse in spades. Not bad, you say? True, but the greatest illusionist of all time, Harry Houdini, would have rejected this line. Instead, he would have played the queen of spades at the second trick. No East living in the twentieth century would fail to cover the king if he had it (declarer might have AJ2, for example). If East played low, Houdini would 'know' the king was in the West hand and win with the ace. He would now draw trumps and play on diamonds. If they weren't good, he would go down just like the scientists, but if they were good he would discard a spade, not a heart from dummy and take a ruffing finesse against West's king of spades, setting up the ten for a heart discard to make his contract with both finesses wrong.

If at that time the kibitzers burst into applause and the deep-throated voice of Ella Fitzgerald singing that 'Old Black Magic' could be heard in the distance, don't be surprised.

ROLL over, Houdini, the bridge magicians are coming.

*After a lot of advice of a very general nature, we move on to a few tips that occur only in a few specific situations, not that that reduces their usefulness.*

# Play a pre-emptor who leads his suit for a singleton trump

## Andrew Robson *(England)*

*Born in 1964, ANDY ROBSON is now a professional bridge player, teacher and writer. He won the World Junior Teams in 1989 and the European Open Teams in 1991. He plays on professional teams both in England and the USA. In 1996 he played on the first professional team to represent Great Britain in a World event. He is the bridge columnist for* Country Life *and* The Lady.

SAY you open the bidding with a three-level pre-empt. Soon you find yourself on lead to an enemy trump contract. What do you lead?

Well, of course, you need to know your hand, but generally? 'A priori'?

Perhaps your first thought is that you will lead a side-suit singleton, if you have one. How likely is that going to be? We shall assume a fairly aggressive, though sane, style of pre-empting: that, as well as seven-card suits, you will open a fair number of 6-3-3-1 or 6-4-2-1 hand patterns at the three level, but very few 6-3-2-2 or 6-4-3-0 shapes. In this event your hand will contain a singleton over three-quarters of the time, and, if that singleton is in a side suit, you will generally lead it.

The enemy have an unfortunate habit, however, of playing in their longest trump fit. Thus, sadly, your singleton is more likely to be in trumps than elsewhere. In fact, about half the time you are on lead to a trump contract, having pre-empted, you will hold a singleton trump. Now, what do you tend to lead holding a 7-3-2-1, 6-3-3-1 or 6-4-2-1 shape with a singleton trump? Most of the time you lead your own suit, do you not?

What of the other 20-25% of hands, when you don't hold a singleton at all? On a little under half such deals you will hold a void (7-3-3-0, 7-4-2-0, very occasionally 6-4-3-0) and unsurprisingly it will nearly always be in trumps, particularly if partner has doubled! On the rest you will be 7-2-2-2 (or occasionally 6-3-2-2). Again, on all these hands you are likely to lead your own suit.

Our final conclusion: if a pre-emptor leads his own suit, he will have a singleton trump about two-thirds of the time; but he will have two or more trumps less than one-fifth of the time, basically the dreaded 7-2-2-2 pattern, though actually nearly four times less frequent than the 7-3-2-1. More simply explained: the large majority of pre-empts contain a singleton; if it's in a side suit it will be led; if it isn't led it's in trumps!

WITH the above in mind, you can improve on my line of play on this hand from the Cap Gemini 1991:

♠ K J 10 4
♥ 6 4
♦ J 8 4 3
♣ K 4 3

***Love All***
***Dealer W***

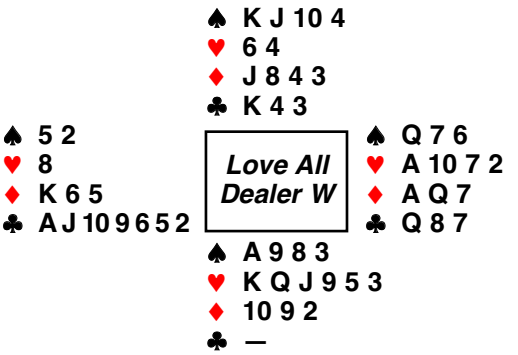
♠ A 9 8 3
♥ K Q J 9 5 3
♦ 10 9 2
♣ —

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Robson* | *Kreijns* | *Forrester* | *Tammens* |
| | 3♣ | Pass | 3NT |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

West leads the ace of clubs. When dummy hits the table, you realise that you would have done better to pass or double East's 3NT. But West's lead of the ace of clubs gives you a chance.

At the table I ruffed, crossed to the king of spades, took my diamond pitch on the king of clubs and played a heart to the king. I was essentially playing for both majors to break, with the queen of spades doubleton. Unlikely. Virtually impossible after the pre-empt and the 3NT bid. I ended up two down. Let's analyse the clues available. West has found an unattractive ace lead in his pre-empt suit; so where is his singleton? Surely not in diamonds or spades or he would have led it. Thus it is in trumps. And East, no joker, has bid 3NT, thus he has the guarded queen of spades. These clues, none of them certain, but all probable through intelligent inference, lead to the following line:

After crossing to the king of spades and taking your diamond pitch on the king of clubs, run the jack of spades. Assuming it is not covered, play a heart to the nine(!). If the spade is covered, play a top heart from hand to draw West's singleton and subsequently cross to dummy's ten of spades and play a heart to the nine. Neat! Let's hope West's singleton trump is not the ten, as it may well be if East doesn't cover the jack of spades! Note that playing East for Qxx in spades forces us to play West for a singleton trump (or the ace – impossible on the bidding); otherwise East can rise with the ace of hearts to give his partner a spade ruff. The full hand is as expected:




My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Play a pre-emptor who leads his suit for a singleton trump.**

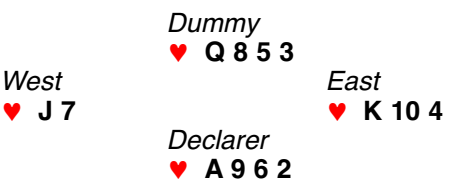
*The next offering, like this one, also considers the subject of playing suits in a fashion that is against the 'a priori' odds because of information that has been gleaned from the bidding. It had a great impact on the game at the time, opening people's eyes to possibilities that had not previously been recognised.*

# The intra-finesse

## Gabriel Chagas *(Brazil)*

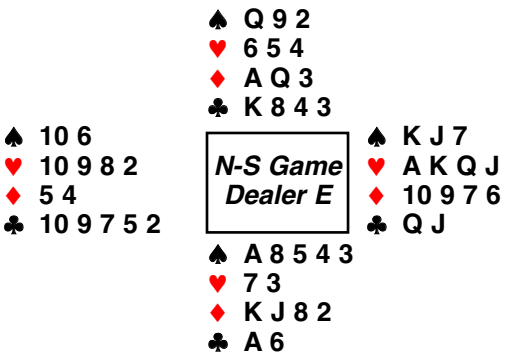
*GABRIEL CHAGAS is the diminutive super-star of Brazilian bridge. Now in his fifties, he is a financier and investment consultant in Rio. He is one of just eight players in the world to have won the triple crown of World Olympiad Teams (1976), World Pairs (1990) and Bermuda Bowl (1989). He is the top-ranked South American player, having won the South American teams twenty times in twenty-four attempts in the period 1967–93. He has also won the* Sunday Times *twice, in 1979 and 1992, and the Cap Gemini Pairs in 1993.*

THE finesse is usually regarded as one of the humbler forms of play, but it sometimes requires quite a lot of imagination. This is especially true of the intra-finesse, a play of which I am very fond. This diagram shows one common type of intra-finesse.




The bidding has given you a good idea of the lay-out of this suit. To hold yourself to one loser you play small towards dummy and finesse the eight! East will score the ten but later you'll enter dummy and lead the queen, smothering West's jack. Well, this is an intra-finesse.

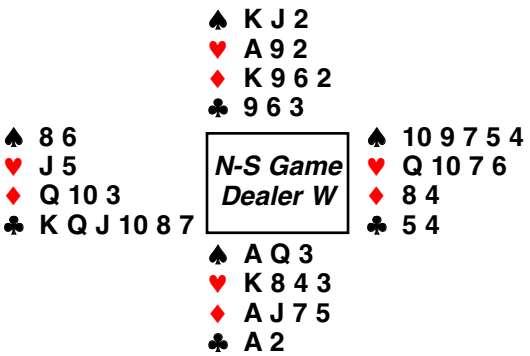
Here's how an intra-finesse can arise in practical play:




East opens a strong no-trump but South reaches Four Spades anyway. West leads the ten of hearts and South ruffs the third round. Knowing that East has the king of spades, South leads low to the nine, which loses to the jack.

South wins the club return with the ace and, in order to test the distribution, plays a club to the king and ruffs a club. With East showing out South decides to play him for three trumps, so he crosses to dummy with a diamond and leads the queen of spades.

A VETERAN intra-finesser now, you find yourself in Four Hearts on the next deal after a club overcall by West:




You duck the first club and West continues the suit. As a 3-3 trump break is unlikely, you lead a low heart towards the dummy and when West follows with the five you finesse the nine!

East wins with the ten and switches to a spade, confirming that the clubs are 6-2. You cash the trump ace and when this collects the jack from West you pick up East's remaining trumps by finessing the eight.

On the fourth trump you throw not a club but a diamond from dummy. The successful intra-finesse has brought you to nine tricks but now you must establish a diamond for game.

As you are wide open in clubs you lead a low diamond, intending to finesse the nine of this suit also, into East's hand. West, however, inserts the ten. You win with dummy's king and cash the remaining spades. When West shows out on the third spade you have a perfect count. West began with six clubs, two hearts and two spades – and therefore three diamonds.

You need no more finesses. On the third spade West is forced down to two diamonds and the jack of clubs. You therefore lead dummy's losing club, throwing West in and forcing him to lead into your diamond tenace.

This ending was very satisfying, but you would never have got there without the aid of the intra-finesse in the trump suit.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Whenever you have to develop a shaky suit, and especially when this suit is trumps, you should consider whether you can prepare for an intra-finesse by ducking with an eight or nine on the first round.**

Happy finessing.

*Talking about finessing, it can often be a good idea to look as if you're doing it when in fact you are not, as the next tip suggests.*

# Conceal the queen of trumps

## Sally Brock (then Horton) *(England)*

*Somebody once said that I had no chance of becoming famous because I kept changing my name! That is certainly true. In my early twenties I married Tony Sowter, then in 1981, after that was dissolved, I married Mark Horton and finally (I hope) on my fortieth birthday I married Raymond Brock. I have now retired from international bridge because of two very small children, but one day … who knows? My high spots were winning the Venice Cup in 1981 and 1985, though I was quite proud of my domestic record in the open game – three Gold Cups, for example. I now work from home as a writer/editor/typesetter of many bridge and non-bridge publications.*

ONE aspect of the game that distinguishes the expert from the average player is in the area of deceptive play. The expert is always looking for ways to induce an opponent to make an error or to save himself from having to make a guess.

In the area of declarer play, one way to do this is to persuade the defenders that they have established more defensive tricks for their side than is actually the case. The trump suit offers an excellent opportunity for a number of deceptive plays, one of which deserves more attention than it has previously been given.

Suppose your trump suit is:

*Dummy*
♠ K J x x

*Declarer*
♠ A Q 10 x x

Imagine that you are in a fair contract which has various chances, but no clearcut route to success. If you play trumps by cashing the ace, leading low to the king and (assuming one hand shows out) leaving the remaining trump outstanding, the relevant defender may well assume that his partner has the queen. Then, at a later stage, he may try to cash his side's 'other' winners rather than defend with more subtlety – hopefully to your advantage.

THE following hand occurred in an international match between England and Scotland:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ Q<br>♥ 5 4<br>♦ A 8 7 6 4 3<br>♣ Q 6 5 4 | |
| ♠ K 9 7 2<br>♥ K 9 8 2<br>♦ 5 2<br>♣ 10 9 8 | *N-S Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ A 8 6 5 4<br>♥ J 10 6 3<br>♦ 9<br>♣ 7 3 2 |
| | ♠ J 10 3<br>♥ A Q 7<br>♦ K Q J 10<br>♣ A K J | |

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 2NT | 3♣[1] |
| 3♦[2] | 4♦ |
| 4♥ | 4♠ |
| 6♦ | |

[1] asking for a 5-card major
[2] denial

In the absence of a major-suit lead, the slam appears to depend on the heart finesse, so when West leads the ten of clubs you must ask yourself: are there any extra chances?

The spade honours are almost certainly divided since East did not double the Four Spade cue-bid and West did not lead a top spade at trick one.

If East can be persuaded to play his spade honour when declarer first plays the suit, it would then be possible to take a ruffing finesse against West.

A spade towards dummy's queen is likely to result in West playing his honour whichever it is. However, if East has the ace of spades it may be difficult for him to duck – particularly if he can be persuaded that the ace of spades may be the setting trick.

So … win the club lead, cash the king of diamonds and play the jack of diamonds to the ace. Now play the queen of spades. From East's viewpoint you may easily hold something like:

♠ K 10 x x
♥ A K x
♦ K J 10
♣ A K J

when it would be essential for him to take his ace.

One word of warning: it would be extremely unethical and completely against the rules of the game to look disappointed or annoyed when West shows out on the second round of trumps.

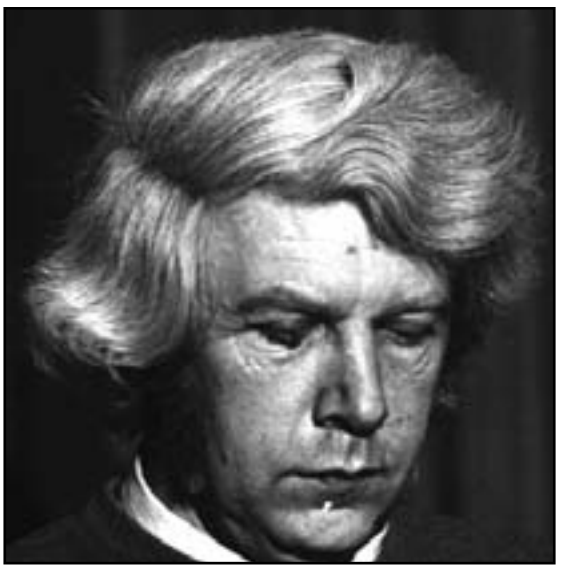
My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Conceal the queen of trumps – the defenders may think they have it.**

*The next suggestion is also concerned with creating extra problems for the defenders. A winner of its year, it was very well received by the bridge press.*

# Second hand problems

## Eric Crowhurst *(England)*



*ERIC CROWHURST, an accountant from Reading, England, has long been considered a first-rank bridge theoretician. He is the author of several bridge books perhaps the best known of which being* Acol in Competition. *He was the inventor of the Crowhurst convention, a checkback over a wide-range 1NT rebid, which is widely used by British tournament players. He contributed the Suit Combinations section of the* Bridge Encyclopædia.

YOU are the declarer in a no-trump contract, and you have a 4-4 club fit containing AKQJ109 in the two hands. How would you plan the play of the suit? If you believe that it cannot possibly matter, read on.

If the adverse clubs are 3-2, one defender (A) will have to find one discard on the clubs, and the other defender (B) two. The important point is that if the fourth round of clubs is led from the hand on his right, Defender B's two discards will have to be made before Defender A has made even one. This can be of considerable advantage to the declarer.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ K 5 4<br>♥ 7 5 2<br>♦ A 8 4<br>♣ K Q 6 2 | |
| ♠ 7 6 3<br>♥ K Q J 9<br>♦ Q 10 3<br>♣ 7 5 3 | *Love All*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ Q J 9 2<br>♥ A 6 3<br>♦ J 7 5 2<br>♣ 8 4 |
| | ♠ A 10 8<br>♥ 10 8 4<br>♦ K 9 6<br>♣ A J 10 9 | |

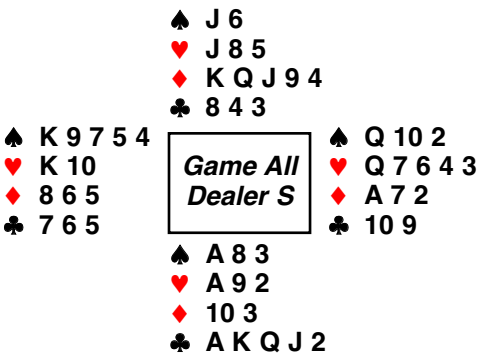
| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

The defenders cash their four heart tricks, on the last of which dummy discards a spade. East throws the nine of spades, after some thought, and South discards the six of diamonds.

West switches to the six of spades, the standard MUD lead from three small cards, and South captures East's jack with the ace. It looks as if East might be under pressure when the clubs are cashed, and this diagnosis is confirmed when South's lead of the jack of clubs produces the three from West and the eight from East. If East began with two clubs at the most, he might be in difficulty if the fourth round of clubs is led from dummy – so that he has to find two discards before receiving any help from West.

South cashes the ace of clubs and crosses to dummy with the queen of clubs, on which East discards a diamond. On the last club, East has a serious problem. Should he throw a spade, retaining a diamond guard if West started with 10876 of spades and Qx of diamonds? Or should he discard a second diamond, which is vital on the actual layout? It is not easy for him – but only because he has to make the crucial discard before West can clarify the spade position.

THERE are other situations in which declarer must assume in advance that a particular defender will be his victim. As before, he then ensures that that defender is the second to play to a vital trick – and therefore forced to make a crucial decision before seeing his partner's card.



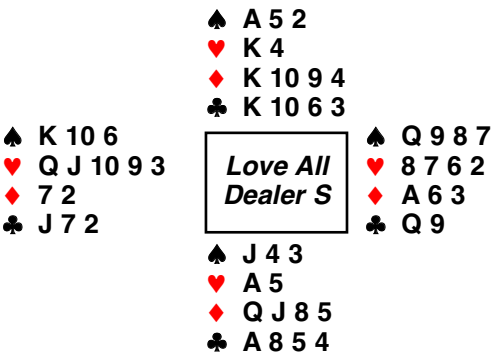

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♦ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

West led the five of spades and declarer won the third round. It was clear that he had to make two diamond tricks for his contract. This involved finding East with the ace of diamonds and persuading him to duck two rounds.

At trick four, South led the ten of diamonds. West contributed the five to show an odd number, but South's concealment of the three meant that the position was not clear to East. South now made the key play of overtaking the ten of diamonds with the jack and leading the king from the dummy, forcing East to make a decision before seeing West's second diamond. After some thought, East ducked again, in case his partner had started with 53 doubleton, and South cashed his nine tricks.

If declarer had led the second diamond from the closed hand. West would have contributed the six, showing an odd number, and East would have had no further problem.

FINALLY, a hand on which South could only select his victim on the basis of which defender appeared to hold the doubleton diamond.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

West led the queen of hearts. South won in the closed hand and led the queen of diamonds to East's ace, with West contributing the seven. East's return of the two of hearts knocked out dummy's king, and declarer appeared to be one trick short. However, he followed the correct principle by cashing his diamond winners in the optimum order, forcing West, who held the doubleton diamond, to find two discards before his partner had a chance to signal.

South cashed the king and jack of diamonds, on which West discarded the six of spades. When declarer led his last diamond, however, West had a difficult discard. He could not throw a winning heart without permitting South to establish a ninth trick in clubs, and West therefore had to choose between the ten of spades and two of clubs. The winning defence is to discard a spade, but this would not be the

case if South had started life with, say, Qxxx in spades and Axx in clubs. At the table, West threw a club on the fourth diamond, allowing South to make four club tricks and an overtrick in his 'impossible' contract.

Notice the importance of South's winning the third diamond in the closed hand. If the fourth diamond lead had come from dummy, East would have had an opportunity to show a useful holding in spades, either by discarding the nine of spades or by giving a suit-preference signal with the eight of hearts.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Plan which opponent plays second to the trick.**

*We continue with the idea that declarer should try to look at the hand through the eyes of the defenders.*

# Do their thinking

## Villy Dam *(Denmark)*

*VILLY DAM, from Vejle, Denmark, is now in his fifties. His bridge career started in 1964, since when he has won many national titles and represented Denmark on several occasions. His team won the Danish First Division six times out of seven and he has also won the prestigious Hoechst tournament in the Netherlands. He writes a daily column for one of the biggest newspapers in Denmark and a couple of years ago he won the IBPA prize for the best article of the year on declarer play.*

*Trained as a school teacher, since 1991 he has been employed by the Danish Bridge Federation; he writes textbooks (that are also adopted in Norway), organises youth bridge and tournaments for beginners, teaches bridge teachers, and writes articles for the Danish bridge magazine and for Teletext.*

*He has a particular love of the tactics and psychology of the game, and this has given a lot of flavour to his articles over the years.*

WHEN you are bidding, playing or defending a hand you do a lot of planning. You work out a strategy from the cards you and your partner hold. This is not always enough. Bridge is not a game between machines, but between human beings. Do not expect the opponents to play perfectly. They cannot look through your cards.

Consider what they know and what they may do. Figure out what they may be induced to do. Do not only your own thinking – enter their minds to include their thinking. See it through their eyes.

PLAY this hand with me.

♠ K 9 3 2
♥ 6
♦ K 7 6
♣ A Q J 10 5

***Love All***
***Dealer S***

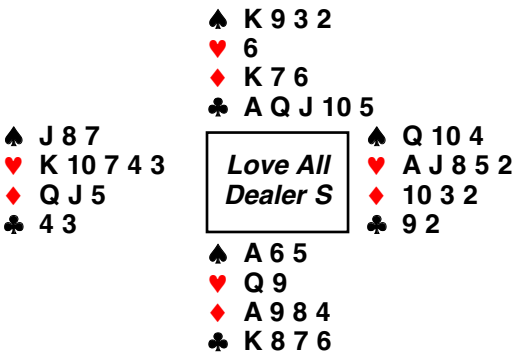
♠ A 6 5
♥ Q 9
♦ A 9 8 4
♣ K 8 7 6

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 4♣ | Pass |
| 5♣ | All Pass | | |

West leads the queen of diamonds against Five Clubs. What are your chances? You have a loser in each of the side suits, and odds of a successful elimination and endplay are very slim. Your move?

Let the queen of diamonds hold the first trick! West does not know the position of the ace of diamonds. When you duck smoothly he is destined to continue the suit, 'knowing' his partner has the ace. Just peep into your opponent's mind – do their thinking!

Your best chance for the contract is a diamond continuation and a 3-3 break. After drawing trumps you dispose of dummy's singleton heart. East will discourage diamonds, you say? It is really not easy for him, having to choose between the two and three. Furthermore, most Wests will expect partner to give count in a situation like this, where the play to the first trick should tell him the position of the ace. The full deal:




HERE is another example:


| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| 1♥ | Double | 1NT | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

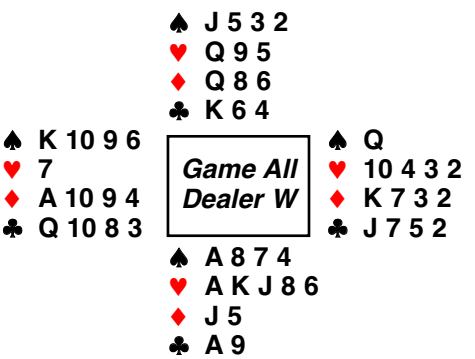
The opening lead was the three of clubs. Plan your play.

From the double West is known (more or less) to hold four spades. His opening lead makes it unlikely he holds the ace and king of diamonds. Thus East has a singleton spade (quite possibly an honour) and the diamond honours must be divided. Before the opponents come to two spade tricks you must set up a diamond.

There is no legitimate way of doing this, but try the king of clubs, the ace of hearts and then a diamond from your hand. If West has the king of diamonds he may be persuaded that you hold the ace and accordingly play the king.

I was the declarer when the deal came up in the Danish first division many years ago. However, West did not fall for my plan. On my five of diamonds he played the four, and I …? Wait a moment. Now I knew for sure that West would not hold the ace and king of diamonds. I also knew that it is human not to split the ten-nine, so I took my only chance and inserted the eight. When it forced the king I had a chance.

I took East's queen of spades return with the ace, drew trumps and played the jack of diamonds. The result: ten tricks. Bad play by West? Not really. He was just showing his length in diamonds (reverse signals). The full deal:




My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When considering how to play a poor or no-play contract, try to enter the opponents' minds and see the problem through their eyes.**

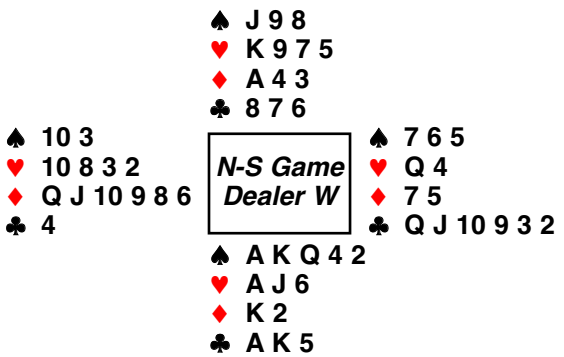
*The next tip touches on an aspect of declarer play that crops up on every single hand – that of counting. However, it is not sufficient merely to count …*

# Count the opponents' hands, but…

## Pietro Forquet *(Italy)*

HOW many times have you heard the excuse, 'Sorry, partner, if I'd guessed correctly I'd have made the contract'? And how many times was this so-called 'unlucky guess' truly unlucky?

For example, take a look at a hand that my partner played in a recent Pairs event:



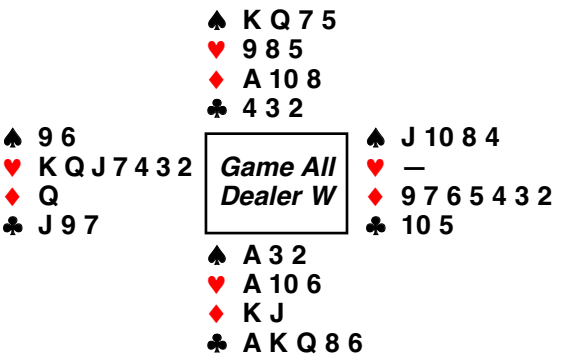

We reached the good contract of Six Spades and West led his singleton club. East played the nine, forcing declarer's ace and declarer continued with three rounds of trumps, ending in his own hand. Crossing to dummy with the ace of diamonds, he took a successful heart finesse. Next he cashed the ace of hearts and East played the queen.

My partner had now, as they say, reached the crossroads. The contract was guaranteed (he could count on five trump tricks, three hearts and four top cards in the minor suits), but the overtrick hinged on 'guessing' the heart position. Had East started life with the doubleton queen? Or did he have Q104 initially, in which case the falsecard of the queen would have been mandatory on the second round? As this was a Pairs event the overtrick was, of course, vital and my partner spent a good deal of time pondering his choice. In the end he played a heart to he king, hoping to drop the ten, and made only twelve tricks.

'Sorry, partner,' he said, and explained that if he had taken the finesse of the ten, and it had failed, he would have gone down in Six Spades, having no further entry to dummy. At this point I gave him half of my tip: count the opponents' hands!

He should have won the third round of trumps in dummy, and then taken the heart finesse. With twelve tricks in the bag, he could now set about obtaining the vital count by playing out three rounds of diamonds, ruffing the third round. The king of clubs comes next, the play to this trick revealing West's distribution: two spades, six diamonds, one club and therefore four hearts. Declarer can now finesse dummy's nine of hearts for a certain overtrick and a much better score on the board.

NOW we come to the second half of my tip, and it, too, has a story behind it. I was recently playing rubber bridge with my wife, who sometimes accuses me with considerable emotion (but, in my opinion, very little justice) of taking a superior attitude toward her at the table. In consequence, she says, I fail to concentrate fully – and here she may be nearer the truth, as the reader may judge from a hand I played that evening in 6NT.




I was in 6NT and West, who had opened the bidding with Three Hearts, duly led the king of hearts. East discarded a diamond and I won with the ace, continuing with five rounds of clubs.

West and dummy each discarded two hearts and East parted with two small diamonds. I cashed the ace-king of spades and all followed.

Now, I am a consistent fellow and follow the advice I give to others, so at this point I

applied the first part of my BOLS bridge tip and started counting the opponents' hands. West had started with seven hearts, three clubs and at least two spades. His thirteenth card was either a spade or a diamond. If it was a spade, the diamond finesse through East was a mathematical certainty; while if West held a diamond, the odds were seven to one that his diamond was not the queen. Armed with this analysis, I led a diamond from dummy, finessed the jack … and went down four.

'Sorry, partner,' I said, trying to make the best of it. 'With the diamonds 7-1, you must admit I was unlucky to find the singleton queen in West's hand.'

'Down four?' said my wife.

'Yeah, an unlucky hand,' I said, hoping she'd failed to notice my error. (Have you seen it?)

'Wouldn't it have been better to endplay East with the fourth round of spades?' she asked.

'Sure, I could have,' I replied, 'but it wouldn't have helped. If East held the queen of diamonds, and exited with a low one, the suit would have been blocked.' (I was beginning to realise she'd seen my mistake.)

'Blocked? How can that be? I would have cashed the king of diamonds instead of taking that silly finesse. If West showed out, that would mean the spades were 3-3 and there would be twelve tricks on top. If West followed with a small diamond, I would simply cash the queen of spades and lead dummy's last spade, discarding the jack of diamonds on it. East would then have to lead into dummy's ace-ten of diamonds at the end.'

As you see, my wife was quite right, and it is to her that I am indebted for the completion of my BOLS bridge tip:

**Count the opponents' hands, but when you have counted them, play intelligently.**

*The Italians and Americans may have been rivals for the World Championship, but their advice for us is similar: keep on counting.*

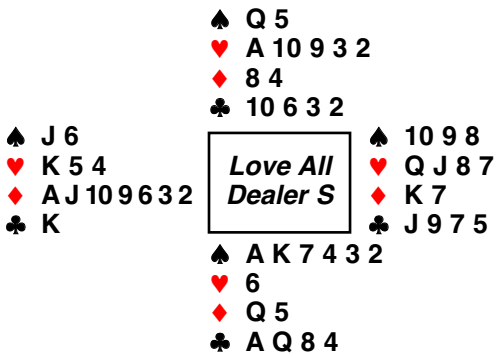
# Build up a picture of the unseen hands

## Robert Hamman *(USA)*

*ROBERT HAMMAN of Dallas has been the highest ranked played in the world since 1985. All the superlatives that have been used in conjunction with the great Italians in the 1960s and early 1970s can be applied equally to Hamman over the last twenty years. An early member of the Dallas Aces, he is one of the eight triple crown holders: World Team Olympiad (1988), World Pairs (1974) and Bermuda Bowl (seven occasions from 1970 to 1995).*

Would you try to play golf or tennis blindfolded? That does not seem a very intelligent thing to do, but most players do exactly that when they play the hand at contract bridge.

If you are ever to amount to anything at this game, you must build up a picture of the unseen hands. The idea is to know what the problem is before you try to solve it.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | 2♦ | Pass | Pass |
| 2♠ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

I recently found myself playing in Four Spades on a low heart lead. I had two diamond losers for sure. I had to assume the trumps were 3-2, and I also had to hold myself to one club loser. What picture could I form of the opponents' hands?

First, diamonds. West had bid this suit, but he obviously didn't have both high diamonds or else he surely would have led one. Therefore the ace-king of diamonds are split, with East probably clutching the king.

What about hearts? Could the lead be a singleton? Hardly. In that case East would have KQJxx of hearts and the king of diamonds and certainly would have ventured Two Hearts, not vulnerable. So West is leading low from an honour. With KQx West would have led the king, so East clearly has at least one high honour in hearts along with that diamond honour.

Now it is easier to figure out the club situation. East's silence would be incomprehensible with a diamond honour, at least one heart honour and the king of clubs as well. Therefore, West has the king of clubs and it will be pointless to take a finesse. Instead I must rely on the likelihood that West is short in clubs.

Accordingly, I lead a club to the ace at trick two. The king falls, but I'm still not home. I still have two club losers unless I can arrange to lead a second round of the suit from dummy – and unfortunately I can't draw all the trumps before going over there.

So, I simply do the best I can. I play the ace of spades and a spade to dummy's queen, then a low club from dummy. East inserts the nine and I win the queen as West does not (thank God) have the last trump.

Quickly I draw the last trump and concede a club and two diamonds to make Four Spades. I notice that only my partner is congratulating me. East is eyeing me suspiciously and West has already slid his chair a foot back from the table.

My BOLS bridge tip to you is:

**Whenever you are declarer, try to build up a picture of the unseen hands.**

*Timing is the subject of the next tip and it is one of the most difficult aspects of declarer play to learn. Particularly clear thinking is needed.*

# The secret is in the timing

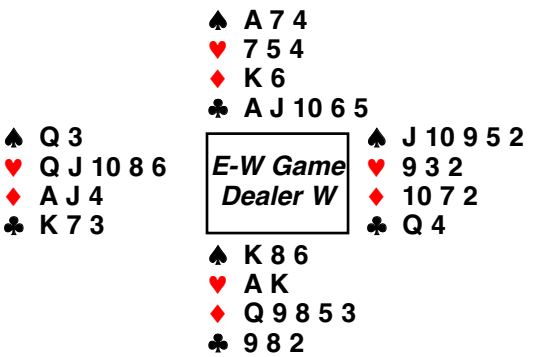
## Pedro-Paulo Assumpćao *(Brazil)*

*Now in his early sixties, P-P ASSUMPCAO was a regular member of the Brazilian national team in the 1960s and 1970s, having represented his country in fifteen World Championships. A WBF Grand Master, his greatest achievement was being part of the team that won the World Teams Olympiad in 1976.*

IN most deals declarer soon identifies the plays he must make for the contract, such as establishing a suit, knocking out an entry, and so on and so forth.

But however good his reasoning, success may still elude him unless he makes these plays in precisely the right order. In bridge the secret is often in the timing.

Whenever there is more than one step to be taken, you should take special care to select the best order. Ask yourself whether the 'obvious' sequence of play will in fact produce results. Whenever there is doubt, try the effect of a change in the timing.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♥ | Pass | Pass |
| 1NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

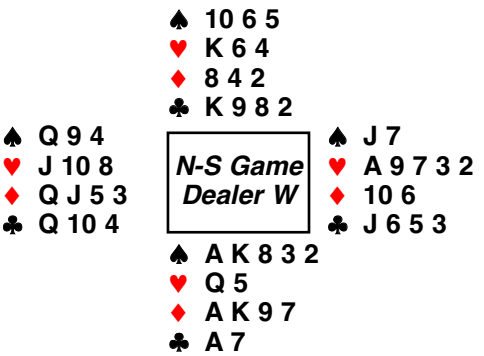
You are in 3NT and West leads the queen of hearts. It is easy to see where the tricks must come from. You have only four tricks in the major suits, so must plan to take four club tricks and a trick in diamonds.

Many players, however, would get the timing of this hand quite wrong. Would you?

Suppose that you play clubs first, as may perhaps seem natural. If you do so, your last heart stopper will be dislodged and you will make only eight tricks. You will never succeed in making a diamond trick.

So, try playing a diamond at trick two! As the cards lie, if West rises with the ace you make nine tricks, and if he doesn't rise with ace you still make nine tricks, as you can come to hand with a spade and attack clubs. The timing, you see, makes all the difference.

IN the next deal three distinct steps are needed and there is only one correct sequence.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

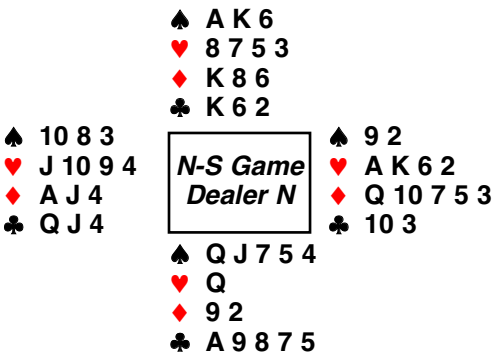
West leads the jack of hearts and you win with the queen. You hope for a 3-2 trump break, but you may still need to dispose of your fourth diamond. The plan, therefore, must be to draw two rounds of trumps, give up a diamond, and ruff a diamond. The question is, what is the best timing?

If you start with two top trumps West will cash the queen of trumps when in with a diamond and dummy will not get a ruff. Suppose, then, that you begin with three rounds of diamonds. Still no good, for West will play a fourth diamond and East will overruff the dummy.

The solution is to start by ducking a diamond. Then you simply cash the ace and king of trumps and go on your way rejoicing.

You could easily miss this solution unless you were actively searching for the best timing.

GOOD timing is especially necessary when there is a danger of being shortened in trumps.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♣ | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 3♣ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass |
| 4♠ | All Pass | | |

West leads the jack of hearts and East wins with the king, continuing with the ace. You ruff and note that in order to make this optimistic contract you will have to draw trumps, establish the clubs, and build up a tenth trick with the king of diamonds. There is a good chance that West has the ace of diamonds, as East has shown up with the top hearts. But you still have to find the best sequence of play.

Suppose you draw trumps and give up a club. A heart comes back and you ruff with your last trump. Now you go down, for when you eventually lead a diamond towards the king West hops up with the ace and cashes a heart.

The right play is to lead a diamond at trick three! West can do no better than win and return a heart. You ruff and play a low club from each hand. Now if another heart comes back you can afford to ruff for the third time, as you can draw trumps in dummy and cash the clubs.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**When more than one play is needed to make the contract, give special thought to the best sequence. You may well find that the order in which you make your plays is no less important than the plays themselves.**

*The subject of counting reasserts itself in the next tip. There are many clues to the unseen hands available and the good declarer learns not to overlook any of them*

# Check out the distribution

## Bobby Wolff *(USA)*

*BOBBY WOLFF, of Dallas, was one of the original Dallas Aces. He has won ten world titles in the period from 1970 to 1995. He is the only player to have won world titles in* four *different categories (Bermuda Bowl, Mixed Teams, Olympiad Teams, Olympiad Pairs). For the last twelve years or so he has been ranked number two in the world, second only to his regular partner, Bob Hamman. As well as being an outstanding player, Bobby Wolff has always taken a keen interest in the politics of the game, culminating in a period as President of the World Bridge Federation from 1992 to 1994. He used his influence to promote the principle of 'Active Ethics', which encourages players to bend over backwards to be fair and ethical at all times; it is not sufficient merely to keep to the letter of the law.*

SOME of the clues concerning the unseen hands are rather obvious: an opponent who opened the bidding is likely to have at least twelve points, and so on and so forth. Obvious, but not always entirely reliable.

The successful declarer does not rest content with the easy clues but tries to unearth additional information. This challenging hand from match play shows the process at work.

♠ 9 8 7 5
♥ A J 8 3
♦ K Q 7
♣ 8 2

*Game All*
*Dealer E*

♠ A Q 10 6 3
♥ 5
♦ 9 3
♣ K Q J 10 7

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♣ |
| 1♠ | 2♦ | 4♠ | All Pass |

The spade game was reached at both tables in a teams match and the play to each trick was identical. However, one declarer based his play on flimsy reasoning while the other had a sure bet.

West led the five of clubs and East took the ace, switching to the two of diamonds. West won with the ace and returned a diamond, ruffed by East who exited with a club. This trick was won by declarer as West followed suit.

The defenders had taken three tricks and South had to pick up the spade suit without loss. Both declarers crossed to dummy's ace of hearts and led the nine of spades, on which East played low. How should South play to this trick?

Both declarers played low. The nine held the trick and now another spade lead took care of the trumps, allowing the game to be scored.

The full deal:

♠ 9 8 7 5
♥ A J 8 3
♦ K Q 7
♣ 8 2

♠ —
♥ 10 9 6 2
♦ A J 10 8 6 5 4
♣ 5 4

*Game All*
*Dealer E*

♠ K J 4 2
♥ K Q 7 4
♦ 2
♣ A 9 6 3

♠ A Q 10 6 3
♥ 5
♦ 9 3
♣ K Q J 10 7

The first declarer remarked: 'I played for the double finesse in spades because East had opened. West had shown up with five points and I reckoned that East needed both spade honours for his bid.'

A good reason. But is it good enough? Suppose East had not had the jack of spades. Might he not have opened the bidding just the same? The singleton diamond surely would have persuaded him, so declarer did not really have valid grounds for the deep finesse.

Why did the second declarer play West for a void in spades? The answer is hidden in both the bidding and the play. East, who had opened with One Club, had shown up with only four cards in this suit. He therefore could not have five cards in either hearts or spades, and as he had a singleton diamond he must be precisely 4-4-1-4. West had to be void in spades.

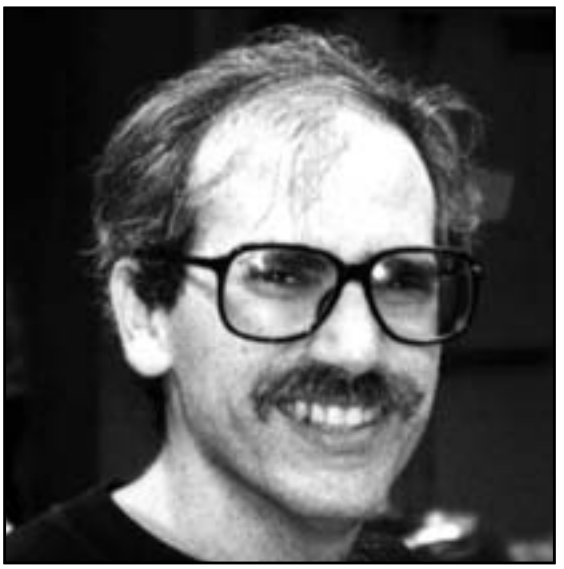
My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Do not be content simply to work out the high cards a defender is likely to have for the bids he had made. You should also try to picture his distribution, for this may provide you with an even surer guide to the winning play.**

*Another top American player comes next with the reminder that there are fifty-two cards in the pack, not just the twenty-six on view.*

# Play with all 52 cards

## Chip Martel *(USA)*



*CHIP MARTEL of Davis, California, is a professor of computer science. When he won the World Pairs in 1982 at the age of 29 he was the youngest player ever to have won this event. He also won the Bermuda Bowl in 1985 and 1987. He spends a fair amount of time training young players and was the captain and coach of the winning US team in the World Junior Teams in 1991.*

'YOU played that hand as if you could see through the backs of their cards' is one of the nicest compliments a bridge player can get. Accurate reconstruction of the unseen hands is an essential skill for a successful card player.

Unfortunately, there are often several constructions of the unseen hands that seem reasonable. The ability to come up with the right choice separates winners from losers.

Consider the following typical defensive dilemma:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 9 6 3<br>♥ 10 7 5<br>♦ 8 4 2<br>♣ 9 8 5 2 | |
| ♠ 10 8 4 2<br>♥ A J 6<br>♦ K 7<br>♣ K J 6 3 | *Game All*<br>*Dealer W* | |

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♣ | Pass | 1♠ |
| Double | 2♠ | Pass | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

You lead the two of spades against 3NT. This goes to the three, king and ace. Declarer now plays the ace and queen of diamonds with partner playing the ten and nine, showing a doubleton. Decide what you would play before reading on.

It may seem that you must guess what to play. If declarer has:

♠ A Q
♥ K x x
♦ A Q J x x x
♣ A Q

a spade continuation will defeat the contract while a club shift will give declarer his ninth trick.

However, if partner has the queen of clubs, on many lay-outs you must play a club to set up your five tricks before declarer drives out the ace of hearts.

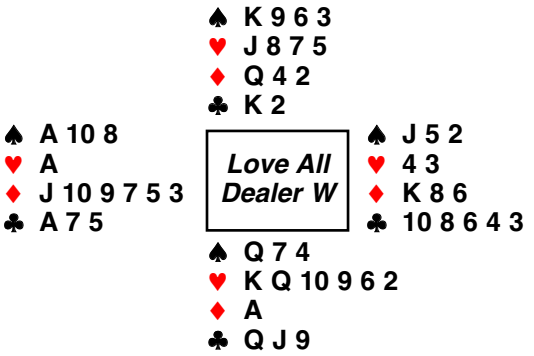
All three hands are consistent with declarer's bidding and play. However, if you turn your attention to partner's bidding, the answer becomes clear. East responded One Spade with only a four-card suit. Thus he cannot have four hearts to an honour. A South hand such as:

♠ A Q
♥ K x x
♦ A Q J x x x
♣ A Q

(giving partner Qxxx in hearts) is impossible for declarer. Thus a club shift will defeat the contract whenever it can be beaten.

This type of reasoning will often turn an apparent guess into a sure thing. A good player considers all 52 cards, not just his own and the dummy's.

IF the West player had known this tip he would likely have avoided declarer's trap on the next hand:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♦ | Pass | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

West led the jack of diamonds against South's Four Hearts and declarer cleverly played dummy's queen! After winning East's king with the ace (East could hardly know to duck), declarer led a spade at trick two. West flew in with the ace, planning to take a trick in each suit.

While a singleton spade and doubleton diamond is consistent with South's bidding and play, it leaves East with QJxxx in spades to go with his king of diamonds. He would surely not have passed over the One Diamond opening with this hand, so declarer must have at least two spades. And if that is the case, ducking the spade at trick two is clearly correct.

As a defender, drawing inferences from your partner's bidding and play has an added benefit. While declarer may make bids or plays that are surprising, hopefully you know what to expect from your partner.

DECLARERS can also benefit from using all 52 cards in their analyses.

Consider the following play problem:


| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1NT[1] |
| 2♠ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

[1] 15-17

East wins the jack of hearts lead with the king. After cashing the ace of hearts (West playing the deuce), East takes the ace of clubs, West playing another deuce. East now exits with the six of hearts as West follows with the eight. You cross to a club and pick up the spades, finding East with Kxx. How do you play the diamonds to justify your partner's aggressive bidding?

In counting East's points, it is clear that he has either the queen of diamonds, the jack of clubs, or both. On this information alone, East is more likely to hold Qxx in diamonds than a small doubleton. However, let's turn our attention to West. If East has:

♠ K x x
♥ A K x
♦ Q x x
♣ A x x x x

then West did not lead a singleton diamond from his virtual Yarborough. This is unlikely, so you should play for the drop in diamonds.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When analysing a hand,
be sure your construction is consistent
with the bidding and play
of both unseen hands.**

If you follow my tip and make sure that when you construct a possibility for one hand you also check the fourth you will 'guess' correctly far more often. Soon your partner and opponents will be complimenting you on your ability to see through the backs of the cards.

*Discovering distribution is probably the most common theme in this collection of BOLS tips. This is because it is so crucial to the play of so many hands.*

# Discovering distribution

## Steen Moller *(Denmark)*

*Born in 1939, STEEN MOLLER is a lawyer in Copenhagen. His best international results were winning the European Cup in Paris in 1986 and a silver medal in the 1979 European Teams in Lausanne but he has won 45 national titles and played for the Danish open team more than 400 times (counting each individual match in a championship as one 'time'). He is a bidding theorist whose ideas are used widely in Denmark. He is married to Kirsten who won the World Teams Olympiad in 1988 and has represented Denmark internationally more than any other woman.*

CONSIDER the play of this suit in a no-trump contract:

*Dummy*
♠ **K J 9 5 2**

*Declarer*
♠ **A Q 7**

You probably think that it is not beyond your capacity to cash the ace, followed by the queen and the seven. You are, however, quite wrong. I did not deal you this suit to see you solve an unblocking problem, and you have just missed an excellent opportunity to test the honesty of your opponents and their methods. If you simply cash the ace, nobody will bother to reveal their distribution, but try the effect of leading the queen first!

Now each of the defenders might think that his partner holds the ace and will normally try hard to give count, so that partner can grab the ace at the right moment.

If one or both defenders manage to falsecard in this situation – and you will find out when you run the suit – you should not trust any of their signals for the rest of the session. I find it a considerable advantage to get a suit like this at the beginning of a Teams event, so that I know where I am for the rest of the match.

As you have seen in this example, the effect you want to achieve occurs by leading from your hand an honour card that is touching to one or more honour cards in dummy, and that has the air of being an unblocking play.

*Dummy*
♠ **J 9 5 2**

*Declarer*
♠ **K Q 10**

With this combination you should lead the queen to test your opponents' count signals!

For various reasons this lead is also more likely than the lead of the king to locate the position of the ace. West, if holding the ace, will quite often cover the queen to protect partner's holding in the suit (remember that he cannot see the ten). East, if he holds the ace, may well take it to preserve a possible tempo or for fear of later crashing partner's king. The lead of the king does not have this effect, as it normally 'promises' the queen.

Having tested your opponent with one or two of the above-mentioned suit combinations and found out that they are quite honest, you may get a chance to use your knowledge later in the match.

*Dummy*
♠ **K 10 7 2**

*Declarer*
♠ **A Q 4**

Now you quite routinely play the queen to ensure that you get the count! West follows with the six and plays the nine under the ace. When you then play the four, he produces the three. This is rather confusing. What is going on, when your opponents are playing normal signals?

Well, it is quite simple. West started a count signal from J963 with the intention of playing the three on the second round, when he expects you to play a low card towards dummy. When, you show up with the ace after the queen, he knows that he has given away the position. In an attempt to recover, he is now trying to disguise his length and show an odd number, but the play of the three on the third round reveals everything, and a finesse of the ten is almost sure to win – at least in my experience.

If your opponents play upside down signals, you will see the same thing happen when West holds 963. He starts with the six to show an odd number, then tries to fool you by throwing the nine, but the final play of the three discloses the distribution, and it is almost a sure thing to go up with the king and drop the jack from East's hand.

Now that you know how a nasty declarer tries to discover the distribution of your suits, you would probably want to know how to defend against this. I am sorry, but I cannot help you. There is hardly any defence except by illegal methods, and they are not recommended if you want to continue playing bridge.

Inspiration may help you, but if you are too inspired and partner seems to work it out most of the time, you are close to illegal methods. Holding the hand with 963 (using normal signals) you could of course play the six followed by the nine, being semi-honest to your partner, and then play the three, which would fool me if I was the nasty declarer. If from J963 you have started with the six to show an even number, my advice to you is to follow normally with the three and then the nine. Most declarers are very suspicious of honesty like that, especially if they have not had the opportunity of testing you with another combination earlier in the match.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**Take the opportunity early in a match to discover the honesty of your opponents' signalling – it may help you later on.**

*The final tip in this section concentrates on what the opponents didn't do rather than what they did.*

# Remember what they didn't do

## Sandra Landy *(England)*

WHEN playing a hand as declarer it is always wise to stop and look when dummy goes down – after all, you haven't played a wrong card yet! Gather all the evidence from the bidding and the card led. Analyse all the clues before deciding on your line. And remember there are just as many clues to be gained from what hasn't happened as from what has:

- an opponent who has not opened the bidding has fewer than 13 points
- opponents who have not overcalled don't have values and a long suit
- the lead of the chosen suit often tells you something about holdings in other suits

CONSIDER the problem facing Graham Kirby on this hand from a European Championship:

♠ A K 10 5
♥ 10 8 3
♦ J 9 7
♣ A Q J

*Game All*
*Dealer N*

♠ Q 8 4 2
♥ A Q 9 7 4
♦ Q 2
♣ 10 3

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| | 1NT[1] |
| 2♦[2] | 2♥ |
| 2♠[3] | 2NT[4] |
| 3♠[5] | 4♠ |

[1] 14-16 [2] transfer [3] relay [4] not maximum
[5] 4 spades

Against Four Spades West led the four of diamonds. East won the ace and returned the three to West's king. West played a club. How would you play on?

Well, you wouldn't play on straight away, you would stop and gather the evidence:

(1) West led a diamond from Kxxx. This cannot be an attractive lead as it could easily give a trick. So why didn't West lead a club?

(2) East returned a diamond, setting up a discard. If East had the king of clubs he might try a heart to get partner in; either he has an attractive heart holding or he doesn't have the king of clubs. The diamonds seem to be 4-4.

(3) West has switched to a club rather than play the third diamond but he would probably do that wherever the other cards were.

(4) There has been no bidding, but vulnerable opponents have few values to justify bidding so this is not very helpful.

Anyway, Graham thought long and hard about West's lead and East's failure to switch. He decided all the clues pointed to West having both minor-suit kings. Imagine West holding:

♠ x x
♥ K J x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x x x

Surely he would lead a club through the no-trump bidder rather than a diamond.

Backing his judgement Graham finessed the club, which held. He played the ace of spades and a spade to the queen, the trumps breaking 3-2, and finessed the club again. He cashed his king of spades, diamond and club winners, throwing hearts to reach this position:

♠ 10
♥ 10 8 3
♦ —
♣ —

*Game All*
*Dealer N*

♠ 2
♥ A Q 9
♦ —
♣ —

Now a heart to the nine endplayed West wherever the heart honours were. The play was necessary as the full deal was:

♠ A K 10 5
♥ 10 8 3
♦ J 9 7
♣ A Q J

♠ J 6
♥ K J 5
♦ K 8 5 4
♣ K 8 6 2

*Game All*
*Dealer N*

♠ 9 7 3
♥ 6 2
♦ A 10 6 3
♣ 9 7 5 4

♠ Q 8 4 2
♥ A Q 9 7 4
♦ Q 2
♣ 10 3

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When deciding on your line of play, remember what the opponents didn't do. It may give you the clue to playing hands more successfully.**

*Sandra's is the final tip on cardplay. We have been given some excellent advice, ranging from the very specific to the general – which brings us to the subject of our last group of tips.*

## Part Four

# General Bridge Tips

## Contributors to General Bridge Tips



*The final section of BOLS bridge tips comes under the heading of 'General'. These are concerned with the areas of the game, often psychological in nature, that can apply to bidding, defence and declarer play.*

# Don't be impulsive – consider the alternatives

**Phillip Alder *(USA)***

*Born in 1951, PHILLIP ALDER was a promising young British player until he emigrated to the USA in the mid-1980s. In England he was the editor of* BRIDGE Magazine *from 1980–5 and when in the USA he stuck with bridge journalism and is now one of the most widely read bridge columnists in that country. Away from the bridge table his interests include sport, wine, travel, cats, the West End theatre and the stories of P G Wodehouse.*

IT is often written and said that bridge and chess have close ties. It is true that many of us first learned chess and later gravitated towards bridge. But in the playing of the two games there are several obvious differences. In chess, the positions of all the pieces are always known. In bridge, only some of the cards are visible to each player. In chess, the number of possible moves increases dramatically as the game unfolds, and just worrying about the sensible ones and their ensuing variations is a formidable task. In bridge, the number of possible bids and plays is more limited. However, it is true in both games that if you do not think of the best move, bid or play, you will not make it.

Assume this is the first round of spades; how many possible plays do you have?

*Dummy*
♠ A 2

♠ Q led

*You*
♠ K 3

The first two are easy: you could win in dummy with the ace or in hand with the king. But that is only half the answer. You can also win in dummy with the ace and unblock the king from hand, or you can let your left-hand opponent win the trick with the queen! It is true that these last two plays tend to arise in double-dummy problems rather than in real life at the table, but if either were the winning play and you did not consider it, how could you get it right?

I run some bridge classes and the biggest problem from which I see average players suffering is their propensity for making the 'obvious' play; the first thing that comes into their minds. I spend a long time trying to make them consider the alternatives.

HERE is a hand I set to a relatively advanced group, from a lesson about fit-showing jumps by a passed hand.

♠ 3 2
♥ A J 6 5 4
♦ Q 10 9 8
♣ A 2

***Game All***
***Dealer N***

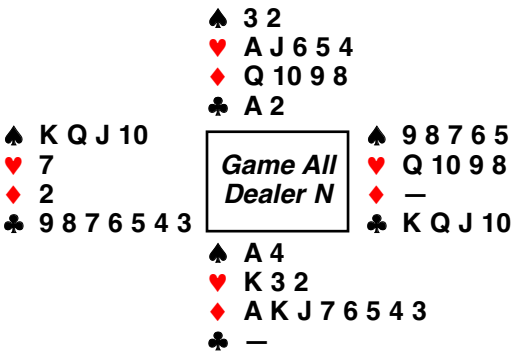
♠ A 4
♥ K 3 2
♦ A K J 7 6 5 4 3
♣ —

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pass | Pass |
| 1♦ | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 4NT | Pass | 5♥ | Pass |
| 7♦ | All Pass | | |

The bidding is a little rustic, but not totally unreasonable. North's jump to Two Hearts is

fit-showing, indicating a maximum pass with hearts and diamonds. South's final shot is based on the expectation that North will have most of his goodies in his two suits.

Every declarer won the opening king of spades lead in hand, crossed to dummy with a diamond and discarded their spade loser on the ace of clubs. Finally, they turned their attention to the hearts and this was the full deal:




'Could you avoid a heart loser, Phillip?'

'Yes.'

'How?'

'By playing the suit differently.'

'But East had queen-ten to four.'

'True, but I'd cash the king of hearts, cross to the ace of hearts and ruff a heart.'

'You'd revoke.'

'Ha, ha! No, I would not.'

Now the penny drops at some tables. I explain that discarding a heart on the ace of clubs and then establishing the hearts, using dummy's trumps as entries, allows a late discard for that pesky spade loser.

THIS theme crops up in the bidding as well. A good player failed to find the winning action here by not thinking about all the possibilities.

It is a team game and only the opponents are vulnerable. Sitting West, you hold:

♠ 10
♥ 10 6 2
♦ A K 9 7 2
♣ 10 9 5 4

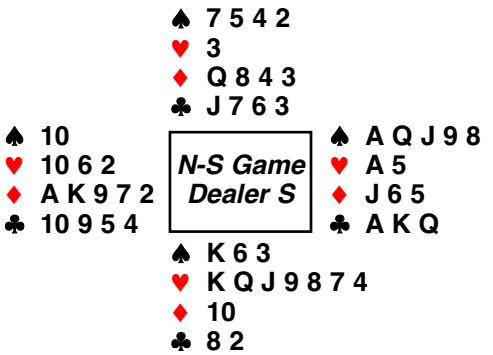
The bidding starts like this:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3♥ | Pass | Pass | Double |
| Pass | ? | | |

What would be your choice?

Partner will be assuming you have some six or seven points, so you are not worth a jump to Five Diamonds. Realising this, at the time the player concerned bid a quiet Four Diamonds. It worked out reasonably, but he did not consider the alternatives. If he had, he would have thought about passing. And if you do analyse that for a moment, you soon realise what a good idea it is. You have two possible tricks of your own, and partner rates to have spade strength opposite your singleton. Even if partner has made a light balancing double, you will still probably defeat Three Hearts and you are unlikely to be making a game.

This was the full deal:




Three Hearts doubled costs a cool 1100. West leads a top diamond and switches to the ten of spades. East wins with the ace and returns the eight, West ruffing declarer's king. East regains the lead in clubs and cashes his two black-suit tricks before continuing spades. Declarer can ruff the fourth round high and lead a top trump, but East wins with the ace and plays another spade, promoting the ten of hearts as the eighth defensive trick.

At the time, the auction went as follows:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3♥ | Pass | Pass | Dble |
| Pass | 4♦ | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | 5♣ | Pass | 5♦ |
| All Pass | | | |

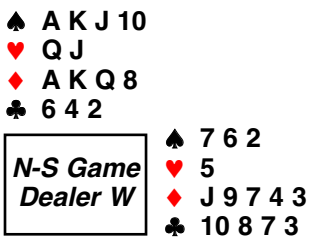
On the second round, West hoped his partner did not have a strong one-suiter in spades and continued the hunt for a minor-suit fit.

Against Five Diamonds, North led the three of hearts, an obvious singleton. Declarer put up dummy's ace of hearts and considered his

alternatives in the trump suit. To cross to the ace and lead low back towards the jack risked losing to a doubleton queen in the South hand. So West decided to cash both top honours and, if North proved to have two trump tricks, to take the ruffing spade finesse in an effort to get rid of the heart losers.

South's having the singleton ten of diamonds was good news, and allowed West to drive out the queen. Declarer won North's club exit in the dummy and took the ruffing spade finesse to guarantee his contract. When it won he ended with an overtrick, but +420 was a scant return compared with the 1100 that was there for the taking if West had taken care to consider the alternatives in the auction.

FINALLY, a defensive hand:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1♥ | Double | Pass |
| 1♠ | 2♥ | 2♠ | Pass |
| 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

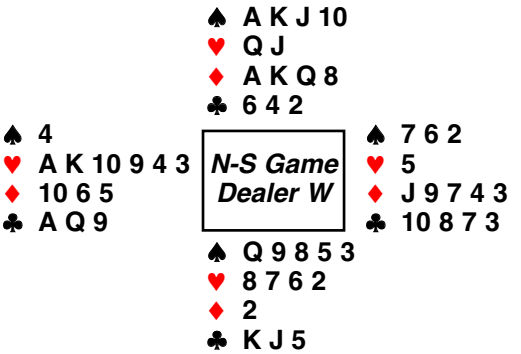
You might not like North's bidding, but that is what he did at the time.

West leads the king of hearts and continues with the ace. Which card should East play?

This sort of problem is much easier on paper. At the table, most players would calmly discard a diamond (or a club) without really giving the matter much thought. However, if you have trained yourself to consider the alternatives, you will pause. You need four tricks to defeat Four Spades: where will they come from?

There are two heart tricks in the bag, but nothing in sight in diamonds and spades. That leaves clubs, and there is a need to expedite matters as declarer might be able to get a discard or two on dummy's diamonds.

If you give the matter some thought, you will realise that the correct defence is to ruff partner's ace of hearts and return a club. This was the full deal:




This play was found at the table by the late, great Helen Sobel.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Do not make the 'obvious' play without thinking: consider the alternatives.**

*Good advice indeed. It is not possible to find the correct play if you do not even consider it.*

*We have seen tips in the play and defence sections that are concerned with the importance of small cards. The following tip concentrates on the same area but in a much more general way.*

# The value of small cards

## Gabriel Chagas *(Brazil)*

IN bridge, and other card games, attention has always focused on high cards. You start by counting points, or honour tricks, but as you improve you appreciate intermediate cards: Q1098, 10987, Q987 have potential, while Q432, AK432 and even AKQ432 show signs of fragility.

For the defenders, the small cards have great significance. As leads and signals they will often show length, or attitude, or a desire for some other suit. And the declarer will attempt to decode them in the light of other information he has available.

The rare situation in which a defender discards an ace is highly meaningful – often an indication that he has all winners and that a shift is desirable. The common situation in which a defender plays or discards a deuce can be given more precise meaning.

Many experts play a mixture of count and attitude according to circumstances. Consider the situation in which your partner leads a strong honour holding and you have 842. I suggest that the normal play should be the four followed by the eight to show an odd number of cards. This preserves the deuce for special purposes, perhaps a suit preference to the low-ranking suit.

When the deuce seems to suggest an impossible or absurd shift, the corollary must be that the deuce-player had no choice. Perhaps he has a singleton, or a doubleton honour that cannot be wasted.

This, of course, applies to the lowest missing card not in view. If the two is in the dummy, your three is obviously low and has special power. However, your play of the three does not have a special meaning when the declarer follows with the deuce. Otherwise you would be overexposed to falsecarding.

The small trumps, too, are not given the attention they deserve. They are often crucial for entry purposes, and in rare situations are needed for endplays. Careless players frequently lose contracts by routinely ruffing with the lowest trump: one very seldom loses by saving that card.

The modern trend toward upside-down count and upside-down attitude signals often permits a defender with a doubleton to play his small card and preserve an intermediate card. 'We prefer to keep the high cards to score tricks,' they say, thus showing a deplorable contempt for the small cards.

My BOLS tip is aimed at defenders as well as declarers:

**Watch the small cards,**
**as they tell you the story of the hand.**

OPPORTUNITIES for the declarer to make proper use of small cards are often missed. The following example is a 'small-card adventure' in the manner of Geza Ottlik. North-South overbid to 6NT after a Precision Club opening was countered by a 'Crash' overcall to show two suits of the same colour.

♠ J 5
♥ 9 7 6 5
♦ A J 3
♣ K J 5 3

***N-S Game***
***Dealer S***

♠ A 10 8
♥ A K J
♦ K 4 2
♣ A 10 8 6

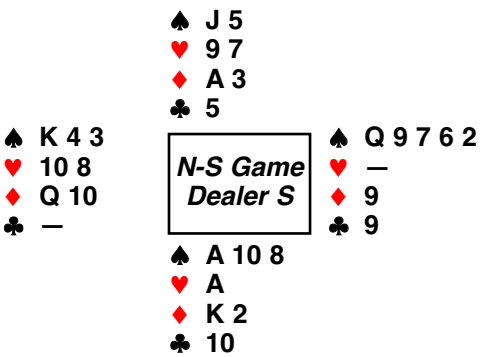
The heart two was led and East played the queen. South won with the king, cashed the ace, and was still not sure whether West held the red suits or the black suits. But to come close to twelve tricks he had to assume that West held the diamond queen and he began by finessing in that suit.

It might not seem to matter which small diamond South led, but South showed proper respect for small cards by leading the four. Believe it or not, preserving the deuce was the key to success.

When the diamond jack held, South felt sure that West had a red hand, not a black hand. So the club jack was led and East covered with the queen. South won with the ace, led to the king, and took the marked finesse of the eight.

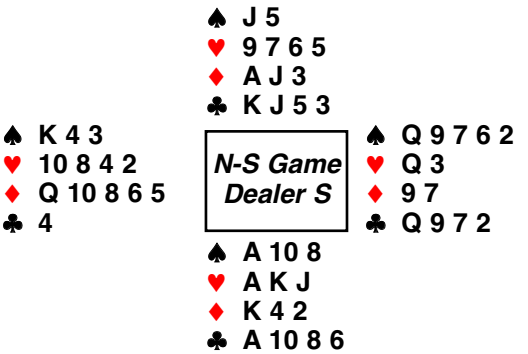
South could now place West, fairly confidently, with an original 3-4-5-1 distribution – the lead suggested a four-card heart suit, and a six-card diamond suit would have been bid or led. He needed to score his twelfth trick in the spade suit and had to make a guess at the location of the king and the queen.

There was a way to endplay West in the unlikely event that he had the king and the queen. Direct play would produce the extra trick if East had both key cards. But thanks to his ownership of the diamond deuce, South found a way to have a good chance of success if East's five spades included the nine and one of the king or queen. The position was in fact this:




The club ten was led, putting pressure on West. He could not part with a heart, and a spade discard would have permitted a low spade lead. So West gave up the diamond ten, apparently safely. But this gave South an extra entry to the dummy. He led the diamond king to the ace and played the spade jack.

With the diamond three available as a further entry to the dummy, it did not matter whether or not East covered with the queen. When he did so, South took the ace, led to the diamond three, and finessed the spade eight. The complete deal was:




Given the accuracy of the distributional assessment, this small-card play is about as likely to succeed as playing East for the king and queen of spades – and vastly more aesthetic.

THE defenders must also give more attention to the small cards. To illustrate this, put yourself in the East seat – you are defending Six Hearts:

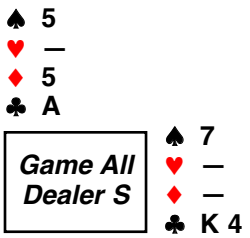

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | Pass | 2NT[1] | 3♠ |
| 4♦ | Pass | 4♠ | Double |
| 5♥ | Pass | 6♥ | All Pass |

[1] 4-card support

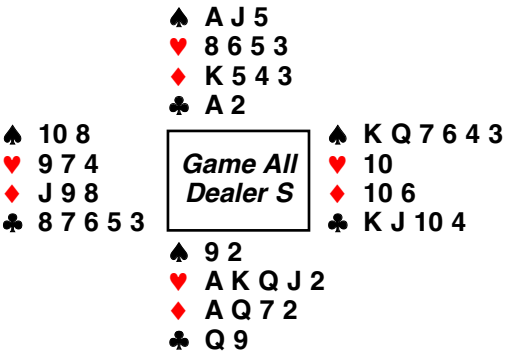
Your partner leads the spade ten, and dummy's jack is played. You win with the queen and return the king. South follows suit and wins with dummy's ace, obviously relieved that your partner has a second spade.

Five rounds of trumps now force a lot of discards. You give up two spades and the jack and ten of clubs, and your partner, after following to three rounds, discards two clubs.

Dummy parts with a club, and South cashes the ace, queen and king of diamonds, putting the lead in dummy in this end position:




The club ace is cashed and South plays the queen. He follows with the diamond five, and you remember that your partner followed three times. You give up the spade seven, but unfortunately declarer produces the deuce of diamonds and scores the last trick with the spade five. You quickly blame the bad light for your slight misplay. The complete deal was:




In real life, would you be paying the required attention to the diamond pips?

*The following advice takes the theme one step further, concentrating specifically on the lowest card in a suit.*

# Save the deuce

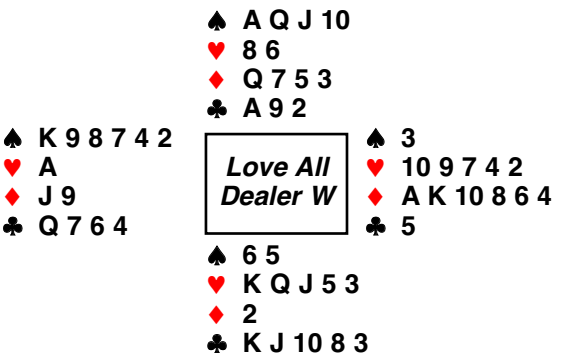
## Jim Jacoby *(USA)*

*In 1968 Dallas financier, Ira Corn, decided to fund a full-time professional team for the express purpose of returning the Bermuda Bowl to the USA. The first two players to be selected for this project were JIM JACOBY and Bobby Wolff. It did not take long for the goal to be fulfilled. Jim Jacoby won the Bermuda Bowl in 1970 and 1971, the World Mixed Teams in 1972 and the World Team Olympiad in 1988. He was also one of the most widely syndicated bridge columnists in the USA. Unfortunately he died in 1993, a couple of years before his sixtieth birthday.*

FROM our bridge infancy we learn to conserve our high cards carefully, using intermediates to promote smaller cards to winning stature. Since the normal object is to win tricks, the philosophy of play is to rid ourselves of low cards and preserve the higher ones to take tricks. In fact, there are many occasions when it is necessary to save your smallest cards, either to force a particular opponent to take the lead at a propitious moment, or to avoid being placed on lead yourself to disadvantage.

My BOLS tip is expressed in easy language. The deuce should be thought of, not as the two-spot, but instead, as the lowest remaining card in any particular suit. When the situation warrants it, *save the deuce!*

If I had written this article a year earlier, I might have used my own advice to improve my final position in the Staten Bank Tournament in The Netherlands in January 1990.



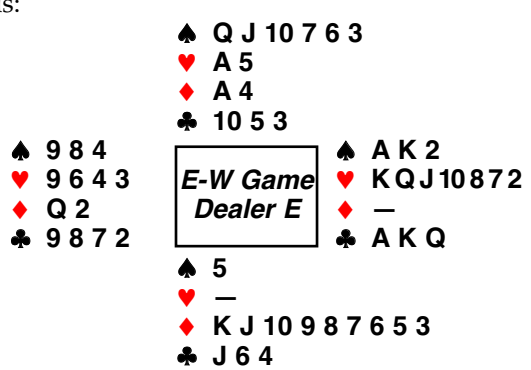

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2♠ | Pass | Pass |
| 3♥ | Pass | 3NT | Double |
| 4♣ | Double | All Pass | |

As declarer I covered the jack of diamonds with dummy's queen, and then ruffed the second diamond with my three. In retrospect, I should be able to read the entire position: West held six spades, four clubs, had shown up with two diamonds, therefore must hold a singleton heart … and what card other than the ace could justify a business double of Four Clubs from the great Zia Mahmood? So, a low heart from my hand would have made the going easy.

But I played the heart king. Zia won the ace and led the nine of spades. The ten of spades held the trick; now a club to the king and the jack of clubs, finessing. Then a spade to dummy, finessing again, and the ace of clubs was cashed. If Zia followed low to the ace of clubs, preserving his winning queen, I would have made ten tricks. I would play a heart to the jack, cash the queen of hearts, and throw Zia on lead with the club queen, forcing him to lead once more into dummy's ace-queen of spades. And he could not affect the result by ruffing one of the high hearts, since he would still be endplayed in spades.

But Zia knew about saving the deuce – he unblocked the queen of clubs under dummy's ace. The contract now had to go down. How different it would have been if I had ruffed at trick two with the eight instead of the three! Zia might still unblock his queen of trumps, but my three would relinquish the lead to his four at the finish.

SAVE the deuce can also apply to communication blocking themes. Consider this:




Vulnerable, East opened Six Hearts and, non-vulnerable, South sacrificed with Seven Diamonds, passed around to East who doubled. Perhaps West should have read this as a Lightner double, but he opened up with a low heart. Declarer discarded his spade on the heart ace and played the queen of spades, king, ruffed with the five of diamonds (notice declarer was saving his lowest diamond). Declarer played the three of diamonds, West followed with the deuce, and declarer played the four from dummy. Now another ruffing finesse in spades and a return to the ace of diamonds, and suddenly the sacrifice bid at the seven level became a make!

Declarer played well, but West should have saved the deuce. If he puts up the queen of diamonds when the suit is first led, declarer will be deprived of his second entry to dummy. Note well that this is only the correct play when declarer leads the three. If declarer had led any other diamond, the traditional play by West stops the extra entry.

For more fun as either declarer or defender, and to get yourself written up in bridge columns, watch for those opportunities when you must save your lowest card. Remember my BOLS bridge tip:

**When the situation warrants it, save the deuce!**

*I am an optimist by nature so would particularly benefit from listening to the next tip.*

# Fear the worst

## Terence Reese *(England)*

WHEN opponents bid unexpectedly high you have to ask yourself: does my hand contain any nasty surprises?

I take as my text (as the preachers say) a problem set by Howard Schenken in a 1971 *Bridge World:*

Both sides are vulnerable at IMP scoring and the dealer is North. South holds:

♠ 9 6 2
♥ 6 3
♦ 9 7 5
♣ A K 9 4 2

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♥ | 1♠ |
| Pass | 2♠ | 3♦ | 4♠ |
| ? | | | |

What call do you make?

The great majority of the American panel were ready to double, some with confidence, such as:

**Begin:** Double. Throwing out the possibility of slam (which, I agree, could be on) I think I might get this for 800. Partner might even sneak in a club ruff.

**Clarke:** Double. If partner has the tops in his suits it is difficult to see how the opponents can escape for less than 800. If partner has two long red suits lacking some of the tops, I think he will pull my double.

Howard was not impressed by this argument. When opponents bid unexpectedly high you have to ask yourself: does my hand contain any nasty surprises for them? Obviously not. East knows he hasn't got the ace and king of clubs.

There was a big majority for the double, though in many cases there was not much confidence. Thus:

**Wolff:** Double. I'd lead a trump. It looks as if East has one of partner's suits stacked. To not double is too much like tiptoeing through the tulips.

That's an entrancing picture of the rotund Robert.

**Weiss:** Double. The double is a two-way action and North should not be averse to moving out of it with a strong two-suiter.

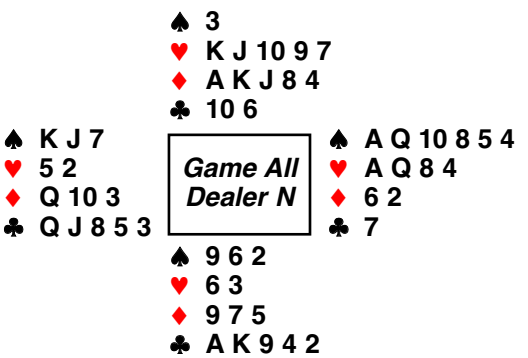
In favour of a pass:

**Roth:** Pass. I didn't push them into game. I'll be satisfied to beat them.

**Rubens:** Pass. A double without a trump honour would be an insult to East.

There was also some support for bidding on: Five Diamonds, even Five Clubs. Howard observed that these bidders fell into two groups: far out, and far, far out.

I must say that I don't think the 1971 panel distinguished itself. The most likely construction of East's hand is that he has six good spades and strong hearts. The full hand might be something like this:




Whether you double or not – Howard considered it close – it is very important to lead a trump, not a heart or the ace of clubs. A trump lead (or a diamond and a trump back) is good enough, just. East wins and leads his singleton club, taken by the king. You play another round of trumps. If East takes this in dummy and runs the queen of clubs, discarding a diamond, you will play a third round of trumps, holding the declarer to nine tricks.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When opponents bid unexpectedly high, ask yourself if your hand contains any nasty surprises.**

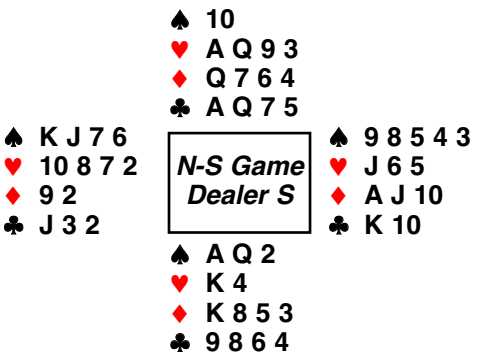
*Reese's next advice deals with a different topic – the ability experts seem to have to guess right so often.*

# See round corners

## Terence Reese *(England)*

THERE are many situations where the declarer has to 'take a view' on the second round of a suit. In this area both sides have opportunities for clever play.

You may remember reading about this deal from a past *Sunday Times* tournament.




As at most tables, Andrew Robson played 3NT from the South side. Dummy's ten of spades held the first trick and a diamond was won by the king. South ran the nine of clubs to East's ten, won the third round of spades, then led another club, on which West played low. Taking the view that if East had held the jack and ten he might have played the jack on the first round, Robson went up with the ace. Now he had nine tricks.

As Patrick Jourdain pointed out, West should have inserted the jack on the second round. Then South would probably have finessed the queen. There is a further interesting point. If West, a knowledgeable player, follows with the two and three, what conclusion should you draw? Presumably that he began with K32, not J32.

There are a few situations where the unnecessarily high card is absolutely necessary to give declarer the chance of going wrong. The first of these two is better known than the second.

**(1)**

*Dummy*
♠ 8 3

*Partner*
♠ K Q

*You*
♠ 10 6 2

*Declarer*
♠ A J 9 7 5 4

**(2)**

*Dummy*
♠ Q 10 8 6 4

*Partner*
♠ J 7 2

*You*
♠ K 9 5

*Declarer*
♠ A 3

In (1), after the eight has run to partner's king (or queen), East must not fail to insert the ten when the next card is led from dummy. Otherwise South, needing five tricks, will play the ace; it will be his only chance to make the remainder.

In (2) declarer leads low to the ace. Would it have occurred to you as East that you must play the nine? This will encourage South to play the queen from dummy on the next round, because of the chance of dropping a doubleton jack-nine (to find East with king-nine won't help).

The common factor in these deceptive plays is that it is generally right for a defender to play a card that cannot conceivably take a trick but may mislead the declarer.

NOW let's look at one or two situations where the declarer has the chance to draw a particular inference. Consider this frequent position:

*Dummy*
♠ 10 5 3

*Declarer*
♠ A K 6 4 2

You play off the ace and king. East follows with two low cards, West with a low card and the queen. Who has the jack? Probably East, because with QJx West might equally have played the jack on the second round. Similarly:

*Dummy*
♠ 7 6 4

*Declarer*
♠ A Q 8 5 2

On a low card from dummy East plays the ten and the queen holds. The ace follows and East drops the king. Who has the jack? More likely

West, as with KJ10 East might have played the jack on the first round. You always assume that a player did not have a choice.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**As a defender, consider playing an unnecessarily high card on the second round of a suit; as declarer if you need to place a missing honour assume the defenders had no choice about which honour to play.**

Think along these lines whenever you have to make a decision on the second round of a suit. In time you will gain the reputation of being a good guesser. Or a good looker.

*The following idea deals with the necessity of planning … as far in advance as is possible.*

# Build your own algorithm

## Jean-Paul Meyer *(France)*

*Born in 1936, JEAN-PAUL MEYER of Paris is a professional bridge writer. The best moment of his playing career was in 1987 when, in partnership with Gerard Le Royer, he won the European Pairs. He is the editor of* Le Bridgeur *and columnist of* L'Expres.

QUITE often I meet bridge players who ask me why chess computers are so efficient compared with bridge computers. There are plenty of reasons; you probably know most of them and this is not the place for such arguments. But one of the important reasons is that programmers in chess have succeeded in computing several steps in advance by building up what is called an 'algorithm'.

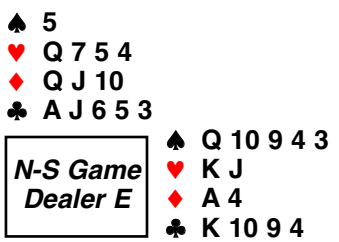
Until machines devoted to bridge improve their performance (Zia's £1 million bet that no computer could beat him still looks safe), you had better count on your own brain to win at bridge, and it would be a good idea to build up your own algorithms. If it works perfectly (unfortunately there is no such thing as perfection) you should have no problem playing and defending efficiently.

To be more pragmatic, let me now give you my BOLS bridge tip:

**When playing, either as declarer or in defence, your first concern should be to foresee what will happen two or three, or sometimes even eleven, tricks later.**

MANY articles have been written to emphasise the importance of making a plan at trick one, but often a new plan has to be launched in the course of play. Your own algorithm should warn you what is going to happen before it is too late.

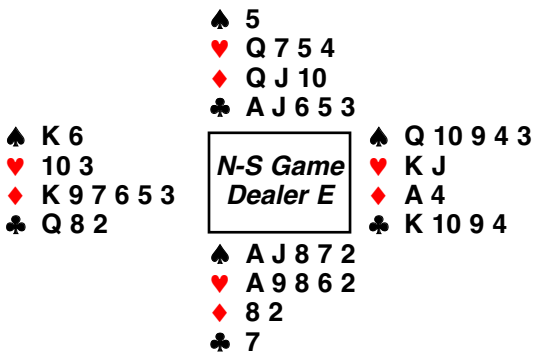
Let us see one example:



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1♠ |
| Pass | 1NT | Pass | 2♣ |
| 2♥ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

Partner leads a trump to your jack and declarer's ace. Now South plays the two of diamonds, seven from West. You take with the ace. You cash your king of hearts. All follow. What is going on?

Your opening bid showed a five-card suit. Partner has shown no support so should have at most two spades; that gives South a 5-5 major two-suiter. Partner showed an even number of diamonds, so you can construct the full deal:




What next? You could play a spade 'safely'. Really? Let us check the algorithm:

*Trick 4:* ace of spades
*Trick 5:* ace of clubs
*Trick 6-9:* clubs and spades cross-ruffed
*Trick 10:* club ruffed
*Trick 11:* diamond

Your partner takes his king and must play a diamond for two high cards in the dummy (diamond and club). So here you are! At trick four, after the ace of diamonds you should play back a diamond! Who said, 'Both sides playing the same suit, one is crazy'?

South was right to play a diamond and had not your brain done a little bit of work, no doubt declarer would have collected his reward for the work of his own brain. Both algorithms were good, but here the last word belonged to the defence!

A diamond return leaves declarer with no chance to make his contract.

*It's not what you play, it's how you play it – that is the theme we move on to consider.*

# Your tempo is showing

## Bobby Wolff *(USA)*

CONSIDER this deal:


| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| 1♠ | 2♥ |
| 3♦ | 4♠ |
| 6♠ | |

West leads the jack of clubs. What do you do? You win in your hand and lead a heart immediately. This puts tempo pressure on West. Will he have the presence of mind to duck the ace? If West plays low without hesitation, my guess is that if you play the jack, you are better than 50-50 to be right.

YOU are declarer in Six Hearts with:

♠ K Q 9
♥ K J 8 3
♦ A Q 5 2
♣ K 8

*N-S Game*
*Dealer N*

♠ 10 7 2
♥ A 10 9 7
♦ K J 10
♣ A J 4

West takes a considerable amount of time and leads the ace of spades. My experience tells me that East is more likely to hold the queen of trumps. Most players, even experts, avoid huddling on opening lead when they hold crucial cards.

YOU are West on the following deal:

♠ A K 10 8
♥ K J 6 4
♦ 10 8
♣ Q 7 5

♠ Q J 6
♥ A 5 3 2
♦ K J 4 2
♣ 9 8

*Love All*
*Dealer N*

| SOUTH | NORTH |
|---|---|
| | 1♣ |
| 1♠ | 2♠ |
| 4♠ | |

You lead the two of diamonds. Your partner wins the ace and leads back the five with declarer playing the seven and queen. Don't cash the ace of hearts and sit back smugly for the setting trick. Declarer may assume, since you are not playing your partner either for the queen of hearts or for a club trick, that you hold precisely QJx or QJxx of spades and he may (and probably should) finesse you out of your trump trick.

Body language with intent to mislead has no place at the bridge table. Rather, I am addressing what you can do to make yourself difficult to play against. Don't look bored with a Yarborough. Don't sweat when baring a king offside. Play confidently, although you may expect a poor result, and make your opponents guess what to do.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

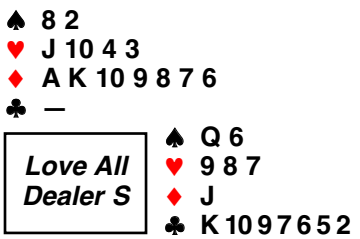
**Keep a steady demeanour**
**and consistent tempo,**
**both in bidding and play.**
**When your opponents' tempo varies,**
**look for a reason for it.**

*Jeff Rubens told us to honour our partners in the 'Tips on Defence' section; Gabriel Chagas exhorts us to make the most of their brilliance.*

# Don't spoil your partner's brilliancy

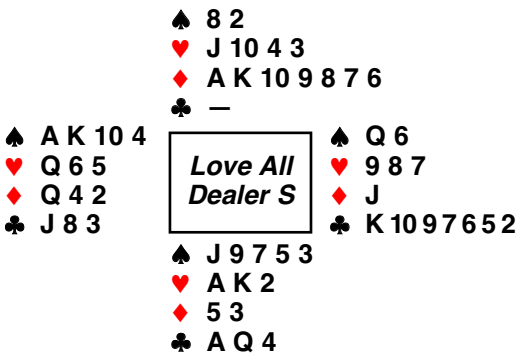
**Gabriel Chagas *(Brazil)***

FROM time to time, sitting at the bridge table, you will get the opportunity to rise to the occasion. This does not always succeed because there is also a partner who must understand what is going on. Everybody knows the situation: you underlead an ace against a trump contract, and your partner looks a little surprised when his king wins the trick. This is an awkward moment for your partner, whose first duty is to discover why you underled your ace.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♠ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3♦ | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

North-South play five-card majors, the 2NT rebid as less than 15 points and Three Diamonds as forcing. Partner leads the three of clubs, dummy discards a small heart, you play the king of clubs as East, and declarer takes the ace. The prospects are gloomy. If declarer has three diamonds, then eight tricks are already in the basket. South plays the three of diamonds, your partner contributes the queen and, to your surprise, declarer plays low from dummy! Are you in a meeting of wizards? It is impossible that partner has a singleton diamond because, in that case, declarer would have played the king. Nevertheless there is not much time to think because, in the next split second, your partner has put the four of spades on the table. What is going on? Why not another club? The mystery deepens when you put on the queen, and it wins the trick (declarer playing the three)! The ten of clubs is already in your hand but … wait, what would have happened if West had played a small diamond to the second trick? Apparently, declarer has only two diamonds, and is prepared to give you a diamond trick. So you would have gained the lead with the jack and then, well, which card would you have played? The ten of clubs, of course. Ah! Your partner played the queen of diamonds in order to play a spade, not a club. He did not want a club continuation. He must have promising cards in spades, and know that the club suit offers no future. As the light dawns, you return a spade. And this was the full lay-out:




Wave a flag for West playing the queen of diamonds! He knew declarer had the queen of clubs and the ace of hearts, and therefore nine tricks if you continued a club. So he found a way to gain the lead himself to make the killing switch. But what would have happened if, when you won the spade, you had thoughtlessly switched back to clubs? West would have slipped from his chair, and would have been ready for the mental hospital, to spend his days regretting this waste of beauty!

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**When your partner makes an unusual play, be careful not to spoil his brilliancy.**

*We have read many tips that should help us guess right more often but even if we guess wrong there is no need to let the opponents know it…*

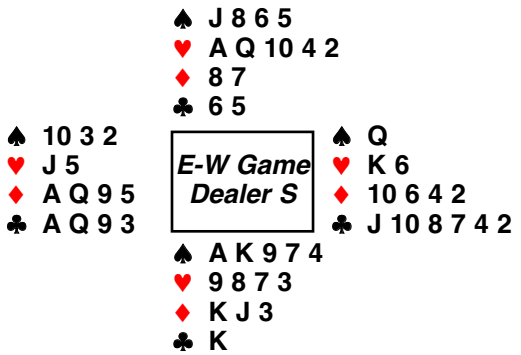
# Keep your guesses to yourself

## Matthew Granovetter *(Israel)*

WHEN I asked my wife Pamela to suggest a tip for this year's competition, she reminded me of the one taught us by our bridge mentor, Victor Mitchell. He is known in New York as the expert's expert, and when he is not on the racetrack, this Damon Runyon figure of the bridge world is often teaching other good players how to improve their bridge game.

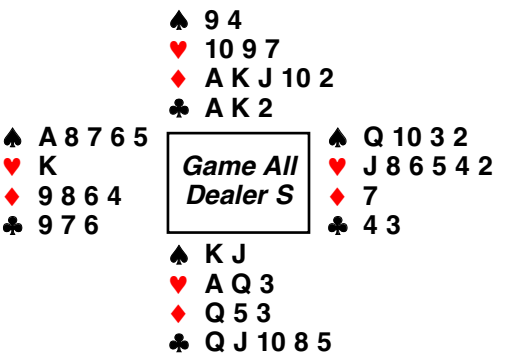
Once, during a Pairs event, he was playing with Pamela and advised: *when you have to make a guess in a suit, don't give away the position by hesitating at the crucial moment*.

Personally, when defending, I prefer a capable declarer who is slow at the crucial moments, to an average one who always plays his cards quickly. Victor's tip was illustrated during that Pairs event.




Most Souths in the field declared a spade partscore against a major-suit opening lead. When a trump was led, the typical declarer drew trumps and led a heart to the queen. East won the king of hearts and often found the best shift of a diamond. Most Souths now thought about it for a moment, and made their guess, usually the jack. In either case, West cashed his other diamond honour, then the ace of clubs. Making three. At Pamela's table, Victor was declarer in Three Spades. Against the trump lead, Victor won, drew a second round of trumps and then led a heart for a finesse. When East returned a diamond, Victor played the king without a flicker. (He had already decided to make this play if the heart finesse lost and a diamond was returned.) When West won the ace, he took a reasonable inference that East held the jack of diamonds, based on the fact that declarer had no problem on the diamond return. Anxious to defeat the contract, West underled his queen of diamonds and Victor made two overtricks for a near top.

A FEW years later it was my turn to watch Victor. I was dummy and he was declarer in 6NT. The opening lead was a diamond. How would you play it?




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT | Pass | 6NT | All Pass |

If you use Victor's tip, you might do as he did: win the lead in dummy and play a spade immediately! When East plays low, however, you must be prepared for the guess and not hesitate even a split second. Let's follow the reasoning behind this technique.

Declarer can count five tricks in each minor and the ace of hearts for a sure eleventh. The twelfth trick can come from a correct spade guess or a successful heart finesse. If you lead a spade and put in the jack, forcing the ace, you will succeed. If you lead a spade towards the king and the ace was on your right, you will succeed. Or if you take the heart finesse and the king is with East, you will succeed. But which play is the best? Is it possible to give yourself more than one chance?

Yes, if you lead a spade towards your hand and make your play without hesitation. There is no use discussing the hand if you guess correctly in spades. But if you guess wrong, you may get another chance when the spade honours are split. For example, say that you lead a spade to the king, losing to the ace. West

is very likely to continue diamonds, and you are now in a position to take the heart finesse – your second chance.

Every once in a while your chances will improve further. On the actual layout, let us assume that you misguessed in spades, took the diamond return, cashed your clubs and then led out the rest of your diamonds. Because you know by inference where the queen of spades is (West would have cashed it if he held it), when you lead a heart towards your queen at trick twelve, East will follow with the jack and you will know that his thirteenth card is the queen of spades. Therefore you go up with your ace of hearts and make the slam even with the king of hearts offside!

As Victor Mitchell put it to me after the hand, sometimes your chances against 'experts, like the one sitting West' are even more remarkable. When Victor played the hand he misguessed in spades, but his king of spades held the trick! West was being clever, of course, holding off the first round of spades, but, as he tried to explain to his unforgiving partner, what was the likelihood that Victor was leading to the king without the queen at his second trick?

Notice, of course, what happens if declarer tries a spade lead at trick two and hesitates over his third-hand play. If he guesses wrong, West will know that East holds the other honour, and it is easy for him to return the suit and defeat the slam.

My BOLS bridge tip is to take Victor Mitchell's advice:

**If you have a guess to make, don't let the opponents in on the secret – do it smoothly!**

*We have read a couple of tips about the importance of tempo, but there is someone who disagrees. Jens Auken argues that it is more important to play the right card.*

# The kill point

## Jens Auken *(Denmark)*

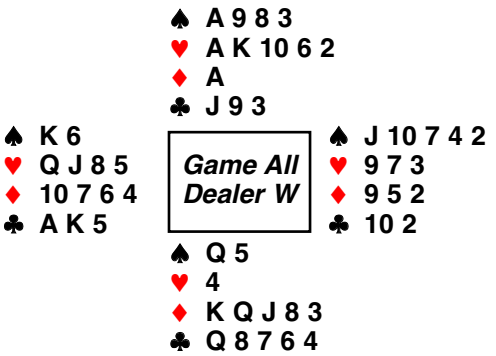
*JENS AUKEN, of Copenhagen, a lawyer by profession, is a member of the European Bridge League Executive Committee, a vice-president of the World Bridge Federation and the legal consultant for the Danish Bridge Federation. Now in his late forties, he has been the top Danish masterpoint winner on no less than six occasions. The high spot of his playing career was a third place in the World Teams Olympiad in 1984. The high spot of his non-playing career was to marry German international, Sabine Zenkel, in 1996. They now have a son, Jens Christian, who made a name for himself by crawling on to the stage while his father was receiving his bronze medal at the 1996 Olympiad in Rhodes.*

IT is often stated that the best a bridge player can do is always play in an even tempo. That statement is wrong. How many tricks have been lost by not playing in an even tempo?

We have all tried playing in an even tempo and a trick too late realised that at the trick before we should have stopped to think. Instead we made a mistake. We are beyond the point of no return now, and there is no way to recover. We say once again, 'Sorry partner, I lost concentration.' But maybe it is not good enough to concentrate if you do it in an even tempo.

My belief is that on almost every bridge hand there is a point of time – a trick – when the action of a bridge player is decisive for the fate of the contract. The spotlight is on him. What he is doing the rest of the time is not decisive as long as he does not do anything foolish. I call that point the 'kill point'. If you are clever at spotting kill points you are a strong player and you will gain yet more strength from being able to relax the rest of the time.

DURING the Philip Morris European Mixed Championship in Bordeaux the Norwegian player, Ludvigsen, played in the teams against the eventual winners, Ginette Chevalley and Paul Chemla. Ludvigsen gave me this hand when I told him about my tip.



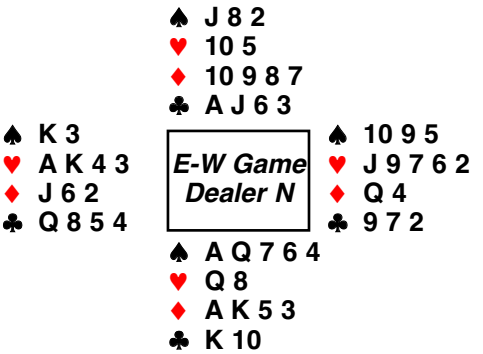

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Ludvigsen* | *Chemla* | *Rogstad* | *Chevalley* |
| | 1♣ | Double | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 2♥ | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

The opening lead was the ace of clubs, followed by a diamond switch to dummy's ace.

South continued with the jack of clubs from dummy and saw to his horror the ten of clubs on his right. He had not unblocked the nine of clubs on the first trick. West ducked and South had no sure way to get to his hand or to make his contract and in the end he went down.

South's kill point was at trick one when he should have unblocked the nine of clubs, a play that could never cost. He could then lead the jack, overtaking with the queen when the ten turned up. South missed his kill point.

KILL points occur often at trick one for declarers. But usually crop up later in the play for defenders, simply because defence is more difficult than declarer play.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pass | Pass |
| 1♠ | Double | 2♠ | Pass |
| 3♦ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass |

Defending as West against Four Spades on this hand, I cashed the two top hearts and, with a certain trump trick to come, I got off lead with the obvious diamond: an honour with partner and the contract would be one down if South had at least four diamonds.

South had listened to the bidding, however, and took the diamond queen with the king to proceed with the ace and a low trump. More or less endplayed, I switched to a low club to partner's nine and, after a short pause, South's king. I had missed the kill point! Three rounds of trumps, and I would be finished. South correctly cashed two rounds of trumps, the other top diamond, and then the last trump, squeezing my hand in the minor suits.

Awareness of the kill point would have made me stop to think at the moment I could see three defensive tricks and a probable fourth. South's distribution could easily be 5-2-4-2 with the queen of spades and king of clubs, all I had to do was switch to a club at trick three and continue clubs later to break up his communications for the simple squeeze. The bidding had already told declarer about the lie of the remaining high cards.

My BOLS bridge tip is simply this:

**Develop an ability to spot kill points.**

*So, we are left with a difference of opinion about the importance of playing in tempo, but if you are in the habit of playing too fast you may have need of the next tip.*

# Beware bridge players bearing gifts

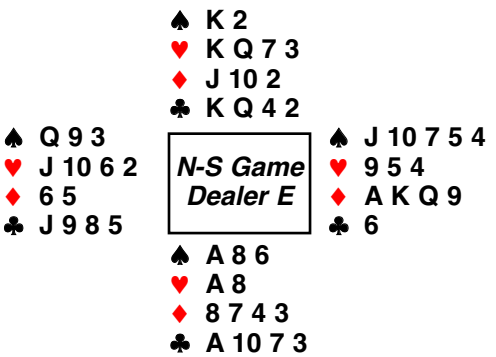
**Jim Jacoby *(USA)***

YOU bridge players do a lot of humdrum and routine work. Consequently it's very easy for you to be lulled into that well-known false sense of security. Of course, in theory you should play your heart out on every deal, but as a practical matter you just don't.

It helps to get the adrenaline going, but how do you do it? This is a problem you must solve individually. But perhaps I can help with a tale from an old legend.

In Virgil's *Aeneid*, the soothsayer Cassandra warned the Trojan warriors: *'Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.'* (I fear the Greeks, even bearing gifts.) Nevertheless, the soldiers of Troy took the gift of the wooden horse into their city. Virgil little knew that his story could assist bridge players thousands of years later. Yet, with due acknowledgement to that ancient poet, my tip to you is 'Beware bridge players bearing gifts'.

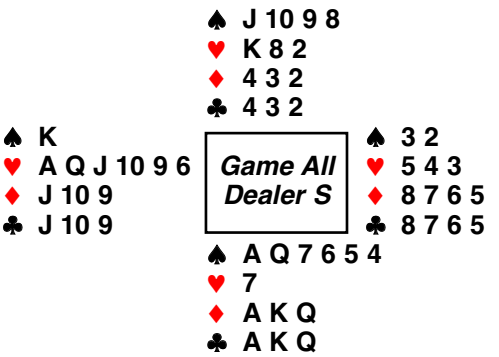
THERE is a wealth of deals with Trojan horse themes. Here is one from a recent knock-out teams final at a US regional tournament:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Pass |
| 1♣ | Pass | 1♥ | Double |
| Pass | 1♠ | 2♠ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |

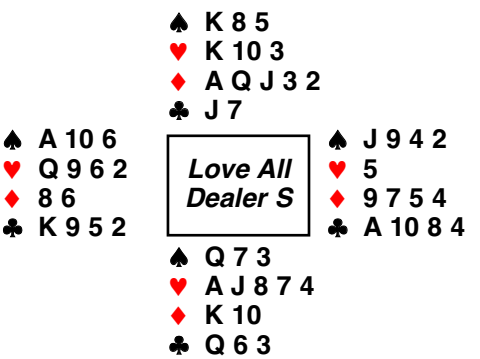
Declarer won the three of spades lead with dummy's king and cashed the king and queen of clubs. When East showed out on the second club there were only eight tricks. But declarer sent his wooden horse to the gates of Troy. He led the jack of diamonds from dummy. East, a good intermediate player, surprised VuGraph onlookers by cashing out all four diamonds, so that the subsequent play of the ace of spades squeezed West in hearts and clubs.

NEXT we have a familiar theme:




South plays in Six Spades after West has overcalled in hearts. West leads the ace of hearts and continues with a second heart, putting the lead in the North hand so that declarer can (hopefully) take a losing trump finesse. But now that you are aware of the clever traps these bridge players set, you of course simply play the spade ace – and sneer as the king comes clatttering down.

AN exciting demonstration of the wooden horse play occurred in a world championship. Bobby Wolff was the star, while the victims were Svarc-Boulenger of France.



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1♥ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

Boulenger, East, won the two of clubs lead with his ace and, after brief reflection, returned the four of clubs. Svarc, West, won with the king, played the ace of spades and continued spades.

From South's angle there was no certainty that a bridge gift had in fact been offered – and yet…! Svarc would surely be unlikely to cash the ace of spades unless he felt he had some good chance of taking the setting trick later. (Without such expectation, he might, for example, have played a low spade, hoping to find East with the queen.)

Accordingly, Wolff won with the queen of spades and played the jack of hearts, which was covered by Svarc with the queen and taken by the king in dummy. Declarer returned to his hand with the ten of diamonds and led the eight of hearts. When Svarc played low, Wolff called for the heart three…! How did it all happen?

Simple enough. Declarer decided the prompt play of the third trick for the defence suggested the queen of hearts was in the West hand. Then, when West readily covered the jack, there was a further deduction that a player of Svarc's calibre would not play the queen from Qx or Qxxx. (With such a holding, West would have to allow for the possibility that declarer originally had AJ98x(x) in hearts.)

So the play of the queen of hearts was a gift: a gift that tested our declarer. Fortunately for the Aces' world championship aspirations that year, Wolff passed the test.

Let this be my BOLS bridge tip to you:

**When a good opponent seemingly gives you a present, stay alert!**
**Watch for a trap!**
**Beware bridge players bearing gifts!**

*The next tip is all about riding your luck – every dog has its day but can he recognise it?*

# Imagine … and capitalise!

## The Apple, the Law and the Principle

### Bernard Marcoux *(Canada)*

THE apple tree has always attracted human kind: Adam and Eve, Newton and ... Eric Kokish? (What? Yes, Eric once wrote that if you shake an apple tree [well, a bridge tree??!], ten good dummy players will fall out but maybe only one good bidder.)

Is the one-good-bidder principle the same apple that Newton received on his nose (OK, maybe it fell at his feet)? The pain Newton felt prompted him to invent the Law of Gravity. The pain of going down one has also prompted Matthew Granovetter to formulate the Law of Granovetter, or should we say the Law of Gravitynovetter: 'Never bid a grand slam if you cannot count thirteen tricks'.

Well, after Newton came Albert Einstein who said that: 'Imagination is more important than knowledge' and that the fast ball Newton saw falling from the tree is actually a curved ball.

And, in 1990, after winning the World Championship in Geneva, Gabriel Chagas, who always throws curved balls, invented the Chagas Principle. 'If you're lucky or good on the first board, things are probably going your way.'

So, all this gibberish means that if you think in straight lines you are applying the Law of Gravitynovetter.

And if you think in curves, if you let your imagination sometimes supersede your knowledge, you are following the Chagas Principle.

IN the second session of a Calcutta*, you pick up your first hand:

♠ A Q 8 7
♥ K 10 9 8 7 5 3
♦ A 6
♣ —

Partner opens One Club, you bid One Heart. Partner jumps to 3NT showing long solid clubs. This is the time to imagine: if partner has queen or jack doubleton in hearts, you have a chance in Six Hearts. You have no means of knowing, you just imagine. You were average in the afternoon session; tonight you must make it happen.

The longer you think, the less you know and the more you find that you have to take the plunge. You bid Six Hearts.

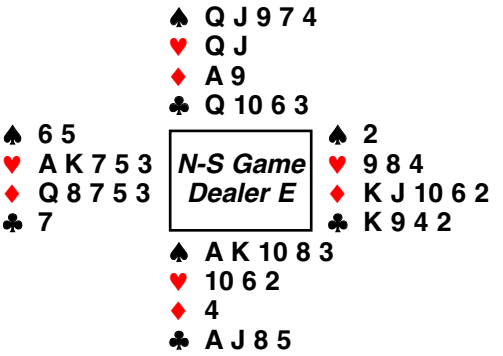
Partner has:

♠ K 5
♥ Q
♦ 7 5 2
♣ A K J 7 5 3 2

Dummy is one card short of what your imagination dreamt up but, then again, dummy always lacks imagination. You take the king of diamonds opening lead with your ace, go to dummy with a spade, play the ace and king of clubs to pitch a diamond and a spade. The moment of truth has come: queen of trumps … holds. You ruff a diamond and, imagining jack doubleton somewhere, you play the king of trumps … for the jack and ace. +1430 (12 IMPs).

IN the third round, the opponents, after preempts from your side, play Six Spades and Four Spades, go down in both contracts and you gain 17 IMPs. You feel you can't lose now. IN the fifth round, you and your partner throw a rising fast ball (one can't always throw curved balls, can one?):

*A duplicate tournament where before the event an auction is held and all the competing pairs are 'sold', thus money is raised, some of which goes to the winners, some to the 'purchaser' and often some to a charity.




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 2♦ |
| 2♠ | 5♦ | 5♠ | All Pass |

Partner leads three rounds of hearts. Declarer draws trumps and plays the queen of clubs. You cover. She takes the ace and plays … the jack from her hand!?! One down, +13 IMPs. Is it possible?

IN the sixth round the opponents climb to Five Clubs, vulnerable, doubled. Declarer can escape for –200, but also makes a mistake and you reap +500, 6 IMPs.

AFTER seven rounds, you are +61 IMPs. Halfway to go.

IN the eighth round, you play against good players experiencing a bad round, and they hurt you on the first board. They bid a real curved ball (the standard ball being 3NT): Six Diamonds, making seven, your first negative score of the round.

On the next board, you pick up the following as South:

♠ A 6
♥ A K Q 7 5 3 2
♦ K 6
♣ Q 4

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♣ | 2♠ |
| 3♥ | Pass | 4♥ | Pass |
| 4♠ | Pass | 5♦ | Pass |
| 5♠ | Pass | 5NT | Pass |
| 6♣ | Pass | 6♥ | Pass |
| ? | | | |

Four Spades is Key Card Blackwood and Five Spades asks for specific king(s); 5NT showed

the king of spades and does not deny another king; Six Clubs asks specifically for the king of clubs and Six Hearts denies it. What do you do? Do you know if partner has the queen of spades or the queen of diamonds?
No.

You are at the crossroads: do you follow the Law of Gravitynovetter? With this hand, you know you can only count twelve tricks. Or should you apply the Chagas Principle? Should you bid 7NT, even if partner has denied the king of clubs? Should you imagine thirteen tricks even if you cannot count thirteen tricks? Should you go against the Law of Gravitynovetter?

Yes, and you cannot miss; from board one, luck was with you. Everything you have done turned out right; opponents have given you tons of IMPs; you're riding a high wave of success; in these special conditions, the Chagas Principle overrules the Law of Gravitynovetter. Don't go against the good vibrations, remember the first board, you cannot fail. Think in curves, not in straight lines. Imagination is more important than knowledge. Bid 7NT!!

Dummy has:

♠ K Q 5 3
♥ J 6 4
♦ A 8 5
♣ A 7 3

You win 10 IMPs and finish second overcall, +84 IMPs. In ordinary conditions, follow the Law of Gravitynovetter: 'Do not bid a grand slam if you cannot count thirteen tricks.' A fast ball on the nose is a lot or pain.

IN exceptional situations, forget Newton and follow the Chagas Principle, think in curves. So my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Imagine … and capitalise!**

*One of the reasons that attracts us to bridge, rather than chess or poker, for example, is that it is a partnership game. We should always remember that we are on the same side…*

# When in Rome

## Robert Hamman *(USA)*

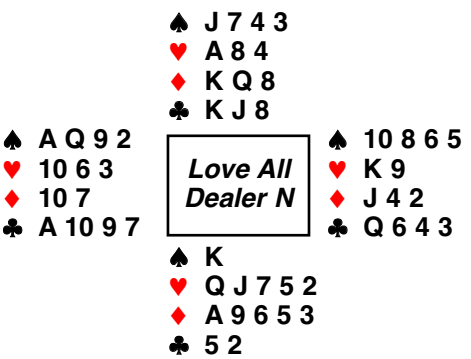
YOU'VE been there before. The contract is Four Spades. You lead your singleton club, which declarer wins in hand. At trick two declarer takes a losing trump finesse through you. Excellent! You've got two other tricks, so while you silently congratulate yourself on your fine opening lead, you contemplate your matchpoint score – or your IMPs – for one down.

But wait! Partner has started thinking! Where is that club return? Is he kidding? In your mind your lead was so obviously a singleton, partner must have been in a coma if he didn't recognise it! How could he consider anything else!?!

If partner fails to return that club, chances are the defence will go up in smoke. There may be a way to defeat Four Spades even if you don't get that ruff, but you'll never find it in your emotional state. You're too busy with recriminations and frustration. Your mind is clouded with thoughts that have no place at the bridge table.

I WAS involved in a crucial deal at the United States bridge championship in Memphis a few years ago that was the perfect illustration of this kind of trap.

It was the last deal of the whole event and our team was behind by 7 IMPs. We didn't know it, but the contract had been Four Hearts in the other room – making.



| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | 1♦ | Pass |
| 1♥ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 2♦[1] | Pass | 3♥ | Pass |
| 4♥ | All Pass | | |

[1] checkback for 3-card heart support

Against the game I chose to lead the ten of diamonds. Declarer won with the king in dummy. Obviously, at this point he can play ace and another heart, hoping to guess right in clubs if it comes to that. However, declarer decided that his chances of stealing the king of spades – in addition to the possibility that I had a singleton diamond and three hearts to the king plus at least one black ace – justified winning the lead in dummy and playing the three of spades at trick two. Declarer was doomed at this point. I took the king of spades with my ace and returned the seven of diamonds. Declarer ducked in dummy and took my partner's jack with his ace.

The jack of hearts came next and my partner, Bobby Wolff, won with the king. Being the careful, thoughtful player that he is, Wolff began to think about his return.

It was at this point that my energy became misdirected. I was rooting so hard for Wolff to return a diamond that I'm afraid that I might have failed to find the defence to defeat the hand even without the diamond ruff.

Say Wolff had chosen to return a spade, the only logical alternative to a diamond. Declarer would ruff and, knowing I had started with a doubleton diamond, would have been forced to play me for the ace of clubs. Pulling two more rounds of trumps and then unblocking diamonds would be a certain one down. He would have to use his last trump to return to his hand to run diamonds, and the defence would be waiting with the ace of clubs and queen of spades.

Therefore, declarer would have to play a club immediately after ruffing the second round of spades. He would reason that if East had the ace of clubs, a diamond would surely be returned and he would be one down as before. Therefore, if I ducked the club, declarer would go up with the king, pull trumps, unblock the diamond suit and return to his hand with a spade ruff. Making ten tricks – and his team would have gone to Salsomaggiore instead of mine.

I could still have defeated Four Hearts without the diamond ruff, however. On the spade return, declarer would have ruffed and been forced to lead clubs at the next trick. The winning defence is for me to rise with the ace of clubs and play the queen of spades! Look what happens to declarer on that defence. Forced to ruff, he would be down to two trumps in each hand – with the diamond suit still blocked. If he draws trumps he has no chance. If he draws one more round of trumps before playing diamonds again, hoping I started with only two trumps, I still get my ruff. If he plays a club to the king and ruffs a club, I will get my ten of hearts.

Admittedly defence of this type – deliberately establishing dummy's jack of spades – is tough to find. You will surely never find it if you sit there pining for partner to return a diamond. I was wasting my time rooting for partner to defeat the contract on routine defence instead of thinking about how to beat it if he didn't make the right play.

The reality of bridge is that your partners will vary from great to bad – and even the great ones will not always see the defence that is obvious to you.

The same thing applies in other settings. When your opening lead turns out to be a bad one, don't sit there saying 'Gee! I wish I had made a different lead.' Spend your energy searching for ways to recover. There may still be time – and ways – for your side to prevail.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**When in Rome, do as the Romans do, i.e. when you are playing bridge think about bridge.**

Concentrate on what cards you should play or bids you should make rather than expend your energy worrying about what your partner should or should not do.

*More psychological advice follows from one of the best bridge writers of this generation.*

# Ecstasy

## Mike Lawrence *(USA)*

*MIKE LAWRENCE of California, WBF Grand Master, was a founder member of the Dallas Aces and won Bermuda Bowls in 1970, 1971 and 1987. Although he has achieved much in the playing of the game, he is perhaps even better known as a bridge author. Two of his books,* How to Read Your Opponents' Cards *and* The Complete Book on Overcalls *were named 'Book of the Year' and are classics, considered by the* The Official Encyclopædia of Bridge *to be 'mandatory requirements for a modern technical bridge library'. More recently Mike has diversified into bridge software with* Counting at Bridge, *an interactive tuition program that has been particularly well received.*

ALMOST everyone I know will admit to the following mishap. You are declaring, say, 3NT, and due to unfortunate circumstances, the defenders are running their five-card suit so you are going down at least one. Being depressed about the bidding, you discard poorly, thus messing up your entries. Suddenly, your eight remaining tricks become only six when the opponents take advantage of your sloppy carding. Three down. It's bad enough you're getting a zero, but even with your head hung halfway to the floor, you catch a glimpse of partner whispering to his kibitzer.

Sound familiar?

Bad news is infectious. It brings with it emotions ranging from disappointment to sadness to depression, any one of which can distract and cause muddled thinking.

Most players know that it is important to keep your wits when things go sour. The trick is to recognise when your concentration is failing and to get your thoughts back together.

The tough player does this automatically. The good player struggles, but usually succeeds and the rest of the world does it occasionally but not routinely.

You say, 'I know that.' I agree that you probably do know that, but do you really know it on a usable conscious level?

Strong negative emotions. They do obstruct our thoughts.

Is there anything worse for our emotions than bad news? Try this.

The bidding goes 1NT–Pass–3NT. You lead fourth best from KJ8642 of spades. Dummy has two small spades and 12 HCP.

Have you led into the ace-queen of spades? No. Partner plays the ace and starts to think. Does he have another spade? Is he thinking of switching?

Partner leads … a spade! Please! Partner leads … the spade ten. You are now in charge with six running spades which you proceed to take. Each one a little firmer than the one before, you pound out your remaining spades, the last one being especially satisfying because it is getting you +200. You're feeling a little ecstasy mixed with a little power as you turn the final spade. Feels good, doesn't it?

Now what? Cutting through a euphoric glow, you reconstruct the last four tricks. Let's see now. Partner discarded the – what did he discard? I know his last card was the seven of diamonds. But the one before that, and the one before that … Come to think of it, what did dummy discard, or for that matter declarer?

Do you think you're going to get it right? What if partner has another ace and you don't get it. Can you stand to see partner talking to that kibitzer again?

ECSTASY plays no favourites. It muddles your bidding judgement, your declarer play, and your defensive awareness with equal facility.

♠ 9 5
♥ K Q 6 2
♦ A 10
♣ A J 9 6 3

***Game All***
***Dealer E***

♠ Q J 8
♥ J 9 5
♦ K Q 7 3
♣ K Q 4

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Pass |
| 1♦ | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2NT | Pass | 3♥ | Pass |
| 3NT | All Pass | | |

West leads the six of spades to East's ace. This is your basic dull contract which looks like a routine nine tricks. Perhaps you have been unlucky to get a spade lead. For instance, if North hadn't bid Three Hearts, you might have gotten a heart lead allowing you ten tricks. Therefore, when East returns a spade ducked by West, you have to consider whether to finesse the ten of diamonds in order to try for ten tricks.

First, just to put your mind at ease, you cash the king of clubs. West pitches the three of hearts.

Eight fast tricks. Not nine. So, where is the ninth coming from? You have two possible plays:

(1) Play on hearts and hope spades are 4-4

(2) Finesse the ten of diamonds

Which play is right?

The answer depends on your opinion of the spades. If East returned the two, the suit rates to be 4-4 in which case you should play on hearts. If East returned a higher spade, then spades are likely to be 5-3 in which case you have to hope for the diamond finesse.

The issue here is very simple. Either you paid attention to the spade spots and made an educated decision or you didn't pay attention to the spade spots and therefore had to make an uneducated guess. If you allowed the comfort of nine apparent tricks to cloud your vision, you're in trouble. Conversely, if you ignored emotional intrusions and paid attention to the cards, then you were able to determine rather than to guess the correct play.

My BOLS tip is:

**Any time you feel yourself succumbing to an emotion, whether sadness, depression, irritation, COMFORT, ELATION, or ECSTASY, you should fight it off. STOP AND PAY ATTENTION.**

*I have heard it said that if you believe that bridge is 'only a game' you will never become a good player. I guess there is some truth in that but not everyone is destined for greatness. Many players all over the world enjoy the game at club level and the next tip is addressed to them.*

# Bridge is only a game – have fun playing it

## Ib Lundby *(Denmark)*

'The reason why you play bridge is more important than the result. Me, I play bridge because it's fun.'

*Zia Mahmood*

BRIDGE is only a game – have fun playing it like Zia, regardless of the results. From the day you play your very first tournament until you reach the highest level of competition, bridge will reward you more if you remember that it is only a game. Why not be like Zia and play bridge because it's fun?

I had a great time participating in the first Journalist World Championship in Salsomaggiore in 1992. Against Tommy Sandsmark and Rolf Olsen I opened very light and immediately lost control of the auction. I couldn't stop the train rolling until I arrived in 6NT, with myself as declarer. Perhaps my partner had also overbid a trifle because, after the opening lead and a look at the dummy, Rolf as West made a generous offer: 'Down two?'

Tommy apparently agreed, but I didn't: 'No, down three.' The Norwegians protested wildly so I had to play the hand trick by trick – down three. I got a zero, but bridge is only a game, so have fun playing it as we did.

NEW round, new opponents, new hand.

This one was a piece of cake – the final contract at every table was Four Hearts by South. The opening lead was obvious – West had ace-king-queen of diamonds and the suit broke 4-3-3-3. Ten tricks were made everywhere except when I was declarer. Why?

Well, like everyone else, I received a diamond lead, but from the wrong hand, out of turn. East found the lead from four small and although he deserved a prize for this he got a zero, because I used my right to forbid the diamond lead.

Naturally East apologised for his mistake, but West's remark is worth mentioning: 'That's all right, partner. I'm not sure I would have found the diamond lead anyway.'

They got a zero, but bridge is only a game – have fun playing it as they did.

NEW round, new opponents, new hand:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ Q 7 6 3<br>♥ A 9 7 4<br>♦ A Q 7<br>♣ K Q | |
| ♠ A J 8<br>♥ Q 8<br>♦ 10 8 6 4 3 2<br>♣ 10 9 | *N-S Game*<br>*Dealer S* | ♠ K 10 5 4<br>♥ J 10 6<br>♦ 9<br>♣ 6 5 4 3 2 |
| | ♠ 9 2<br>♥ K 5 3 2<br>♦ K J 5<br>♣ A J 8 7 | |

North-South were Alan Truscott and Phillip Alder. Peter Lund was East, and I held the West cards. This was the bidding:

| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1NT | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♥ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass |

I started with a low diamond to the ace in dummy and Phillip immediately played a low trump to the king. I followed suit with the queen.

Afterwards my dear partner called my play a mishap. Peter has never accepted me as a player on his level (where he stands alone). But my play actually gave us a chance to defeat the contract, so I may have some sort of talent. What happened?

From the South seat Phillip continued with a low trump and paused when I played the eight. Phillip: 'What's going on around here?'

Finally, Phillip decided to guard against the possibility that I was trying to get a hand with a Grosvenor Coup* for my daily column. In that case, I might have been trying to fool him by playing the queen of hearts from QJ108.

He asked for the 'safe' nine of hearts from dummy without realising the risk. So Peter as East got an unexpected trick with the ten of hearts and now it was up to him to finish the work: a spade return and a diamond ruff with the jack of hearts (perhaps the king of spades and a spade to the ace makes it somewhat easier for partner).

Unfortunately my partner didn't co-operate. In with the ten of hearts he returned a club and my deception was to no avail.

Even after this experience my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Bridge is only a game – have fun playing it.**

*You can't be rude to your partner if you don't speak to your partner (though a lot can be expressed via the eyebrows!), or so says the next tipster.*

*A humorous psychological ploy whereby a player makes a deliberate error that he knows his opponent(s) will never take advantage of because of its irrationality. The purpose is to demoralise.

# The Trappist rule

## Kitty Munson (then Bethe) *(USA)*

*KITTY MUNSON now works as a computer systems analyst in New York City. When she was well-established as a hopeful for international representation in the USA her then husband, Henry Bethe, moved to London for a few years because of his job. Kitty then represented Great Britain, winning the 1987 Common Market Mixed Teams and finishing third in the 1987 European Championship. Shortly thereafter her husband was recalled to the USA and, after a special appeal to the WBF that she should be allowed to represent her native country so soon after representing another, she was part of the American team that won the Venice Cup in 1989.*

THE hand is over and it went badly. Do you find yourself asking your bridge partner 'Why did you…?', to which the only correct answer is, 'Because I lost my mind.' Is she going to say, 'Sorry, I guess I lost concentration there.' Of course not, either she tries to justify her error – 'Well, if declarer had had … (fourteen cards)', or she defends herself by attacking you – 'If you'd played the seven instead of the six, I couldn't have gone wrong.' Now tempers start to rise, some nasty words get said, and how well does the next deal go?

Or how many times have you put down dummy saying, 'If I had bid Three Clubs instead of Two Spades, would it have shown extras?' or some similar query that the bidding has brought up. The fact that this sometimes

has a distracting effect on partner, resulting in an inferior line of play, may have escaped your notice.

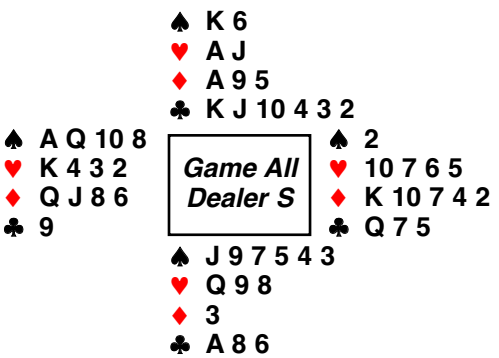
Well, I have an answer for you, my BOLS bridge tip is:

**Don't discuss bridge with your partner while you're playing.**

TAKING the Trappist vow of silence will eliminate the above two problems before they start; saving the analyses and arguments for later will improve concentration and reduce the error rate. It is best not to allow any exceptions, other than brief compliments like 'well played'. When partner uses a convention in an unexpected fashion, play it the way it was used or explained until there is a long enough break to make a new agreement.

If remembering hands for later discussion is a problem, write them down. Playing rubber bridge, keep a small notebook handy. In a tournament, there's room on the scorecard; make a note next to the board number.

Margie Gwodzinsky and I were strict Trappists while playing together in the 1989 World Championship. Our resolve was severely tested in the final by a major accident which swung 32 IMPs to our Dutch opponents (lose 15 instead of win 17), but not a word was said. This was the next board at our table:




| SOUTH | WEST | NORTH | EAST |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pass | 1♦ | 2♣ | 3♦[1] |
| 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | Pass |
| Pass | Double | All Pass | |

[1] pre-emptive

Hurdle number one, I almost passed as West (look at the rebid problem if partner responds Two Clubs). Margie stuck with our style and bid Three Diamonds, pre-emptive. Both these actions made it hard for our opponents to stop in a partscore. The last hurdle in the bidding was remembering to say double. All Wests offered this opportunity were equally greedy, and no North-South pair ran to the cold Five Club contract.

Next, a diamond honour was led and it was my opponent's turn. She played a club to the ace and a club; is it right to discard or to ruff and shift to a heart? I took some time here, but the hand was over; either play gets +200.

Gabriel Chagas, playing in the Bermuda Bowl, was the only South to make Four Spades doubled. He won the diamond honour lead, ruffed a diamond back to hand, led a spade to the king, cashed the king of clubs, noting the fall of the nine, and played a club to the eight. The defence ruffed and played a heart back. When the jack of hearts held, Chagas led another club and claimed; the defence could get only their three trump tricks.

My final hurdle could have been to find the winning defence if my opponent had played like Chagas. West must rise with the ace of spades at trick three and play a heart to North's jack. After ruffing the second round of clubs, another heart removes the ace from dummy. Now when West ruffs the third round of clubs, the king of hearts forces declarer to ruff with the king of spades, promoting a fourth trump trick for the defence.

What an interesting hand! Our calm and quiet after the disaster had paid off; we avoided making the available errors and not a single IMP was lost on this, or the remaining eight boards of the set. One of the interesting effects of staying cool, calm, and silent is that your opponents have more opportunities to go wrong. Try it yourself. I promise you that the Trappist rule will improve your game overnight.

*The next couple of tips are directed at the inexperienced. The first is an attempt to help relieve the pressure club players often feel when playing against experts.*

# Don't walk the plank

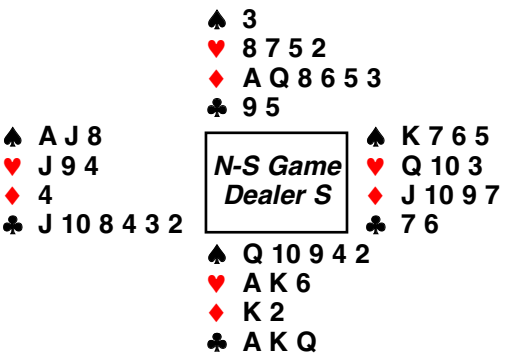
## David Poriss *(USA)*

*(In the 1992 competition, David Poriss submitted an unsolicited tip for beginners. Although the BOLS committee hesitated over its inclusion because it dealt with such an elementary level, it nevertheless became part of that year's crop. As David is an 'ordinary' bridge teacher, rather than a household name, I wrote to him and asked him to write an autobiographical paragraph which he did.)*

*DAVID PORISS, aged 47, was born, raised, and still lives in the Hartford, Connecticut, area. He is a bridge teacher and director at several local clubs but is known by all the New England tournament players as the wholesale and retail bridge bookseller. He is in great demand as a substitute lecturer at local tournaments whenever the main lecturer and the back-up fails to show up. He is also a sought-after kibitzer by the top players and is frequently asked to 'turn the dummy's cards'. Top players then listen carefully to his advice such as 'No spades, partner?' and he frequently apologises for the absent player's bidding. His greatest claim to fame is that he advised Larry Cohen on how to join the IBPA and to submit his tip to André Boekhorst, which eventually won. He is a Silver Life Master with over a dozen Regional wins, and was the winner of the ABTA's inaugural Apple Basket Award for best teacher's suggestion. He plans to win a major championship if only the partnership desk would fix him up with three world-class players. But even if he does win a major championship, his mother, Selma, will tell him his brother is still a better player.*

PICTURE how easy it is to walk across a board laid on the ground six feet long and one foot wide. Now take that same board and put it between two buildings ten storeys high and the same task becomes next to insurmountable. As the penalty for failure increases, one tends to change the technique. Whereas one would simply walk across a board on the ground, one might tend to crawl across it ten storeys up. However, the penalty for failure at the bridge table is only mental anguish not physical, so that the penalty for failure is only in the mind of the declarer. Most experienced bridge players forget how frightened novice declarers can become, and this phenomenon seems to be in direct relationship to the level of the contract in question. This even occurs with good players when their opponents are known as experts. When the spotlight is turned on, panic sets in, and logic flies out of the window. Overcoming the debilitating fear of failure as declarer can lift a player to a higher level of ability.

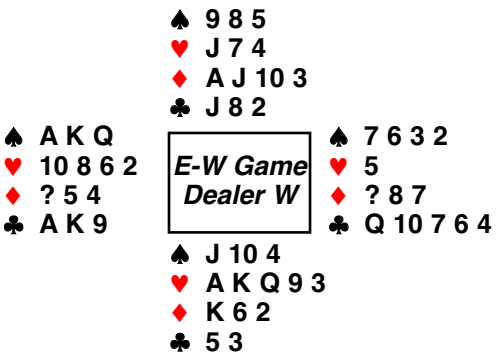
To illustrate this concept, here is a hand on combining chances by Hugh Kelsey. You are in 3NT and the lead is the jack of clubs. Cover the East-West hands and try your technique:




UNDER pressure at the table, many players would simply bang down the king of diamonds and continue playing diamonds, hoping for the even split. Away from the table, many players would discover the extra chance by ducking a trick in the heart suit (to maintain control in hearts) before running the diamond suit upon regaining the lead. But when your head is pounding and your heart is wildly thumping it is virtually impossible to realise the best technique or safest line of play.

There are two fears that go through the minds of declarers on this hand at the table. First, giving up the lead needlessly; second and more compelling, the perceived switch to spades. But a thoughtful glance at the Q109 combination away from the table would reassure us that no combination of spades would enable the opposition to take more than three tricks before we regained the lead to test both the diamonds and hearts. In fact the switch to spades would ensure the contract, otherwise the fourth heart in dummy now becomes the ninth trick when the diamonds fail to split.

Now you are playing against the international champion pair of Eddie Kantar and Alan Sontag.




Eddie, in the West seat, opens 1NT (15-17) passed around to you as South. At favourable vulnerability, you cautiously bid Two Hearts, at which point Eddie doubles. The stakes have been raised. If you make this contract your head will soar with the clouds, and if not you will fall into the abyss of humiliation.

Eddie bangs down the three top spades, then the king, ace and another club. You ruff and draw trumps. Your palms are sweaty, perspiration beads on your forehead, which way do you finesse for the queen of diamonds?

Eddie has already shown up with exactly 16 points, playing a 15-17 no-trump. There is no room for the queen of diamonds. Play East for that card. Or were you too nervous at the table to work this out? Understanding this mental process and overcoming the perceived fear is an important part of improving your bridge game.

My BOLS bridge tip is:

**Never let the level of the contract or the quality of your opponents immobilise your thinking process.**

Learn to walk mentally across the board, rather than picturing yourself walking the plank.

*What follows is sensible, physical advice to help the inexperienced remember what they have already worked out about the hand.*

# Move an important card

## Joyce Nicholson *(Australia)*

*Now in her seventies, JOYCE NICHOLSON did not turn to bridge until late in life though that didn't stop her winning the Australian National Women's Individual in 1983. She is a professional journalist, author and publisher and was awarded membership of the Order of Australia for services to writing and the book-publishing industry. She was the editor and publisher of* Australian Bridge *from 1985 to 1989 and the author of the controversial* Why Women Lose at Bridge.

*She has played in the last four Pairs Olympiads and reckons that her old age has been much enlivened by the many international bridge friends she has made – particularly members of the press – and especially Alan Truscott's drunken ditties!*

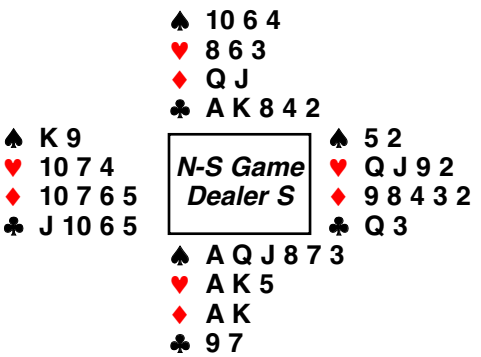
THIS is a very simple tip, but one that can help an intermediate player who occasionally finds it easy to lose concentration. You may have made a lead or planned a play that involves playing a certain card later in the hand. Maybe the card is not one you would automatically play when the time arises. The recommendation is to move that card to an unusual place in your hand.

For example, you lead MUD, middle up down, and you decide a heart lead is called for.

You lead the six from 862. About three or four rounds later, declarer leads a heart. Your concentration falters, you glance at your hand and automatically play the obvious card from 82 doubleton. You play the two (you give reverse count). You should have played the eight. Immediately you realise what you have done, but it is too late. Partner will think you led from a doubleton. He will get the count of the hand wrong, or lead a heart for you to ruff when next on lead. Horror of horrors!

Therefore, as soon as you lead the six, move the eight away from the two, maybe to the middle of a black suit, or maybe to the other end of your hand. You must do this, of course, without attracting attention, possibly rearranging several cards in your hand. You have to be careful about obviously moving a card that gives information to partner or opponents. When the next lead of a heart is made and you look at your hand, the fact that the hearts are separated immediately sends you a message. You are reminded of your original lead and make the correct play.

HERE'S a more complicated example:




You are South and arrive happily in Six Spades. You had been thinking of Seven. Dummy goes down and you feel somewhat dismayed. There is the duplication of points in diamonds, and the mirror situation in the red suits, and the lack of entries to dummy. You have a losing heart. All will be fine if the spade finesse works, but what if West has the king? You will have to set up a club trick by ruffing, to throw away your losing heart. The warning bells ring. You will need to be very careful. If clubs break 4-2, you will need two ruffs and dummy is woefully short of entries.

You think long and hard. If spades break 2-2 and clubs 4-2, you can still make it. There are two possible spade entries in dummy, provided you keep the three in your hand to lead to the six for the third round of spades in dummy.

So, you take the ace of hearts, lead to the ace of clubs in dummy, grateful to see both opponents following. You lead the four of spades to your queen and, as you expected, West has the king. Back comes another heart. They should have led a trump, of course, and then you would be finished. You feel a great surge of relief about this. Then you lead a club to the king and are again overwhelmed with relief that both West and East follow suit. Tension increases. If the spades break 2-2, you are making. You ruff another club, high, and then in your anxiety to find out about the spades, you quickly lead the three of spades to the ten in dummy. Relief, ah relief, the nine comes down from East. You take the trick with dummy's ten, and triumphantly proceed to ruff your fourth club.

Then you look at your hand in dismay. You have wasted the all-important three of spades! You have blocked yourself. You cannot get back to dummy for your club trick. How could you be such an idiot? You have planned the hand so carefully. You have allowed for the bad club break. You have planned to be able to get back to dummy with your three of spades. But you played it carelessly too soon. You are down one. Life isn't fair…

But, had you, when you planned your play originally, moved the three of spades to the middle of your diamonds, you could never have played that precious card by accident.

My BOLS bridge tip is this:

**When you have made a lead or planned a play that involves playing a certain card later in the hand, move that card to an unusual place in your hand in order to avoid playing it too soon by accident.**

You think you would never do such a foolish thing? Watch enough VuGraph, and you will see how even the top players do strange things occasionally, let alone intermediate players.

*The final tip is rather extraordinary. For reasons that will become obvious, it is only of relevance for duplicate players but reveals a side of the game that many may not have thought of.*

# Shuffle your cards!

## Toine van Hoof *(Netherlands)*

TWO days ago I received a letter from a talented young bridge player who had recently joined the ranks of the professionals. I was quite surprised that he had written to me, because I only knew him slightly. It was a cry for help from a desperate young man. It read as follows:

Dear Mr van Hoof,

As you probably know, some six months ago I was asked to play for the Bubbles team. I felt flattered. The team was by far the strongest in the country. They had won almost every team-of-four tournament the previous season, giving their sponsor a lot of publicity. Moreover, they made me an offer I couldn't refuse, so I didn't.

Soon afterwards I was invited for a team meeting. I was supposed to come to a rather shabby pub outside town. I arrived at eight sharp but didn't see any familiar faces. So I asked the bartender for the bridge meeting and she directed me to a small room at the back of the establishment. I entered the badly lit room and it took a while before my eyes could pick out three men sitting at a table. They were probably my team-mates, but I couldn't be sure.

The man in the middle told me to sit down and handed me a board. 'Pick up the South cards, but don't sort them,' he said and so I did. One of the other guys took out the North cards, sorted them and spread them out on the table. It took me a while to get used to looking at an unsorted hand but then in the light of a candle I faced this single-dummy problem:

♠ A J 9 4
♥ 9 7
♦ K Q 8 2
♣ A Q 5

***Game All***
***Dealer S***

♠ K 10 8 3
♥ A 6
♦ A J 5 4
♣ K J 9

'This hand was recently played in the Botahall Tournament,' the man in the middle said. 'You declare Six Spades and the lead is the king of hearts. Plan the play.'

I looked at the hand and saw it was a simple matter of finding the trump queen. I couldn't see any further snags so I quickly responded. 'I win the first trick, cross to the ace of spades and play the jack of spades, finessing East for the queen.'

'Okay, you made the contract. Why did you play that way?' 'I don't know. I just guessed and I'm usually lucky.' 'There is no such thing as luck in bridge,' the third man interfered crossly. 'It's impossible to beat the odds.'

The man in the middle put his hand on my arm reassuringly and asked me: 'What do you think happened at the table?' 'How would I know?'

'Not so quickly. Look at your cards. After the hand was over, declarer put them back in the board without shuffling or rearranging them first. Players seldom do, you know. I asked you not to sort the hand. Which card is on the top?'

'It's the heart ace.' 'And which cards come next?' 'Spade king, spade ten and heart six.'

Suddenly I understood. By looking at the cards I could see in exactly what order they were played in the tournament. So declarer took the first trick with the ace of hearts, laid down the king of spades and ran the ten. This lost to East's queen and he returned a heart for one down.

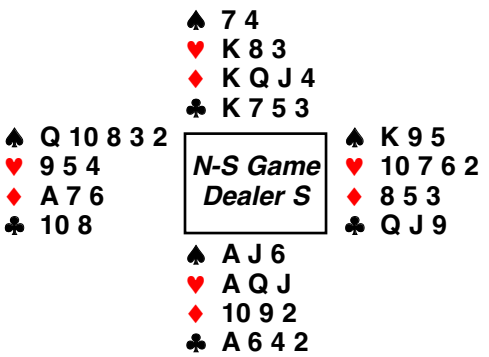
'At the other table declarer went one down!' I said, gasping for breath.

'Correct. You're a clever fellow. So in future, when playing for our team and you play the boards that have come from the other table, don't sort your cards unless you're capable of memorising the order in which you picked them up.'

'But that's cheating!' I cried. 'No it's not,' the man on the left said. 'It's merely a not very well-known expert technique, called reading the opponents' cards. You're allowed to draw conclusions from their bidding and signalling, so this is also allowed.' 'This meeting is over,' the man in the middle said. 'Just do as you are told and you'll see that your game will improve.'

I was in a state of shock when I left the pub. In the next weeks I couldn't help testing my newly learned technique, however much I disapproved of it. It was amazing indeed how few bridge players shuffle their cards before putting them back in the board. Sometimes, I was able to follow the play at the other table from trick one to thirteen.

It didn't bring me much real benefit, though, but then, in my first tournament for the Bubbles team, the following hand occurred:




It was the second half of a tense match against a team of good, though rather inexperienced, players. The bidding was 1NT–3NT and I could be sure that it had been the same at the other table. The lead was the two of spades (small from an honour) and East inserted the king. To make the contract I needed three diamond tricks. If East had the ace of diamonds, I should hold up my ace of spades twice to guard against a 5-3 spade split. If West had it, I'd better win the first trick in order to keep another stopper in the spade suit. There I was in a 28 HCP 3NT and I needed to make a right guess to fulfil my contract.

I looked at my unsorted cards: the six of spades on top, then the jack of spades, ace of spades, ten of diamonds, two of clubs and four of clubs. So at the other table, declarer ducked the spade lead. His jack of spades was won by the queen and a third spade cleared the suit. South then played the ten of diamonds and apparently this was taken by the ace. The small clubs strongly looked like two discards, so West must have had the ace of diamonds, together with five spades headed by the queen.

Feeling kind of guilty, I took the first trick with the ace of spades and laid down the ten of diamonds. I ended up making ten tricks.

'Well done,' my partner said. 'Well done,' my team-mates said later. Thanks to this board we had won by a margin of 12 IMPs.

In the months that followed I was able to apply the card-reading technique on an increasing number of occasions, not only in declarer play but also in defence and even in bidding. It helped me in choosing the right lead against 3NT from KQ9xx and it even kept me out of a 50% slam where I could detect that the king of trumps was offside.

But, Mr van Hoof, it somehow bothers me to win my points (and money) this way. There is no way that I could stop using these dubious techniques; my team-mates would notice immediately. And even if I left the team, I just wouldn't be able to neglect the order of the cards that I pick up.

Therefore, I turn to you for your help. Your column is read by a lot of tournament players. Please write about this phenomenon, of course without mentioning your source, and tell all bridge players all over the world to shuffle their cards before putting them back in the board.

Yours etc

I DON'T know about you but I was flabbergasted after having read this letter. I agree with the writer that this kind of card-reading comes very close to cheating, but there are no rules against applying it. So I'm happy to oblige with the request to publicise it and I submit the following BOLS tip:

**Shuffle your cards!**

*An even more diverse range of advice than in the previous sections. Surely there is not a player of any standard anywhere who would not benefit from at least one of these tips.*

# The winners

In the original three years of tips, only the first three places were made known publicly.

| | | | | *Marks* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1974** | | | | |
| 1 | Terence Reese | *England* | The discard tells the story | 425 |
| 2 | Gabriel Chagas | *Brazil* | The intra-finesse | 384 |
| 3 | Tim Seres | *Australia* | Give declarer enough rope | 377 |
| | Giorgio Belladonna | *Italy* | Hold up the ace of trumps | |
| | Charles H Goren | *USA* | Try the duck | |
| | Robert Hamman | *USA* | Build up a picture of the unseen hands | |
| | Rixi Markus | *England* | Lead low from a doubleton honour | |
| | Bobby Wolff | *USA* | Check out the distribution | |
| **1975** | | | | |
| 1 | Jean Besse | *Switzerland* | Nurture your trump tricks | 472 |
| 2 | Howard Schenken | *USA* | Take your time at trick one | 429 |
| 3 | Pietro Forquet | *Italy* | Count the hand and then play intelligently | 428 |
| | Jeremy Flint | *England* | Consider whether to lead an honour | |
| | Pierre Jaïs | *France* | Extend your distributional signals | |
| | Jim Jacoby | *USA* | Beware bridge players bearing gifts | |
| | Anna Valenti | *Italy* | Don't rush to draw trumps | |
| **1976** | | | | |
| 1 | Jeff Rubens | *USA* | Honour thy partner | 662 |
| 2 | Dorothy Truscott | *USA* | Show attitude to the opening leader's suit | 618 |
| 3 | Tony Priday | *England* | Practise the art of camouflage | 514 |
| | P-P Assumpçao | *Brazil* | The secret is in the timing | |
| | Billy Eisenberg | *USA*` | Play low from dummy | |
| | Benito Garozzo | *Italy* | Against a slam contract, attack! | |
| | Michel Lebel | *France* | Duck when you don't have the ace! | |
| | Sam Lev | *USA* | Third hand low | |
| | P-O Sundelin | *Sweden* | Be bold when you are defending | |

It is interesting that none of the tips in the first three years of the competition contained advice about the bidding. Perhaps it shows that the emphasis has shifted over the twenty year period from the play to the bidding.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1987** | | | | |
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| 2 | Gabriel Chagas | *Brazil* | The value of small cards | 312 |
| 3 | Ed Manfield | *USA* | The five level belongs to the opponents | 290 |
| 4 | Hugh Kelsey | *Scotland* | Guard your honour | 278 |
| 5 | Pietro Forquet | *Italy* | Always be ready to change your plan | 238 |
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| 7 | George Havas | *Australia* | Falsies | 134 |
| **1988** | | | | |
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| 2 | Max Rebattu | *Netherlands* | The high cards will be with the length | 94 |
| 3 | Bep Vriend | *Netherlands* | Look out for minus points | 84 |
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| 5 | Dirk Schroeder | *Germany* | Use the free space | 78 |
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| 7 | Phillip Alder | *USA* | Don't be impulsive – consider the alternatives | 62 |

| | | | | *Marks* |
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| 8 | Matthew Granovetter | *USA* | Picture the original shape | 60 |
| 9 | Sally Brock | *England* | Conceal the queen of trumps | 50 |
| 10 | Eric Kokish | *Canada* | Make the 'one for the road' a double | 50 |
| 11 | Jeremy Flint | *England* | Don't cry before you are hurt | 48 |
| 12 | José le Dentu | *France* | Tip for the pip | 40 |
| 13 | Alfred Sheinwold | *USA* | Don't think | 34 |
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| 4 | Terence Reese | *England* | Unfriendly play | 189 |
| 5 | George Rosenkranz | *Mexico* | Direct the opening lead during the auction | 100 |
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| 7 | Rixi Markus | *England* | Keep it simple | 98 |
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| **1991** | | | | |
| 1 | Chip Martel | *USA* | Play with all 52 cards | 430 |
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| 3 | Berry Westra | *Netherlands* | Don't follow your parter's signals blindly | 252 |
| 4 | Anders Brunzell | *Sweden* | Don't relax when dummy is strong | 182 |
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| 6 | Bobby Wolff | *USA* | Your tempo is showing | 152 |
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| 4 | David Birman | *Israel* | Give partner a suit preference signal | 206 |
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| | | | | *Marks* |
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| 7 | Aavo Heinlo | *Estonia* | Let the opponents tell the story | 132 |
| 8 | Ib Lundby | *Denmark* | Bridge is only a game – have fun playing it | 110 |
| **1994** | | | | |
| 1 | Jean Besse | *Switzerland* | Don't play idle cards thoughtlessly | 489 |
| 2 | Patrick Jourdain | *Wales* | Consider the discard | 407 |
| 3 | Qi Zhou | *China* | Play your honour earlier if it is of no use | 400 |
| 4 | Toine van Hoof | *Netherlands* | Shuffle your cards | 328 |
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# The **Complete** Book of **BOLS** Bridge Tips

*Not sure what to lead?*
*Can't decide the right bid?*
*Worried about your defence?*
*Want to make more contracts?*

You will find all the advice you need to to resolve these and many other problems in this book. Not only that, but all the answers are provided by the world's best players and writers.

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