

Table Talk

The Quarterly

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Editors

Mark Oettinger

Ingi Agnarsson

Editors' Message:

Ah, Youth! (Mark Oettinger)

As you will read later in this issue, Burlington Bridge Club recently hosted a group of 16 Hanover High School students. The 10-table Friday morning game was a huge success. Wouldn't it be great if more young people were to be entering the game. How might we promote that?

I was President of the Vermont Bridge Association in the early 1980s, during which time I circulated quarterly newsletters. The first of those opens with a pitch for youth promotion as an antidote to the graying of the duplicate bridge community. That was 35 years ago! It's remarkable how similar the issues were then, and now. A few differences that come to mind today: zero tolerance; no smoking; and smaller tournaments. But the need for youth promotion persists. What to do?

The Hanover students were incubated through the efforts of Burlington player Michael Morris. He was a math teacher at Hanover High School, where he founded a bridge club, and taught the game during "intercession" between semesters. He even took a group of students to the Philadelphia Nationals. All of our clubs are located close to middle and high schools, and many are near colleges. Many of our current players are teachers and administrators at those

educational institutions. I ask that readers email me with news of what you are doing to grow the game.

As we think about “youth bridge,” we also need to keep an open mind. So many of us learned bridge in college 30, 40, 50 years ago, and then “took time off to raise families.” Now, many of us have come back, and there’s a flood of empty nesters and retirees where we came from. In the context of an ACBL with an average age close to 70, let’s also target people in their 50s and 60s...people with 30 good years to give to...and get back from...the game.

Matchpoints versus IMPs; How Does the Form of Scoring Inform Your Declarer Play (Mark Oettinger)

| <p> ♠ K72 ♥ 6 ♦ AQ84 ♣ AK954 ♠ 10643 ♥ AJ85 ♦ K765 ♣ 6 ♠ AJ9 ♥ Q43 ♦ J109 ♣ QJ103 </p> | <p> Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>West leads the 3 of Spades</p> </p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | 1♣ | Pass | 2NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass |
|---|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|----|------|-----|------|-----|----------|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1♣ | Pass | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2NT | Pass | 3NT | All Pass | | | | | | | | | | |

If the conditions of contest are IMPs (Teams), making the contract is paramount. No unnecessary risk should be undertaken. Overtricks do not matter if pursuing them could place the contract at risk. As such, after the Spade lead, you have 9 sure tricks (3 Spades, 5 Clubs and a Diamond), and you should “take them and run,” before the opponents gain the lead and take enough tricks to defeat the contract.

If the conditions of contest are Matchpoints (Pairs), however, the analysis becomes much more nuanced. If the ♦K is onside, you can take 12 tricks. But, if the ♦K is

offside, you will lose that trick...and very possibly 5 Hearts...for Down 2. Should you try for 12 tricks?

The first question is whether 3NT is a standard contract. In this case, it seems extremely standard. For Standard American or 2/1 bidders, it is hard to imagine a different auction. Even Precision players, whose 1♣ opener shows 16+ HCP, will almost certainly end up in 3NT.

The second question is how much risk is involved. Given the absence of opposing bidding, it seems like 50/50 that the ♦K will be onside. Should you take a 50% chance of going down in order to gain three overtricks if the ♦K is onside?

What about the fact that you got a favorable opening lead? Any other declarer who is unlucky enough to get a Heart lead will likely be down off the top. Should you be happy to have avoided that fate, and just take your 9 tricks, hoping that the ♦K is offside?

How strong is the field, and does that affect the analysis? How strong are these particular opponents (or the East player specifically), and does that affect the analysis?

There are no sure answers to these questions. My inclination is to take the Diamond finesse immediately at trick 2. I hope that I could do so in tempo “in real time” at the table. My first instinct is to run the Clubs first, with the goal of getting at least a partial count on the hand, and perhaps inducing a defensive mistake. Note, however, that if you do run the Clubs, you have to find a discard on dummy’s last Club. What will you throw? The only thing that kind-of works is throwing a Diamond, but that will prevent you from picking up the Diamond suit if the ♦Kxxx is onside. Note that you can avoid the discarding problem, and still induce some discards (if you feel that doing so will help you more than it will harm you), by running only 4 Clubs.

Another collateral consequence of running the Clubs is that it will give the opponents the chance to signal. There is a potential downside to this, in that West

could show interest in a Heart switch, thereby dissuading East from continuing Spades if and when he were to get in with the hypothetical ♦K. That said, there is also a potential upside of giving the opponents a chance to signal, in that East could decide to (honestly) imply ownership of the ♦K. Were he to do so, it could dissuade you from taking the losing line of play. Again, this brings us back to the value of knowing the style and skill level of our opponents. There are some players who always signal honestly (bless them), and if East is known to be one of them, it may make sense to give him the chance to signal...or to take a negative inference if he does not.

Against weak or average opponents, I would probably run 4 Clubs, see if East signals to show the ♦K, and if he does not, take the Diamond finesse. Against strong opponents, I would take the Diamond finesse at trick 2, since I do not want to give West the chance to show interest in Hearts. After all, East knows from trick 1 that West led a Spade from 10xxx, which is probably enough information in itself for a competent East to find the Heart shift.

So...if I take the Diamond finesse at trick 2 (in tempo), I will win when the ♦K is onside...and when it is offside and East dutifully returns West's Spade lead...and even when East wins the ♦K, and shifts to a Heart, but both the ♥A and ♥K are in the East hand. By my rough calculation, taking the Diamond finesse is about a 70% proposition, and in Matchpoint scoring, the value of the overtrick(s) justifies the concomitant 30% risk to the contract.

It is sometimes said that "Matchpoints isn't real bridge," but even if you fall into that camp, it certainly makes the play of the hand a LOT more complicated...and interesting. For those who prefer the IMP form of scoring (Teams), I commend you to Ingi's treatment of "safety" plays. For those who relish the slings and arrows of outrageous Matchpoints, however, consideration must be given to "danger" plays as well.

Senior Moments with Junior Players (Ingi Agnarsson)

On March 15th we had a unique game at the Burlington Bridge Club when Michael Morris visited with an impressive group of high school students for an entertaining and refreshing game. How wonderful it is to see young people play bridge, and to do so quite well. Some in the group are already playing tournaments, and several are looking forward to more bridge in the coming years. Kudos for an amazing effort, Michael! What an excellent example of how to keep bridge alive and well, through active recruitment of youth. Wouldn't it be great if "someone" started a similar effort in Burlington? That someone has to be one of us. Who will take on the challenge? I hope the group will visit again. You are all welcome to come and play any time at the club, of course, and I, for one, would be happy to host students for a few days, if it would help the group to come for a bit longer visit. I'm sure that many others in our bridge community would do the same.

Despite the excitement, I felt tired, and I produced some fine senior moments to help the youngsters get some good scores. Board 4 was funny.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p> ♠ AK1032 ♥ 10 ♦ J10953 ♣ 62 ♠ 984 ♥ A9 ♦ A742 ♣ AQ109 ♠ Q ♥ J7 ♦ KQ8 ♣ KJ87543 </p> | <p> Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable West North East South 1NT Pass 4♦ Pass 4♥ All Pass </p> |
|--|--|

Sitting East-West against youngsters Peter Burnham and Andrew Chen, I opened 1NT (12-14 HCP) and Mark employed a Texas Transfer, bidding 4♦. I did as I was told (occasionally, I do abide) and bid 4♥, which Mark passed. This is a nice way to arrive quickly at the final contract, giving opponents no space to intervene. The lead was a small Spade to South's ♠Q, and a switch to Diamonds. I looked at the dummy and counted 10 tricks (correctly). Of course, my first thought was, "How do I get 11?" Somehow, this process mixed up 10s and 11s in my head, and resulted in a senior moment. As I was making my plan, I thought that

dropping honors in Clubs was the only chance for the overtrick, but I had few entries to my hand, as the $\heartsuit A$ had gone on the opening lead, and since I had no Clubs in the dummy. Could I force an extra entry? I counted eight trumps in dummy, plus the two in my hand...for a total of "11." As you may have noticed, my addition was a bit off the mark. So, I ruffed a club and "created" an entry by playing the $\heartsuit K$ from the dummy, and overtaking it with the $\heartsuit A$! When the trumps "split," I ruffed another Club and played a low Heart to mangy $\heartsuit 9$ hoping that the $\clubsuit K$ would fall under the $\clubsuit A$. Good plan, except, it fell a bit short when Andrew produced the $\heartsuit J$! Thus, I gave up an unnecessary trump trick, and went down one in a 100% game contract! They say that if you can count to 13 you can learn to play bridge. Is there hope for me?

Against another aspiring pair, Meg Snyder and Noah Pikielny, in Board 10, it was my turn to use the Texas transfer tool...except I did it exactly wrong!

| <p> \spadesuit Q96 \heartsuit 93 \diamondsuit KQJ6 \clubsuit 8763 \spadesuit A \heartsuit KJ8754 \diamondsuit A5 \clubsuit J1054 \spadesuit K8532 \heartsuit 6 \diamondsuit 109874 \clubsuit Q2 </p> | <p> Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4\diamondsuit</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4\heartsuit</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | 1NT | Pass | 4 \diamondsuit | Pass | 4 \heartsuit | All Pass |
|---|--|----------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|-----|------|------------------|------|----------------|----------|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | 1NT | Pass | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 \diamondsuit | Pass | 4 \heartsuit | All Pass | | | | | | | | | | |

Mark, sitting East, opened the bidding with 1NT (12-14 HCP). After South passed, it was my turn with a pretty 13-point hand. Now, 13 against 12-14 HCP doesn't sound very slamish, but there is a lot to like about my hand. First, an 8-card fit is guaranteed, and second, my hand has extra values. We discussed in the last issue how to approach counting shape as extra points. I have a singleton Spade (add 3 points), a doubleton in Diamonds (add 1 point), and 6 Hearts (add 3 more points in a guaranteed fit such as the one here). What's more, my $\clubsuit J$ is augmented by the supporting $\clubsuit 10$. So, I can credibly claim to have a good looking 19-point

hand. Now, with 19 against 12-14 you certainly want to keep your slam chances open.

The beauty of Texas Transfers is that there are two fast routes to 4♥ (or 4♠). The Texas Transfer of 4♦ (or 4♥, if the intended trump suit is Spades) gets you there in *one* round of bidding, whereas a Jacoby Transfer of 2♦ (or 2♠, if the intended trump suit is Spades) followed by a raise to 4♥H (or 4♠), gets you there in *two* rounds of bidding. It's the same contract, so what's the big deal? The big deal is that these two approaches differ, and they should have different meaning. Mark and I have the difference clearly defined. His bid of 4♦, followed by a pass of 4♥, in the previous hand, showed what he had, long Hearts but no slam interest. I did the same, but what I should have done was to transfer to 2♥, and then raise to 4♥. When dummy goes that route, it indicates a "mild slam interest." There is zero risk, since you are still at the 4-level! Armed with that information, and holding an absolute maximum, with rock-solid 4-card support, prime values, good concentration, and great intermediates, Mark would likely have pushed to the sharp slam (easily makes except on diamond lead from S, in which case one must find the ♣Q). Instead, I steered us into a mediocre contract.

Note that there are further implications of using these two transfer approaches. A Texas Transfer followed by 4NT by dummy asks for aces (or key cards, if you use Roman Key Card), whereas a transfer to 2♥ followed by 4NT is again an invitation, in this case a quantitative invite, with a hand containing 5 Hearts, to either a Heart or Notrump slam! This is a very useful additional nuance, which can come in very handy. Handy, that is, if you actually employ it correctly, as a good system on a convention card is no good unless you actually use it correctly!

In sum, Jacoby Transfers vs. Texas Transfers after an opening 1NT:

1NT – 2♦ (transfer, showing 5+ Hearts)

2♥...

Pass = to play

3♥ = game invitation

3NT = pick a game,

4♥ = mild slam try

4NT = quantitative invitation to 6♥ or 6NT promising 5 hearts

1NT – 4♦ (transfer, showing 6 Hearts)

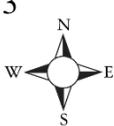
4♥...

Pass = to play

4NT = Roman Key Card (key suit = Hearts)

Mark's Comment: I think that Ingi is being a bit hard on himself. This 27 HCP slam is indeed cold without a Diamond lead. It also makes, even with a Diamond lead, when the Queen of Clubs is onside. As the hand was actually dealt, the Queen of Clubs was doubleton offside, and dropping it is not a percentage play. I don't remember what I got for a lead, but since I made 6, it apparently wasn't a Diamond. Frankly, a Diamond lead seems indicated from either defender, so I think I was a bit lucky. All of that said, the distinction between Texas Transfers and Jacoby Transfers is an extremely valuable one, and the hand is an excellent illustration of the principle.

I wasn't quite done yet. In our other board against Meg and Noah, the youngsters bid and played well. In doing so, they offered me the opportunity to show some "advanced" defense to get the better of them, but I roundly rejected the opportunity, despite partner's best effort to guide me.

| <p>♠ 9854 ♥ K 105 ♦ A 1065 ♣ 93</p> <p>♠ AKQJ3 ♠ 2 ♥ 42 ♥ QJ763 ♦ 972 ♦ 4 ♣ KQ6 ♣ J108742</p> <p>♠ 1076 ♥ A98 ♦ KQJ83 ♣ A5</p>  | <p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table><thead><tr><th><i>West</i></th><th><i>North</i></th><th><i>East</i></th><th><i>South</i></th></tr></thead><tbody><tr><td></td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td></tr><tr><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>2♦</td></tr><tr><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♦</td></tr><tr><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr></tbody></table> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | Pass | Pass | 1♦ | 1♠ | Pass | Pass | 2♦ | 2♠ | Pass | Pass | 3♦ | All Pass | | | |
|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|------|------|----|----|------|------|----|----|------|------|----|----------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Pass | Pass | 1♦ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1♠ | Pass | Pass | 2♦ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2♠ | Pass | Pass | 3♦ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The bidding went Pass by North and Pass by partner. I have to admit I would likely have bid something on those 4 points, but that's my job, not Mark's. South opened 1♦ and I overcalled 1♠. It went Pass, Pass to South, who reopened with 2♦. I stubbornly persisted with 2♠, and now North came to life with 3♦...Pass, Pass, Pass...to reach the par contract. The par result on the hand is down one, +100 for us, but that was not to be.

I led the ♠A, followed by the ♠K and ♠Q. Mark followed with the ♥3 (upside down, i.e., encouraging) and the ♣J, an excellent discard to show ♣J and ♣10. This is all I needed. I continued ♠J, which declarer ruffed, before taking 3 round of trumps. Declarer now took ♥A and ♥K, and played Club to the ♣A, for trick 7. The hand is now an open book, and I could have put the contract down one by jettisoning the ♣K under the ♣A, and ducking the next Club to partner's advertised and proven 10, allowing Mark to also take his Heart trick for down one! Except, I didn't. Instead, I had another senior moment and allowed Noah to endplay me with the ♣K, forcing me to give him a ruff and sluff...for 3♦ made! Perfect bidding and play, giving me the chance to massacre myself, which Friday-Ingi accepted. I guess I'm used to be among the youngest players in the club, and with all this youth around me, my brain got "seniorized."

The take-home for you young players is threefold. First, we welcome the Hanover High School students to visit again, and to keep learning this most wonderful of games. Second, a simple and true statement: bridge is awesome. It is the most strategic game there is, even more so than chess. As you get better, the more fun the game becomes, and the learning is endless. You will learn something on the last day you ever play bridge. And your eventual retirement will be full of joyful moments and excellent company! Third, never worry or get frustrated about your mistakes. Learn from them. That's how you really learn bridge, by making mistakes. So be proud of producing your own lessons. As I demonstrated on Friday, you can compete against and even beat "advanced" players, even as you are just learning the game, because we make mistakes just as you do. If you keep the game up, you may very well get to compete against world champions, perhaps even beat them in a short round. Is that true of any other sport?

Sequences After a *Penalty-Oriented* Double of our 12-14 HCP 1NT Opening, or of our Direct (15-18 HCP), or Balancing (10-14 HCP), 1NT Overcall (Mark Oettinger and Ingi Agnarsson)

We've become fond opening 1NT with 12-14 HCP. This means that a lot of hands get opened 1NT. About 50% of hands are balanced, treating any 5332 as balanced (plus, many of us open 6332 hands with a long minor). About 20% of the hands you get dealt have 12-14 points, suggesting that on average you get a 12-14 NT opening hand about 10% of deals—likely 2-3 per section. Compare that with the frequency of 15-17 points at around 10% of hands, thus 15-17 NT hands occur at about half the frequency of 12-4 NT hands! [note that following the same line of thought 9-11 NT openings would have the highest frequency, followed closely by 10-12—food for thought...]. Those of us who espouse this approach claim several benefits for the structure. First, it has legitimate preemptive effects. Second, follow-on bidding systems, which do not vary materially from those employed by partnerships whose 1NT opener shows a more traditional 15-17 HCP, are extremely well developed, with tools like Stayman, 4-Suit Transfers, Texas Transfers, and Smolen. To add to the frequency with which 1NT is opened, many partnerships open 1NT with a 5-card Major. For those who do, Puppet Stayman is a helpful adjunct, because it allows you to locate a 5-3 Major suit fit when the 1NT opener has a 5-card Major, and you have 3-card support.

Digression: Speaking of **Puppet Stayman**, why not play it after 1NT - $2\clubsuit$? Ingi and I do, and it works just fine. The only "loss" is the rarely-arising Garbage Stayman, which is a very small price to pay for the depth of information available from the more frequently-arising Puppet sequences. And, you are getting the information at the 2-level to boot! That said, Grand Life Master Allan Graves, of St. Johnsbury, Vermont, cautions that Puppet Stayman gives away too much information to the opponents, and that it thereby aids them in fashioning their defense. His favorite auction, he adds, is 1NT - P - 3NT - P - P - P.

Do you *always* open 1NT with a balanced and a 5-card Major? If not, have you and your partners agreed on the circumstances in which you do *not*? There is more than one view on this question, and I solicit reader input. Ingi suggests opening 1NT with a 5-card Major when the Major is either “semi-running+,” such as KQJ109, or when it is “just a stopper,” such as Kxxxx. I prefer a rule that “we do not open 1NT with a 5-card Major if we have only 2 cards in the other Major.” The rationale behind my approach is that responder will all-too-often transfer opener into his 2-card Major, thereby landing the partnership in a 7-card fit...sometimes even with an 8-card fit in opener’s 5-card Major!

Admittedly, opening 1NT with 12-14 HCP has certain risks. In an attempt to capitalize on that risk, many defenders use “penalty-oriented” doubles (*a la* Cappelletti) against opponents who play a weak 1NT opener. One purpose of this article is to suggest a system for reaching a safe contract after an auction which has started with our 12-14 HCP 1NT opening bid, or with our direct (15-18 HCP), or balancing (10-14 HCP) 1NT overcall, followed by a direct or balancing penalty double. Each variation of these six bidding sequences represents a different type of “Scramble.”

Scramble # 1: After an opening 1NT, and a direct-seat Double.

| | | | |
|-----|------|---|---|
| N | E | S | W |
| 1NT | X... | ? | |

South asks about the meaning of the Double, and is told that it is “penalty-oriented.” We use the following structure of continuations:

South’s 1st Option: A Pass by South is Forcing, and is alertable. The **Forcing Pass** requires North to Redouble, and South then either Passes again (if he is willing to have partner play 1NT XX), or South and North bid their **4-card suits up the line**, until a 4-4 fit is found. [Yes, there are rare cases in which we have no 4-4 fit.] Per the Law of Total Tricks, if there *is* a 4-4 fit, we should matchpoint well if we are allowed to play at the 2-level (on average, there will be the very rare -800). The contract may make, we may suffer a small minus. An opponents’

penalty double at the 2-level is relatively rare. The opponents may remove to a non-making contract of their own. There are lots of ways that we can come out on top.

South's 2nd Option: A **Redouble** by South says, "I have a **5-card suit**," so please bid 2C and allow me to "Pass or correct;" and

South's 3rd Option: An **immediate suit bid** by South says, "This is my **6-card suit**. I suggest that we play in this contract."

Scramble # 2: After an opening 1NT, and a balancing-seat Double.

| | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|
| N | E | S | W |
| 1NT | P | P | X |
| P | P | ? | |

In this situation, South does not have the Forcing Pass option available to him. He can Pass if he thinks that playing 1NT X is our best option. Alternatively, if he wants to Scramble, he can either Redouble or bid. I recommend that South's Redouble start the "4-card suits up the line" Scramble, that and South's direct bid of a suit shows a 5-card or longer natural suit. Unfortunately, being in the pass-out seat deprives partner of the 1NT bidder of one of his options.

Scramble # 3: After a direct-seat 1NT overcall (15-18 HCP), and a direct-seat Double.

| | | | |
|----|-----|---|---|
| W | N | E | S |
| 1S | 1NT | X | ? |

A *direct*, as opposed to *balancing*, 1NT overcall is a full 15-18 HCP. That said, West has opened, and East has expressed a desire to defend and a belief that you will be defeated in 1NT. A decent East player will have 10 HCP, and your prospects in 1NT are not good. You therefore want to Scramble. You have all

three options available, just like in Scramble # 1: (a) Forcing Pass (seeking the 4-4 fit); (b) Redouble (showing a 5-card suit, and asking partner to relay with 2C, so that you can “pass or correct”); and (c) immediately bidding your 6-card suit.

Scramble # 4: After a direct-seat 1NT overcall (15-18 HCP), and a reopening Double.

| W | N | E | S |
|----|-----|---|---|
| 1S | 1NT | P | P |
| X | P | P | ? |

Again, in the pass-out seat, you lose the Forcing Pass option. So...you Pass if you think that playing 1NT X is our best option, you Redouble to start the 4-4 run-out, and you bid your 5-card or longer suit to play.

Scramble # 5: After a balancing-seat 1NT overcall (10-14 HCP), and a reopening double.

| W | N | E | S |
|----|---|---|-----|
| 1S | P | P | 1NT |
| X | ? | | |

The balancing 1NT overcall traditionally shows 10-14 HCP. As always, in the direct seat, you have all three options available, just like in Scramble # 1: (a) Forcing Pass (seeking the 4-4 fit); (b) Redouble (showing a 5-card suit, and asking partner to relay with 2C, so that you can “pass or correct”); and (c) immediately bidding your 6-card suit.

Scramble # 6: After a balancing-seat 1NT overcall (10-14HCP), and a balancing-seat Double.

| W | N | E | S |
|---|---|---|---|
|---|---|---|---|

| | | | |
|----|---|---|-----|
| 1H | P | P | 1NT |
| P | P | X | P |
| P | ? | | |

As always, in the pass-out seat, you lose the Forcing Pass option. So...you Pass if you think that playing 1NTX is our best option, you Redouble to start the 4-4 run-out, and you bid your 5-card or longer suit to play.

In the context of Scrambles, it is always the partner of the 1NT bidder who initiates. In the direct seat, he has three options; in the pass-out seat, he has only two. This is a common theme across the Scramble sequences.

Here are two sample hands, identical save for the exchange of 2 cards between West and South, which illustrate two very different...and effective...Scrambles:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p> ♠ A83 ♥ K63 ♦ J104 ♣ KQJ9 ♠ 972 ♥ J10 ♦ Q83 ♣ 86543 ♠ Q64 ♥ Q87 ♦ A7652 ♣ 72 </p> | <p> Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable West North East South 1NT* Dbl** Pass*** Pass Rdbl**** Pass Pass***** </p> <p> * 12-14 HCP ** Explained as “penalty-oriented” *** Forcing Pass...requires opener to Redouble **** As instructed ***** 20-22 HCP between us...we’re odds-on to make </p> |
|--|--|

Even with best defense, we appear to have a logical path to 7 tricks.

But...if you posit exactly the same hands, with the exception of switching South's ♦A and West's ♦8, you are likely to prefer the relative safety of the odds-on 8-card Diamond fit. To get there, and assuming no interference from the opponents, you would Redouble in order to initiate a different sequence...which is illustrated below:

| <p>♠ A83 ♥ K63 ♦ J104 ♣ KQJ9</p> <p>♠ 972 ♠ KJ105 ♥ J10 ♥ A9542 ♦ AQ3 ♦ K9 ♣ 86543 ♣ A10</p> <p>♠ Q64 ♥ Q87 ♦ 87652 ♣ 72</p>  | <p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT*</td> <td>Dbl**</td> <td>Rdbl***</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣*****</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*</td> <td colspan="3">12-14 HCP</td> </tr> <tr> <td>**</td> <td colspan="3">Explained as “penalty-oriented”</td> </tr> <tr> <td>***</td> <td colspan="3">“I have a 5-card suit. Please bid 2C, so I can pass or correct”</td> </tr> <tr> <td>*****</td> <td colspan="3">As instructed</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | 1NT* | Dbl** | Rdbl*** | Pass | 2♣***** | Pass | 2♦ | All Pass | | | | * | 12-14 HCP | | | ** | Explained as “penalty-oriented” | | | *** | “I have a 5-card suit. Please bid 2C, so I can pass or correct” | | | ***** | As instructed | | |
|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|------|-------|---------|------|---------|------|----|----------|--|--|--|---|-----------|--|--|----|---------------------------------|--|--|-----|---|--|--|-------|---------------|--|--|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1NT* | Dbl** | Rdbl*** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 2♣***** | Pass | 2♦ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| * | 12-14 HCP | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ** | Explained as “penalty-oriented” | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| *** | “I have a 5-card suit. Please bid 2C, so I can pass or correct” | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ***** | As instructed | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

To review, the 12-14 HCP 1NT opener allows us to strike the first blow in many more auctions. Its preemptive characteristics will sometime deter the opponents from entering the auction as all. And, when the opponents do choose to enter the auction, having clear partnership understandings about follow-on sequences is critical to “staying low,” finding a fit, and giving the opponents other ways to afford us a good result. An unencumbered auction is a wonderful thing, but when the opponents do enter the bidding, it gives us additional ways (like free bids, passes, doubles and cuebids) to differentiate our holding for partner.

In a future issue of *Table Talk*, we will discuss how to handle auctions in which partner opens a 12-14 HCP 1NT, and your right hand opponent overcalls showing 2 suits. Depending on the opponent's system, neither suit, one suit, or both suits, may be known. Each circumstance lends itself to a different treatment, and consideration of Lebensohl must be part of the discussion. In my opinion, Ron Anderson's, *The Lebensohl Convention Complete*, is the indisputable authority on that topic. I urge you to acquire and periodically re-read it.

I Like Those Odds! (Ingi Agnarsson) Playing Common Combinations Odds-On; and the 'Safety Play' (Part 2, of 2)

In the January 2019 issue we ended our discussion on examples involving finding a queen, and accounting for singleton queens. In the same vein:

Combination 11

62

AKJ1093

Here going up with the A first is not best as the prospect of catching the Q stiff in W does not compensate for risking Qxxx in E. A nice way to think about this problem is that you are concerned with the 4-1 break, and if W indeed has a stiff, it is four times more likely to be a small card than the Q—there are, after all, four of those out and only one Q! Here, directly finessing is better. (note that we often claim games depending on such a finesse are “50%”, but this is often not the case. In the above example you only make in about 48% of cases as even if the finesse is on because you can still not deal with Qxxxx in E.)

Sometimes, taking an honor first is pretty obvious.

Combination 12

J32

AK54

If you need 3 tricks (you can never make 4 absent a defensive mistake), taking a top honor and leading towards the J is as good as you can do. The second best approach, taking AK first, is 15% worse as it will benefit only when the Q is doubleton in either hand, but lose when the Q is better protected in the W (and only

gain when the Q is exactly Qx in E). This kind of a statistic--15% difference in quality of different lines of play--is certain to cost you dearly in the long run, so this is one of many combinations that you should simply recognize and know how to play.

In other positions the correct line of play is far from obvious:

Combination 13

32

AK1094

If you need 5 tricks the best you can do is to finesse for QJ in E. Double finesses succeed around 25% of the time, and you also need E to have no more than 4 cards. If you only need 4 tricks, your odds, as always, are much better. But what is the best play? There are two approaches that are very similar in terms of success rate. However, be aware. In many previous hands we've cashed a top honor before proceeding further. Cashing one top honor only would be a mistake as that helps only when W has a stiff honor. Instead, you should either play 1) AK and then 10, winning in all 3-3 hands, and those with Qx or Jx on either side, or 2) finessing twice against E. The latter is ever so slightly better, for the main reason that QJ(x) in W is less likely than any combination of two small cards in W (again, there are more small cards than honors!). These approaches are about 65% and 66%, respectively.

In the following example the combined hands are of the same strength as in the previous, but the play is in fact quite different.

Combination 14

K2

A10954

For four tricks there is clearly nothing better than starting with the K. Both follow and when you play the 2 E follows low. Now what? The options are A up, or finesse. Either way works when the cards are 3-3 so that's not relevant, nor are hands where W holds 4 cards E holds 5 cards as the approaches will not differ in success. In what situations do these alternative plays succeed differently? Precisely when W has two cards (and E thus 4). That's when you'll gain going up with the A when W has Qx or Jx, or gain from finessing when W's doubleton is two small. Just a guess, right? In some real sense, yes, it's a guess. But one approach, all other things equal, has a slightly better chance of succeeding. There are fifteen possible combinations of doubletons among the 6 outlying cards: QJ, Q8, Q7, Q6, Q3, J8, J7, J6, J3, 87, 86, 83, 76, 73, 63. Note that more of those have an honor than not. Hence, it is slightly better to play the A and hope to drop an honor second! Your chances are pretty good either way, close to 70%. What if we transfer one of the intermediate cards to dummy, such as:

Combination 15

K10

A9542

Is this the same problem with the same odds of success? Far from it. Why not? Because now you cannot afford to take the K and then the A, as that will consume one of your middle cards! The superior play here is a low card towards the 10 which is a safety play accounting for doubleton honor or QJx(x) in the W. Again you make all hands with 3-3 distributions, but cannot deal with E having QJxx, so you are down to a bit over 60%. What if we now transfer one of the small cards to dummy? We're making a minor change to the hand with no change in the actual cards that the declaring partnership holds, yet the situation keeps changing.

Combination 16

K102

A954

Now declarer has only 4 cards and the safety play would be to secure 3 tricks (see how this links into why we count length in distribution points as per TT October 2018! There are more tricks available when one hand has long suit, even with the same strength cards). There are many possible ways of playing this combination. Can you come up with the best one based on the principles laid out above? What are the alternatives and how likely are they to succeed? Try to figure it out before reading on.

Playing the A and K is not bad, you get your 3 tricks 70% of the time. You could do better by playing to the K and then finesse the 9 on the way back. Best, however, is to play low towards the 10 in trick one with the aim of then taking the K and (unless W is out) the A. The last approach has the advantage over the previous two most notably in that it caters for QJx(xx) in W, and all cases where W has a singleton, while still picking most of the common situations that one or both of the other approaches will, such as 3-3 distributions and all hands with Qx or Jx in W.

Here is an interesting combination that I think many would get wrong, but refers to solution laid out in combination 14.

Combination 17

A3

J10652

How do you secure three tricks? I'm willing to bet that a lot of players would lead small to the A and small to an intermediate (J or 10). This seems intuitive, but once E plays a low card to the second round, it is now a question of what cards can you beat. We already know E has got at least two cards and it's not an honor second. So, in what situations will it help going up with a middle card? You always make if the suit breaks 3-3 and you never make when the break is really bad (5-1, or 6-0). So, again, the important situation is the 4-2 break, which, if you recall previous 'I like those odds' installments, is the most common way 6 cards break (48%) and

thus very relevant. Playing to a middle card in trick 2 wins when E has a small doubleton, but loses when E has Kx or Qx. As we saw above, combinations with an honor are more common than two small (missing six cards)—thus the correct play of this combination is small to the A followed by small from both hands! This gives you about 65% success. A and small to a middle card is not bad, but it is statistically (slightly) inferior. This brings about an idea if you are defending against an expert player that knows their stats. You are E with KQxx. Your best defense is to play low on the second trick, hoping the declarer is playing ‘odds-on’ and declarer will probably only ever get the one trick! Against a declarer you suspect might not know the odds, however, it might be better to go up with an honor.

Here’s a hand illustrating another example that may seem counterintuitive, but where the correct approach is to play for an honor doubleton, rather than two small, with six missing cards.

Combination 18

2

QJ97

A843

KJ32

AJ10432

K102

52

A7

S plays 4S and the lead is DK. You take the A and now what? Many would next, intuitively, play a spade to a middle card, the J or 10. This is a (slight) error based on the same principle. The best approach is to play small to the A and then a small card from declarer's hand. This limits the hand to two trump losers in all 3-3 breaks and all 4-2 breaks with Kx or Qx on either side. Playing the two towards a middle card right away also works for the 3-3 break, but only caters for Kx or Qx in E, but not in W. Why secure against honor doubleton on one side when you can safely

secure against honor doubleton on both sides? It is true that this will matter only rarely, but the correct play is cost free and gives you a 3% edge that will count in the long run.

Here is an interesting example of a combination that again depends on the number of tricks needed.

Combination 19

2

KQ76543

You got 8 cards in total, and if the suit breaks 3-2 you are in a pretty good shape. If you need 6 tricks you need to count on Ax in E, playing low towards the K or Q and then low from declarer's hand. But what if you only need 5 tricks? In that case, as in combination 7, your ***best play abandons the chance to make the maximum number of tricks for increased probability of making the necessary number of tricks***. Playing low to an honor gives you 70% chance of making 5 tricks, but the safety play is leading low from both hands! What is the point of this play? It caters for a stiff A in W, while securing 5 tricks in all the other distributions that were successful on the previous play. Of course, this relies on you having plenty of entries and time to develop this particular suit.

Let's wrap up with a couple of combinations with which even the experts seem to struggle:

Combination 20

A873

Q1092

You are playing for 3 tricks (4 are only possible in very rare cases, such as K stiff in W), and you have many options. I have a feeling that most people play this

combination by leading the A and then low towards Q109. I am sure I can remember playing this way on several occasions. And it's not terrible, but it is not the best approach. Superior is to play the 10 and finesse, followed by the 9 and finesse. Another double finesse with high rate of success (78% for 3 tricks). Of course, your ultimate success will depend on where the KJ are, and if they are in the same hand, you will lose when they are in the East and gain when they are in the West. The main difference, however, is that if you first take the Ace and lead towards the Q109, after East plays low on trick two, now you have a guess, going up with Queen loses to Kx, and finessing loses to Jx. The double finesse takes out guesswork and yields a higher overall probability of scoring your 3 tricks.

Combination 21

A10987

Q432

On this combination, it's the same principle, but be careful not to start with the Queen for a double finesse. Lead a low towards dummy, and you can double finesse, or, go up with the Ace if West shows out at trick 1. An additional benefit of leading low to the Ace is that you can pick up the whole suit if the singleton King is on your left, and if you have an entry to access the "thirteenth" at the end.

Play of the Hand - 10 Examples (Jerry DiVincenzo)

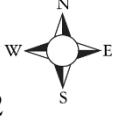
The following 10 hands are gratefully reproduced, with Jerry's permission. They were the pre-dealt practice hands from Part 4 of Jerry's *Play of the Hand* series. Credit is also due, for the production of this wonderful event and its exceptional materials, to Patti DiVincenzo, Mary Tierney, Linda Kaleita and Ken Kaleita.

1.

| <p>♠ Q876 ♥ 103 ♦ A98 ♣ J652</p> <p>♠ 3 ♥ K9862 ♦ 542 ♣ KQ104</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>♠ A5 ♥ 754 ♦ KQJ10 ♣ 9873</p> <p>♠ KJ10942 ♥ AQJ ♦ 763 ♣ A</p> | <p>Dealer South</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠*</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>*[4 card support, pending partnership agreements, could very well be treated differently, like with 3♣ Bergen, or 3S constructive raise]</p> <p>Opening Lead: ♣K</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | 1♠ | Pass | 2♠* | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass | | | |
|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|------|-----|------|----|----------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 2♠* | Pass | 4♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Declarer appears to have 4 losers: 1 Spade, 1 Heart and 2 Diamonds. Declarer can eliminate 1 Diamond loser by playing Hearts immediately. Discard a Diamond on the third Heart before playing trumps. If declarer leads a Spade at trick 2, it will disrupt the timing. East will win the ♠A and switch to the ♦K.

2.

| <p>♠ A4 ♥ AJ752 ♦ A862 ♣ A6</p> <p>♠ 53 ♥ 864 ♦ QJ10 ♣ Q10932</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>♠ K76 ♥ KQ103 ♦ K973 ♣ J4</p> <p>♠ QJ10982 ♥ 9 ♦ 54 ♣ K875</p> | <p>Dealer North</p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♦Q</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ | Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♠ | Pass | 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | All Pass | | | |
|--|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|----------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1♥ | Pass | 1♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 2♦ | Pass | 2♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Declarer has 9 tricks: 5 Spades, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 2 Clubs. The losers are 1 Spade, 1 Diamond and 2 Clubs. To reduce the Club losers to one, declarer should play ♣A and ♣K, followed by the ♣7, ruffing with the ♠A. Ruffing with the A

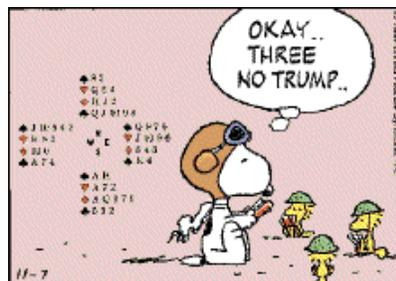
secures the 10th trick, while ruffing with the ♠4 runs the risk of an over ruff and a Spade return for down 1.

3.

| <p>♠ Q763 ♥ 1094 ♦ - ♣ AKJ652</p> <p>♠ 54 ♥ AQ2 ♦ QJ986 ♣ 1087</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ 87 ♦ K107543 ♣ Q943</p> <p>♠ AKJ1098 ♥ KJ653 ♦ A2 ♣ -</p> | <p>Dealer South</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th> <th>North</th> <th>East</th> <th>South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 ♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 ♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6 ♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">Opening Lead: ♦ Q</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> | West | North | East | South | | | | 1 ♠ | Pass | 2 ♣ | Pass | 2 ♥ | Pass | 3 ♠ | Pass | 6 ♠ | All Pass | | | | Opening Lead: ♦ Q | | | |
|---|---|------|-------|------|-------|--|--|--|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|------|-----|----------|--|--|--|-------------------|--|--|--|
| West | North | East | South | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1 ♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 2 ♣ | Pass | 2 ♥ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 3 ♠ | Pass | 6 ♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Opening Lead: ♦ Q | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

The declarer has 9 tricks: 6 Spades, 2 Clubs, and 1 Diamond. The key to the hand is to make enough Club tricks to avoid a Heart play. Trump the opening lead in the dummy and trump a Club. Play the ♠A and a small Spade the Queen, drawing the trump. Play the Ace and King of Clubs, throwing the 3 and 5 of Hearts. When both defenders follow, ruff out the Queen of Clubs. Ruff the ♦A in dummy, play the two remaining Clubs, discarding 2 more Hearts and leaving the declarer with the ♥K only.

Declarer makes 8 Spades and 4 Clubs for 12 tricks.



The best bid in bridge!

4.

| <p>♠ AK5 ♥ 742 ♦ AQ ♣ A9863</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ 865 ♦ 108754 ♣ KJ102</p> <p style="text-align: center;">  </p> <p>♠ 732 ♥ KQJ9 ♦ K963 ♣ Q4</p> <p>♠ QJ10864 ♥ A103 ♦ J2 ♣ 75</p> | <p>Dealer North</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 5px;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="padding: 5px;">1NT</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">4♠*</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>All Pass</p> <p>*[note that using Texas transfers, discussed in some detail above, partially solves the problem by placing the 4♠ contract in the stronger hand. A diamond lead is now a gift rather than a threat. However, after a ♥K lead the logic of the problem is the same]</p> <p>Opening Lead: ♦ 5</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | 1NT | Pass | 4♠* |
|--|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|-----|------|-----|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | |
| | 1NT | Pass | 4♠* | | | | | | |

Count your possible losers: 2 Hearts, 1 Diamond, and 1 Club = 4 losers. The key is to use the Club suit to avoid a Heart loser. Playing the Queen of Diamonds and losing to the ♦K will disrupt the timing. East will shift to the ♥K and the declarer will never get the Clubs going. Since declarer can set up the fifth Club for a discard if the Clubs are 3-3 or 4-2, setting up Clubs is a much better play than the Diamond finesse.

The declarer should take the ♦A and play a small Club. The defenders win the Club, cash their Diamond and switch to the ♥K. Declarer takes the ♥A, plays to the ♣A, trumps a Club (high if necessary), plays a Spade to the Ace, and trumps a Club. Play the ♠Q and a small Spade to dummy's ♠K. Cash the long Club and discard a Heart. Declarer makes the contract, taking 6 Spades, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 2 Club.

5.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p> ♠ KQ ♥ KQ85 ♦ J97643 ♣ 2 ♠ 42 ♥ J10964 ♦ K5 ♣ AQ97 ♠ AJ10987 ♥ A ♦ 102 ♣ K653 </p> | | <p> ♠ 653 ♥ 732 ♦ AQ8 ♣ J1084 </p> | <p> Dealer South West North East South Pass 2♦ Pass 1♠ Pass 3♠ Pass 2♠ All Pass 4♠ Opening Lead: ♥J </p> |
|---|--|---|--|

Declarer has 9 tricks: 6 Spades and 3 Hearts. To make another Spade trick the declarer needs to lead a Club at trick 2. If the defenders return a Spade, declarer wins the ♠A, trumps a Club and cashes the ♥K and ♥Q, making 7 Spades and 3 Hearts. Leading to the ♠K to lead a Club toward the ♣K will lose and the contract will be set when West leads his other Spade.

6.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <p> ♠ J63 ♥ 52 ♦ K84 ♣ AQ987 ♠ A107 ♥ KJ964 ♦ 72 ♣ 543 ♠ KQ5 ♥ AQ8 ♦ A963 ♣ J102 </p> | | <p> ♠ 9842 ♥ 1073 ♦ QJ105 ♣ K6 </p> | <p> Dealer South West North East South Pass 3NT All Pass 1NT Opening Lead: ♥6; East plays the ♥10 </p> |
|--|--|--|--|

Declarer has 5 tricks: 2 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and 1 Club, and needs to develop 4 more tricks. If East has the ♣K, the declarer will need a Spade trick. West is the

danger hand, and therefore, his entry should be attacked first. Play the ♠K. If East *wins*, and continues a Heart, duck one round, and then take the ♥A. Lead the ♣J to finesse for the ♣K. When it loses, East has no more Hearts. Win the return and cash your winners. If West *ducks* the ♠K, lead the ♣J and finesse for the ♣K. East wins and returns a Heart. Declarer has 9 tricks. If the Club is finessed before playing a Spade, East will return a Heart, and the Hearts will be established before you win a Spade trick...and the contract will fail. *When you need to knock out 2 entries in the defenders' hands, you should attack the entry in the danger hand first.*

7.

| <p>♠ AK85 ♥ 743 ♦ 9652 ♣ K6</p> <p>♠ QJ10742 ♥ A ♦ K84 ♣ Q75</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ 1062 ♦ QJ10 ♣ J109832</p> <p>♠ 63 ♥ KQJ985 ♦ A73 ♣ A4</p> |  | <p>Dealer South</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♠Q</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | 1♥ | 1♠ | 1NT | Pass | 3♥ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass | |
|---|--|--|--------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|----|-----|------|----|------|----|----------|--|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1♥ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1♠ | 1NT | Pass | 3♥ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 4♥ | All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Declarer has 10 tricks: 2 Spades, 5 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 2 Clubs. The key is timing when they are taken. Win the opening lead in dummy, and lead a Heart. West wins and leads the Jack of Spades. Rather than risking it being ruffed, play a low Spade from both hands and trump the third Spade in your hand. Draw trump. Cross to the King of Clubs to cash your King of Spades, and take 10 tricks.

8.

| <p> ♠ Q104 ♥ Q83 ♦ Q95 ♣ AK62 ♠ KJ9532 ♥ 6 ♦ AJ7 ♣ 1098 ♠ A86 ♥ AKJ10952 ♦ K4 ♣ 4 </p> | | <p> ♠ 7 ♥ 74 ♦ 108632 ♣ QJ753 </p> | <p>Dealer North</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>X*</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>* support double</p> <p>Opening Lead: ♣10</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | 1♣ | Pass | 1♥ | 1♠ | X* | Pass | 4NT | Pass | 5♦ | Pass | 6♥ | All Pass | | | |
|---|--------------|---|--|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|----|------|----|----|----|------|-----|------|----|------|----|----------|--|--|--|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | 1♣ | Pass | 1♥ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1♠ | X* | Pass | 4NT | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 5♦ | Pass | 6♥ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Based on the bidding, declarer should place the ♠K and ♦A with West. The declarer has 10 tricks: 1 Spade, 7 Hearts and 2 Clubs. Declarer wins the ♣A, takes the ♥A and ♥J in his hand, and leads a low Diamond. If West takes the ♦A, declarer can pitch his two low Spades on the ♣K and the ♦Q.

If West ducks the Diamond lead, declarer leads the ♣K, pitching the ♦K and plays the ♠A and ♠6 toward the ♠Q. The declarer takes 2 Spades, 7 Hearts, 1 Diamond, and 2 Clubs, for 12 tricks.

9.

| <p> ♠ 3 ♥ 985 ♦ J10762 ♣ 10854 ♠ A52 ♥ QJ4 ♦ K98 ♣ AKJ6 ♠ KQJ109 ♥ AK762 ♦ AQ ♣ 3 </p> | | <p> ♠ 8764 ♥ 103 ♦ 543 ♣ Q972 </p> | <p>Dealer South</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♣K followed by the ♣A</p> | <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | 1♠ | 1NT | Pass | Pass | 3♥ | Pass | 4♥ | All Pass | |
|---|--------------|---|---|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--|--|--|----|-----|------|------|----|------|----|----------|--|
| <i>West</i> | <i>North</i> | <i>East</i> | <i>South</i> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | 1♠ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1NT | Pass | Pass | 3♥ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Pass | 4♥ | All Pass | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Declarer has 4 losers: 1 Spade, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 1 Club. If Hearts are 3-2, declarer should play to ruff the $\heartsuit Q$ in dummy. Declarer should take one high Heart and lead a Spade. If West takes the $\spadesuit A$, and continues Clubs, declarer draws a second round of trump, and plays Spades, discarding Diamonds. West can ruff, but cannot keep the declarer from ruffing his $\heartsuit Q$ with the $\heartsuit 9$.

10.

| | |
|---|---|
| <p> \spadesuit 32 \heartsuit AQ52 \diamondsuit 964 \clubsuit KQ73 \spadesuit 876 \heartsuit 1064 \diamondsuit KQJ3 \clubsuit A108 \spadesuit AKQJ104 \heartsuit 87 \diamondsuit A102 \clubsuit 64 </p> | <p>Contract 4\spadesuit</p> <p>Opening Lead: \diamondsuit K</p> |
|---|---|

Declarer has 8 tricks: 6 Spades, 1 Heart and 1 Diamond. Declarer can develop Club tricks, or play to make the $\heartsuit Q$ if the $\clubsuit A$ is with East. The declarer needs his trumps for entries and should take the $\diamondsuit A$, and lead a Club toward the $\clubsuit K$ and $\clubsuit Q$. If it wins, lead a Spade to back to the hand, draw trump, and lead a second Club. If West takes the $\clubsuit A$, the declarer has a discard for his or her Heart.

If East has the $\clubsuit A$, the declarer will need to take the Heart finesse. With the current layout, the declarer has 6 Spades, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 2 Clubs, for 10 tricks. The important point is not to take trump before the first Club play.

Upcoming Vermont Tournaments

Vermont Sectional
 Burlington Bridge Club
 600 Blair Park Road

Williston, Vermont
May 17, 18 & 19, 2019

Sectional Tournaments at Clubs (STAC) Week
Burlington Bridge Club (5 sessions)
600 Blair Park Road
Williston, Vermont
June 24-30, 2019

Vermont Sectional
Battenkill Eagles
2282 Depot Street
Manchester, Vermont
July 12, 13 & 14, 2019

President's Cup
Location TBD
August 18, 2019 (tentative)

Vermont Sectional
Burlington Bridge Club
600 Blair Park Road
Williston, Vermont
September 13, 14 & 15, 2019

Vermont Sectional
Quechee Base Lodge
3277 Quechee Main Street
Quechee, Vermont
October 25, 26 & 27, 2019

0-500 MPs; Non-Life Master Sectional
Burlington Bridge Club
600 Blair Park Road
Williston, VT

January 25, 2020

Vermont Sectional
Burlington Bridge Club
600 Blair Park Road
Williston, Vermont
May 15, 16 & 17, 2020

Vermont Sectional
Battenkill Eagles
2282 Depot Street
Manchester, Vermont
July 10, 11 & 12, 2020

Vermont Sectional
Burlington Bridge Club
600 Blair Park Road
Williston, Vermont
September 11, 12 & 13, 2020

Vermont Sectional
Quechee Base Lodge
3277 Quechee Main Street
Quechee, Vermont
October 30, 31 & November 1, 2020

Vermont and Nearby Clubs

Lyndonville Bridge Club

Cobleigh Library
14 Depot Street
Lyndonville, Vermont 05851
Jeanie Clermont; (802) 684-2156
Saturday, 1:00 p.m.; semi-monthly; stratified

Manchester Equinox Village Open

49 Maple Street

Manchester, Vermont 05254

Elizabeth VonRiesenfelder; (802) 362-5304

Tuesday; 1:00 p.m.; 0-200 MPs

Tuesday; 1:00 p.m.; open, stratified

Sunday; 2:00 p.m.; February, March; open; stratified

Multiple sites; call first; reservations requested

Taconic Card Club

6025 Main Street

Manchester, Vermont 05255

Kim Likakis; (802) 379-1867

Thursday; 12:30 p.m.; open; reservations requested

Apollo Bridge Club

115 Main Street

Montpelier, Vermont 05602

Wayne Hersey; (802) 223-3922

Friday; 6:30 p.m.; open

Newport Club

84 Fyfe Street

Newport Center, Vermont 05855

Eric McCann; (802) 988-4773

Wednesday; 1:00 p.m.; exc. Jan, May, Oct, Nov, Dec; open; stratified

Barton Bridge Club

34 School Street

Orleans, Vermont 05860

Linda Aiken; (802) 525-4617

Monday; 12:30 p.m.; open; stratified

Rutland Duplicate Bridge Club

66 South Main Street
Christ the King Church
Rutland, Vermont 05701
Raymond Lopes; (802) 779-2538
Monday, 12:00 Noon; open; stratified
Tuesday; 6:00 p.m.; open; stratified
Thursday; 6:00 or 6:30 p.m. (time changes seasonally...call first); open; stratified
Multiple sites - call first for locations

St. Albans DBC

75 Messenger Street
St. Albans, Vermont 05478
Marsha Anstey; (802) 524-3653
Monday; 7:00 p.m.; open

Burlington Bridge Club

600 Blair Park Road
Williston, Vermont 05495
Phil Sharpsteen; (802) 999-7767
Monday; 6:30 p.m.; 0-500 MPs; stratified
Tuesday; 7:00 p.m.; open; stratified (call first November-April)
Wednesday; 9:15 a.m.; open; stratified
Wednesday; 1:30 p.m. 0-20 MPs; strat'd; may resume Fall; pre-reg. & part. req'd
Friday; 9:15 a.m.; open; stratified
Sunday; 1PM; open; semi-mo. exc. May, June, July, Aug; strat.; call/check web
Website: www.bridgewebs.com/burlingtonacademy/

Norwich DBC

43 Lebanon Street
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755
Paul Hoisington; (802) 249-0839
hoise430@gmail.com
Tuesday; 6:30 p.m.; open; stratified

Quechee Duplicate Bridge Club

Quechee Club

3268 Quechee Main Street

Quechee, Vermont 05059

Karen Randle; (802) 225-6640; klhewitt9@gmail.com

Monday; 1:00 p.m.; open; stratified

Eastman Bridge Club

48 Lebanon Street Street, Hanover, NH (Wednesday at 1:00 + Friday at 1:00)

6 Club House Lane, Grantham, NH (Tuesday at 12:30)

Jane Verdrager; (603) 865-5508

Website: www.eastmanbridgeclub.com

Keene DBC

Elks Lodge

81 Roxbury Street

Keene, New Hampshire 03431

Anne McCune; (603) 352-2751

Monday; 12:00 Noon; open; stratified (partner available)

Thursday; 12:00 Noon; open; stratified (no partner guaranteed)

Ticonderoga (New York) DBC

109 Champlain Avenue

Ticonderoga, New York 12883

Michael Rogers; (518) 585-3322

Monday; 12:30 p.m.; open; stratified; reservations requested

Thursday; 12:30 p.m.; open; stratified; reservations requested

Plattsburgh (New York) DBC

5139 North Catherine Street

Plattsburgh, New York 12901

George Cantin; (518) 563-6639

Tuesday; 6:45 p.m.; open; handicap

Thursday; 6:45 p.m.; open

Friday; 12:30 p.m.; open

Useful & Fun Links

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| ACBL | <u>www.acbl.org</u> |
| District 25 | <u>www.nebridge.org</u> |
| Unit 175 | <u>www.vermontbridge.org</u> |
| Bridge Base Online | <u>www.bridgebase.com</u> |
| OKBridge | <u>www.okbridge.com</u> |
| Bridge Guys | <u>www.bridgeguys.com</u> |
| Pattaya Bridge Club | <u>www.pattayabridge.com</u> |
| Larry Cohen | <u>www.larryco.com</u> |
| Mike Lawrence | <u>https://michaelslawrence.com/</u> |
| Marty Bergen | <u>www.martybergen.com</u> |
| Baron Barclay Bridge Supply | <u>www.baronbarclay.com</u> |
| Michael's Bridge Sanctuary | <u>www.mapiano.com/bridge.htm</u> |
| Power Rankings | <u>www.coloradospringsbridge.com/PR_FILES/PR.HTM</u> |