

MALENY CONTRACT BRIDGE CLUB

This is the tenth bridge article for members of our club.

Last Week's Problem

North Deals ♠ A K Q J
None Vul ♥ A 9 8 5 3
 ♦ —
 ♣ K 7 5 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 9 8 7
♥ 7 2
♦ A Q 8 7 6 4
♣ Q

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Dbl	4 ♠	All pass	

Lead: ♠ 3

Count your tricks. You have one in hearts and one in diamonds and can establish one in clubs. If you can make 7 tricks by cross-trumping, you are home. This is what would happen if West had not led a trump. Suppose West led a heart. Win the A in North, lead 2 ♣. The opponents win the A♣ and can lead a trump to cut down on your cross-trumping. But you can still make 7 trump tricks after winning their trump return and cross-trumping with your 6 remaining trumps.

For his double, West will have all or nearly all the outstanding high cards. West probably decided that, because he held all those high cards, the only way you can make your contract is by trumping and he led a trump to cut down your cross-trumping potential. He was right. When he gets in with the A♣, he will certainly lead another trump. You will then only have 6 trump tricks (the A and K plus tricks from each of your 4 remaining trumps) and you will be one trick short of your contract.

Is there a way for you to make another trick? You could try to set up a second trick in diamonds, but even if you could establish it, you would have no entry to cash it after drawing trumps. What about hearts? If they are 4-3, can you set up the fifth heart for your tenth trick? The best way is to lead 3 ♥ from North at trick 2. The opponents will lead another trump to stop you from cross trumping. Now play A♥ from North and trump a heart. Now play Q♣ from South. West will win. If he doesn't have a third trump (as is likely from the bidding), he will have to lead something else.

A diamond lead gives you an extra diamond trick for your tenth trick (so you don't need the hearts after all).

A club lead is won with North's king; a heart from North trumped by South to establish the fifth heart. South plays A♦ and trumps a small diamond in North, who can now draw trumps and play their established heart winner.

Similarly, a heart lead from West allows South to trump to establish the fifth heart and the play proceeds as before.

This hand illustrated the importance of stopping and thinking at trick 1 and also having sufficient entries in the correct hand to succeed.

Look at the next hand. Remember our aim is to give ourselves the best chance to make the contract. Overtricks and extra undertricks are irrelevant. You are South, the declarer in each hand.

North Deals	♠ A J 10		
None Vul	♥ A 9 8 4 3		
	♦ A K 6		
	♣ K 8		
			
	♠ K 7		
	♥ 7 5		
	♦ 7 5 4 2		
	♣ Q J 10 9 7		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♥	Pass	1 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	
	Lead: ♠ 2		

What is your plan for this hand?

The lead has given you a free finesse and a guaranteed 3 spade tricks. You play the Jack of spades in dummy and when East plays the Queen you win the King. You have 2 more spade tricks in North's hand. Looks good. Now you think about where the rest of your tricks are coming from. You have 2 diamond tricks, a heart trick and four club tricks once you knock out the ace. You lead the 7♣ from South and play the K♣ in dummy and it wins. You return the 8♣ from North and the opponents win their ace. You now have 3 club tricks in the South hand and no way to get to them. You are left with 7 tricks only (3 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 1 club). Two down. Instead of leading the 8♣ after winning the K♣, you could try to establish an extra 2 tricks in hearts. This will succeed if hearts split 3-3. So after winning the K♣, lead any heart and keep leading hearts when you get in. You have plenty of entries and enough high cards in spades and diamonds to ensure the opponents cannot take 5 tricks before you take your 9.

However, if you played like this, you weren't thinking before you played a card at trick 1. As dummy goes down, you count your tricks. And make a plan. If you can make 4 tricks from clubs, 2 diamonds, 1 heart and 2 spades, you have enough. To take 4 club tricks, you need an entry in South's hand after you knock out the A♣. That entry is the K♠. By playing the J♠ from the North hand to gain an extra spade trick, you lost your K♠ entry when East played the Q♠. This cost you 3 club tricks. You should refuse the free finesse at trick 1 and play the A♠ from North. This keeps the K♠ intact as a future entry. Now lead K♣ from North and play

clubs till they take their ace. You can then take 9 tricks (2 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 4 clubs), making your contract. You do not need hearts 3-3.

Here is another hand where you must be careful with entries.

South Deals	♠ Q		
None Vul	♥ Q J 10 9 4		
	♦ A 9 8 2		
	♣ 8 7 3		
			
	♠ A J 4		
	♥ A 7		
	♦ K 5 4 3		
	♣ A 5 4 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
2 ♠	3 ♥	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
	Lead: ♠ 5		

North plays the Q♠, which wins. South can count 2 spade tricks, 4 heart tricks, 2 diamonds and 1 club. That's 9 tricks. It seems safe to play for an overtrick by taking the heart finesse, but it isn't. If it wins and the K♥ doesn't fall under the ace, you suddenly need two entries to North to make the 4 heart tricks. You only have one entry.

Instead, you must not try the heart finesse. At trick 2, just lead the 4♥ from North, win the A♥ in South's hand and knock out the K♥. You now have an entry in North's hand to make all 4 hearts tricks that you need.

In the previous two hands, you were able to count 9 certain tricks at trick 1 but you may have been distracted by the prospect of an extra trick that you forgot about entries and went down. Here is another hand with a variation

South Deals ♠ 9 6 5
 None Vul ♥ 7 5
 ♦ Q J 9 4 3
 ♣ Q 8 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A Q 7 3
 ♥ A Q 8 4
 ♦ A K
 ♣ K 10 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3 NT	All pass	2 NT ¹
	1. 21-22 HCP balanced		

Lead: ♣ 5

North plays the 4 ♣ and East plays the 3 ♣. What is your plan?

You have 4 top tricks (1 in spades, 1 in hearts and 2 in diamonds) and can easily set up 2 more in clubs, thanks to the club lead. There does not seem to be a way to make this contract without being able to get to North's hand to take 3 more diamond tricks after you play A♦ and K♦ from your hand.

Suppose you win the first trick with the 10♣ and play A♦ and K♦ from South. What next? You might try playing the K♣ in the hope the opponents will win their ace and use the Q♣ as an entry to the three diamond tricks, making 9 tricks as required. Will they play their ace? Not likely. They can see you may not have an entry to North's diamonds and will keep their ace to stop you getting to North's hand. If, instead of K♣, you play 9♣, they will play the A♣ on this trick to stop you getting to dummy. Your K♣ will win the next club trick and you will not have a chance to get to dummy's diamonds. With luck, you might make 7 tricks.

Is there nothing we can do? Who do you think has the A♣? Probably West, since East would usually have played it on the first trick if he had it. Certainly, with only 2 clubs, he would play the A♣ to avoid blocking the suit.

If West has the A♣, the solution is to win the first trick with the King, not the 10. Now you can play the ace and king of diamonds and lead a club from South towards the Queen in North. West is then incapable of stopping you from reaching North's diamonds.

East may have 3 clubs including the ace and be keeping his ace to play on the Queen. If so, there is nothing you can do. You cannot get to North's hand and will go well down. Just congratulate East on their good defence (not playing the ace at trick 1) and get on with the next hand.

This week, we have looked at examples of some of subtle entry management ideas. In all cases you must be aware of what you are trying to achieve and not be distracted by other things. Next week we'll look at examples of some other ideas. Without giving a hint of what that is, try to work out your plan on this hand.

West Deals ♠ A 8 5 4
 None Vul ♥ Q 6 5
 ♦ Q J 8 4 3 2
 ♣ —



♠ K Q J 10 9
 ♥ 10 7 4
 ♦ A
 ♣ K J 10 9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	1 ♦	1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♥	2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

Lead: ♥2

West lead 2 ♥ and East plays J♥.

East plays A♥ and then leads 3 ♥ to West's K♥.

West leads the 7♠.

Where are your 10 tricks coming from?