MALENY CONTRACT BRIDGE CLUB

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

Solution from last week

East Deals
None Vul

♠ K 10 7
♥ K 6 5 4
♦ J 2
♣ K J 9 6

♠ A Q J 2
♥ J 10 9 8
♦ 9 8 4
♣ Q 4

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	1 NT[1]
Pass	2 ♣[2]	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. 15-17 balanced
2. Stayman

Lead: ♣ 2

You are East. North plays the 6 ♣ on your partner's lead. You play the Q and it wins, declarer playing the 3.
What can you deduce about West and South's hands?

1. Your partner has the A♣ since otherwise declarer would have played it at trick 1.
2. South has all the other high cards you can't see (A♥, Q♥, A♦, K♦, Q♦). This is because he has 15-17 HCP for his opening bid of 1 NT and these 15 HCP are the only high cards South can have.
3. South has 4 spades since he bid 2 ♠ over his partner's Stayman enquiry.
4. You partner almost certainly has 4 clubs since he led the 2 ♣. (With more, he would have led his fourth highest and his fourth highest would be higher than the 2).
5. South has 3 clubs since your partner has 4.
6. South must have at least 3 diamonds since he has the AKQ.
7. South has either 4 diamonds and two hearts or 3 diamonds and 3 hearts, since he has a balanced hand with 7 black cards and therefore 6 red cards. It is most likely to be 4 diamonds and 3 hearts, since, if he has only 3 diamonds, your partner will have 5 diamonds and would most likely led a diamond.

Let's see all four hands since we've worked them out except for a few irrelevant small cards.

East Deals
None Vul

♠ K 10 7
♥ K 6 5 4
♦ J 2
♣ K J 9 6

♠ 8 6
♥ 7 3 2
♦ 10 7 6 5
♣ A 7 3 2

♠ A Q J 2
♥ J 10 9 8
♦ 9 8 4
♣ Q 4

♠ 9 5 4 3
♥ A Q
♦ A K Q 3
♣ 10 8 5

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		Pass	1 NT[1]
Pass	2 ♣[2]	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. 15-17 balanced
2. Stayman

Lead: ♣ 2

We are now going to see how you can defend to beat 3 NT. To do this, we don't need the full details of the hand we've just worked out, just some of it.
We know West has A♣ and that South can take at most 4 diamond tricks and 3 heart tricks before he has to lead clubs and will be able to establish 2 more for a total of 9. When in with A♣, West can lead a spade and you can take 2 spade tricks. However, 2 spade tricks and 2 club tricks aren't enough. What can we lead back at trick 2 to change this? Clearly any lead but a spade cannot be good enough.
Leading the A♠ at trick 2 doesn't work. Nor does leading Q♠ or J♠. Declarer will win the K and his fourth spade (he showed 4 spades in the bidding) will stop you making more than 2 spade tricks.

What you must do is lead the 2 ♠ at trick 2. Declarer will win but have at most 8 tricks before he must lead clubs (1 spade, 3 hearts and 4 diamonds). Your partner will win the A and returns a spade. Now you can take 3 spade tricks with your A, Q and J since North's K will fall under your ace and your spades beat South's spades. This defence is difficult to find because the usefulness of ducking a round of spades at trick 2 in preparation for your partner to lead a second round through dummy's K is not immediately obvious. Congratulations to anyone who decided to play 2 ♠ at trick 2.

More examples of inference by defenders

We have seen several examples of varying complexity illustrating the value of signalling by defenders. Here are some more. In each of the hands, you are East.

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

♠ J 10 8 2
♥ A 7 2
♦ A 8 4 3
♣ A 8

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT
All pass			

Lead: ♣ 2

North plays 3 ♣, you play A♣ and South plays 7 ♣. What do you lead at trick 2?
You have enough information to determine South's distribution. What is it?
West has at most 4 clubs because he led the 2. South has at most 4 clubs, since with 5, the bidding would be different. So clubs are 4-4 in the unseen hands.
South has at most4 hearts or he would open 1 ♥. West has at most 4 hearts; with 5, he would surely have led a heart. So hearts are 4-4 in the unseen hands.
South has at least 4 diamonds (with 3 he would open 1 ♣ not 1 ♦).
Hence South has either 0 or 1 spade (probably 1) and your partner has 3, which must include the A or Q or both.
Lead the 2 ♠. The normal lead from J108 would be the J, but because your partner is known to have the A or Q, leading the 2 will maximise your spade tricks.
South's hand: ♠ Q ♥ KJ109 ♦ Q1065 ♣ KQ107
West's hand : ♠ A73 ♥ 8654 ♦ K2 ♣ 9652
West wins the A♠ at trick 2 and leads a spade back. You will take 7 tricks (3 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 2 clubs).
West had led from his strongest 4 card suit (not by much). On this hand, the message about spades would have been lost to those using the convention to lead top or second top from 4 or more small cards. Here the count of the suits was important to be able to discover that South had a singleton spade, despite his 1 NT rebid.
It was necessary to lead a spade at trick 2. Otherwise South has 3 club tricks, can establish 3 heart tricks and can't be stopped from taking a spade trick or a diamond trick, total 7 tricks.

South Deals ♠ A J 8 5
None Vul ♥ K Q 8
♦ 8 4 3
♣ 5 3 2

♠ 6 3
♥ A J 9 6 3 2
♦ A 7 5
♣ J 6

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

Lead: ♥ 4

North plays 8♥, you play A♥ and South plays the 10. What do you lead at trick 2?
How many hearts do you think West has? You and your partner have an agreement that with 3 small cards in a suit, you lead the middle one (called MUD: Middle Up Down). If West has 2 hearts, he would lead the top one, but the 4 is the lowest card out. If West had 3 hearts (754), he would lead the 5 not the 4. Therefore West has 1 heart and he will trump when you lead a heart back.
Which heart do you lead? You would like him to return a diamond after he trumps the heart, so you can lead another heart for him to trump. This is exactly the situation where McKenny suit preference signals apply. If you lead a high heart, you are asking for a diamond lead (the higher of the other two suits; not the suit your partner is trumping and not trumps). Don't be subtle. Lead the J♥.
How do you know that your partner has a second trump to trump the third round of hearts? Well you don't for sure, but a singleton lead is not very attractive with a singleton trump.

South Deals ♠ Q 10 9
None Vul ♥ 10 8
♦ Q 9 5
♣ K Q J 9 7

♠ 8 7 2
♥ 6 5 3 2
♦ A K J 8 3
♣ 4

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

Lead: ♠ 3

North plays the 9♠. What do you play?
You have no reason to encourage spades and every reason to encourage West to lead a diamond. Play the 2 ♠.
South plays the 5 ♠. North now leads 7 ♣, you play the 4 ♣, South the 10♣ and West the 6 ♣. South leads the 2 ♣, West plays A♣, North the 9♣. What do you play now?
You want your partner to lead a diamond. You have a choice of ways to do this. You could play 2 ♥ which would discourage a heart lead and expect your partner to lead a diamond (the only suit you have not discouraged. Alternatively you could discard the 8♦ to encourage a diamond. The latter is quite blatant and should be certain to provoke a diamond lead if your partner is watching. The 3 ♥ is more subtle, but, by keeping all your diamond tricks, you expect to take 5 diamond tricks for 2 down rather than only 4 diamond tricks if you discard one. At pairs, where extra undertricks are important, you may choose the 2 ♥, and hope your partner is watching. At teams, where defeating the contract is of primary importance, you might play 8♦ and still hope your partner is watching, although if you are used to playing signals on discards, this is harder to miss.

In each of these hands, finding the winning defence would have been an unlikely fluke without firstly, having a signalling system agreed by the partnership, and secondly, each partner actively observing the small cards as well as the big cards and drawing appropriate inferences.

Now we will leave defence for the time being and look at bidding. In preparation for this, here are some bidding situations that will be discussed in more detail next week. In each case,

your job is to decide what bid you would make, assuming your bidding system was like the one described in Paul Marston's introductory bidding books. These situations do not have a clear-cut right or wrong bid and the bid you should select may depend on the detailed discussions you and your partner have had about similar situations. In all of these hands, you are North.

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 9
♥ 5
♦ K Q J 5
♣ J 9 8 6 3

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	?		

South Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q J 7 5 3
♥ A Q 4
♦ 6 5 2
♣ 6

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
Pass	2 ♥[1]	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	?		

1. Transfer to spades

South Deals
None Vul

♠ A 9 5
♥ A 5 2
♦ 8
♣ A K 8 7 3 2

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
Pass	?		

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 7 4 2
♥ A 9 5
♦ A K 3
♣ 3 2

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	?		

South Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 7 3
♥ Q J 8 6
♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ 8

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
2 ♣[1]	?		

1. Natural

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 6 4
♥ K J 6
♦ K 9 6 4
♣ Q 6 3

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
2 ♠[1]	?		

1. Natural

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 6 4 2
♥ 8 7 4
♦ 9
♣ K Q J 5 4 3

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
2 ♠[1]	?		

1. Natural

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 3
♥ 8 7 5
♦ K Q 5
♣ A Q J 8 7 5

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 NT
2 ♠[1]	?		

1. Natural