MALENY CONTRACT BRIDGE CLUB
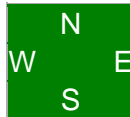
This is the Number 11 bridge article for members of our club.

Last Week's Problem

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

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        N
    W       E
        S
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♠ K Q J 10 9
♥ 10 7 4
♦ A
♣ K J 10 9

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
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?

If West had not led a trump at trick 4, you would have tried to cross-trump the hand making all 9 of your trumps separately and the A♦. Provided East didn't overtrump either of the first two rounds of clubs, you would have been trumping with high trumps. Since West did lead a trump, you would only be able to take 8 of your trumps separately and that would leave you a trick short.

Can you set up the diamonds? Let's try.

Win the fourth trick with the K♠ in South.
South leads A♦.
South leads 9♣ and trumps in North with 5 ♠.
North leads low diamond and South trumps.
South leads 10♣ and trumps in North with 8♠
North leads a low diamond and South trumps.
South leads a trump to North's A♠.

North will be able to make the extra diamond tricks needed to make the contract if the K♦ has been played (i.e. whoever had K♦ had at most 3 diamonds) and trumps are 2-2. Otherwise the opponents will be able to trump the diamonds and you still don't have enough tricks.
Having both short K♦ (i.e. K♦ and at most 2 other diamonds) and trumps 2-2 is not a particularly good chance but it is better than trying to cross trump which must fail.

Can we do better? Let's count the HCP. We have 23 HCP between us, East has shown 5 (A♥ and J♥), so that leaves at most 12 HCP with West, who opened the bidding with 1♣. Who has the A♣? Clearly West. Who has the Q♣? Almost certainly West since he opened the bidding and needs to have Q♣ to have more than 10 HCP.

If West has both A♣ and Q♣, we can establish the clubs by taking two ruffing finesses.

South wins the trump lead at trick 4.
South draws a second round of trumps. (We only need 2 trumps in dummy to trump 2 clubs).
South leads K♣. Suppose West plays A♣, then North trumps.
North leads a low diamond and South wins with the ace.
South leads J♣. Suppose West plays Q♣, then North trumps again with his last trump.
North leads a low diamond and South trumps.
South draws the remaining trump, if necessary and he has the rest of the tricks; high trumps and high clubs.

When South leads a club at any stage, West may not cover. In that case, North discards a small diamond. The club honour will win the trick, since West has both the outstanding high clubs and the play would proceed in much the same way as above.

This line of play is much more likely to succeed (given the bidding) than trying to establish the diamonds. It is possible, though unlikely, that some Wests may open the bidding as dealer with a hand like ♠72 ♥K932 ♦K10 ♣A8642. In this case, the diamond play works and the club play fails. If this happens, write it down to bad luck. Congratulate West on his deceptive opening bid (opening bids on this hand are much more likely to lead to a poor score and we want to encourage our opponents to play badly). Get on with the next hand.

The theme of today's hands is counting HCP. Consider the following hand.

East Deals
None Vul

♠ 10 3 2
♥ A J 9 4
♦ A Q 7 3 2
♣ 7

N
W E
S

♠ 7 5 4
♥ K 10 6 3
♦ K J 4
♣ A Q 4

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 ♣
Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	

Lead: ♠ 9

North elects to bid his longer diamond suit. When South bids 1 ♥, North decides he has values for game. West leads a spade and East plays J♠. East continues with A♠ and K♠ and

West follows suit. East then leads J♣ and you win the A♣. You just need to draw trumps with no losers and you can finesse against Q♥ in either hand. How do you play the trumps?

This hand is easy, especially because the theme is counting HCP. For the play at trick 1 to make sense, East must have the Q♠ to go along with the A♠, K♠ and J♠ he has already played. He has passed as dealer with 10 HCP in spades and 1 HCP in clubs. He can't have the Q♥ or he would have 13 HCP. So, lead the 3 ♥ from South and play the J♥ if West plays low. You may have to repeat the finesse if West has 4 hearts and you are going down whatever you do if he has all 5.

Here is another hand.

East Deals	♠ K 5 4 2
None Vul	♥ A Q J
	♦ 8 7 3
	♣ 9 4 3

```
        N
    W       E
        S
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♠ A Q 10 8 7 3
♥ 4
♦ 9 5 4 2
♣ A 5

West	North	East	South
		1 NT[1]	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

1. 15-17 HCP, balanced

Lead: ♦ Q

West leads the Q♦ and East plays the 10♦.West continues with the J♦ and East plays the K♦. East now takes the A♦ and West follows with 6 ♦. East now leads K♣ and you win the A♣. You now have 9 certain tricks (6 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 1 club). You can get the tenth trick from hearts if you can guess who has the K♥. If West has the King, you take a simple finesse. If East has the King, you take a ruffing finesse (play A♥ and lead Q♥, discarding the club if East plays low). How do you play?

It's easy again if you count up the HCP. You have 20 HCP between the two hands, so the opponents also have 20 HCP. East has 15 to 17 HCP, so West has 3 to 5 HCP. He has already played Q♦ and J♦, so he can have at most 2 more HCP. Therefore, West doesn't have the K♥ and East must have it. You can play the 4 ♥ to North's A♥ and lead the Q♥. If East plays the K♥ trump it and draw trumps in 3 rounds ending in dummy so you can discard the 5 ♣ on the J♥. If East doesn't play K♥, discard the club and draw trumps. In either case, you have 10 tricks (the 9 already counted plus the extra heart trick).

Can anything go wrong? What if East has all four trumps? Well that's still probably OK. When you draw trumps (after playing A♥ and Q♥ from North), you will be playing the A♠ from South first. You will know East has the Q♠ when West shows out. So next, play the 3 ♠ from South to K♠ in North. Cash the J♥. Play 2 ♠ from North and finesse against East's J♠.

Can anything else go wrong? East could have four spades and only two hearts. This is unlikely as, with 7 hearts, West would normally bid. If this happens, East will be able to trump the J♥ when you play it from North and we will be unable to discard our losing club on J♥. Can we do anything about that? No. We cannot draw all 4 of East's trumps and then be in North's hand to cash the J♥. We have no way to make the contract in this (unlikely) circumstance.

Here is another hand. You will recognise the theme immediately.

	East Deals	♠ 8 5 2	
	None Vul	♥ 9 3 2	
		♦ A 6	
		♣ K J 9 8 5	

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        N
    W       E
        S
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♠ 7 6 4
♥ A Q J
♦ K 9 7 4 3
♣ A Q

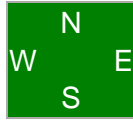| West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
All pass			

Lead: ♠ 10

East wins the J♠, then plays the A♠, the K♠ and the Q♠. West follow to 3 rounds of spades and discards 4♥ on the last spade. East then leads 5♥. We've been in a similar position to this before. How do you play?

Clearly West has the K♥ (or East passed with 13 HCP), so the heart finesse will surely fail. A count of tricks shows only 8 tricks (assuming clubs break 3-3 or 4-2) with no real prospect for 9. Do you finesse as the only chance, hoping that East just forgot to bid but probably just get the hand over quickly, so you can get on with the next one?
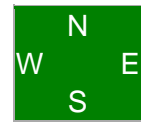
Suppose we take the view that where there is life, there's hope and win the A♥. We now take whatever tricks we can. This is the actual hand.

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East Deals          ♠ 8 5 2
None Vul            ♥ 9 3 2
                    ♦ A 6
                    ♣ K J 9 8 5
♠ 10 9 3                              ♠ A K Q J
♥ K 10 4         ┌─────────┐         ♥ 8 7 6 5
♦ Q J 5 2        │    N    │         ♦ 10 8
♣ 10 7 6         │ W     E │         ♣ 4 3 2
                 │    S    │
                 └─────────┘
                    ♠ 7 6 4
                    ♥ A Q J
                    ♦ K 9 7 4 3
                    ♣ A Q
```

South cashes the A♣ and Q♣ to unblock the club suit. South leads the 3 ♦ to North's A♦ and plays K♣ (South discards 4 ♦) and the J♣ (South discards J♥, West discards 2♦). This is the position before North plays the last club.

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                    ♠ —
                    ♥ 9
                    ♦ 6
                    ♣ 9
♠ —                                  ♠ —
♥ K              ┌─────────┐         ♥ 8 7
♦ Q J            │    N    │         ♦ 10
♣ —              │ W     E │         ♣ —
                 │    S    │
                 └─────────┘
                    ♠ —
                    ♥ Q
                    ♦ K 9
                    ♣ —
```

North plays the 9♣ and South discards the Q♥. What does West discard. If West discards the K♥, North's 9♥ is high. If West discards a diamond, North leads the 6 ♦ to South's K♦ and the 9♦ is high. So 3 NT made.

When South won the A♥ at trick 5, he may or may not have been aware of the possibility of scoring an extra trick by what is called a simple squeeze. The squeeze happened automatically. West was guarding two suits (diamonds and hearts) and couldn't maintain that guard against the 9♥ in North's hand and the 9♦ in South's hand. The K♦ provided optional communication between the hands. Notice that this isn't a case of the opponents not keeping track of what is happening in the late stages of the hand and discarding the wrong card. West was forced to make a damaging discard.

There are many different types of squeeze. The simple squeeze always conforms to what we see in the final stage of this hand. One opponent is guarding two suits. The two threats are either in different hands or in the one hand to the left of the victim (i.e. playing after him). There is always a communication card in one of the threat suits and there must be only one potential loser. This squeeze would have been impossible if East had switched to a heart at trick 2 rather than taking his spade tricks first. Even if South knew enough to play A♥ at trick 2, West would have had no trouble finding discards when the club suit is run. It was East who

caused the squeeze to happen when he took his spade tricks. At the same time, he demonstrated that he could not possibly have the K♥.

These examples are hands where the bidding (or lack of it) defined a HCP range for an opponent and the early play allowed the declarer, by counting HCP, to obtain enough information to subsequently make a winning "guess". It is not only HCP that declarer (and defenders) should be counting; they should also be counting how many cards are played in different suits that may help him deduce things about unplayed suits. The discovery play from an earlier article is an advanced technique where the declarer actively played other suits to get information about a particular suit.

The last hand introduced the idea of a squeeze. All bridge experts will make a study of squeezes at some point in their bridge career. Squeezes don't come up very often. They may just happen without any planning, as in the last hand. Alternatively, a squeeze may need precise play that only a squeeze expert could find. Often, when a squeeze would have been successful, there are alternative plays that may seem more likely to succeed. If the squeeze is planned, the declarer normally needs to have information about the opponent's cards (often by counting) or has to assume that cards are distributed in a certain way to succeed in their play. In the last hand, a player familiar with squeezes would recognise when they won A♥ that the contract could be made if only West were guarding diamonds.

The next article will have more on squeezes. See how you go with this hand.

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North Deals          ♠ K Q 7 4
None Vul             ♥ 8 6 3
                     ♦ Q 9 8 2
                     ♣ 5 3

   ♠ 10 5 3                        ♠ 8 6 2
   ♥ J 10          N               ♥ 9 7 5 4
   ♦ J 10 6 4    W     E           ♦ K 7 3
   ♣ A Q 10 4      S               ♣ K 7 2

                     ♠ A J 9
                     ♥ A K Q 2
                     ♦ A 5
                     ♣ J 9 8 6
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West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1 ♣
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 NT[1]
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. 18-19 HCP, balanced

Lead: ♣ 4

This time all four hands are given. To start, cover the East and West cards and see if you can work out how you might make the contract. Then have a look at all four hands.

West leads the 4 ♣ and East wins the K♣.
East plays 7 ♣, South the 8♣ and West wins the 10♣.

West leads the A♣ and the Q♣. What do you discard from North? East discards 2 ♠ on the fourth club.

West leads J♦. You take it from here. How do you cater for the possibility that hearts do not split 3-3? If the defenders could see all four hands, how would they defend differently to beat the contract?