



Rookie eNews



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Rookie Challenge Hand 2 (Bid and Play)

North (D)			
♠ KJT2			
♥ 6			
♦ KQJ93			
♣ A32			
South			
♠ Q9876			
♥ KJ3			
♦ T2			
♣ K54			

You open 1♦,

West	North (D)	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

partner responds 1♠, You end up in a 4♠ contract.

West leads the ♣J, East will play the ♣8, an encouraging signal.
Plan the play.

Editor Comments

This revised Newsletter format (Email & PDFs triggered from the email) is designed to ease the big PDF files that used to be delivered. It also allows more focused content for user groups.

Kevin

Rookie Challenge Hand 1 (Bid and Play)

North			
♠ A864			
♥ KT			
♦ AJ9876			
♣ 9			
South			
♠ J5			
♥ AJ9753			
♦ T4			
♣ KQ5			

You open 1♦. The auction proceeds:

Standard Bidding			
West	North	East	you
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♥
3♠	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All	

West leads the ♠9, and your partner puts down the dummy
What is your plan at trick one?

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♦ PO -Cover an Honour?



It is from my book *Demystifying Defense*.

We are West. Our hand is

♠ K32 ♥KQJ73 ♦8764 ♣2.

Standard Bidding			
West	North	East	South (D)
			1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

South opens 1NT, we pass and North raises to 3NT.

All pass and we have an obvious lead, the ♥K.

	North
	♠ AJ9
West	♥ 865
♠ K32	♦ 532
♥ KQJ73	♣ KQ73
♦ 8764	
♣ 2	

Declarer ducks in dummy and his own hand, partner contributing the ♥2.(count 1 or 3) We continue with the ♥Q, partner playing the ♥9 and declarer wins with the ♥A.

How many points does partner have?

Declarer has 15-17, dummy has 10 and we have 9. That leaves 4-6 for partner.

Declarer now leads the ♠Q and we have to decide what to do. Let's think about what would happen if we cover or do not cover.

What would declarer do if we ducked the ♠Q?

He would undoubtedly duck in dummy, winning the trick, and continue with spades. Whether we then play the ♠K or not, the ace and jack will take two more tricks. That is not a good scenario.

What would happen if we covered the ♠Q with the ♠K?

The ace would be a winner in dummy and the jack would be another winner. However, if partner has the ♠T, he will have control of the third round of spades.

So, we cover. Declarer can take five diamonds and lead a club, but partner has the ♣A, the ♠T and another heart, so the contract is defeated.

The Full Deal

	North	
	♠ AJ9	
West	♥ 865	East
♠ K32	♦ 532	♠ T874
♥ KQJ73	♣ KQ73	♥ T92
♦ 8764		♦ 9
♣ 2	South (D)	♣ AJT65
	♠ Q65	
3NT/S	♥ A4	Vul Nil
Lead ♥K	♦ AKQJT	Dir: South
	♣ 984	

If we failed to cover the ♠Q, South would have made the contract via three spades, one heart and five diamonds.


Note that we had to assume that partner had the ♠10, otherwise there would be no hope. Certainly, not covering the ♠Q with the ♠K is a losing play.

Post Mortem

Remember the Golden Rule:

When declarer leads an honour, cover when there are two honours in dummy.

◆ PH – How High

	This article was based on a Bridge feed article “How High” by
	Pat Harrington. Link to full article

My beginner class learns to decide on a contract and to play it before they learn how to bid. They look for a fit and decide how high the bidding will go based on the partnership’s total high-card points. Let’s look at two deals that help my beginners learn a very important lesson. Look at the North–South hands in both examples and decide the best final contract for North–South without worrying about how the bidding will go.

Hand 1.

	North	
	♠ 85	
West	♥ KJ8652	East
♠ KQ62	♦ A	♠ AT93
♥ A73	♣ Q972	♥ T
♦ J942		♦ Q87653
♣ J6	South	♣ 85
	♠ J74	
	♥ Q94	
	♦ KT	
	♣ AKT43	

On deal 1, North–South have a fit in clubs and hearts. East–West have three top tricks defending a contract in clubs or hearts. We opt for playing in 4♥ because a major-suit game requires only 10 tricks. A minor-suit game requires 11 tricks. The lesson for my beginners:

With two fits — one in a major and one in a minor — game in the major is easier to make.

A partnership needs about 26 playing points (high cards and points for distribution) to make a major-suit game. Because a minor-suit

game requires an extra trick, a partnership needs a bit more — about 29 playing points — to play 5♣ or 5♦.

Hand 2.

	North	
	♠ AQJ62	
West	♥ A64	East
♠ T5	♦ T3	♠ 974
♥ 732	♣ 863	♥ JT98
♦ KJ842		♦ A96
♣ A52	South	♣ T94
	♠ K83	
	♥ KQ5	
	♦ Q75	
	♣ KQJ7	

On deal 2, North–South will choose between 3NT and 4♠. North and South have balanced hands, but 4♠ is the winning choice. Against 3NT, West leads the ♦4, and the defenders quickly take five diamonds and the ♣A. In 4♠, East–West can win only two diamonds and the ♣A. The lesson here for my beginners: 3NT requires only nine tricks and a major-suit game requires 10 tricks, but you have more control when you have a trump suit.

It is usually easier to make 4♥ or 4♠ when you have a fit than it is to make 3NT with the same cards.

3NT and four of a major require about 26 points.

Would you have reached the right contract with the North–South hands? That isn’t always easy to do.

◆ JD -Trick 2 is too late



This article was based on a Bridge feed article "Trick Two is too late to start thinking" series by

Joan Dziekanski.

[Link to full article](#)

You hold:

♠J5 ♥AJ9753 ♦T4 ♣KQ5.

Here is the auction:

Standard Bidding			
West	North	East	you
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♥
3♣	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	All	

Left-hand opponent leads the ♠9, and the dummy comes down:

North
♠ A864
♥ KT
♦ AJ9876
♣ 9
South
♠ J5
♥ AJ9753
♦ T4
♣ KQ5

What are your thoughts as you think about your line of play?

1. First, consider the bidding and the trump holding in the dummy, the "short" hand. Because LHO bid 3♣, it is likely she has the ♣A, so you should not play RHO for that card. So, if you decide to ruff clubs in dummy, you will have to trump two of them with good hearts, namely the ♥K and the ♥T. If the dummy held two low hearts and other high cards, you would be happy to try this.
2. Pulling trumps is premature until you figure out your line of play.
3. Because trumping clubs is not ideal, there is the diamond suit to work on. Of course, diamonds should be played from your hand.

T1 These thoughts lead you to your best play at trick one. You should duck the ♠9 lead. As RHO wins with the ♠Q

- T2 East returns a club ♣2 .(four clubs?) You play the ♣Q, and West wins the ♣A.
- T3 When LHO then returns the ♠2 (likely doubleton), so you win the ♠A in the dummy.
- T4 Next, you need to work on dummy's diamonds, but because it's better to play them from your hand, you need to cross to your hand using trumps. So, cash the ♥K
- T5 Then the ♥T. Here, you get some good news: East plays the ♥Q, and you win the ♥A.
- T6 You pull West's last trump with your ♥J.
- T7 Finally, you get to work on diamonds from your hand. You are playing for split honours, but you need to be careful here. You should play the ♦4 to dummy's ♦9, the key play. You should not play the ♦T because West may cover it, interfering with your intention to finesse twice in the suit. You want East to win the first trick with the ♦Q or ♦K; if the honours are split between your opponents, you will finesse against West's remaining honour on the second round. So, East wins the ♦Q.
- T8 East returns a club and you win the ♣K
- T9 And now you play the ♦T, overtaking with dummy's ♦J when West plays low.
- T10 Next cash dummy's ♦A, dropping West's ♦K. Dummy's diamond suit is good to go.

Well done! You listened to the bidding, played for the ♣A to be with LHO, played for the diamond honours to be split, and played trumps correctly. You realized you could not ruff clubs in the dummy because dummy's trumps were needed to extract the opponents' trumps.

Here is the full deal:

	North	
	♠ A864	
West (D)	♥ KT	East
♠ 92	♦ AJ9876	♠ KQT73
♥ 864	♣ 9	♥ Q2
♦ K52		♦ Q3
♣ AJT76	South	♣ 8432
	♠ J5	
4♥/S	♥ AJ9753	Vul Nil
Lead ♠9	♦ T4	Dir: W
	♣ KQ5	

♦ AR – Bidding Zones



[Bidding Zones](#)
Adapted from an **Andrew Robson** article from his ARBC website

Bidding Zones

There are three bidding zones: part-score, game and slam.

- Slams, that's a small slam (bidding and making 12 tricks) or a grand slam (that's bidding and making all 13 tricks) are fairly rare.
- Most auctions focus on the decision of the partnership as to whether or not to play for a game – that's 3NT, 4♥, 4♠, 5♣, or 5♦.
- If your partnership definitely does not have enough for game, **stop right there** (assuming you've found your denomination i.e., which trump suit or notrumps to play).

The auction 1NT-2NT does not say, "I want us to contract for eight tricks", for there is no material advantage in playing the contract of 2NT rather than 1NT. Why give yourself a stiffer challenge or bigger risk, for no real reward (who cares if you earn a 70 part-score rather than a 40 part-score – in practice it almost never makes a difference)?

Instead, the auction 1NT-2NT **invites game**. It says, "I don't know which zone we're in – whether we're in the part-score zone or the game zone". The point-count guide for 3NT is 25/26 points, so presumably responder has calculated there may be 25/26 points, or there may not.

Facing a 15-17 1NT opener, partner should have good 8-9 points for a 2NT invite.

Exercise:

You opened 1♥ and partner raised to 2♥ (about 6-9 pts). Which zone are you in? What would you do now? (The point-count guide for 4♥ is 25/26, although this is approximate as good shape compensates for points.)

Hand a)	Hand b)	Hand c)
♠ Q2 ♥ AJ732 ♦ KQ2 ♣ K62	♠ KJ6 ♥ AKJ63 ♦ AQ42 ♣ 3	♠ K2 ♥ KJ632 ♦ AJ5 ♣ AJ2

Hand (a).

15HCP, you are definitely only in the **part-score zone**, not the game zone. So, **PASS**. Do not bid 3♥ or 2NT – what would be the purpose?

Hand (b).

You are in the **game zone**. **Bid 4♥**. You may be a point shy of 25/26 but the lovely shape (that singleton club) more than compensates.

Hand (c).

Bid 3♥. You are not sure in which zone you lie, whether part-score or game – although you know you want to play in Hearts. So, bid 3♥, inviting game, in effect telling partner you do not know which zone you are in, and you need her to choose.

♦ EK -Take your Chances

 <p>Eddie Kantar</p>	<p>This article was based on a Kantar "Take your chances" series article in the ACBL "Bridge Feed" website. Link to article</p>
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North (D)	Standard Bidding			
	West	North (D)	East	South
♠ KJT2		1♦	Pass	1♠
♥ 6				
♦ KQJ93	Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣
♣ A32	All Pass			
Bidding Notes				
South	1♦	4+♦, Opening Hand		
♠ Q9876	1♠	4+♠ 6+hcp		
♥ KJ3	3♣	4♣ Good hand		
♦ T2	4♣	To Play		
♣ K54				

The Bidding

You arrive at 4♣ after partner opens 1♦ and then leaps to 3♣ over your 1♠ response. You convert to 4♣. West leads the ♣J, East will play the ♣8, an encouraging signal. Plan the play.

Preliminary Analysis

Winners 4♠+4♦+2♣ = 10 but
 Top Losers: ♠A, ♥A, ♦A and slow ♣ that they are attacking.

Strategies for 10 Tricks

You are off three aces, always a bit unsettling, you must dispose of your slow club loser before the opponents can get in twice. You **do not have 'time'** to drive out the trump ♠A as a club will come back and when either opponent eventually get in with a red ace, the setting trick in clubs will be right there on the table to haunt you.

You have 2 primary choices.

Option 1

Win the lead in dummy and lead a heart hoping to guess the position if East plays low. If East rises, your troubles are over. Your ♥K provides a parking place for your club loser, the ♣K the entry to cash the ♥K. If East plays low, put on your guessing shoes, but there is

more to this hand than this. If East is a strong player, East may duck the ♥A smoothly. But if East is not a strong player, East will almost always go up with the ♥A looking at that singleton in the dummy. **You must know your customers.** In any case, the heart play is at least 50% (guessing correctly if East plays low) but far more for psychological reasons.

Option 2

Win the club lead in your hand and drive out the ♦A, win the club return in dummy, and play a second and third diamond hoping the suit divides 3-3 (36%). If it does, you can discard your losing club on a third diamond.

Percentage wise it is clearly better to win the opening lead in the dummy and lead a heart.

Tip:

This hand illustrates how important it is not to play too quickly to the first trick from either the dummy or your hand because of entry considerations.

Also, how 'time' enters into the calculations when you have a slow loser. And, finally, how important it is to know the skill level of each opponent.

	North (D)	
	♠ KJT2	
West	♥ 6	East
♠ A	♦ KQJ93	♠ 543
♥ Q9852	♣ A32	♥ AT74
♦ 8654		♦ A7
♣ JT9	South	♣ Q876
	♠ Q9876	
4♠/S	♥ KJ3	Vul Nil
Lead ♣8	♦ T2	Dir: N
	♣ K54	