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Rookie Challenge Hand 4 (Bid and Play)

| North     |  |
|-----------|--|
| ♠ AKQ2    |  |
| ♥ 32      |  |
| ♦ AT8     |  |
| ♣ JT92    |  |
| South (D) |  |
| ♠ 3       |  |
| ♥ AKQJT8  |  |
| ♦ KJ7     |  |
| ♣ K43     |  |

On the way to 6♥, you checked for keycards via 4NT.

| West     | North | East | South (D) |
|----------|-------|------|-----------|
|          |       |      | 1♥        |
| Pass     | 1♠    | Pass | 3♥        |
| Pass     | 4♦    | Pass | 4NT       |
| Pass     | 5♥    | Pass | 6♥        |
| All pass |       |      |           |

West leads a trump ♥5  
 Plan the play.

Rookie Challenge Hand 1 (Bid and Play)

| North     |  |
|-----------|--|
| ♠ JT532   |  |
| ♥ A74     |  |
| ♦ 4       |  |
| ♣ 8642    |  |
| South (D) |  |
| ♠ AKQ765  |  |
| ♥ 3       |  |
| ♦ A97     |  |
| ♣ AQT     |  |

You decided to take a shot at slam & a good dummy ensues

| West     | North | East | you |
|----------|-------|------|-----|
|          |       |      | 1♠  |
| Pass     | 4♠    | Pass | 6♠  |
| All Pass |       |      |     |

Plan your play in the 6♠ contract, with the opening lead of the ♥Q

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

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Rookie Challenge Hand 2 (Bid and Play)

| North     |  |
|-----------|--|
| ♠ K63     |  |
| ♥ 643     |  |
| ♦ AQT943  |  |
| ♣ J       |  |
| South (D) |  |
| ♠ AQ2     |  |
| ♥ AJ8     |  |
| ♦ J6      |  |
| ♣ K9874   |  |

You open 1NT & partner raises you to 3NT

Plan your play in the 3NT contract, with the opening lead of the ♥K

Rookie Challenge Hand 3 (Bid and Play)

| North (D) |  |
|-----------|--|
| ♠ 9       |  |
| ♥ 7532    |  |
| ♦ K8      |  |
| ♣ AQ9876  |  |
| South     |  |
| ♠ KJ642   |  |
| ♥ AKQT    |  |
| ♦ A32     |  |
| ♣ 10      |  |

The auction begins with your partner passing and your right-hand opponent opening 1♠.

| Standard Bidding |       |      |      |
|------------------|-------|------|------|
| West             | North | East | you  |
|                  | Pass  | 1♠   | Pass |
| Pass             | 2♣    | Pass | 3NT  |
| All Pass         |       |      |      |

Assuming you get to 3NT, West leads ♦J.  
 Plan the play.

♦ PO - Enlist the Enemy



It is from my book *A Second Book of Bridge Problems*.

| North     | Standard Bidding   |       |      |     |
|-----------|--|-------|------|-----|
| ♠ JT532   | West   | North | East | you |
| ♥ A74     |  |       |      | 1♠  |
| ♦ 4       | Pass   | 4♠    | Pass | 6♠  |
| ♣ 8642    | All Pass   |       |      |     |
| South (D) | You decided to take a shot at slam and bought a very well-fitting dummy. |       |      |     |
| ♠ AKQ765  |  |       |      |     |
| ♥ 3       |  |       |      |     |
| ♦ A97     |  |       |      |     |
| ♣ AQT     |  |       |      |     |

West leads the ♥Q. How will you make this lovely slam?

**Analysis**

You have only 24 HCP in your combined hands but lots of distribution. Bridge is all about shape.

- You could take the double finesse in clubs, losing only if West has both the ♠K and ♣J which is only a 25% chance, leaving 75% for you.
- Is there anything better?

**The Full Deal**

|                 | North     |                   |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------------|
|                 | ♠ JT532   |                   |
| West            | ♥ A74     | East              |
| ♠ -             | ♦ 4       | ♠ 98              |
| ♥ QJ9654        | ♣ 8642    | ♥ KT8             |
| ♦ Q865          |           | ♦ KJT32           |
| ♣ KJ7           | South (D) | ♠ 953             |
|                 | ♠ AKQ765  |                   |
|                 | ♥ 3       |                   |
|                 | ♦ A97     |                   |
|                 | ♣ AQT     |                   |
| 6♠/S<br>Lead ♥Q |           | Vul Nil<br>Dir: S |

There is a line of play that has a 100% chance of success.

It is an elimination and end play.

- 'Elimination' means to void your hand and dummy in a suit.
- 'End play' means to lose a trick to the opponents so that they have to make a lead that is favourable to you.

The elimination of a suit ensures that if the opponent on lead chooses that suit, you can ruff in one hand and discard in the other. This nearly always allows you to get rid of a loser.

You need to be in dummy when you finish the elimination.

|      |                                      |
|------|--------------------------------------|
| T1   | So, win the opening lead with the ♥A |
| T2-3 | Draw trumps in two rounds.           |
| T4   | Then ruff a heart in your hand       |
| T5   | cash the ♦A                          |
| T6   | ruff a diamond in dummy.             |

This leaves one heart remaining in dummy and one diamond in your hand.

|    |   |
|----|---|
| T7 | Continue the elimination by ruffing the last heart in your hand |
| T8 | Ruff the last diamond in dummy.                                 |

So, hearts and diamonds have been eliminated and, importantly, the lead is in dummy.

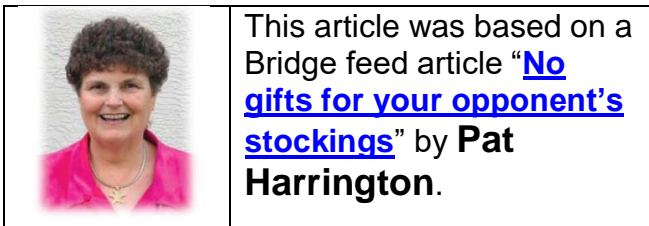
|     |   |
|-----|---|
| T9  | Now for the <i>coup de grace!</i> Lead a small club and cover whatever card East plays. In this case East will play a small card and you will play the ♣10. West will win with the ♣J |
| T10 | But west has either to lead back into your ♣AQ, or to lead a red card (heart or diamond) allowing you to ruff in dummy and to discard the ♣Q from your hand.                          |

Note that this line works whatever the location of the ♠K and ♣J.

**Key Point**

**Look for opportunities to eliminate side suits and throw an opponent in to your advantage.**

◆ PH – No Gifts for your opponent’s stockings



Plan your play in 3NT with the lead of the ♥K (you opened 1NT as South and your partner raised you to the 3NT game).

| North     |  |
|-----------|--|
| ♠ K63     |  |
| ♥ 643     |  |
| ♦ AQT943  |  |
| ♣ J       |  |
| South (D) |  |
| ♠ AQ2     |  |
| ♥ AJ8     |  |
| ♦ J6      |  |
| ♣ K9874   |  |

Your sure winners are three spades, one heart and one diamond. You will end up with four more diamond tricks simply by giving up the lead to the ♦K. With a successful diamond finesse, you might not even lose the lead. You definitely should try to establish the diamonds!

When you might lose the lead, you must consider whether there are any dangerous suits. If the defenders switch to clubs, you lose two tricks at most (East cannot get in enough times to lead through your club holding twice), so that suit isn’t too dangerous. Are hearts dangerous? They could be if you win the ♥A and East gains the lead with the ♦K. East could return a heart through your remaining ♥J8. In notrump, you do not lead an honour without the next touching honour and usually a third high card, so it is reasonable to picture West with four or five hearts headed by the ♥KQTxx. If West started with five hearts, you could go down if you win the ♥A at trick one. So, better to hold off. A side benefit of doing this is that it is now unsafe for West to continue leading hearts. Another heart lead will come right into your ♥AJ and give you a trick you do not deserve!

No switch can hurt you badly. Suppose West switches to the ♠T at trick two. Save the ♠K in dummy as an entry to the diamonds and win in your hand. Then go after diamonds, leading

the jack to finesse. If the finesse loses, East cannot hurt you. Win a major suit return. If East returns a low club or even the ♠T, let the lead ride around to dummy’s ♣J to guarantee the loss of no more than two quick club tricks (the ♣AQ). If East returns the ♣Q, cover to guarantee the loss of no more than two clubs (the ♣AT). The worst you can do is lose four tricks — the heart you refused on opening lead, the ♦K and two clubs. The full deal:

|         | North     |         |
|---------|-----------|---------|
|         | ♠ K63     |         |
|         | ♥ 643     |         |
|         | ♦ AQT943  |         |
|         | ♣ J       |         |
| West    |           | East    |
| ♠ T98   |           | ♠ J754  |
| ♥ KQT75 |           | ♥ 92    |
| ♦ 85    |           | ♦ K72   |
| ♣ A62   |           | ♣ QT53  |
|         | South (D) |         |
|         | ♠ AQ2     |         |
|         | ♥ AJ8     |         |
|         | ♦ J6      |         |
|         | ♣ K9874   |         |
| 3NT/S   |           | Vul Nil |
| Lead ♥K |           | Dir: S  |

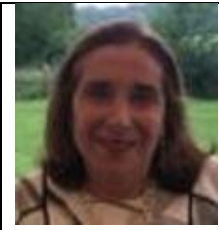
Assuming you hold up at trick one and West switches to the ♠T, East can return a heart when he gains the lead with the ♦K to hold you to nine tricks. If West continues hearts at trick two, you make an overtrick. In a pairs game, preventing overtricks can sometimes be good for a top even if declarer makes the contract.

Notice West’s heart holding. West led his long suit, choosing the ♥K, top of touching honours from a suit containing at least three high cards.

When you lead from a holding like this, it is important to watch partner’s signal. Partner must tell you if it is safe to continue leading your suit. With no help in hearts, how should East signal at trick one? East should play the ♥2 — a low, discouraging card. ‘Tis the season for giving gifts, but not at the bridge table, and the ♥2 signal warns West not to present the gift of a cheap overtrick to declarer.

Declarer’s hold-up play to entice West to continue leading hearts has a name — the **Bath Coup**. Two hundred years ago, the British upper classes went to the town of Bath in the west of England to enjoy the hot springs and to play whist, the ancestor of bridge. This hold up play dates from those days and was perhaps discovered by a vacationing whist player.

♦ 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**.

You hold:

♠KJ642 ♥AKQT ♦A32 ♣T.

The auction begins with your partner passing and your right-hand opponent opening 1♠. Your choices are to bid 1NT or to pass. You decide to pass because with spade shortness in the other two hands, you feel the auction will continue. LHO passes, and your partner bids 2♣. You decide to bid 3NT, ending the auction.

| Standard Bidding |       |      |      |
|------------------|-------|------|------|
| West             | North | East | you  |
|                  | Pass  | 1♠   | Pass |
| Pass             | 2♣    | Pass | 3NT  |
| All Pass         |       |      |      |

LHO leads the ♦J, and the dummy comes down:

| North (D) |
|-----------|
| ♠ 9       |
| ♥ 7532    |
| ♦ K8      |
| ♣ AQ9876  |
| South     |
| ♠ KJ642   |
| ♥ AKQT    |
| ♦ A32     |
| ♣ 10      |

**Preliminary Analysis**

How should you play? Well, you have eight tricks to start. You can play a spade to the jack in your hand, and you likely have four heart tricks, two diamonds and the ♣A.

Winners: 1♠+4♥+2♦+1♣ = 8 tricks

Where should the ninth trick come from? What do you know about the hand? Well, RHO has spade length, and LHO likely has length in diamonds, based on her decision to lead her own suit instead of spades, the suit her partner opened. RHO has almost all the high cards (she opened the bidding), namely the ♦Q, the ♠AQ, and the ♣K. The only honour cards whose locations are in doubt are the ♣J and the ♥J.

What do you know? Well, you need to play spades from the dummy, and to need to make sure the opponents cannot get to each other in diamonds. Therefore, even though you hold the ♦A and the ♦K, you should duck the first trick.

This is an important play theme. If you have to give up the lead twice in notrump, duck once even

if you have two stoppers in the suit, making it harder for the opponents to reach each other in that suit.

So,

- T1 The ♦J wins the first trick
- T2 Dummy's ♦K wins the second. RHO plays the ♦Q at trick two. Let's think: That likely means she had three diamonds to start; with a doubleton, she would have unblocked the ♦Q at trick one. What should you do with this information? Let's see how the remaining suits break first.
- T3 You play a spade to your jack, which holds.
- T4-7 Next you cash the top hearts, noting that RHO plays the jack on the first round of the suit, and then discards two clubs and a spade on the next three rounds.

So, what do we know? RHO began with five spades, one heart, three diamonds and, therefore, four clubs. This will guide your following play.

- T8 You need to cash the ♦A next to take away RHO's exit card
- T9 If you play clubs and you will likely lose to the ♣K in RHO. So, you should play a club to dummy's ♣A,
- T10 Then, exit with the ♣Q. Success! RHO wins the ♣K as LHO follows with the ♣J. RHO is stuck (End Played): because you took away her last diamond – her exit card – she will have to play either clubs allowing you to run dummy's winners or cash the ♠A and play another spade which you will win with the ♠K in your hand.

Well played! You counted out the entire hand. You knew the distribution when RHO unblocked her ♦Q at trick two. You knew the location of all the high cards at trick one except two jacks. And you knew you had to break the communication between the opponents by ducking the first trick even though you had two diamond stoppers. Here is the entire deal:



|                |                  |                |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|
|                | <b>North (D)</b> |                |
|                | ♠ 9              |                |
| <b>West</b>    | ♥ 7532           | <b>East</b>    |
| ♠ T7           | ♦ K8             | ♠ AQ853        |
| ♥ 9864         | ♣ AQ9876         | ♥ J            |
| ♦ JT975        |                  | ♦ Q64          |
| ♣ J5           | <b>South</b>     | ♣ K642         |
| <b>3NT/S</b>   | ♠ KJ642          | <b>Vul Nil</b> |
| <b>Lead ♦J</b> | ♥ AKQT           | <b>Dir: N</b>  |
|                | ♦ A32            |                |
|                | ♣ 10             |                |

♦ AR – Look for extra tricks



Look for extra tricks

Adapted from an Andrew Robson article from his ARBC website

You cannot make any extra tricks - over and above your top tricks - with any of these suits:

- a) ♠ A75 facing ♠ K4
- b) ♦ KQ3 facing ♦ A96
- c) ♣ K3 facing ♣ AQ64

So (unless you are trying to get information about the shapes of the opposing hands to help you to play other more interesting suits), do not play on these suits!. Not until much later, when the top tricks from these suits will bring you to your contract.

The following suits may look less appealing, but (say in a fiddly INT contract), they represent far better suits to develop:

- d) ♥ QT facing ♥ J932
- e) ♠ J863 facing ♠ T9

If you stay clear of these suits, you will make precisely no tricks from either. However, look at their sequential nature (the key word).

(d). Using ♥Q and ♥T to force out ♥K and ♥A, you will promote ♥J9: regardless of which opponent holds ♥A and ♥K and regardless of the opposing split.

(e). Similarly, use ♠T9, then ♠J/♠8, to force out ♠AKQ promoting one trick: regardless of which opponent holds ♠AKQ and regardless of the split. An opponent could have ♠AKQ7542 and you'd still make a trick.

Eventually. And that's the issue. **These suits need time**, for you have to lose the lead twice on (d) or thrice on (e). So start early.

South Deals ♠ A72  
None Vul ♥ A82  
♦ 873  
♣ J952

|                                   |  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| ♠ J965<br>♥ KJ4<br>♦ JT96<br>♣ K4 | <table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> |   | N |  | W |  | E |  | S |  | ♠ QT<br>♥ QT95<br>♦ 54<br>♣ AQ763 |
|                                   | N  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |
| W                                 |  | E |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |
|                                   | S  |   |   |  |   |  |   |  |   |  |                                   |

♠ K843  
♥ 763  
♦ AKQ2  
♣ T8

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|      |       |      | 1 N   |
| Pass | Pass  | Pass |       |

T1 West led ♦J - top of a sequence of three touching cards prioritising over fourth highest, declarer winning the ♦Q in hand.


You can count six top tricks: ♠ AK, ♥ A and ♦ AKQ Yet to cash any one of those top tricks would see him be unable to make a seventh!.

- His very worst play would be (♥ 3 to) ♥A - setting up the opposing hearts.
- ♦AK would be next worst - for he knows from West leading the suit that the suit is very unlikely to be splitting 3-3.
- Spades could be splitting 3-3, in which case playing on spades could give him a seventh trick via a long card, but a 3-3 split occurs only 36% of the time ie it's not very likely.

Clubs is the suit to broach - look at your four-card sequence. Any other play at trick two and down you go!

T2 Goes ♠T, ♣K, ♣2, ♣3.  
T3 You win (say) ♦T return with the ♦K  
T4 You lead ♣8 to East's ♣Q  
T5 You win his (say) ♥T switch with ♥A  
T6 You and lead ♣J. Letting East win ♣A  
T7-9 The defence can cash three top hearts,  
T10+ Then you can win any return, cross to ♠A and enjoy promoted ♣9. Seven tricks and contract made.

♦ EK -Take all your Chances

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  <p><b>Eddie Kantar</b></p> | <p>This article was based on a Kantar <a href="#">‘Take all your chances’</a> series article in the ACBL “Bridge Feed” website.</p> |
|--|---|

T3 Cash **♥K**, drawing the outstanding trump, discarding a club ♣2 from dummy.  
 T456 Your next move should be to cash the dummy’s three top spades **♠AKQ**, discarding two clubs from your hand.  
 T7 Ruff the last spade ♠2 in hand **♥T**  
 T7 Then exit with the now singleton ♣K.

If West has the ♣A and no more spades, he will be forced to lead a minor-suit card, solving your play. If West gets out with a club, a club winner will be established for a diamond discard. If West gets out with a diamond, you can claim.

If West has a fifth spade and leads it, ruff and try to get the diamond guess right. The idea is to try to figure out which opponent has more diamonds and play that person for the queen. If West started with five spades, East is more likely to have diamond length.

If East has the ♣A and does not have a spade to lead, East’s best return is a low club, which you should ruff. If West started with a doubleton ♣Q, you won’t have to guess the diamonds, otherwise you will. If East has a spade to lead, it’s basically back to the diamond finesse. You have given yourself your best chance to avoid the diamond finesse.

The full deal:

|             |                  |             |
|-------------|------------------|-------------|
|             | <b>North</b>     |             |
|             | ♠ AKQ2           |             |
| <b>West</b> | ♥ 32             | <b>East</b> |
| ♠ J764      | ♦ AT8            | ♠ T985      |
| ♥ 65        | ♣ JT92           | ♥ 974       |
| ♦ Q54       |                  | ♦ 9632      |
| ♣ AQ76      | <b>South (D)</b> | ♣ 85        |
| 6♥/S        | ♠ 3              | Vul Nil     |
| Lead ♥5     | ♥ AKQJT8         | Dir: S      |
|             | ♦ KJ7            |             |
|             | ♣ K43            |             |

|                  |                         |                    |      |           |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|------|-----------|
| <b>North</b>     | <b>Standard Bidding</b> |                    |      |           |
| ♠ AKQ2           | West                    | North              | East | South (D) |
| ♥ 32             |                         |                    |      | 1♥        |
| ♦ AT8            | Pass                    | 1♠                 | Pass | 3♥        |
| ♣ JT92           | Pass                    | 4♦                 | Pass | 4NT       |
|                  | Pass                    | 5♥                 | Pass | 6♥        |
| <b>South (D)</b> | All pass                |                    |      |           |
| ♠ 3              | <b>Bidding Notes</b>    |                    |      |           |
| ♥ AKQJT8         | 1♥                      | 5+H, Opening hand  |      |           |
| ♦ KJ7            | 1♠                      | 4+S, 6+hcp         |      |           |
| ♣ K43            | 3♥                      | 6+H, Strong hand   |      |           |
|                  | 4♦                      | Cue                |      |           |
|                  | 4NT                     | Keycard (H)        |      |           |
|                  | 5♥                      | 2+ no QH, (SA, DA) |      |           |
|                  | 6♥                      | to Play            |      |           |

**The Bidding:**

On the way to 6♥, you checked for keycards via 4NT.

T1 West leads the ♥5, ♥2, ♥4 which you win cheaply in hand ♥8  
 T2 You cash ♥A, and both EW follow to a second heart

**Plan the play.**

**Preliminary Analysis**

Winners: 3♠+6♥+2♦=11 tricks, one short!

Losers ♣A, also may be ♣Q or ♦Q

Strategies for 12 tricks

- Diamond ♦Q finesse for 12<sup>th</sup>
- Lead up to the ♣K for extra trick, but very risky
- Eliminate Spades from both hands is usually a good starting strategy

**Solution**

The best idea is to try to avoid the diamond guess if possible. So,