

Articles for our Newer Players
Read and enjoy these articles, including analysis by authors Pat O'Connor, 2x Bridge Puzzles, Pat Harrington, & Julian Foster.
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[Click here to read about Hands, Tips & Tricks for New players](#)

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♦ Beginner Bridge Lessons

Do you know anybody who may be interested in learning to play bridge? Our first 2 6week beginner courses (F2F @ East Lindfield and Online on Zoom) have been scheduled for a Jan/Feb start.

Learn Bridge

2023 CLASSES

FACE TO FACE

6-week course

\$150

- @ East Lindfield Rollers Bowling Club
- 2 hr lessons with notes to take home
- Supervised practice sessions
- No partner is required, just give it a go!
- The next course starts on **31st January 2023**
- Lessons on Tuesdays mornings at 10 am
- Practice/Supervised sessions on Thursday mornings from 10:30 am to 12 noon.

ONLINE VIA ZOOM

6-week course

\$150

- 2 hr lessons with a recording for you to re-watch
- Supervised practice sessions
- No partner is required, just give it a go!
- The next course starts on **27th February 2023**
- Lessons on Monday mornings at 9:30 am
- Technical support available

Challenge Hand 1 (Play)

North
♠ 32
♥ J2
♦ AKJ4
♣ AQ765
South (D)
♠ A54
♥ AKQ3
♦ 6532
♣ T4

You get to a 3nt Contract with no interference.

The Defence leads ♠9,
You duck twice, then win the ♠A

What do you next?

Challenge Hand 2 (Play)

North
♠ K86
♥ A4
♦ KJ54
♣ QJ32
South (D)
♠ A753
♥ K8
♦ QT73
♣ AT9

You get to play a 3NT Contract, after West pre-empted 3♥

West leads ♥Q,

What is your plan to make this contract?

♦ PO – Combining Chances.

 Pat O'Connor	Combining Chances. It is from my book "A Second Book of Bridge Problems".
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Solution Challenge 1

North	Std Bidding			
♠ 32	West	North	East	South (D)
♥ J2				1♦
♦ AKJ4	Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
♣ AQ765	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
South (D)	Bidding Notes			
♠ A54	1♦	4+♦, Opening Hand		
♥ AKQ3	2♣	5+♣, 10+ Hcp		
♦ 6532	2NT	Bal 12-14		
♣ T4	3NT	To play		

West leads the ♠9.

How will you play this hand?

Analysis

You should hold up your ♠A until the third round, as usual. West shows up with ♠987 and East with ♠K106, leaving the ♠QJ outstanding.

West is unlikely to have led the ♠9 from ♠QJ987 so East most likely started with five spades and is thus the danger hand.

You have eight top winners. Either a diamond or club finesse could give you the ninth trick, but if it fails, East will probably cash two more spades, setting the contract.

Which finesse to try?

Can you combine your chances?

	North	Dealer: South Vul: Nil
	♠ 32	
West	♥ J2	East
♠ 987	♦ AKJ4	♠ KQJT6
♥ T654	♣ AQ765	♥ 987
♦ T98		♦ Q7
♣ J93	South (D)	♣ K82
3NT/S 9♠ Lead	♠ A54	Vul: Nil Dir: S
	♥ AKQ3	
	♦ 6532	
	♣ T4	

In isolation the correct play in either diamonds or clubs is to take a finesse, because the missing honour is more likely to be in the hand with more cards in the suit.

Now look at the diamond suit again. There are only five cards missing so there is a reasonable chance that the ♦Q is doubleton.


So instead of guessing which suit to try, you can increase your chances by playing the ♦AK first in case the ♦Q is singleton or doubleton, and then, if it doesn't drop, finessing against the ♠K.

So, you play the ♦AK and, hey presto, the ♦Q falls and your worries are over. You make ten tricks.

Key Point

Sometimes you can combine your chances by trying for the drop in one suit before finessing in another.

♦ Bridge Puzzles

	This article was derived from Bridgefeed, "Puzzle This no 5"
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North	Acol Bidding			
♠ K86	West	North	East	South (D)
♥ A4				1NT
♦ KJ54	3♥	3NT	All Pass	
♣ QJ32				
South (D)	Bidding Notes			
♠ A753	1NT	12-14 Bal		
♥ K8	3♥	Weak, 7+♥, pre-empt		
♦ QT73	3NT	To Play		
♣ AT9				

Challenge Hand 2 Solution

You open a weak NT (12-14), and West pre-empts 3♥, but you (South) become declarer in 3NT.

T1 West leads the ♥Q.

A pre-emptive (Non Vul) three-level bid typically shows a weak hand with a seven-card suit. Keep that in mind while planning the play.

What's the best plan for nine tricks?

Preliminary Analysis

Top winners: 2♠+2♥+1♣ Only 5 tops

If you win the first heart trick and immediately attack diamonds, the defence will win the ♦A and continue with hearts. You'll have eight tricks only at that point: the ♠AK, the ♥AK, three diamonds and the ♣A. If the club finesse doesn't work, the contract will fail. Is there a better way?

Yes there is!

Win the first trick in dummy and immediately take the club finesse. If it works, forget about repeating the club finesse and go after diamonds. (If West has ducked the ♠K at trick two, he'll be sorry!) If the club finesse fails, however, win the heart return and work on diamonds.

Won't the opponents run the heart suit? That depends.


If West has the ♦A, yes, you'll finish down three.

If East has the ♦A, however, he may have no more hearts to play. In that case, you can win any return and claim with overtricks.

There is no 100% line of play but tackling the clubs and diamonds in the proper order gives you the best chance. You will go down only when West has both the ♠K and the ♦A.

The full deal:

West		North	East	
♠ T2		♠ K86	♠ QJ94	
♥ QJT9765		♥ A4	♥ 32	
♦ 62		♦ KJ54	♦ A98	
♣ K8		♣ QJ32	♣ 7654	
3NT/S Lead ♥J		South (D)	Vul NS Dir: S	
		♠ A753		
		♥ K8		
		♦ QT73		
		♣ AT9		

	This article was derived from Bridgefeed, " Puzzle This no 7 "
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North (D)	Std Bidding			
♠ KQ94	West	North (D)	East	South
♥ QJ2		1♣	Pass	1♣
♦ A74	Pass	2♣	All Pass	
♣ JT2				
South	Bidding Notes			
♠ JT875	1♣	2+♣, opening hand		
♥ K6	1♣	4+♣, 6+hcp		
♦ K65	2♣	12-14 4♣		
♣ 943				

Can you make 2♣ on this layout after West leads the ♦Q?

North opened 1♣, you (South) bid 1♣ and partner rebids 2♣ ending the auction. West leads the ♦Q. What is your plan?

Preliminary Analysis

As declarer, you should count your winners — or losers — when the dummy appears. Here, it's easier to count losers. In 2♣, you have six possible losers: the ♠A, the ♥A, three clubs and (eventually) one diamond.

To make your contract (which requires eight tricks, meaning you can allow the opponents to take five tricks only) you have to eliminate one of your losers. How can you do that?

Solution

First, let's consider what you shouldn't do. If you reflexively attempt to draw trumps, West will win the trump ace and continue to attack diamonds. When you win the ♦K and finish drawing trumps, you'll have to drive out the ♥A, but when you do, the opponents will win and cash a diamond trick. Then they will then cash their club winners (if they haven't done so already) and beat you one trick.

You can't do anything about the ♠A, the ♥A or the three club losers: The opponents are going to get those tricks no matter what you do, but you can do something about that

eventual diamond loser. The key is to find a way to discard it before diamonds get attacked a second time.

	North (D)	
	♠ KQ94	
West	♥ QJ2	East
♠ A6	♦ A74	♠ 32
♥ 9763	♣ JT2	♥ AT54
♦ QJT9		♦ 832
♣ K76	South	♣ AQ85
	♠ JT875	
2♠/S	♥ K6	Vul NS
Lead ♦Q	♦ K65	Dir: N
	♣ 943	

- T1 Win the **♦K**,
 T2 play the **♥K**. If the opponents win **♥A** and
 T3 play another diamond, win the **♦A**
 T4 cash the **♥Q**
 T5 Then the **♥J**, on which you can discard your diamond loser.
 Only then should you start on trumps.

♦ JAN/FEB Rookie Courses

Link to [Website Teaching Basics](#)



Jessica Brake

Jessica Brake will restart her “**Build on the Basics**” & “**Hand Analysis**” after the Summer Nationals (Canberra) in early Feb.



Liz Wilkinson

Liz Wilkinson will be leading the first F2F Beginners course in late Jan, and will restart the “**Build your Basic Skills**” in late Feb/Mar.

♦ PH – My Lead – What’s the Contract



This article was based on a Bridge feed article “**My Lead, Whats the contract?**” by

Pat Harrington.

You hold this hand as West:

♠ 763 ♥ 72 ♦ 832 ♣ AK763

What do you lead?

I hope you did not answer this question. They say there is no such thing as a blind opening lead — **only a deaf opening leader**.

You have not heard the bidding, which makes it impossible to select a good opening lead. Here are two possible auctions. After listening to each auction, decide on your plan for defending, and choose your opening lead long suits that are headed by only two honours.

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

Partner is not that likely to have the ♣Q, but your lead will probably preserve communications between your hand and partner’s. When partner gains the lead, a club return will most likely let you run the remaining clubs.

Standard Bidding			
West	North	East	South (D)
			1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥

It could be disastrous to lead the same fourth best ♣6 against 4♥ (Auction 2). Doing so risks allowing declarer to win a doubleton queen, a trick declarer doesn’t deserve, and gives the defence nothing in return. Let’s look at how the suggested opening leads work out.

Against 3NT, if the full deal was as follows, the ♠6 would be the killing lead.

	North	
West You	♠ QJT ♥ KJ8 ♦ A954 ♣ 854	East (D)
♠ 763 ♥ 72 ♦ 832 ♣ AK763		♠ A854 ♥ 953 ♦ QJT6 ♣ 92
3NT/S Lead C♣	South ♠ K92 ♥ AQT64 ♦ K7 ♣ QJT	Vul Nil Dlr:

T1 West leads ♠6 (4 best), Declarer winning ♠T

Declarer wins the club opening lead and can count seven additional tricks — five hearts and two diamonds. Declarer must turn to spades for the ninth trick. Declarer must drive out the ♠A and hope the club suit won't provide the defenders with enough tricks to defeat the 3NT contract.

As long as East wins the ♠A the first-time **spades are led** and returns partner's club lead, the defenders will win their five tricks to defeat 3NT. If you duck once, declarer runs 9 tricks: 1♠+5♥+2♦+1♣ = 9 tricks

Leading low (4th best) from the ♠AKxxx preserved your only entry (in Clubs). West needed to run the club suit. If West had led a high club at trick one, 3NT would make because West would have no entry to cash the long clubs.

You may be thinking that South made an error opening 1NT with a five-card major, but South's hand meets the requirements for a 1NT opening bid — balanced with 15 high-card points. Choosing your opening bid with this hand is a matter of style. I suggest you find your style, or you will have to guess every time you hold a hand like this. If your luck is like mine, you could end up making the wrong choice every time!

Even though we love majors, there are merits to ignoring the five-card heart suit and opening 1NT with this hand. If you don't, you could have a problem on the next round of

bidding. Over a 1♥ opening, finding a descriptive rebid is almost impossible after partner makes a minimal 1♠ or 1NT response. If opener rebids 1NT over 1♠, he understates the strength of the opener. If he jumps to 2NT over 1♠ or raises 1NT to 2NT, he has overstated his values. Rebidding in hearts shows extra length. You can avoid all these problems by simply opening 1NT with hands of this type.

Further, 4♥ with the North–South cards in the example deal will also go down.

- T1 West leads ♠A, East plays ♣9 encouraging
 T2 West leads ♠K, East ♣2
 T3 West leads ♠x, East a ruffs with ♥9 (high just in case in may promote)
 T4 East cashes the ♠A.

♦ JAN/FEB Advanced Courses

Link to [Website Advanced Teaching](#)



Anita Curtis

Anita Curtis, will restart **“Develop your Skills”, “Gentle Hand Analysis” & “Broaden your Game”** after the Summer Nationals (Canberra) in early Feb.



Pete Holland

The final lesson from Pete Hollands – **“Healthy habits in defence”** is on Zoom on Friday 6th Jan.

♦ JF Hand Analysis -Getting to game



Julian Foster (many times NSW representative) analysing (bidding & play) on an interesting hand from a club session. Sourced SBC Wisdom articles.

Declarer play - working out where your tricks are coming from and listening to the opponents' bidding.

West (D)		North	Dealer: West Vul: NS	East
♠ A532	♥ 964	♠ 9 ♥ JT832 ♦ Q954 ♣ A72		♠ QJT84 ♥ AQ7 ♦ 83 ♣ J98
♦ K6	♣ KQT4			
7		South		
12 10		♠ K76 ♥ K5 ♦ AJT72 ♣ 653		
11				

This Board in a club level game, saw most pairs playing 3♠ by East making 9 tricks. But 10 were available. Let's have a look.

At most tables West opened 1♣ and East responded 1♠. Several South's overcalled 2♦.

West (D)	North	East	South
1♣	P	1♠	2♦

A bit risky for reasons I've discussed before:

- Only a 5-card suit
- Vulnerable against not
- Relatively balanced hand

There are a couple of points in its favour though:

- It points to a good lead if partner were to end up on lead
- Partner isn't a passed hand so could still have some values.

In that last point it is important to appreciate what we mean by a "passed hand". Yes partner passed over West's 1♣ but they can still have quite a reasonable hand to do that (most weak no trump hands (12-14) will probably have to pass). A "passed hand" means one where partner passed as dealer – in that case we would know they are fairly weak and 2♦ then has a lot more to lose than gain. Here that isn't the case.

West (D)	North	East	South
1♣	P	1♠	2♦
2♣	3♦	3♠	

It makes little difference whether South overcalls or not on this hand because West bids 2♣ regardless (see advanced section for other possible inferences here though), North competes to 3♦ and East pushes on to 3♠. All perfectly reasonable.

South has a nasty lead to 3♠. I think I would have led a small trump for similar reasons have I previously mentioned - it's unlikely to cost a trick.

T1 South leads ♠6

I wouldn't consider a red suit lead from those holdings - not even if partner has raised diamonds in the auction. On this hand the ♦K sits over us so the choice of ♦A and another is safe - but ♦K could just as easily have been with East in which case leading ♦A would give a trick away. A club would be my 2nd choice but that's less appealing as it may help declarer establish dummy's first suit. The spade lead doesn't work very well here as it should give declarer a fairly easy route to 10 tricks (5 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 3 clubs) although you have to be a bit careful to get them all.

I was surprised how few declarers actually took the spade finesse on the hand.

T1 After ♦A
T2 Another ♦2 to ♦K
T3 Some played ♠A, and some played a low spade - in both cases giving up a trick to the ♠K.

But there is no need to do that. If South has bid then he is more likely to have the ♠K so it's definitely worth trying the finesse. Of course you do have to get to hand to do that though. How to do that? Play a club. We have the J98 in hand so we can always force an entry by playing a club to the 8 and if that loses we can next play the ♣T to our ♣J.

T2 As it happens, North will probably duck the first club ♣A so our ♣8 will win.
T3-5 Then we lead ♠Q to take the finesse and play 3 rounds picking up South's ♠K.
T6 Then we continue with clubs to force out the ♣A.

Yes, this line does have some risk (see advanced section) but it would still be my preferred choice playing pairs. Why play a club at trick 2 and not a heart though? Because once we have the $\spadesuit A$ out of the way we can discard one of our hearts on the 4th club in dummy. Taking the heart finesse will, if it loses, expose us to 2 heart losers before we have set up our clubs (assume the defence will return a heart to knock our ace out). If we can discard a heart then we will make 10 tricks even though the heart finesse fails - we only lose $\heartsuit K$, $\diamondsuit A$ and $\clubsuit A$.

We have to lose the $\spadesuit A$ and it's a good general principle to knock out certain losers first because you might then be able to do something about other losers. There is one more catch we may have to overcome though - see advanced section.

What if South hadn't led the $\diamondsuit A$ to start with? Suppose as happened at some tables, it was T1 a club to the $\spadesuit A$
 T2 $\heartsuit J$ switch. Declarer might try the heart finesse $\heartsuit Q$ which will lose to $\heartsuit K$
 T3 The defence may then play another heart to knock out the $\heartsuit A$.
 T4 Declarer is now at risk of going off if the spade finesse loses but he should still take it. When it wins all is OK.
 T5-6 He can draw trumps,
 T7-9 Cash the clubs discarding his last heart,
 T10 Trump a heart back to hand
 T11 Lead towards the $\diamondsuit K$. When the $\diamondsuit A$ is onside he has 10 tricks.
 What's more, if South overcalled 2 \diamond vulnerable, he can be almost sure the $\diamondsuit A$ will be onside if the play has gone this way- see advanced section for why.

Key points to note

- Don't typically lead unsupported aces - even in suits your side has bid and raised.
- Don't be afraid to take finesses at pairs - especially through a hand that's bid as it's still odds on to have a key opposing card.
- Usually aim to knock out certain losers first. You may then be able to do something later to get rid of other losers.

- Support doubles allow an extra inference that a direct raise to 2 major guarantees 4 card support. That can help partner compete further in the auction.
- Watch the spot cards carefully as declarer - you may need one of them as a later entry.
- If the defence bid and raise a suit but don't lead it then there's a very good inference that the opening leader has the Ace.

More advanced

One further point about the auction

West (D)	North	East	South
1 \clubsuit	P	1 \spadesuit	2 \diamond

and similar ones.

A popular method these days is **support doubles** where a \times by opener here shows 3 card spade support. This is very useful to East when he has 5 spades as now he knows there's a fit. But it can also be useful in another sense because it leads to another inference. It means when West DOES bid 2 \spadesuit that guarantees **four card support**.

Here that will encourage East to compete further to 3 \spadesuit because he now knows there is a 9 card fit. Support doubles are typically played over bids up to 2 of your side's major (so \times of a 2 \diamond overcall would be support but \times of a 3 \diamond overcall wouldn't, that would just be takeout).

Like any convention there are downsides though – imagine responder has dredged up a 1 \spadesuit response with a flat 4333 5 count and now they are faced with partner doubling 2 \diamond to “helpfully” tell them they have 3 card spade support! You can hardly leave the double in so you may have to find a bid from a set of very unpalatable choices.

After $\diamondsuit A$ and another it might be tempting to try the heart finesse at trick 3. I wouldn't because if it loses another heart puts me in danger of having another heart loser exposed before I have knocked out the $\spadesuit A$. It's an example of the good general principle of knock out the certain losers first - especially if they may help you later (perhaps identify which way to take a 2-way finesse in another

suit or set up winners so you can avoid taking a finesse in the first place).

I mentioned some risk of playing on clubs though. That risk is if clubs are 4-2. If one round of clubs is ducked and then I take the spade finesse and it loses, North may now be in a position to give South a club ruff. But it's a risk I'd take at pairs with the spade finesse odds on to work.

What's the other catch with knocking out the ♣A? Assuming the ♦K and ♠A have already gone from dummy, if North holds up the ♠A to the 3rd round we can't now immediately reach our last club. But this is where entries are so important. Look at the little spades. West has the ♠5 and East the ♠4! So you can cross to the ♠5 to cash the last club winner and you can afford to play a 4th round of trumps to do that because East will still have one left. Swap the ♠4 and ♠5 round and the whole hand might have to be played differently!

On an initial club lead to the ♣A and ♥J switch I said declarer can be pretty sure South has the ♦A. Why? Two reasons. First simply because he needs it to have enough points to have overcalled vulnerable. But second if defenders have bid and raised a suit it's normal for them to lead that suit. Typically, the ONLY reason they don't is when the opening leader has the A but not the K. That's a useful inference. Declarer might even view to play ♥A and not take the finesse on the grounds that when North has shown up with the ♣A, South is almost marked with the ♥K to have enough values to make a vulnerable 2♦ overcall - and it's possible (albeit unlikely) that it's singleton. The key to the hand though is recognising the potential for the 13th club in dummy to discard a heart loser and having a later entry to it. Which points to knocking out the ♣A before heart losers are exposed. If the heart finesse is winning there will still be time to take it later thanks to that precious ♠5 entry to West.

Julian Foster (many times NSW representative)

♦ Restricted Play Opportunities

The club has expanded the Jan RB Swiss Pairs Congress. So, it will also contain a Restricted (<300 MP) section.

3rd

Online Australia Day Weekend
Open & Restricted (<300mp) Swiss Pairs

Sunday 29th Jan 2023 on RealBridge
10:00am Start 2 Sessions – Swiss Pairs (IMP) Event
Prize Pool: Generous, but dependent on Entries
 Convenor, queries & partnership advice: Gary Barwick 0413 884 805
 Director: Ronnie Ng
 Entry Management: Enter by MyABF
 Pre-Payments: Visitors use MyABF Credits & NSBC Members to select "Club PP System"
 2022 Open Winners: **Peter Gill & Jane Dawson**
 NORTH SHORE BRIDGE CLUB
 Online Venue with RealBridge
 Tel: 0413 884 805
 Conducted under the auspices of the NSWBA. The ABF has approved the issue of **red masterpoints at level B4**. All players are subject to the NSWBA's Disciplinary Regulations. Yellow systems restricted.

Player Fees (pp) \$30pp

Why not join the NSBC? Remote Members just \$25/year

There are multiple events in Canberra for both Restricted & Novice players.

2023 SUMMER FESTIVAL OF BRIDGE
January 10-22
Canberra Rex Hotel
150 Northbourne Avenue, Braddon, ACT

Week One 10-14 JANUARY
 Senior And Women's Teams
 Senior And Women's Playoffs
 Non Life And Life Masters' Teams
 Chris Diment Swiss Pairs
 One Day Novice Teams and Two Day Novice MP Pairs
 PENLINE Swiss Pairs

Weekend 15-16 JANUARY
 TBIB Open, <100 And Mixed (**New With PQPs**) And
 PENLINE <500 Swiss Pairs

Week Two 17-22 JANUARY
 South West Pacific Teams
 <750/300 MPs Teams
 Neura Swiss Pairs
 Pack Up & Go Home Pairs
 NOT Quarter-Finals, Semi-Finals and Finals
 All Enquiries: [Ian Thomson](#)

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