

IT STARTS AT TRICK ONE

Consider this hand:

South
 ♠AQ6
 ♥AK
 ♦KQ76
 ♣AK52

The bidding goes:

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

West leads the ♣6 and you see this pathetic dummy:

North
 ♠873
 ♥QJ43
 ♦542
 ♣J109

West
 ♣6

East

South
 ♠AQ6
 ♥AK
 ♦KQ76
 ♣AK52

You started out with a barn burner. How are you going to make the contract, though?

South used the modern method to show 25 balanced points. Why not just open 3NT? Because that bid is better used as the “gambling 3NT” a conventional opening that shows a long solid minor and nothing else. More about that bid in future blogs. North made a waiting 2♦ bid and when South showed his 25-27 range, North added his points and knew that they could only settle for game.

Back to the play of the hand. The first thing you must do is count your sure tricks. You have 1 spade, 4 hearts, and 2 clubs. You need 2 more tricks. You can force an extra diamond and club for your 9 tricks. Now you must ask yourself, what could go wrong?

The lead looks like it's 4th best from a club honor. Looking at your hand and the dummy's, you surmise that West must hold the ♣ Q. So you're not surprised to see East play the ♣ 4 under the dummy's ♣ 9. If you let the ♣ 9 hold that trick, you are going down. You will unblock the ♥ A K, but when you go to the dummy to cash the remaining two hearts, West will put up that ♣ Q. Now your ♣ A K are keeping you in your hand. You are never going to reach that dummy. You end up with 1 spade, 2 hearts, 1 diamond and 3 clubs.

Lets go back to trick 1. You must anticipate the later play that is going to allow you to take all four hearts. You will need to unblock the ♥ AK and get back to the dummy. The only card entry is the ♣ J. That is going to take two leads up to it and you'll need both low clubs to achieve this. Therefore, you must ignore the the "gift" you got on the initial lead and win the first trick with the ♣ A. Now when you unblock the hearts you can lead up the the ♣ J. The first time you make the trip, West will put up the ♣ Q. But this won't bother you because you'll win any return in your hand and lead up to the ♣ J again. There is nothing West can do to stop you from making an overtrick.

This is the full deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 20px; text-align: center; line-height: 20px;">1</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">N North</div> ♠ 873 ♥ QJ43 ♦ 542 ♣ J109	<table border="1"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>2♣</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>2♦</td><td>P</td><td>3NT</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>P</td><td>P</td><td></td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S		P	P	2♣	P	2♦	P	3NT	P	P	P	
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		P	P	2♣														
	P	2♦	P	3NT														
P	P	P																
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">W West</div> ♠ K42 ♥ 965 ♦ A9 ♣ Q8763	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">E East</div> ♠ J1095 ♥ 10872 ♦ J1083 ♣ 4																	
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;">S South</div> ♠ AQ6 ♥ AK ♦ KQ76 ♣ AK52		3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0																

If you would like to see the whole hand played out click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/pw3op52> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.