

WATCH THE DISCARDS

Many times in bridge, you will use psychology to help you make your contract. Here is a tip that you should keep in the back of your mind when you have to make a good guess.

A defender who holds A-5-3-2 or K-5-3-2 is more apt to discard from this suit than from a suit like Q-5-3-2 or J-5-3-2.

This could help in a situation like this:

| | |
|-------|------|
| North | |
| J76 | |
| West | East |
| Q94 | A532 |
| South | |
| K108 | |

You are south and have to make one quick trick in the suit. During the previous tricks, East has made two discards from this suit. You should lead up to the king. East is much more likely to have discarded from a suit headed by the Ace.

This tendency can be seen in action on the following deal:

| | | | | |
|----------|-------|----------|-------|---------|
| | | | | North |
| | | | | ♠1052 |
| | | | | ♥KJ63 |
| | | | | ♦A73 |
| | | | | ♣864 |
| West: ♣3 | | | | ♠AKQ864 |
| | | | | ♥74 |
| | | | | ♦KQ2 |
| | | | | ♣Q2 |
| WEST | NORTH | EAST | SOUTH | |
| | | Pass | 1♠ | |
| Pass | 1NT | Pass | 3♠ | |
| Pass | 4♠ | All Pass | | |

West leads the ♣3 and you are looking at 4 losers: 2 heart and 2 clubs. You need to finesse either the ♥K or ♥J. If this succeeds, you have eliminated one of the losers; if you guess wrong you lose both hearts and go set.

You ruff the 3rd club and start playing trump. On the 3rd and 4th trumps, West discards a club and a diamond. East throws a club and a heart. What's your plan?

The important discard to watch is East's low heart discard on the 4th trump. He must know that the deal depends on the outcome of the heart suit. If he holds the ♥A-x-x-x, there is no need to hold onto the small hearts. However, if he holds the ♥Q-x-x-x, he would want to hold the extra hearts in case South has the ♥A. Therefore, play East for the ♥A and finesse the ♥J.

This is the complete board:

| | | | |
|---|--|---|---|
| 11 D | | N North ♠ 1052 ♥ KJ83 ♦ A73 ♣ 864 | W N E S P 1NT P 1♠ P 4♠ P 3♠ P P |
| W West ♠ 93 ♥ Q102 ♦ 10954 ♣ KJ73 | | E East ♠ J7 ♥ A965 ♦ J86 ♣ A1095 | |
| | S South ♠ AKQ864 ♥ 74 ♦ KQ2 ♣ Q2 | | 4♠ S NS: 0 EW: 0 |

Note that if you put up the ♥K on the first heart lead, East would have taken the ♥A and fired back a heart to West's ♥Q.

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/mgckap9>
Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.