

Switches continued



to the East hand:

♠ Q 10 8
♥ A 10
♦ J 9 3
♣ A J 10 7 2

♠ K 7 2
♥ 8 6 4 3
♦ Q 10 8 5
♣ K 6

	N	E
W		S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	End	1NT ¹
12-14			

The bidding, the dummy and the play to the first trick are exactly the same as before. You win trick one with the king of spades after partner leads the three and declarer follows with the four.

You should notice two differences: your hand is weaker and it contains the two of spades. Now that you have only 8 points, partner holds 6-8, which leaves room for the ace of diamonds or one of the red kings as well as the known ace of spades. In addition, because you can see the two of spades, you know the lead comes from a four-card suit.

Making three spades and one club is no good. For a spade return to work, you will need your partner to hold the ace of diamonds as well. If partner does have the ace of diamonds, you can beat the contract with a diamond switch. This must be better, as you will set up enough tricks to defeat the contract if partner has either the ace or the king of diamonds – two chances are clearly better than one. This is the full deal:

♠ Q 10 8
♥ A 10
♦ J 9 3
♣ A J 10 7 2

♠ A 9 5 3
♥ 9 7 2
♦ K 6 2
♣ 8 5 4

♠ K 7 2
♥ 8 6 4 3
♦ Q 10 8 5
♣ K 6

	N	E
W		S

♠ J 6 4
♥ K Q J 5
♦ A 7 4
♣ Q 9 3

After your diamond return, the contract actually goes two down.

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In my previous article we dealt with situations in which you could see a glaring reason for trying a different suit to the one that you or your partner led. This time we shall discuss some positions that require a modest amount of thought and counting.

♠ Q 10 8
♥ A 10
♦ J 9 3
♣ A J 10 7 2

♠ K 7 6
♥ Q 8 4 3
♦ Q 10 8 5
♣ K 6

	N	E
W		S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	End	1NT ¹
12-14			

Partner, West, leads the three of spades, and a low card is played from dummy. You put up your king and it wins the trick, declarer following with the four. What do you return?

Continuing the suit lead initially often works well and, before contemplating a switch to another suit, you should consider the possible benefits of persevering with the original one. Here you can count partner for between 4 and 6 points – you can see 22 between your hand and

dummy's, and declarer has announced 12-14. Presumably, partner must have the ace of spades or your king would not have won the first trick. This marks declarer with the king of hearts and ace-king of diamonds. You can also work out that partner must have either the queen of clubs or the jack of hearts, but not both. This should tell you that a switch is unlikely to achieve much; your opponent must have a double stopper in each red suit. The only realistic chance is to find partner with a five-card spade suit. This is certainly possible, as you have not seen the two of spades.

The full deal may look like this:

♠ Q 10 8
♥ A 10
♦ J 9 3
♣ A J 10 7 2

♠ A 9 5 3 2
♥ J 9 2
♦ 6 4 2
♣ 8 4

♠ K 7 6
♥ Q 8 4 3
♦ Q 10 8 5
♣ K 6

	N	E
W		S

♠ J 4
♥ K 7 6 5
♦ A K 7
♣ Q 9 5 3

Partner can duck the second round of spades, conserving the ace of spades as an entry to the long cards. After winning the second trick with the jack of spades, declarer will run the queen (or nine) of clubs for a finesse. Then you will take your king of clubs and play a third round of spades. You defeat the contract with four spades and a club.

It would be a different story if you mistakenly switched to one of the red suits at trick two. Then declarer would make at least nine tricks: ace-king in each red suit and four clubs.

Let us make a couple of slight changes

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Do it My Way!**

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POTTAGE ON DEFENCE continued from page 23

♠ 10 8 2
 ♥ J 6 5
 ♦ A
 ♣ K Q 10 9 7 2

♠ A Q 7
 ♥ Q 8 4 3
 ♦ 10 6 5
 ♣ A 6 4

N
 W E
 S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	3NT	End	2NT ¹

¹ 15-16

West leads the three of spades and your ace of spades wins the first trick. You could continue spades – but would it be wise?

If the lead is from K-x-x-x, you run four spade tricks and, assuming you score your ace of clubs, you will beat the contract. Unfortunately, as there are 15 points (at least) on your left and at most 3 opposite, declarer is the one more likely to hold the king of spades. In any event, as you have an entry in clubs, you can probably afford to wait until you get in with it to return a spade – if the spade suit is running now, it will still do so later.

The sight of dummy should suggest an alternative strategy. Rather than looking for five tricks your way, you should focus on preventing declarer from taking nine. The very attractive club suit in dummy makes it almost certain that South plans to develop several tricks in the suit. Can you see how to thwart this?

You need to begin by returning a diamond, knocking out dummy's only

certain entry. You will continue the good work by holding up the ace of clubs until declarer runs out of the suit. By this, I mean that you will not take the ace on the first round, saving it instead for the second round if you are reasonably confident that the missing clubs are 2-2, and otherwise playing it on the third round.

♠ 10 8 2
 ♥ J 6 5
 ♦ A
 ♣ K Q 10 9 7 2

♠ J 9 5 3
 ♥ 10 7 2
 ♦ Q 9 3 2
 ♣ 8 5

♠ A Q 7
 ♥ Q 8 4 3
 ♦ 10 6 5
 ♣ A 6 4

♠ K 6 4
 ♥ A K 9
 ♦ K J 8 7 4
 ♣ J 3

N
 W E
 S

With the full deal looking like this, your opponent cannot enjoy the clubs after your diamond switch and will go at least one down.

Suit Contracts

The time has come to look at some suit contracts.

♠ A J 10 2
 ♥ J 6
 ♦ J 5
 ♣ K Q 10 9 2

♠ K 7 3
 ♥ Q 8 4 3 2
 ♦ A K 10 2
 ♣ 6

N
 W E
 S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣ ²	Pass	1NT ¹
Pass	4♠	End	2♠

¹ 12-14

² Asking for four-card majors

Partner leads the four of diamonds. You capture the jack with the king, and South plays the eight. What should you return?

The lead of a low card like the four suggests an honour and declarer would

hardly put up dummy's jack with a holding like Q-8-7-6 facing J-5. This tells you that you can continue diamonds without setting up the queen as a discard for dummy's heart loser. However, it should also point you to an alternative strategy.

You can see three defensive tricks: two diamonds and the king of spades. So, if you can score a club ruff, this will suffice to defeat the contract. The thing to do is to switch to your singleton club.

The full deal may look like this:

♠ A J 10 2
 ♥ J 6
 ♦ J 5
 ♣ K Q 10 9 2

♠ 8 5
 ♥ 10 7 5
 ♦ Q 9 6 4 3
 ♣ J 7 5

♠ K 7 3
 ♥ Q 8 4 3 2
 ♦ A K 10 2
 ♣ 6

♠ Q 9 6 4
 ♥ A K 9
 ♦ 8 7
 ♣ A 8 4 3

N
 W E
 S

Declarer probably wins the club in hand to take a trump finesse, but you win with the king. Then, using the knowledge that the opening lead is from a suit headed by the queen, you return a low diamond. Upon winning the trick, partner should have little difficulty in figuring out that you want a club ruff.

♠ J 10 6 2
 ♥ Q J 6
 ♦ A K Q 5
 ♣ 9 2

♠ 7 3
 ♥ A 8 3 2
 ♦ 8 3 2
 ♣ A 6 4 3

N
 W E
 S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣ ¹	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	2♥
End		Pass	4♠

¹ Asking for four-card majors

Partner leads the queen of clubs and you have two decisions:

- (i) whether to put up the ace, and
- (ii) what to lead if you do.

Think about it before reading on.

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**I used to be
Indecisive
but now
I'm not
so sure**

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A count of points tells you that, in addition to the queen-jack of clubs you know about, partner can have at most 4 points. These will include the ace of spades, the queen of spades, or a major-suit king. In each case, your side will have only three obvious winners – that extra high card and your two aces. To defeat the contract, you will need to find a ruff. Luckily, this does not seem so difficult. Declarer has shown four hearts and you can see seven between your hand and dummy. This leaves partner with a doubleton. You do not want your opponent to get in and draw trumps, so you put up the ace of clubs at trick one.

Then, to maintain communications, you switch to a low heart. With king doubleton in hearts, partner would win the heart, play one back to your ace and score a ruff straight away. On the actual layout, shown below, the ruff will come later, after declarer has crossed to the ace of diamonds and taken a losing trump finesse.

♠ J 10 6 2 ♥ Q J 6 ♦ A K Q 5 ♣ 9 2	N W E S	♠ 7 3 ♥ A 8 3 2 ♦ 8 3 2 ♣ A 6 4 3
♠ K 8 5 ♥ 10 5 ♦ J 9 6 4 ♣ Q J 10 7		♠ A Q 9 4 ♥ K 9 7 4 ♦ 10 7 ♣ K 8 5

With this trump position, declarer has no way to avoid the ruff – even playing ace and another trump should not work. Partner should be able to work out to go up with the king on the second round.

Declarer would need to hold the ace and king of spades, and the ace of hearts, to avoid losing the heart ruff. In that case, cashing the two top spades would limit your partner to one trump trick.

One Final Example

Our final example continues the theme of ruffs, albeit with one vital difference. Please move across to the West seat to see if you can spot it.

♠ 8 ♥ 10 8 6 5 ♦ J 10 9 4 ♣ A K Q 10	N W E S	♠ A Q 10 6 ♥ J ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ J 9 7 2
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West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Pass	1♠
Dbf	3♠	End	Pass

Your reopening double has succeeded in pushing the opponents up a level. Can you capitalise on this? You lead the ace of clubs, which holds, partner playing a discouraging three. What next?

Using attitude signals, partner may have started with three clubs, in which case a second round may stand up. Then, again, it may not. A glance at dummy should tell you that if declarer does have a second club, it cannot run away. There is nothing on which South might discard it. The threatening feature of the dummy is its singleton heart. If you are to defeat the contract, you may well need to minimise the number of heart ruffs declarer can take. Accordingly, you should switch to a trump.

♠ 8 ♥ 10 8 6 5 ♦ J 10 9 4 ♣ A K Q 10	N W E S	♠ A Q 10 6 ♥ J ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ J 9 7 2
♠ K 7 3 ♥ A K 9 4 ♦ 6 2 ♣ 8 6 4 3		♠ J 9 5 4 2 ♥ Q 7 3 2 ♦ A K Q ♣ 5

This is the actual deal, and the trump lead strikes a body blow. Whether or not declarer finesses, partner will gain the lead in hearts later on, and be able to draw a second round and a third round of trumps. Provided you hang on to your diamonds – not so difficult with four visible in dummy – this leaves your opponent a trick short. ■

Ten Commandments for Bridge Players

1. Thou shalt not play any game other than bridge whilst at the table.
2. Thou shalt not call a misdeal just because thou hast been dealt nopicture cards.
3. Thou shalt never take the rules of bridge in vain.
4. After losing three games, thou shalt not cry, nor stamp thy feet, nor set fire to thy bridge table.
5. Thou shalt honour thy tournament director's decision, even though thou might find it unfavourable.
6. When thy partner makes a mistake, thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not resort to hand signals, meaningful looks, or kicks under the table to instruct thy partner.
8. If thou breakest Commandment 7, thou must not get caught.
9. Thou shalt keep table talk to a minimum, unless thou has some juicy gossip that will not wait.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy opponent's aces, nor their kings, nor their success at making seven no trumps doubled and redoubled.

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