

# BRIDGE PRACTICE PLAY

## DEFENDING NOTRUMP CONTRACTS

### Deal 1 - Dealer North

♠ J 5		♠ A Q 10 8 3 2
♥ 7 2		♥ A Q 4
♦ A K Q 10 6 4		♦ 8 5
♣ A Q 5		♣ 8 3

  

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
pass	1♦	1♠	1NT
	3NT	all pass	

You are sitting East and West leads the ♠9 against South's 3NT. Declarer plays the ♠5 from dummy. What is your plan for the defense?

### Deal 2 - Dealer North

♠ Q 8 3		♠ K J 9 5 2
♥ A K Q		♥ 8 5 4
♦ K 7 2		♦ Q 8 6
♣ K Q 4 2		♣ A 5

  

	N	
W		E
	S	

West	North	East	South
pass	1♣	pass	1NT
	3NT	all pass	

You lead the ♠5 and dummy's ♠Q wins, East playing the ♠4. Declarer leads the ♣K from dummy, East following with the ♣9, and you play low. The ♣Q comes next, East producing the ♣6 as you win with the ace. What now?

Excerpt taken from:

**TEST YOUR BRIDGE TECHNIQUE:**

**Defending Notrump Contracts**

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### Deal 3 - Dealer South

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

West	North	East	South
			2NT
pass	3♣	pass	3♠
pass	3NT	all pass	

North's 3♣ is four-card Stayman. You lead the ♣K and declarer takes his ace on the third round (partner showing count with the ♣7 and ♣2 from his ♣8-7-4-2). At Trick 4, South leads the ♦Q. How will you defend?

### Deal 4 - Dealer South

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

West	North	East	South
			1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

You lead the ♥5, covered by the jack, four and king. Declarer now leads the ♣5 to dummy's ♣K and East's ♣3. He runs the ♦Q to your hand, partner playing the ♦2. How will you defend?



# BRIDGE PRACTICE PLAY

## DEFENDING NOTRUMP CONTRACTS — SOLUTIONS

### Deal 1 - Dealer North

<p>♠ 9 4 ♥ K 9 6 5 3 ♦ J 2 ♣ 10 9 7 2</p>	<p>♠ J 5 ♥ 7 2 ♦ A K Q 10 6 4 ♣ A Q 5</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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		<p>♠ A Q 10 8 3 2 ♥ A Q 4 ♦ 8 5 ♣ 8 3</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ K 7 6 ♥ J 10 8 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ K J 6 4</p>											

West	North	East	South
pass	1♦ 3NT	1♠ all pass	1NT

Even if partner's opening lead is a singleton, you can be sure of setting up your spade suit by overtaking with the ♠10 and driving out South's ♠K. Will this be enough to defeat the contract, though? Declarer will score one trick with the ♠K and is virtually certain to add at least eight more tricks in the minors. If South does not hold the ♣K he will be able to take a club finesse when he gains the lead in spades.

So, your magnificent spade suit does not seem up to the job when it comes to defeating the contract. A better idea is to win with the ♠A and switch to the ace and queen of hearts, hoping that partner's hearts are good enough to produce at least four tricks in the suit. When the cards lie as in the diagram, partner will signal encouragement on your ♥A switch. You will continue with queen and another heart, putting the contract down two.

### Deal 2 - Dealer North

<p>♠ K J 9 5 2 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ Q 8 6 ♣ A 5</p>	<p>♠ Q 8 3 ♥ A K Q ♦ K 7 2 ♣ K Q 4 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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		<p>♠ 10 7 4 ♥ 10 9 6 2 ♦ A J 10 4 ♣ 9 6</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ A 6 ♥ J 7 3 ♦ 9 5 3 ♣ J 10 8 7 3</p>											

West	North	East	South
pass	1♣ 3NT	pass all pass	1NT

Looking at the club suit in isolation, it is just possible that East holds four clubs. However, it is unlikely that South would have responded 1NT on 2-4-4-3 shape. It would then be more normal to respond 1♦ or 1♥. So you should place South with 2-3-3-5 shape. In that case he is in a position to make two spades, three hearts, and four clubs — a total of nine tricks!

You do not have the time to knock out the ♠A. The only chance of defeating the contract is to score four quick diamond tricks. Is your ♦6 already on the table? Let's hope not because declarer will play low from the dummy, ducking the trick to the safe hand. Instead you must switch to the queen of diamonds. This is just the card to make your partner's eyes light up. You will soon have five tricks before you, putting the game down one.

Do you see how count signals helped you on this deal? The signal in spades did not matter much, but East's signal in clubs allowed you to know how many club tricks declarer had established. Adding in five further tricks in the majors, you could tell that it was right to play the ♦Q rather than persevere with spades.

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## DEFENDING NOTRUMP CONTRACTS — SOLUTIONS

### Deal 3 - Dealer South

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

  

<table style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; width: 20px; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		N			W		E			S			♠ A K Q 7
	N												
W		E											
	S												
	♥ Q 7 4												
	♦ A Q J												
	♣ A 5 3												

West	North	East	South
pass	3♣	pass	2NT
pass	3NT	all pass	3♠

South's 2NT opening shows 20-22 points, so you know that declarer holds the ♠A. If he holds ♠A-Q doubleton, he will not be able to enjoy dummy's long cards in the suit. If he holds ♠A-Q-6 or ♠A-Q-4, he will be able to drop your partner's ♠J on the second round, whether or not you win the first round. The only key situation is when declarer holds ♠A-Q-J. In that case you can block the diamond suit, provided

you win the first round. After cashing a good club, what should you do next?

To take advantage of declarer's blockage in diamonds you must kill the entry to dummy. You do this by returning the ♥K (an entry-destroying play known as the Merrimac Coup). Declarer cannot duck because this would be a fifth trick for the defense. With the long cards in diamonds no longer available to him, he has just three spades, two hearts, two diamonds and one club. That is a total of eight tricks and he has no way of finding a ninth.

### Deal 4 - Dealer South

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

  

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	N												
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	S												
	♥ A K 6												
	♦ A 10 7 6												
	♣ A 9 8 5												

West	North	East	South
all pass	1NT	pass	3NT

You should win with the ♠K. If declarer began with a doubleton ace-king in the heart suit, you would go ahead and clear the heart suit. Since declarer played the ♥K when dummy's ♥J had already won the trick, it is tempting to assume that he is now down to the singleton ♥A. It is also possible that he is trying to fool you by feigning shortage in the suit. Defenders who play count signals protect themselves against this type of deception. Here East

played the ♥4 at Trick 1. Since he would not have chosen this card from ♥6-4-2, you know that declarer's ♥A cannot be singleton!

If you continue carelessly with another heart, dummy's ♥10 will win and declarer (looking pleased with himself) will follow with the ♥6. You should spare yourself such an unpleasant experience by switching to the ♠J at Trick 3. Whether or not declarer covers with dummy's ♠K, you will soon score five spade tricks to add to the diamond trick already made. That's down two.

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