

KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN

You are dealer with the South hand below and open 2NT. Your partner raises to 3NT. The lead on your left is the ♠4 and you see this lovely dummy:

	North			
	♠J87			
	♥J83			
	♦AJ1096			
	♣Q8			
West				
♠4				
	South			
	♠AK			
	♥AK97			
	♦K8			
	♣A10974			
West	North	East	South	
Pass	3NT	All Pass	2NT	

What's your plan for making this standard 3NT contract?

You have 7 top tricks and you focus on the diamonds. You are only missing the ♦Q so you expect to take 2 extra diamond tricks. What could possibly go wrong?

You could play the ♦K and lead to the ♦A, hoping the ♦Q falls. Or, you could finesse the second diamond. Or, you can finesse the first diamond and if the queen doesn't appear, overtake the ♦K with dummy's ♦A and force out the queen.

The problem with the first idea is that it requires a 3-2 diamond split and even so, requires that the longer diamond holding does not include the queen. This reduces the probabilities extensively. The problem with the finesse ideas is that the defender with the ♦Q will not play it on the first diamond and thus you require an entry into the dummy outside of the diamond suit, and you don't have one.

This should lead you to direct your eyes to the club suit. You are missing the ♣KJ. But after they are eliminated you have easy access to the remaining clubs in your hand.

The plan should be to lead a low diamond to dummy's ♦9. If the ♦Q captures this your problems are over. You overtake the ♦K and run the good diamonds. If the ♦Q doesn't appear you have just taken 1 extra trick and you can lead the ♣Q back to your hand. If East plays the ♣K you take your ♣A and force out the ♣Q with your ♣109. When East wins his ♥Q at the 12th trick, he is forced to lead his remaining ♦Q, giving you 11 tricks, total.

This is the complete board:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">11</div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block;">D</div>	N North ♠ J87 ♥ J83 ♦ AJ1096 ♣ Q8	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>W</th> <th>N</th> <th>E</th> <th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>P</td> <td>P</td> </tr> <tr> <td>P</td> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	W	N	E	S				2NT	P	3NT	P	P	P			
	W	N	E	S														
			2NT															
P	3NT	P	P															
P																		
W West ♠ Q9543 ♥ 62 ♦ 73 ♣ J652		E East ♠ 1062 ♥ Q1054 ♦ Q542 ♣ K3																
	S South ♠ AK ♥ AK97 ♦ K8 ♣ A10974	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0																

If you would like to see the whole hand played out, click on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/m6zdw7w> .
 Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.