

PICK THE ALTERNATIVE

Your partner opened 1♠ and you responded 1NT. He immediately jumped to 3NT. You are sitting in the South seat and West leads the ♣J. What are your thoughts?

N	North
♠	AK542
♥	K9
♦	K74
♣	KQ3
S	South
♠	63
♥	J1043
♦	A652
♣	A54

You are in a notrump contract so you first count top tricks; tricks you can take without giving up the lead. You have 2 spades, 2 diamonds and 3 clubs. You need 2 more tricks. They can come from the spade or heart suits. Let's look at this a little closer.

Two extra tricks can come from spades if they break 3-3. This is only a 36% probability. At first blush, the heart suit doesn't look too promising. But there is actually a 100% probability of two extra tricks from this suit. You win the first trick in the dummy and lead the ♥K. If they duck this, follow up with the ♥9. You can go to your hand twice; once to force out the remaining honor with the ♥J and once more to play the remaining ♥10 winner. Of course, if they win the ♥K, it is even easier to force out the ♥Q, leaving the ♥J10 as the two needed tricks.

When you are blessed with two alternative approaches, take the time to assess each one and pick that course of action that is the most probable to have a successful outcome.

This is the entire deal:

D		N North		WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH	
1		♠AK542 ♥K9 ♦K74 ♣KQ3		1♠ P 1NT P 3NT P P P	
W West		S South		E East	
♠QJ98 ♥AQ6 ♦3 ♣J10987		♠63 ♥J1043 ♦A652 ♣A54		♠107 ♥8752 ♦QJ1098 ♣62	
3NT South NS: 0 EW: 0					

You can play this hand clicking on this link:

<http://tinyurl.com/h3qob3j> or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Play" button on the bottom to advance through each card.