

PLANNING THE PLAY IN NOTRUMP

You pick up this 16 HCP balanced hand and open 1NT:

S	South
♠	K4
♥	853
♦	AQJ8
♣	KQJ5

Your partner jumps to 3NT. West leads the ♥6 and you see this dummy. Plan your play.

N	North
♠	85
♥	AQ10
♦	K1073
♣	A964

West leads ♥6

S	South
♠	K4
♥	853
♦	AQJ8
♣	KQJ5

You have 9 top tricks, so making the contract shouldn't be a problem. The next part of the planning stage is to consider the order you will play the cards. Specifically, what will you play from the dummy on the opening ♥6 lead.

West could easily be leading from a suit headed by the ♥K. If that were the case, you could make an overtrick by putting up the ♥Q. That would make sense on a different South hand. But not on this one.

You hold the ♠K4 in your hand and a lead of a spade from East would put the whole contract in jeopardy if West holds the ♠A. You can't risk going down if West's honor is the ♥J rather than the ♥K. The correct plan is to play the ♥A on the first trick and take your other 8 tricks.

Here, you are rewarded by East's fall of the ♥K under your ♥A. You can now take a finesse of the ♥10 and take 11 tricks.

This is the entire deal:

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 40px; text-align: center; margin: 0 auto;"> 11 D </div>	N North ♠ 85 ♥ AQ10 ♦ K1073 ♣ A964	<table border="1" style="font-size: 8px;"> <tr><td>W</td><td>N</td><td>E</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td>3NT</td><td>P</td><td>1NT</td></tr> <tr><td>P</td><td></td><td>P</td><td>P</td></tr> </table>	W	N	E	S	P	3NT	P	1NT	P		P	P
	W	N	E	S										
	P	3NT	P	1NT										
	P		P	P										
W West ♠ A96 ♥ J97642 ♦ 64 ♣ 107	E East ♠ QJ10732 ♥ K ♦ 952 ♣ 832													
S South ♠ K4 ♥ 853 ♦ AQJ8 ♣ KQJ5	Select cards to play for all 4 players	3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0												

You can see how this hand should be played by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/ycvxl3uq>, or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick. Alternatively, by clicking on "Play" you can play all four hands and see if you can make the hand on your own.