

PLAN YOUR ENTRIES

You are sitting in the South seat and your partner opens 1♣ and East passes. What would be your response?

South
♠J943
♥AQ5
♦Q1052
♣76

Some would respond 1♦. Their convention is to bid 4-card suits up the line. Others would skip the diamonds and get right on to the important spade suit. They feel that finding an 8-card major is the most important issue and the quicker it is found the more information about the two hands' qualities can be explored. Let's say you follow the Standard and respond 1♦. West passes and your partner rebids 3♣. Now what?

He is showing a strong hand (17+ points) with a long solid club suit. Since you have stoppers in the other two unbid suits, you bid what you think you can make – 3NT.

West leads the ♥J and you see this dummy:

	North	
	♠72	
	♥K	
	♦K43	
	♣AKQ10982	
West		East
♥J		
	South	
	♠J943	
	♥AQ5	
	♦Q1052	
	♣76	

What would be your plan? Specifically, what are you going to do about the opening lead?

As usual, you count the top tricks. You have 3 hearts and 7 clubs. No problem!

Whenever you say “no problem” to yourself you should always ask yourself, “What can go wrong”? Well, if you win the ♥K and run the clubs you have only 8 tricks. How are you going to get into your hand to take those other two hearts?

The answer is – you can't.

You will try to lead a diamond to your $\heartsuit K$ and either West will take it with the $\heartsuit A$ or if East holds that card, he'll rise with it and play spades for a total of 5 tricks.

The answer to the problem is to overtake the $\heartsuit K$ with your $\heartsuit A$. Now you can play the $\heartsuit Q$ as the 9th trick and then run those clubs.

This is the complete board:

D		N North		W N E S	
1		\spadesuit 72 \heartsuit K \diamondsuit K43 \clubsuit AKQ10982		1 \clubsuit P 1 \heartsuit P 3 \spadesuit P 3NT P P P	
W West		S South		E East	
\spadesuit A1085 \heartsuit J10986 \diamondsuit 976 \clubsuit 4		\spadesuit J943 \heartsuit AQ5 \diamondsuit Q1052 \clubsuit 76		\spadesuit KQ6 \heartsuit 7432 \diamondsuit AJ8 \clubsuit J53	
				3NT S NS: 0 EW: 0	

As you can see, East sees those impeding clubs looming in the dummy and goes right up with the $\heartsuit A$. Then he plays the $\spadesuit KQ$ and another spade, trapping your $\spadesuit J$ between West's $\spadesuit A10$ tenace.

You can see how this hand should be played by the defenders by clicking on this link: <http://tinyurl.com/qjn4qd3> . Or copy and paste it into your browser. Click on the "Next" button on the bottom to advance through each trick.