

## Tip of the month

This month's tip is the first of two articles on **planning** the sequence of plays which will make the most of your opportunities. We are told in 'bridge primary school' that we should normally play towards high honour cards. This article is born of seeing opponents getting themselves into a situation where they are unable to follow this 'rule' successfully. Consider the following hand, East dealer and NS vulnerable:

### North

**S** KQ3  
**H** KQ1094  
**D** 97  
**C** 1053

and the bidding goes

N	E	S	W
	NB	1NT	NB
2D*	X**	2H	NB
2NT***	NB	4H****	NB
NB	NB		

\* Transfer to hearts

\*\* I want diamonds led

\*\*\* 11/12 hcp with five hearts

\*\*\*\* I prefer 4H to 3NT

### South

**S** 9642  
**H** A52  
**D** Q85  
**C** AKJ

West leads D10 and East cashes DAK, West playing D3 on the second round, and switches to a club. [NB There is a case for East continuing with a third diamond in order to kill the discard which declarer will otherwise get on the DQ he is presumed to hold, West having shown a doubleton, but more on this later.] On the club switch, South cannot afford the club finesse as there is still SA to lose. How should he continue? There should be five trump tricks, two clubs and one diamond, leaving declarer needing two spades. South therefore needs **two** entries in order to play **twice** towards KQ3. He knows that SA is with West because if East held it, in addition to DAKJxxx already 'shown', he would surely have opened the bidding.

If South draws trumps first ending in hand, there will be the two entries needed, assuming the trumps break 3-2, of course. But what if the trumps break 4-1? Four with West is a distinct possibility given that East holds six diamonds. In that case, **three** entries will be needed and the club switch has just put South on lead with one of them. Therefore, a spade must be played first towards KQ3. When this holds (if West were to rise with SA, the required two spade tricks would be established so he will play low), play HK and low heart to HA. If the 4-1 break is revealed, take the marked finesse against West's HJ and draw the remaining trump. Declarer can now return to the remaining club entry to cash DQ, discarding a club and lead towards the remaining SK3 making 10 tricks.

If declarer plays on hearts first, before playing the first spade towards KQ3, he will be trapped in dummy in the end game and will be forced to lose two spade tricks. Getting the sequence of plays right is key to success in this hand (and many others). If the trumps had broken 3-2, bad timing would not have been punished here, but good **planning** identified the possibility of a 4-1 break and good **timing** brought home the contract despite the 'bad' break. The EW cards were:

### West

**S** A108  
**H** J863  
**D** 103  
**C** Q874

### East

**S** J75  
**H** 7  
**D** AKJ642  
**C** 962

Returning to the situation where the club discard on DQ is denied by a third round played immediately, ruffed by West and overruffed by dummy, the contract can still be made using **good timing**. After the overruff, a club is returned to CK in order to play the first spade, then the trumps are drawn ending in hand to play the second spade. If West rises with SA at that point, his only alternative to a third round of spades, which sets up S9 in declarer's hand, is a club into the jaws of CKJ. If West ducks the second spade lead, declarer plays the third round from dummy himself and still has a club entry for his 10<sup>th</sup> trick.

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