

August 2021 ACBL Bridge Bulletin Notes

Jeff Kroll
Sam Khayatt

Page 41, "It's Your Call," Problem 3 by Sue Munday and Karen Walker—Support or not?

Matchpoints. All vulnerable.

♠J32 ♥KQ10 ♦— ♣A QJ10987

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	2♦	1♣
			?

Call	Votes	Award
Dbl	9	100
3♣	3	70
3♦	1	50
4♣	1	50

All the panelists play support doubles, so double here promises exactly three hearts. The difference of opinion was whether a support double was mandatory when holding three-card support for partner's major.

Nine of the 14 panelists considered the support double mandatory. As Molson stated, "If you don't double, you don't have three." The doublers planned to rebid clubs on their next bid.

Five panelists did not consider the support double mandatory. Most bid 3C. Rigal states, "This hand is all about clubs."

For casual partnerships, it's impossible and unwieldy to discuss more than the basics when filling out a convention card. But for regular partnerships, this bidding sequence should be discussed before there is a problem, rather than afterwards.

Page 44, "Card Play 101" by Philip Alder—Continue or not?

2

♠ KJ10
♥ 765
♦ Q4
♣ A10987

♠ 7632	N	♠ 54
♥ KJ943	W ← E	♥ Q2
♦ 105	S	♦ KJ9876
♣ 52		♣ K43

♠ AQ98
♥ A108
♦ A32
♣ QJ6

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	1NT

You lead the ♥ 4: 5, Q, 8. East returns the ♥ 2: 10, J, 6. What would you do now?

It might look like a good idea to set up the fourth and fifth hearts. However, after you play the third heart, you will be the only one with hearts and your hand has nothing that even resembles an entry. A heart lead is a good idea only if you want to play a passive defense.

A passive defense is unlikely to be good; dummy's clubs look like they will run, even if partner has a high club.

There looks to be no future in spades, with dummy's strong holding there.

A diamond lead appears to be the only lead that will give you a chance to set the contract. Lead the ♦ T to set the contract.

Furthermore...Declarer should have applied the Rule of Seven to prevent your switch. The Rule of Seven is used by declarer to identify how many rounds of the suit should be ducked. Declarer counts this total holding (his hand and dummy) in a given suit and subtracts that number from seven. The result is the number of times he should hold up or duck, letting the opponents win the trick. In this case, $7 - (3 + 3) = 1$. He should have ducked once.

Declarer should have won the second heart and started on the clubs. Then he makes an overtrick.

Page 53, "Chalk Talk," Deal 2, by Eddie Kantar—Which finesse first?

This is a plan-ahead situation. You are playing IMPs so overtricks mean little, but making a vulnerable slam means a lot – yes, you're vulnerable.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♥
Pass	6♠	All Pass	

West leads the ♠2 and you count 11 sure tricks: six spades, four hearts and one diamond.

There are two possibilities for the 12th trick:

1. Finesse West for the ♦K.
2. Finesse West for the ♣A.

Looking at the ♦AQ, many players would view the diamond finesse as the obvious one. It's a 50%/50% shot. In this case the finesse loses, and the defense can then grab the ♣Ace for down 1.

The correct line is:

1. Pull the last trump.
2. Play four rounds of hearts, discarding a club. This is necessary as you are going to play clubs next. You don't want to lose two clubs, which will happen if the ace is behind the king.
3. Lead a low club towards the king. West will win, but now you can discard your losing diamond on the ♣K.

If the ♣A were behind the ♣K, trying the clubs first allows you to try the diamond finesse as well because the defense cannot take two quick tricks.

This is the correct line as you only need one of two finesses to work. About a 75% chance of success.