

PLAY of the HAND

83 2 Clubs (Stayman)
AJ97 4 Hearts
52
QJ764

KJ94 Pass
652 Pass
Q1096 Pass
K3

Q107 Pass
43 Pass
J873
A1098

A652
KQ108 DEALER – 1 NT
AK4 2 Hearts
52 Pass

West leads a trump. The trump lead is the best defense. Perhaps your first thought is to ruff losers in the dummy. However, a trump return when you concede a spade trick makes this impossible. Instead, you should establish dummy's club suit. After winning the first trick in hand, lead a club toward the dummy. Let's suppose East wins the J with his Ace of clubs and returns a trump. Win in hand and play a second club.

By establishing the dummy rather than your own hand, you keep the loser count to three. You will take one spade, three hearts, two diamonds, two clubs, one club ruff in hand, and one diamond ruff in the dummy.

Note the power of the 4 – 4 fit. 3 NT has no chance with this layout. And remember, don't always ruff your losers in dummy. Sometimes it is better to establish dummy's long suit.

When setting up a long suit in dummy, count to make sure you have enough entries to dummy to set up the suit. If you do not, look for an alternate line of play.

Do not draw trumps by playing the ace – king: you will have blocked the suit. It is much better to draw with the ace and the jack, give yourself the option of later going to either hand.

A764 2 Spades
863 Pass
Q10 Pass
Q963

Q32	Pass	Void	4 Hearts
74	Pass	AKQ1095	5 Diamonds
8653	Pass	KJ9742	Pass
J874		10	

KJ10985
J2 DEALER – 1 Spade
A 4 Spades
AK52 5 Spades

West leads the 7 of hearts. East takes the first trick with the Q, the second trick with the Ace (West following with the 4) and then plays the K of hearts to the third trick. You now have to come up with the rest of the tricks. Plan the play.

You have to decide who to play for the Q of spades. The red suit bidding by East, vulnerable, suggests 11 or 12 red cards, making West the favorite to hold the Queen of spades. Therefore, your best play is to ruff the third heart with the K of spades and run the J of spades.

If you are right, you can pick up spades and have a good chance to take four club tricks as well. If clubs are 3 – 2, you are home. If clubs are 4 – 1 and East has a singleton 10 or Jack, you can pick up that suit as well, as long if you start with the A or K from your hand.

It really helps to use the bidding to help you in the play. If you have a vulnerable opponent bidding two suits as really high levels, the count on these two suits can make your play in the other two suits impressive.

Collect information from the defender's signals.

Opening leads and early signals are usually honest. If you need count information in a specific suit, lead that suit early in the play.

Study the opening lead. Does the card suggest length or shortness? Does it show an honor combination or the lack of one?

“Getting a count” involves gathering information from the bidding, opening lead, and the play.