

Chapter 5

A K Q 10
7 4 2

always a notrump suit or a side is mostly an accident and usually

whether to play the suit straight whether it is right to play the the ten.

and 35

ABLE

10

notrump opener because there suits. Even so, I choose ONE natives leave me with impossi-

MP ending the auction. West

NORTH/SOUTH VULNERABLE SOUTH DEALS

♠ Q 10 2  
 ♥ A K 6 5  
 ♦ J 6 2  
 ♣ 8 5 4



♠ A K J  
 ♥ 9 4 3  
 ♦ 10 5 4  
 ♣ A K Q 10

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

LEAD: ♠9

Having arrived in a good spot, I am pleased I opened one notrump. Had I opened one club, Alex would have bid one heart. I have no idea what I would have rebid.

Alex is still not using Stayman and I still don't agree with him. If you aren't going to bid Stayman, the reason should probably be that you have a terrible four-card suit. AK65 is very good.

The defense may have had five tricks in diamonds but with this lead I have nine tricks if I can bring in the club suit.

I win the king of spades and consider my options.

There are times when I might fool around with diamond plays but with such a good play for nine tricks, I'm going to try to take them.

**NORTH/SOUTH VULNERABLE**  
**SOUTH DEALS**

♠ Q 10 2  
 ♥ A K 6 5  
 ♦ J 6 2  
 ♣ 8 5 4



♠ A K J  
 ♥ 9 4 3  
 ♦ 10 5 4  
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There are times when I might fool around with diamond plays but with such a good play for nine tricks, I'm going to try to take them.

The last thing I want to do is cash the high clubs now. I want to keep the opponents guessing as long as possible.

To do this, I cash the ace king of hearts first. Who knows? If a defender has a 4-1-4-4 hand, he might throw a club.

Next I cash the ace of spades. Again, I might get someone to pitch a club.

So far, everyone follows painlessly. I must play the top clubs now. I lead the king. Maybe someone will give me a count. I follow with the ace of clubs. Perhaps West will show out. No. West follows again. So far West has played 3, 7 and East the 6, 2. One of the defenders is lying.

I enter dummy with the queen of spades, all following, and lead the last club toward my Q10. East follows with the missing nine spot so I am cold for three notrump if I guess correctly.

Is it right to finesse on the theory that a four-two break is 48% and a three-three break is 35%?

Curiously, the correct play is the queen. By about two percent.

This suit combination is an example of how odds change in bridge as you get additional facts.

What facts do I have to influence my play? I know that of the four-two splits, there is no four-two split including a doubleton jack. Remember, I have cashed the ace and king and no one played the jack.

Here are the doubletons. There are fifteen of them.

J 9	9 7	7 6	6 3	3 2
J 7	9 6	7 3	6 2	
J 6	9 3	7 2		
J 3	9 2			
J 2				

We know that five of them do not exist. Only ten of the fifteen doubletons can exist.

If five of them can not exist, it obviously changes the chances for clubs to be four-two. The reduction is approximately one

third. A four-  
the fifteen do  
other four-tw

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3 6 2

2

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third. A four-two split is 48%. If you determine that five of  
 the fifteen doubletons can not exist, the chances that one of the  
 other four-two splits exist is about 32 percent.

This is all relative. At this moment you would say that the  
 35% chance for a three-three split is greater than the 32%  
 chance of the POSSIBLE four-two splits.

I have no reason to go against the odds so I play the queen  
 dropping the jack. The tiny percentage has worked.

Sometimes you have distributional information. If, in my  
 three notrump contract, West had shown up with all seven  
 spades and at least two hearts and two clubs, the odds would  
 change to suggest the finesse was best.

### COMPLETE HAND

♠ 9 8 3 ♥ Q 8 4 ♦ A Q 9 3 ♣ J 7 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W   E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W   E	S	♠ 7 6 5 3 ♥ J 10 2 ♦ K 8 7 ♣ 9 6 2	♠ Q 10 2 ♥ A K 6 5 ♦ J 6 2 ♣ 8 5 4  ♠ A K J ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ 10 5 4 ♣ A K Q 10
N						
W   E						
S						

### FURTHER ANALYSIS

I could just as well have cashed three spades first. This is  
 more likely to get me a useful discard than on the sequence  
 I tried. My plan was good but not as complete as it might have  
 been.

Note that the combination AKQ10 opposite 854 is NOT the same as AKQ9 opposite 854.

A K Q 9

8 5 4

If you play the ace and king dropping the ten or jack from East, the odds are almost two to one that you should finesse. This is because all 10x combinations and all Jx combinations become crucial. With two pertinent combinations to consider rather than just one, the odds change drastically.

The *ACBL Bridge Encyclopedia* discusses this and similar combinations in six encyclopedia sized pages entitled "Restricted Choice."

I recommend these six pages to you.

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