

Sometimes, the problem is more complex, as can be observed here:

- NORTH
 ♠ K 9 6 4
 ♠ 8 3
 ♠ A Q
 ♣ K J 6 5 2
- SOUTH
 ♠ A 8 7 2
 ♠ A J 2
 ♠ K J 1 0
 ♣ A 9 4

If South reaches four spades, no opening lead will cause him much concern. For example, suppose that West leads a low heart and East puts up the king. South wins with the ace, runs three rounds of diamonds in order to discard dummy's losing heart, and ruffs a heart in dummy. The king and ace of spades are then cashed, and declarer ruffs his remaining heart. Declarer may next try for an endplay, or attempt the club finesse, or even play the ace and king of clubs in the hope of dropping a doubleton queen. In any

case, he would never dream of making a safety play in clubs, for he does not need four club tricks.

If South reaches three notrump, he may find it wise and profitable to employ the safety play. Suppose that West leads a low heart, East puts up the king, and South wins with the ace. [Ducking two hearts may be an attractive alternative, depending on the bidding and West's leading proclivities.—*Ed.*] South must bring in the clubs to assure his contract, but he must also shut East out of the lead for fear of a heart return. He should therefore enter dummy with a club to the king and try to finesse the nine of clubs on dummy's club return. This is not so much a safety play as it is an avoidance play. If East has a sure club trick, the hearts will probably spell ruin. However, if East happens to hold queen-third of clubs, declarer is perfectly willing to give up a club trick to West's ten-spot.

CLASSIC REWINNED

THE DEFENDERS DON'T KNOW

BY ROBERT GRAY

The declarer needs two tricks in this suit and can afford one loser:

- NORTH
 A Q 3
 SOUTH
 7 5 4

The comments of various experts were interesting. Expert A says: "Play the ace first, then later lead low to the queen. Two tricks are made whenever West holds the king or six low ones."

North dealer, North-South vulnerable

- NORTH
 ♠ Q 8
 ♠ A Q 5 4
 ♠ Q 9 8 7
 ♣ J 8 7
- EAST
 ♠ 7 6 4
 ♠ K 1 0
 ♠ 5 2
 ♣ K 1 0 5 4 3 2

- WEST
 ♠ K J 9 3 2
 ♠ J 9 8 2
 ♠ 1 0 6
 ♣ A 9
- SOUTH
 ♠ A 10 5
 ♠ 7 6 3
 ♠ A K J 4 3
 ♣ Q 6
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
 1 ♠ Pass Pass Pass
 2 NT Pass 3 NT (All Pass)

West led the three of spades, and the eight held in dummy. I aimed to get a ninth trick from hearts, and at trick two I led a low heart from dummy. East went up with the king. By the way, I have seen defenders play the king even with two guards in this situation; here, East might want to grab an opportunity to return partner's suit. Even if East in every case plays low when he has the king, my method is still successful when East has the singleton king or West has the king, for I will finesse the queen on the second round.

Here's another case in which the theme is to depend on a defender's ignorance of what's going on:

[See top of next column.]

West led the jack of diamonds. South took the first trick with dummy's diamond queen, finessed in spades, and led a low diamond. As the first trick had shown that South has the king, West should have played the ten of diamonds to restrict North to only one more entry. When West played low,

North dealer, East-West vulnerable

- NORTH
 ♠ 4 3 2
 ♠ 9 8 7
 ♠ A Q 9
 ♣ 9 8 3 2
- EAST
 ♠ K 9 8 7 5
 ♠ A K J 5 3
 ♠ 4 3
 ♣ J

- WEST
 ♠ 6
 ♠ 10 6 4
 ♠ J 10 8 7 6
 ♠ Q 10 7 6
- SOUTH
 ♠ A Q J 10
 ♠ Q 2
 ♠ K 5 2
 ♣ A K 5 4
- SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
 2 NT Pass Pass 1 ♠ (All Pass)

the nine was finessed, and dummy had an extra entry for a spade finesse. Afterwards, declarer turned to West and said patronizingly, "The third card you played was wrong; you should have played the ten." West was a weak player, but East was an expert. "The first card you played was wrong," she said quietly to South. "You should have played dummy's diamond ace." And then South could have played the king from the closed hand to create a third entry under his own steam.

One of the easiest questions to answer that I have ever met is: How do you play this holding?

- NORTH
 7 6 4 3

- SOUTH
 A K 5 2

The answer is: Lead any card from one hand and play any card from the other. In other words, you cannot go wrong. In notrump, most people play ace-king and possibly a third round, or perhaps try to duck a trick to West