



PLAY AND LEARN BRIDGE IN A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT

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ALERT – September 12, 2022

Top Master Point Earners at our Club

Contributed by Allen Pengelly

This table lists the individuals who have earned the most master points at our club in each of three master point bands since the beginning of August.

Open Players			499er Players			99er Players		
	Name	MP		Name	MP		Name	MP
1	David Baker	23.09	1	Jake Liu	7.06	1	Belinda Burt	4.49
2	Cindy Mahn	15.65	2	Lynda Burnett	6.35	2	Molly Worden	4.30
3	Mike Peng	14.73	3	John Kip	5.78	3	Noah Pace	3.79
4	Edith Ferber	14.09	4	Cheryl Kip	5.18	4	Reinhold Kauk	3.40
5	Colin Harrington	12.52	5	Sue Moses	4.40	5	Elinor Girouard	3.26
6	Margot Stockie	12.48	5	Brenda Semple	4.40	6	Nancy Cattanach	3.10
7	Ted Boyd	11.45	7	Roy Dandyk	4.26	7	Steven Allen	2.63
8	Moira Hollingsworth	10.97	8	Brian Kirkconnell	4.13	8	Susan Durance	2.42
9	Kathy Russell	9.96	9	Paul Latimer	3.95	9	Virginia Alviano	2.36
10	Dianne Aves	9.75	10	Salvatore Pace	3.79	10	Joe Blake	2.31
11	David Longstaff	7.67	11	Lori Cole	3.74	11	Anita Hanson	2.30
12	Stephen Young	7.33	12	Judy Widdecombe	3.73	11	Barb Neibert	2.30
13	Neil Coburn	7.03	13	David Dennis	3.69	13	Judy Johnston	2.13
14	Bob Griffiths	6.43	14	Andy Wilson	3.65	13	Carol Gerber	2.13
15	John Hanemaayer	6.21	15	Stephen Nantes	3.44	15	Donna McKay	1.90
16	Bruce Roberts	6.16	16	Ted Kennedy	3.38	16	Lori Bailey	1.87
17	Peggy Pearson	6.10	17	Dave Embury	3.29	17	Ginny Scott	1.68
18	Sandy Graham	5.79	18	Barbara Arthur	3.27	18	Connie Green	1.56
19	Liz McDowell	5.72	19	Joan Slover	3.21	19	David Ward	1.40
20	Neil Jeffrey	5.09	20	Vivian McLellan	3.09	19	Michel Lalonde	1.40
21	Malkin Howes	4.75	21	Nanci Phelan	3.07	21	Gordon Hunter	1.39
22	Dave Quarrie	4.58	22	Marlene Dopko	3.05	22	Linda Deluca	1.38
23	Adrian Record	3.98	23	Muzaffar Husain	3.03	23	Elaine Doyle	1.27
24	Pat McMillan	3.83	24	Bev Hitchman	2.84	24	Christine Kelly	1.20
25	Diane Bourdeau	3.55	25	Jack Cole	2.83	24	Jeannie Leforge	1.20

ALL GAMES ARE ONLINE UNLESS DESIGNATED **FACE-TO-FACE**.

Coming Events

- Friday, September 9, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE** EXTRA MASTERPOINTS**
- Friday, September 9, 1:00 pm, **99er game (21-24 boards) (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE** EXTRA MASTERPOINTS**
- Friday, September 9, 5:00 pm, **PICNIC **FACE TO FACE****
- Friday, September 9, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) (\$7 members/\$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE** EXTRA MASTERPOINTS**
- Friday, September 9, 7:00 pm, **199er game (21-24 boards) (\$7 members/\$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE** EXTRA MASTERPOINTS**
- Saturday, September 10 – Sunday, September 11, **70th Annual St. Thomas Jumbo Tournament **FACE TO FACE****
- Saturday, September 10, 1:00 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Sunday, September 11, 10:00 am, **499er game (18 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, September 12, 9:00 am, **Bridge Lab (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE****
- Monday, September 12, 12:30 pm, **99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, September 12, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Monday, September 12, 7:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Tuesday, September 13, 12:30 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Tuesday, September 13, 1:00 pm, **open game (24-28 boards) (\$7 members/ \$9 non-members) **FACE TO FACE****
- Wednesday, September 14, 1:00 pm, **499er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Wednesday, September 14, 6:45 pm, **199er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Wednesday, September 14, 7:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, September 15, 9:30 am, **99er game (20-22 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, September 15, 1:00 pm, **open game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Thursday, September 15, 6:30 pm, **19er game (18 boards) BBO\$5 IT'S BACK!**
- Thursday, September 15, 7:00 pm, **999er game (24 boards) BBO\$5**
- Friday, September 16, 10:00 am – noon, **Barbara Seagram Workshop, \$35 **FACE TO FACE AT THE GUELPH CLUB****

Thursday Night 19er Game

If you play in next Thursday night's game (September 15), you can expect to receive a personalized email from Jack Cole the following morning. Jack will be writing to you to suggest ways that you could have improved your bidding and play on selected hands. Furthermore, Jack will be happy to answer your follow-up questions.

Jack will be at today's (Friday's) picnic, along with the other members of the Thursday night feedback team (Mary McClelland, Wayne Schroeder, and answer lady Susan Lawton). Why not come out and meet them?

Joan Slover already has one person currently looking to **partner up** for this game. If you would be interested in learning more about finding a partner, please contact [Joan](#). If you would like to chat with Joan, include your phone number in your email and Joan will get in touch with you. We hope to see you at both the picnic and the Thursday night game.



A warm welcome to **David Embury**, our latest new member.

GRBC 10th Birthday Party is Today!

We have over 60 folks signed up, but there is room for more - so feel free to do a last-minute drop in! Carpool if you can.

The picnic is from 5:00 pm - 6:30 pm: hot food including gluten-free and vegetarian, birthday cake, draw prizes! and bring your own lawn chair.

All four games will have a club championship rating (extra masterpoints).

- 1:00 pm (99 and 499), followed by hand analysis by Dave Baker
- 7:00 pm (199 and open), followed by pubbing.

Come join in the fun with your fellow bridge players: see some new and old faces and drink a toast to our 10th year!

Annual General Meeting

We will be holding our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday, September 27 at 1:00 pm. You don't have to be a member to attend, but only members can vote. Our president, Cindy Mahn, will be introducing our new slate of directors, and Tom Ramsay, the President of Unit 249, will be presenting the Ace of Clubs and Mini-McKenney awards for 2021.

We are hoping to run three games in the afternoon – 199er, 499er, and open – depending on attendance. Please plan to arrive at 12:30 pm in order to register, eat snacks, and get awards. The AGM will start at 1:00 pm and last only five-to-ten minutes.

Finally, a useful DIY Book!



**"Harry, it's another notice
from the library ..."**

Bridge Club of Niagara Online Swiss Team Games

The BCN will be offering semi-monthly Swiss team games at 7:00 pm on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, starting on September 13.

If you would like to play in one of these games, please register in advance by sending the names of your team members to [Doug Dolbear](#). If you have a partial team, you can send Doug a message to this effect and he will find teammates for you.

Barbara Seagram
renowned bridge teacher and author



presents a workshop on
Improve your Declarer Play
Friday, September 16, 2022
10 am to 12 noon
Cost – \$35 (includes lunch)



Guelph Bridge Club
23 Victoria Rd N at Grange Plaza

register on line at www.guelphbridgeclub.org



BridgeWinners: One Rabbit Hole Leads To Another!

Contributed by Jack Cole

This article isn't really about BridgeWinners (BW), but rather about a tool that I tripped over while reading through one of the BW Forums. It's too good not to share.

The tool is **BBO Helper**, and it's what's called a "Plug In" or "Add In" or "Extension" to your web browser. It's a bit of programming that works with your browser and specific web sites to provide extra functionality. My browser is Google Chrome, so I can vouch for that platform only, although it is also available for Firefox, Microsoft Edge, and Brave.

BBO Helper was developed by BW member Matthew Kidd, from La Jolla, California. You can use the BW *Search* feature (as shown below) to read what people have said about BBO Helper, but I'll save you the trouble by telling you all you need to know.



BBO Helper (BBOH) has a lot of capabilities, but you will want it for just one, and that's the **Double Dummy and Par Analysis** that BBOH shows with **every** board in your BBO history. You will instantly know if your contract was the best one, or if your opponents missed something, or if your sacrifice was worthwhile. It works on the boards in your game history, but it also works on the board you **just finished playing!** If you're a player who likes to analyse performance between rounds, you will be instantly addicted.

Here's a sample from a recent GRBC BBO game, showing the extra BBOH info.

The screenshot shows a Bridge game interface. On the left, a Double Dummy table is displayed, circled in red. The table shows the following data:

	♠	♥	♦	♣	NT
N	6	4	8	9	7
S	6	4	8	9	7
E	6	9	5	4	5
W	6	9	5	4	5

Below the table, it says "Par Score: 100" and "Par: EW 4♦x-1".

In the center, the hand information for West (W) is shown, circled in red:

W: ♠ A8, ♥ 4, ♦ AJ865, ♣ Q10842. Par Score: 100, Par: EW 4♦x-1.

On the right, the hand information for North (N) and South (S) is shown:

N: ♠ 107532, ♥ 92, ♦ K2, ♣ AJ73.

S: ♠ KQ94, ♥ KJ1087, ♦ Q3, ♣ K6.

At the bottom, the game status is shown: "4♦ W NS: 0 EW: 0".

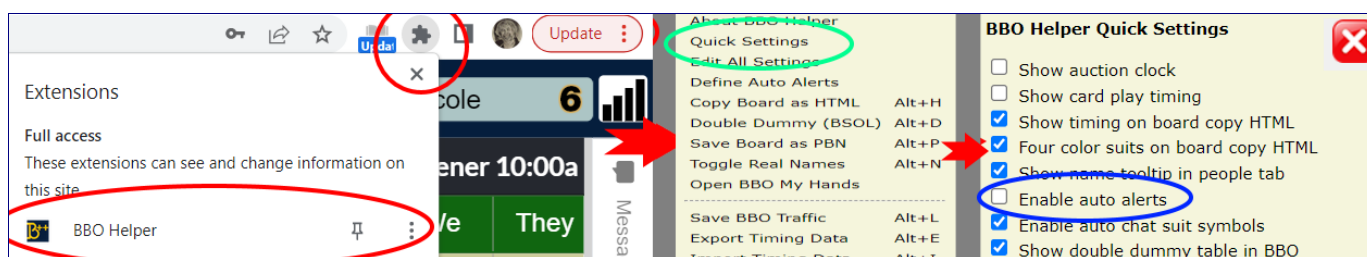
Partner and I were competing for the contract. We had found a diamond fit, while the opponents had a fit in spades. With favourable vulnerability (and figuring to hold about half the points) I pushed to 4♦, expecting to go down a trick or two, or maybe pushing them too high. They let us play it, and we did indeed go down. Was that good?

The Double Dummy table says that E/W makes nine tricks in diamonds while N/S makes nine tricks in ♠, so their 3♠ contract would have paid them 140 points. Putting us down one (doubled) earned them only 100, so we scored better by sacrificing, **and** they did right by not going on to 4♠.

What is this **Par Score** thing? Well, the simple answer is that it's the score that results if **both sides bid (and play) as well as possible**. Here, our side's best possible result – the one giving us the best possible score – was 4♦ down one, stealing their 3♠, after which N/S's best possible action was to double and set us one.

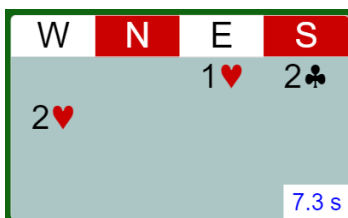
This feature is so much fun, and so educational, that you should get BBO Helper just for that. Now I'll tell you what you **do not want** from BBOH, and that's **Auto Alerts**. This feature lets BBOH make Alerts for you as you bid. No more typing "15-18" before bidding 1 NT! How can that be bad? Well, first of all, BBOH comes with a default list of alertable bids and the exact wording it wants you to use. But this list may not match how you bid! Second, BBOH flashes the alert briefly on your screen before telling your opponents about it (and to them it looks just as if you had typed it), but if you aren't quick enough to catch it you may have just alerted something completely incorrectly and not even realized it!

Happily, you can **turn Auto Alerts** off. Once BBOH is installed (instructions below), you can interact with it using the small "puzzle piece" icon in the top right corner of your display. You should likely have the BBO site open when you do this. Clicking on the puzzle piece opens the list of installed extensions. Select BBO Helper (see two **red ellipses**). Pick "Quick Settings" from the menu that appears (**green**), then uncheck "Enable auto alerts" (**blue**). If you decide you want to use Auto Alerts, use *Define Auto Alerts* (below *Quick Settings*) to set them up properly.



You may need to log off BBO and log back in, or play a hand for a setting to take effect.

Another touted feature of BBOH is the **display of timings**, although I am clearly not advanced enough to have a use for this! It's mildly interesting to see that West took 7.3 seconds to bid 2♥.



It's perhaps **more** interesting if they take 47.3 seconds, but maybe that's the Internet's fault. During play, you might see that West took 15.4 seconds to select a card to play on partner's ace, so maybe they were thinking *really* hard. Or maybe their grandkid was streaming a Disney+ movie. I find the timings very distracting, so I've turned them off in the Quick Settings. For Web site developers, the most useful feature may be the ability to copy hands in HTML (web site) format. There are *many* more settings and features, but these are the ones with which I have experience. Select *About BBO Helper* from the menu to see more.

Now, **to install BBOH!** The documentation and a link to installation options can be found at <https://lajollabridge.com/Software/BBO-Helper/>. Matthew Kidd may write really clever software, but his documentation is very technical, and truthfully much of BBOH is aimed at people who really want to dive deeply into the digital data of BBO. So, skip partway down about three screens to the **Installing BBO Helper** section, find your browser, and click the Install button. It's easy and takes just a couple of minutes. You can also install directly by going to the Chrome Web Store.)

That's the end of the WinnerLand rabbit hole. We've seen a bunch of ways to spend your Bridge time, from TCG to BW to BBOH. I hope you've found something that makes you "Curiouser and Curiouser" about these bridge resources! Thanks for reading.



The Answer Lady

Contributed by Susan Lawton

As the “The Answer Lady”, I have been responding to questions from “newer” players over the past several weeks. A request has been made to share those players’ questions and my responses in the Alert, essentially a column for the beginner player!

If you have a question, please write to me at suzan2420@yahoo.ca. You don’t need to send me the actual deal – just tell me the game date and board number and I can take care of the rest.

Question

My partner and I played this hand recently in a casual online game. As you can see, we bid only to the 3NT level but we took 12 tricks. Did we bid the hand correctly? How could we have bid it to get to 6NT? We look forward to your response. Signed, A Newer Player

The screenshot shows a bridge hand interface with the following details:

- Board:** 1
- North (N):** ♠92, ♥852, ♦J642, ♣J862
- West (W):** ♠KQJ103, ♥J4, ♦K7, ♣AK93
- East (E):** ♠A7, ♥KQ976, ♦Q985, ♣105
- South (S):** ♠8654, ♥A103, ♦A103, ♣Q74
- Bidding Sequence:**

	W	N	E	S
1			1♥	Pass
2	1♠		2♦	Pass
3	2NT		3NT	Pass
4	Pass	Pass		
- Score:** 0-0
- Contract:** 3NT West

Answer

Thank you, Newer Player, for your interesting bidding question. While this is a question about bidding, it also begs a discussion on defence! As this hand is from a casual online game, I am unable to determine how the play unfolded allowing you to take those 12 tricks. Consequently, I will make several assumptions around the play of this hand.

Essentially, you should not be in 6NT despite losing only one trick. First, you are missing two aces, the ♥A and the ♦A. In addition, while West has a 17-point hand, East has minimal values, choosing to open this hand in second seat with 11 HCPs and a five-card heart suit. East was absolutely correct to call a halt by bidding 3NT, essentially describing his/her hand using a “stop” bid to show minimal values. West, at that point, could have bid 4NT, a “quantitative” bid that asks partner to bid 6NT with extra values and pass without. East would pass 4NT with those minimal values and that is where the bidding would end.

The considerable generosity of your opponents allowed you to lose only one trick and take those 12 tricks, likely with a less-than-stellar defence strategy. South, with the ♥A and the ♦A must have gone to bed with one of those aces. I am also going to make an assumption that North on lead chose a club, the unbid suit, likely the fourth-best ♣2. It's possible that South did not go up with the ♣Q after that lead, allowing West to capture that first trick with the ♣9. South likely forgot the rule that third seat plays high. West could then win five spade tricks, three club tricks, and possibly four heart tricks depending on how the play unfolded. However, if you had been in 6NT South would have captured the ♥A when hearts were led and then practically broken his wrist in his haste to bang down the ♦A to defeat the contract.

Conventional Wisdom

This column has now covered all 12 of Larry Cohen's most useful conventions. For the next few weeks, this column will answer a couple of questions posed by Suzanne Edwards. After that, we will go into hiatus – unless more questions are sent in.

Today, we will talk about what interference system to use when the opponents open one no trump. Here there is not much consensus as to which one is best.

There are dozens of different interference systems in use: DONT, Meckwell, Cappelletti, Landy, Brozell, natural bids, and many more, and they all work fine. Click [here](#) for a list of all of the possible conventions, with links to more detailed explanations of each one. At our club, the most common systems in use are DONT, Meckwell, and Cappelletti, so it would probably make sense to choose one of these. Some partners even use one system against weak one no trump openings (usually Cappelletti) and another system (usually Meckwell or DONT) against strong one no trump openings.

All no trump interference bids are **altable**, except for the natural ones.

If you would like lessons on one or more of the various no trump interference systems, write to [Malkin Howes](#) specifying your lesson mode preference and possible time lines.

Bad Jokes That Are So Lame They're Hilarious

- Fun Fact: Australia's biggest export is boomerangs. It's also their biggest import.
- I was sitting in traffic the other day. Probably why I got run over.
- What do you call a can opener that doesn't work? A can't opener.
- Where do spiders seek health advice? WebMD.
- What did Batman say to Robin before they got in the car? "Robin, get in the car."
- What's the most terrifying word in nuclear physics? "Oops!"
- Why was the snowman looking through a bag of carrots? He was picking his nose.

TIME YOU LEARNED YOUR LESSONS!

Our fall lesson schedule has now been posted to our website. Click [here](#) to view the Learn Bridge in a Day session and the beginners' lessons and [here](#) to view the ongoing learning lessons. Registration has been enabled.

The **Counting** course is now underway but the **Basic Bidding** course currently has only three people registered (Debra Perry, Bob Darby, and Carol Burrows). We need eight students in a course for it to go ahead. Do the math!

Basic bidding is the first course new players should take after they graduate from beginners lessons. The first basic bidding lesson is scheduled for this coming Tuesday morning. **If we don't get five more students by Saturday, September 10 at 6:00 pm, we will have to postpone this course.** Please enroll!



Intermediate Bridge Lab

Our first-ever Intermediate Bridge Lab will take place on Monday, September 19 from 10:00 am until noon. Your coach Liz McDowell will preside over a morning of practice hands and be on hand to provide constructive advice and, if needed, mini-lessons to help hone your skills. You can come solo or with a partner.

This is a trial session to test the concept's viability. So, if you want it to continue, please be sure to show your interest by coming out to this inaugural session.

Instructor: Liz McDowell

Level: **Intermediate**

Date: Monday, September 19, 10:00 am - noon

Mode: Face to Face at our Club

Fee: \$7 for members/ \$9 for non-members

This lab will be held at our club in our wonderful teaching room. This is a terrific way to make new friends and recruit new partners (as well as improve your game). Click [here](#) to register.

We have tried to offer something for everyone at every level. However, if you don't see what you need, please email [Malkin](#), our teaching lead, and she will see what she can do for you.

Also, it would be greatly appreciated if our readers would try to stir up interest among their friends and acquaintances who don't yet play bridge. We have a fun **Learn Bridge in a Day** session scheduled for October 1 as well as beginner lessons starting the following week. We need your help to spread the word about LBIAD.

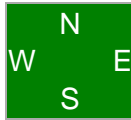
Can you tap into your friends and neighbours, and convince them that Bridge is the new "Head Game" to help manage everything from weight loss to memory gain (okay, we lied about the weight loss). Tell everyone you can (without harassment charges being considered) and share with them the fun, laughter, and friendship they can expect!"

Learn Bridge in a Day posters will be available at the picnic and at the club. Please take as many as you can find a good home for. And if you're not going to the picnic but still want a poster, contact [Sue Peterson](#), 519-240-1386.



Stealing a Trick

Contributed by Robert Griffiths

Board 8			
South Deals	♠ 10 7 6 2		
Both Vul	♥ A 6		
	♦ K J 10 5		
	♣ 10 7 3		
♠ J 5			♠ Q 8 3
♥ K 10 4			♥ Q J 7 3 2
♦ 9 8 3 2			♦ 6 4
♣ K Q J 6			♣ 8 4 2
			♠ A K 9 4
			♥ 9 8 5
			♦ A Q 7
			♣ A 9 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 N
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

West led the ♣K which was ducked all round, then the ♣Q, won by South's ace. South cashed the ace and king of spades, happy to see that there was just one trump loser. But there was still a problem. Declarer could not avoid a heart loser and a spade loser, meaning that he needed to avoid losing a second club. Many declarers would simply cash their four diamond winners planning to throw their last club on the fourth diamond. This plan would work only if the player with the ♠Q also had three or more diamonds (he didn't). Terrence Reese played this hand many years ago. After the two spade tricks, he led the ♦A and then a small diamond to the king. When he next led the ♦J off the board, it appeared to East that South was either going to lose this trick or ruff it, so he discarded a heart instead of ruffing it himself. That was all South needed. He won his ♦Q, crossed to the ♥A and threw his club loser on Dummy's ♦10, not caring whether East ruffed this time. Of course, if East had ruffed the ♦J at Trick 5, he could have led a club to set the contract. Reese found a way to be deceptive in a suit where he held the top five honours. Reese needed the stars to line up exactly (doubleton diamond with East, ♠Q with East, and East falling for the subterfuge). It would be very sad however if the stars had not lined up – because then this little bit of brilliance would have been lost forever. But, on this day, all the conditions were there, so you can read about it 60 years later.



Always give the opponents a chance to go wrong.

FOR OPEN PLAYERS



Dear David

Contributed by David Baker

All Your Chances

When you are declaring, the opening lead is made and dummy comes down. It is at that point that you sketch out a plan. Where are my sure tricks? Where are my potential tricks? What am I worried about? What suit do I lead first? There are about a dozen more thoughts you have about the hand. Try this one.

N North			
♠ J75			
♥ A			
♦ AKJ1082			
♣ Q54			
W	N	E	S
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	4NT
Pass	6NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
S South			
♠ KQ108			
♥ KQ7			
♦ 64			
♣ AKJ3			

Opening lead: ♥J

You count your tricks — three spades (after you knock out the ace), three hearts, two diamonds, four clubs = 12 tricks. No worries. But this is a three-table game. If all three tables bid 6NT and make 12 tricks, you get 50%. If you make 13 tricks, you get 100% and the other two tables get 25% each. Thus, you can see that making an extra trick in a three-table game is very rewarding. If you can take six diamond tricks to go along with your four clubs and three hearts, that is 13 tricks without playing on spades. 100% for you. However, if you finesse a diamond and it loses, you just went down in a cold contract. 0% for you. What to do?

If you think you desperately need a top score because you are not having a very good game, go for it. The other thing to consider is that maybe the other two tables are in 3NT or 6♦ and you already have a top score for 6NT making. That would be the thinking of most good players. Bidding and making 6NT is almost always a great result.

However, let's return to questions at the beginning of this article—Is there anything else to consider before you knock out the spade ace? If you play the ♦AK before you play spades and the ♦Q does not drop, the hand with the ♠A may have the ♦Q to cash. UGH! Anything else? It costs you nothing to play one round of diamonds before you knock out the ♠A. Sometimes, miracles happen.

D	N North		E East
	♠ J75 ♥ A ♦ AKJ1082 ♣ Q54		
W West	W N E S	E East	
♠ A43 ♥ 9862 ♦ 9753 ♣ 109	Pass 1♦ Pass 1♠ Pass 2NT Pass 4NT Pass 6NT Pass Pass Pass	♠ 962 ♥ J10543 ♦ Q ♣ 8762	
	S South		
	♠ KQ108 ♥ KQ7 ♦ 64 ♣ AKJ3		6NT North 0 0

The ♦Q drops on the first round and you have 13 tricks. The other two tables were in 3NT making 12 and 13 tricks, so it didn't matter this time. But the next time, think about all your chances.



For Intermediate *Jake's*
Play a Bad Hand Well

#89

♠ J972
 ♥ AJ5
 ♦ KQJ86
 ♣ 8



♠ K65
 ♥ K976
 ♦ A10743
 ♣ A

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	1♥
3♣	Dbl	Pass	3NT
Dbl	AP		

1) Support double (three hearts)

I was declaring 3NT in the South seat and received the ♣K opening lead. I took this trick with my ace perforce, East following suit. I then cashed three good diamonds. West followed twice and then discarded the ♠10 (indicating that he had stuff in spades). East contributed one diamond and then discarded two clubs. I cashed two more diamonds, reaping two spades from East and two clubs from West. What would you do now if you were in my shoes?

SOLUTION

So far you have collected six tricks and thus need three more tricks to make your contract. And of course you can't afford to lose the lead or else a gazillion clubs will get rammed down your throat. So spades is not an option. Can you take three heart tricks without losing the lead? Here's what you can see.

♠
 ♥ AJ5
 ♦
 ♣



♠
 ♥ K976
 ♦
 ♣

If you're going to take three tricks, you have to figure out who has the ♥Q. Under normal circumstances, you would tackle the hearts by cashing the ♥K and then finessing the ♥J, but these are not normal circumstances.

It may be helpful to wonder why West discarded winning clubs on your long diamonds. Does that mean he has the ♥Q? Well, it is highly likely that West holds the ♠A (because of his ♠10 signal), and he has already showed up with a probable ♣KQJ in clubs. That's 10 HCP. If he also has the ♥Q, he would have 12 HCP in total - and if this is the case he probably wouldn't have pre-empted during the bidding.

So you might as well assume that East has the ♥Q and that normal technique won't work.

Jake's Coup to the rescue! (I have to admit that Jake's Coup isn't foolproof, as it needs West to hold as singleton or doubleton ♥10 if it's going to work. Beggars can't be choosers though.) So, here is the procedure for tackling the heart suit when East has the ♥Q. Cash the board's ♥A and then lead the ♥J.

1. If East covers the ♥J with his ♥Q, overtake with your ♥K. Then, if the ♥10 drops in the first or second round of the suit, your ♥9 becomes boss - yielding your vital third heart trick.
2. If East does not cover the ♥J, you cross your fingers and float it to West. If West can't produce the ♥Q, your judgment is vindicated. But if West has the ♥Q, you can blame West for his odd bidding.

Here is the full hand.

	♠ J972				
	♥ AJ5				
	♦ KQJ86				
	♣ 8				
♠ A10	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ Q843
N					
W E					
S					
♥ 102		♥ Q843			
♦ 92		♦ 5			
♣ KQJ10972		♣ 6543			
	♠ K65				
	♥ K976				
	♦ A10743				
	♣ A				

Once again, Jake's Coup saves the day!

If you would like to play in a particular game but lack a partner that day, you can either:

- ♠ Log in to [Pianola](#), click on Partner Finder, and create a Partner Finder Advert. This needs to be done at least a few hours in advance of the game. OR
- ♠ Log in to the game in question and register yourself on the Partnership Desk tab.

If you are looking for a regular partner, contact [Joan Slover](#), our membership lead.

We have fun in **spades**.
 We play with all our **hearts**.
 We treat our members like **diamonds**.
 We're having a picnic at our **club**.