

148. Options trading

By Ron Klinger

Dealer South : Both vulnerable

North

♠ 86

♥ 6

♦ AK762

♣ QJ973

East

♠ KJ2

♥ A1094

♦ QJ843

♣ 8

West	North	East	South
			1♣
2♣ ⁽¹⁾	3♦ ⁽²⁾	4♣ ⁽³⁾	4♠ ⁽⁴⁾
Pass	6♣	All Pass	

(1) At least 5-5 in the majors

(2) Fit-showing-jump, 5+ diamonds, 5+ clubs

(3) Bid your longer major.

(4) Cue-bid, inviting slam

West leads the ♥K. Plan the defence for East.

Today's deals come from *Polish Bridge* magazine

Your side has one heart trick and you need one more trick. That figures to come from spades. All will be well if partner switches to a spade and has the ♠Q, but what if South has ♠A-Q? Now a spade lead from partner will not work.

What about playing partner for a void in diamonds? Overtake the ♥K and switch to a diamond. That is possible, but not very likely. Partner would need to be exactly 5-5-0-3 or 5-6-0-2/6-5-0-2. Yes, that could be the case, but you have a better prospect with the spades.

You have information that declarer does not have yet. Dummy's 5-card diamond suit cannot produce any extra tricks for declarer as you hold five diamonds yourself. Indeed, if partner is void in diamonds, you do not need to switch to diamond since a diamond trick will come your way eventually anyway.

Since the spade lead should come from your hand, you overtake the ♥K with the ♥A and switch to a spade. This cannot cost, no matter what partner has in spades.

Which spade should you choose?

Your best prospect for giving declarer a losing option is to switch to the jack of spades. The whole deal could look like this:

	North	
	♠ 86	
	♥ 6	
	♦ AK762	
	♣ QJ973	
West		East
♠ 1097543		♠ KJ2
♥ KQJ72		♥ A1094
♦ 10		♦ QJ843
♣ 2		♣ 8
	South	
	♠ AQ	
	♥ 853	
	♦ 95	
	♣ AK10654	

South is in 6♣ after West has shown at least 5-5 in the majors. West leads the ♥K. East takes it with the ♥A and switches to the ♠J. Put yourself in declarer's shoes. Would you finesse the ♠Q under these circumstances?

Virtually every declarer would take the ♠A and pin their hopes on a 3-3 or 4-2 diamond break (an 84% chance vs at best a 50% chance for the ♠K being with East). Once South rises with the ♠A, South is doomed. South draws trumps in one round and then sets about the diamonds, but with the 5-1 diamond split, South is left with the ♠Q as a loser at the end.

Double dummy, South can succeed without taking the spade finesse: take ♠A, ruff a heart, club to hand, ruff a heart and run the clubs. East will be squeezed between the ♠K and the diamond length, but in practice, no declarer is going to play it like that.

Why would you choose to switch to the ♠J rather than the ♠2? Switching to your lowest card promises an honour. A switch to the ♠2 increases the chances of declarer choosing to finesse the ♠Q.

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

	North		
	♠ K1062		
	♥ 75		
	♦ AK76		
	♣ 1064		
	East		
	♠ J985		
	♥ J98		
	♦ J98		
	♣ J98		
West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦ ⁽¹⁾	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

(1) Stopper in diamonds

West leads the ♥4: five – jack – king. Declarer plays the ♦3: five – ace – eight and the ♣4 from dummy. Which club will you play if you play (a) natural count? (b) reverse count? Can you foresee the problem?

South's jump to 3♣ denies a second suit and so South has at most three hearts. The critical situation for the defense is when declarer began with ♥K-Q-x. That means that you need to gain the lead at some point in order to lead a heart through declarer's remaining ♥Q-x. If partner comes on lead, partner cannot cash the hearts if partner began with ♥A-10-x-x-x. South's ♥Q-x is a stopper against West. You know South began with six clubs and therefore partner cannot have more than one club. You must try to stop declarer ducking a club to West.

Dealer West : East-West vulnerable

	North	
	♠ K1062	
	♥ 75	
	♦ AK76	
	♣ 1064	
West		East
♠ Q43		♠ J985
♥ A10642		♥ J98
♦ Q542		♦ J98
♣ Q		♣ J98
	South	
	♠ A7	
	♥ KQ3	
	♦ 103	
	♣ AK7532	

South captures East's ♥J at trick 1 and crosses to the ♦A, followed by the ♣4. You can see what declarer is planning to do. If declarer can duck a club into the West hand, South's 3NT is safe. If East plays the ♣8, declarer will play low from hand, West will win and 3NT cannot be defeated.

You need to try to give declarer a losing option. Regardless of what count signals you play – partner has zero interest in how many clubs you hold – you should play the ♣9. If declarer could see through the back of the cards, declarer could play low here and make the contract. However, on seeing the ♣9, declarer might picture the club layout as:

	1064	
Q8	AK7532	J9

Now if declarer ducks your nine, West plays the ♣8 and you remain on lead to punch a heart through declarer. Meanwhile, if this is the layout, declarer can make ten tricks by playing ♣A, ♣K.

If East follows with the ♣8, South has no losing option. South plays low and guarantees the contract whether the clubs are 2-2 or 3-1. If you play the ♣9, you give declarer the chance to go wrong.

You would also play the ♣9 if your clubs were Q-9-8

Problems for Tomorrow:

1. Dealer North : North-South vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♠	Pass	?

What would you do now as South with:

- ♠ AK2
- ♥ 1043
- ♦ KQ6
- ♣ KQ62

2. Dealer East : East-West vulnerable

West	North	East	South
?		Pass	1♠

What would you do as West with:

♠ 52
♥ QJ10765
♦ 97
♣ AJ3

Why not phone or email your bridge partners and compare your answers and your reasoning?

Glory is fleeting, but obscurity is forever. (Napoleon Bonaparte, 1769-1821)