

Different Contract, Same Play

After this beginning the contract might reasonably be 3NT (played by South) or four spades (by North). Let's dispose of the 3NT contract first, because this one our readers will make in their sleep. West leads a club, declarer holds up until the third round (in case the clubs are 5-3), and makes his contract when both enemy aces are with the short clubs. Nine nervous tricks!

Now watch *North* declare four spades and see where he goes wrong. East (aggressively) leads a club, and dummy's ace wins the trick. Then a

spade is conceded to East's ace and the club continuation is ruffed by declarer. Next, trumps are played but declarer comes unstuck when the suit is 4-1. East will get in with the $\heartsuit A$ and persist with clubs, at which point declarer will have lost trump control. Down one!

North should have taken a leaf out of the notrump playbook. That hold-up play in clubs, which is almost routine when playing notrump, can also work in a suit contract. North can win the opening club lead with dummy's ace but, when East gets in with the $\spadesuit A$ and continues clubs, the correct play is to refrain from ruffing immediately. When a third round of clubs is played, North must ruff, but West never gets in again to do damage with his club winners. What's good for notrump is also sometimes good for suit play!

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

\spadesuit K Q 10 5 4							
\heartsuit K Q 6 3							
\diamondsuit 9 8 7							
\clubsuit 8							
\spadesuit 9 8 7 6	\heartsuit J 8	<table style="border-collapse: collapse; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px 5px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	\spadesuit A
N							
W	E						
S							
\diamondsuit 5 2	\clubsuit Q 10 7 6 5		\heartsuit 10 9 7 5 2				
			\diamondsuit A 6 4 3				
			\clubsuit K J 2				
			\spadesuit J 3 2				
			\heartsuit A 4				
			\diamondsuit K Q J 10				
			\clubsuit A 9 4 3				
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				
Pass	2 \spadesuit	1 \heartsuit	Dbl				
		Pass	?				