

Dear reader,

This edition of the Daily Column AKA Norton's Nuggets centers around the handling of a suit combination. There's one obvious possibility you can cater for, but bridge is all about taking those extra chances.

Quiz of the day: Say partner opens 1♠ and the next hand overcalls 4♥. What does a double mean by you?

Solution in Tuesday's publication

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It's important to make the most of your resources as declarer; to squeeze every last percentage out of your cards. Who knows? One of those extra chances may prove decisive.

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No one is vulnerable and you hold:

♠ -
♥ 8 7 2
♦ J 8
♣ A K 9 7 6 5 4 3

West, on your left, opens 1♠. Partner passes and East jumps to 3♥, natural and invitational with at least six hearts (called an 'intermediate jump shift' by some). *What say you?*

Solution: You can hardly leave your eight-card suit on the shelf, but a jump to 5♣ would be a bit much with the 'death holding' of three small in the suit bid on your right - West might even be about to pass 3♥! Overcall 4♣, targeting a sacrifice should West take another action.



West indeed raises to 4♥ and partner pushes on to 5♣, doubled on your right. That ends the bidding and you receive the ♣10 lead.

♠ Q J 9 7 4 2
♥ -
♦ K 9 6 3
♣ Q J 2



♠ -
♥ 8 7 2
♦ J 8
♣ A K 9 7 6 5 4 3

As it turns out, you might make this! East follows suit. *Plan the play.*

Solution: You have ten top tricks via eight clubs and two heart ruffs, but where might an eleventh come from? It's just about possible that you could get the spades going. If East has a singleton honor, you can ruff a spade, ruff a heart and lead the ♠Q, discarding a diamond. A heart ruff will remain as an entry to the ♠J on table. However, that's hardly likely. Establishing a diamond trick is your primary chance. *How should you tackle the diamonds?*

Solution: One option is to lead up to the ♦K, giving you an extra trick when the ♦A is onside, but you'll be badly placed should East win the ace. You have other chances to cater for. Why not start with the ♦J instead? If West covers, you will put on the ♦K then later force out the ♦10 with your eight-spot. If West doesn't cover, you can run the ♦J then later try leading up to the ♦K to establish a heart discard - it doesn't matter whether you lose a diamond and a heart or two diamonds.

You can cater for the minute extra chance of a singleton spade honor with East en route, mind, by winning trick one with the ♣Q and leading a low spade.

East follows low on the spade, so you ruff and advance the ♦J as planned. West covers with the queen, so you put on the king, losing to East's ace, then ruff the heart return and lead a diamond to the ♦8 and ♦10. You can ruff one more heart on table and park the other on dummy's ♦9 - making eleven.

♠ Q J 9 7 4 2		
♥ -		
♦ K 9 6 3		
♣ Q J 2		
♠ A K 8 6 3		♠ 10 5
♥ K Q 10		♥ A J 9 6 5 4 3
♦ Q 10 5 4		♦ A 7 2
♣ 10		♣ 8
♠ -		
♥ 8 7 2		
♦ J 8		
♣ A K 9 7 6 5 4 3		

West did well to lead a trump; with good holdings in all the side-suits, he figured you might score the bulk of your tricks from ruffs. On any other lead, you could ruff all three hearts on table.

Alas, East-West didn't do too well in the bidding. 5♥ makes in practice, unless you are inspired enough to lead a *low* club at trick one to receive your spade ruff!

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Recommendations

Do you have a bridge partner you'd like to share the daily column with?

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We look forward to hearing from you!