

HAVE YOU EVER THOUGHT TO USE A 'SURROUND PLAY'?

Dummy

♠ A Q J 5 3 2

♥ Q 10 9

♦ 2

♣ Q 6 2

You

♠ 10 8 7 6

♥ 4 2

♦ A J 6 5

♣ K J 9

West

North

East

South

Pass

1♠

2♦

2♥

3♦

3♥

All Pass

You lead the ♦A and see dummy.

NOTE: When dummy has a singleton, partner's signal should be 'suit preference' rather than attitude or count.

Regardless of partner's card, you plan to switch to a club. What club should you lead?

The best club to lead is the Jack. This caters for the position below:

♣ K J 9	♣ Q 6 2	♣ A 7 5 4
	♣ 10 8 3	

If you switch to the ♣K, declarer will end up with a club winner.

If you switch to the ♣9, declarer plays low and will have a club winner.

However, if you switch to the Jack, you will earn yourself three club tricks. If declarer plays the Queen from dummy, when partner wins the Ace and returns a club, you can finesse declarer's ♣10. This is called a 'surround play'.

It's a relatively easy switch to find once you see dummy; it's rare to find it as an opening lead!

Here's the hand (next page):

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

Having lost the first four tricks, declarer should still be able to make the contract, however it does involve 'counting'. You should realise from West's points in diamonds and clubs, and East's overcall on a 'poor' suit, that East must hold the ♠K. Therefore, you must play for the singleton King offside, making your 9 tricks. [Many in the field failed in 3♥ and even 2♥!]

Here's a companion hand from the same event:

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♦	1♥	Pass
2♣	All Pass		

Declarer won the ♦K lead with the Ace, returning the Jack to North's Queen. North switched to the ♥Q. If you trust the lead of the ♥Q, then South is marked with the ♥K. Why is that significant? It means that North has the ♠K (count the points and check for yourself). I refuse to take a finesse when I know it is failing. On this hand, I would cash the ♣A, dropping North's singleton King. You can now ruff the diamond, test the spades, finding that the finesse works and they break 3-3, making 10 tricks.

My opponent obviously didn't think about the points and South's initial pass. He took the club finesse and somehow we managed to make five defensive tricks, which included three club tricks (South holding ♣J-10-9-7).

This next hand was interesting, more from the perspective of whether you are playing Pairs or Teams (see next page).

You are playing in 3NT by North, with no opposition bidding.

♠ A 7 3
♥ 8 4
♦ K Q 6 5 3
♣ Q J 2

♠ K J 9 2
♥ A K J 6 5
♦ A J
♣ 7 4

West leads the ♠6. How would you play the hand – at Teams scoring?

The ♠A is your entry to the diamonds. Therefore, you should win the ♠K in dummy at trick 1, then unblock the diamonds, ensuring your five diamond tricks, together with your two spades and two hearts.

How would you play the hand at Pairs? At Pairs, your objective is to take as many tricks as possible, so you would hope that the ♠6 is a fourth-highest lead, in which case you can win with either the ♠9 in dummy or the ♠7 in hand (try checking that with the Rule of 11). Now you can unblock the diamonds, repeat the spade finesse and, when the ♥Q is doubleton onside, you will make 12 tricks.

Here is the full hand:

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

Barbara Travis

www.bridgewithbarbara.com