



## Tuesday Night Tips The Sydney Bridge Centre mini lesson

If you have joined our F2F session on Tuesday night, you probably already know the host Martin Clear. He is a big fan of the evening game because of his daytime job, and has been leading the group for bridge discussion after the session. This "discussion" will now continue online - Each week Martin will play in the field and pick an interesting hand from the Tuesday night BBO session. Join your bridge buddy for a game on Tuesday night (7.15pm start)!

### Three No-Trump is Not Always a Race

#63206 BBO – Tuesday Night 24<sup>th</sup> August 2021

10	N	♠ 976 ♥ 109742 ♦ K2 ♣ J83	W N E S	1NT P 3NT P P P
	W	♠ Q8 ♥ J5 ♦ QJ9653 ♣ K96	E	♠ KJ54 ♥ AK8 ♦ 108 ♣ A1072
	S	♠ A1032 ♥ Q63 ♦ A74 ♣ Q54		3NT E NS: 0 EW: 0

Many Three No-Trump contracts consist of a race between the declarer and the defenders to set up and establish their suits. Some of the most interesting 3N contracts however are those where that is NOT the case, and where both sides have to carefully try to prevent giving away that crucial 9th trick for the declarer or 5th trick for the defenders while establishing tricks in ones and twos in each suit.

Board 10 on August 24<sup>th</sup> of the BBO's Tuesday Night "Sydney Bridge Centre & Friends" competition was such a hand. The bidding was simple: at most tables, East opened the balanced 15-count 1N and was raised to 3N by West. At most tables ♠2 was led. Half the field put ♠Q up at trick 1, the

rest ran it around to the honours in hand. I think ♠Q is better for declarer because while the chance of South having the 10 and the 9 (making the 8 worth playing) seems remote, there is some chance of South having to be on lead next and that will hamper attacks in the spade suit. Leaving ♠Q stiff in dummy allows an exit in the suit no matter which defender gets in next.

Whichever hand declarer wins in, clearly the diamonds have to be the suit to lead. If the defenders win the first diamond, it is not too difficult for declarer: he wins the return, continues with diamonds to drive out the other honour and is able to reach dummy with ♣K to cash the diamond suit. The defenders can make two spades and the ♦A and ♦K, but no more. At our table however, the defenders correctly ducked the first trick, and now declarer has some thinking to do. The diamonds will need two entries in dummy to be established, and it looks like there is only one there.

Declarer must at least make the diamonds pose a threat, so he leads another diamond and North wins. Now a shift to hearts works for the defenders. Can North find it? North is not going to get the hearts running, but it is sometimes better in passive situations to play a suit that your partner can't play safely, so that partner can exit in it later. It is unlikely the ♥J can be an entry for declarer because the three higher honours stuck in the 5 hearts that North can't see are likely to prevent the J ever winning. North also knows from the initial lead of the spade 2 that South only started with four spades, and declarer must have four as well. However if partner led from AJxx in spades, she will be quite miffed if you fail to continue and with the 8 of spades sitting invitingly alone in dummy, North led ♠9 at our table. This was covered by the Jack and Ace, and South made the right decision to lead the small spade to North's 7 to knock out the King.

On this trick, declarer has to part with something from dummy, and ♣6 seemed a reasonable choice but it actually makes the contract unmakeable. The correct discard is ... a diamond! We will see why later, though it should be noted that if declarer can get the diamonds going, he does not need the 6th one to make the contract: 2 spade winners, 2 heart winners and 2 club winners means he needs only THREE diamond tricks after forcing out the Ace and King to make 3N.

Declarer won ♠K, and was then faced with a difficult choice. At our table, the small heart came out, which should have been fatal (in fact it is the only card to leave declarer two light). South should immediately go up with ♥Q for two reasons: 1) it clearly beats the contract, as South can simply cash ♠T and ♦A for five tricks; and 2) East has opened a 15+ point hand, dummy had 9 and South has 12, leaving a maximum of 4 for North who has already shown ♦K, and cannot therefore have either of the ♥A or ♥K. I would highly recommend all defenders perform this calculation at trick 1 when declarer opened 1N: add your points plus dummy's points plus 16, and subtract that total from 40 and that is the number of points your partner has, plus or minus one. When the ♥J was allowed to win, the diamond Ace was conceded, and South could only take the ♠T and declarer had the other 9.

So what should declarer do after winning ♠K? A club? A club to the King and then a diamond back achieves little, as the defenders will clearly make ♦A, the spade and eventually a club or a heart. A club to the 9 fares no better, as South would split honours if he had both, and North has any number of safe exits if he wins the club. So ... what about a spade?

Sometimes the best play by declarer when suits cannot be established is to give the defenders the trick they are going to get anyway and hope the exit gives them problems. South wins the ♠T, and now a heart exit would give declarer his contract. However South knows on point count alone that a heart will be fatal, and will lead a club hoping her partner has ♣J. This beats the contract, as declarer wins the ♣J with the Ace, but cannot stop the ♣Q and ♦A from winning.

Declarer had a chance to make the contract. As mentioned earlier, on the defender's lead of a spade to his King, he had to throw one of the diamonds from dummy. And then on the throw-in of the 4th spade, he has to throw another diamond from dummy! Declarer still only has seven winners (2 spades, 2 hearts, 2 clubs and the ducked diamond) , but this throw-in gains TWO tricks!

South is stuck on lead, and all roads lead to ruin. Cashing ♦A and leading a heart gives declarer a second diamond trick and an extra heart trick. Leading a heart without taking ♦A, gives the ♥J entry which allows the diamond to be knocked out (leading ♥Q does not help). Leading a low club allows declarer to win ♣J with ♣A and then enter with 9C to set up the diamond. Leading ♣Q is the only way to prevent access to the diamond suit, but this allows declarer to win ♣K, finesse ♣T and make all FOUR club tricks to go with the first ducked diamond trick and the two tricks in each major.

Sydney Bridge Centre and Friends is a weekly 24-board competition on Bridge Base Online on Tuesday Nights at 7.15pm Sydney time - everyone welcome. For those interested we have an online chat about the hands immediately after the game.

Martin Clear (SBC Tuesday Night host)

## Join us to play in The State Individual Championship on BBO



The first [State Individual Championship](#) to be held online!

This is a one-day congress to be held on BBO on Saturday 4th September. You only need to register for yourself, and the competition will provide you a standard system card and line you up with different partners each round - a fun way to "meet" other bridge players.

The State Individual has always attracted some expert players like Julian Foster, so it's a great opportunity to have a game with them and learn from them.

RED masterpoints at state level. BB\$15 per player. [Enter in advance](#) required on the NSWBA website.

## The Sydney Bridge Centre online sessions on BBO

Our clubroom on Goulburn Street is temporary closed under the current restriction. We are running regular club session online on BBO for the moment and will resume our F2F sessions once we can. Please keep an eye on our [website](#) for the latest announcement.

### For BBO sessions:

All are welcome. No need to book. Please find us on BBO / Featured Areas / Virtual Clubs / ABF-Australia. Tournament title "Sydney Bridge Centre & Friends". Tournament will open only 2 hours before the game starts.

24 boards, BB\$4 per person per game.