



## 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)!

### What Does Declarer Have?

#86333 BBO – Tuesday Night 14<sup>th</sup> September 2021

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|---|---|--|--|
| <b>D</b><br><b>9</b>                          |   | <b>N</b><br>♠ J875<br>♥ K1093<br>♦ J9<br>♣ Q83 | <b>W</b> <b>N</b> <b>E</b> <b>S</b><br>P   P   P   P<br>1NT P 2NT P<br>3NT P   P   P |
| <b>W</b><br>♠ Q42<br>♥ A84<br>♦ A8753<br>♣ AK |   | <b>E</b><br>♠ A106<br>♥ J75<br>♦ K4<br>♣ J9762 |  |
|   | <b>S</b><br>♠ K93<br>♥ Q62<br>♦ Q1062<br>♣ 1054 |  | 3NT WNS: 0 EW: 0   |

The 3 No-trump contract, more than any other in bridge, is usually a race between declarer and the defenders to set up their suits. The opening lead is crucial, because if you happen to start off with the wrong suit, you may never recover. And if other players defending the same contract find the right suit, your score is not going to be good.

When you are defending 3N and your side has not bid, you try to lead your side's longest suit, assuming the opponents have not shown length in it. Note that your side's longest suit may not be your own longest suit, but if partner has not bid, it is usually best to try your own longest suit. When that length is only four cards, however, you need to be aware of having to

find a couple more tricks somewhere in the play, and it is very important to place the positions of the cards in declarer's hand.

On Board 9 of the Sydney Bridge Centre & Friends competition on Tuesday Night 14th September, the bidding was an uninformative 1N-2N-3N with North-South justifiably silent. Personally I would have bid 3N directly with the East hand: even in Pairs it is usually necessary to bid 3N aggressively when the opponents are silent, and I use the 7/8/9 rule opposite a 15-17 no-trump range: with 7 points, pass; with 8 points, invite; with 9 points, bid game. East's hand is a 9-count, with the plus of a fifth card in the long suit, but the minus of a couple of Jacks making up the count, but I'd bid 3N and hope to make 9 tricks more than half the time even when partner is in the lower half of their range. In this case, West has a healthy maximum of 17, and 3N should be the contract at all tables (it was at all but one).

Most tables went for a heart lead. The Hearts are a lot healthier than the spades, and require far less from partner to get the suit going. Jack-fourth tends to be a bit too likely to give away a trick when partner has no honours or only one in the suit. In hearts, I would recommend the internal sequence card: the Ten. There are some arrangements of the cards where the small card is better, but the Ten usually helps partner. Some defenders dislike internal sequence cards because partner may not be able to tell the difference between the lead of the Ten from KT9x and from T98x, but partner should assume you have led your best suit, and that can often put them on the right track.

Three defenders led the 3 of Hearts, two led the Ten. When the Ten was led, declarer had no hope of a second stopper in the suit and won the third round to break the defenders communications. When the three was led, two declarers played the Jack. This is the right card when the lead is from KQ+, but in club-level fields I usually prefer to play low as declarer, as third hand has to negotiate the possibility that we have no stopper at all and the suit is wide open. In such cases, a defender who carefully plays the 9 from Q9x only to see declarer joyfully win a trick with Txx tends to face some choice comments from partner. The faster the low card from dummy is played, the more the mental pressure builds up and eventually the high honour is played anyway most of the time.

Those who played the Jack on the 3 lost their second stopper; the only declarer to play low was rewarded as the second stopper is now there whether South plays the Q or not.

At our table, the Ten was covered by Jack and Queen and declarer won the third round with the Ace, then cashed the top two clubs. Entering dummy with the ♦K, declarer played a club and was relieved to find the suit breaking 3-3. North now cashed the winning last heart, and South signalled mightily with the ♠9.

It is now important for the defender to think about the rest of the cards. Clearly West has the ♦A, as South would hardly have allowed ♦K to win (South knows that his partner has the last heart and the top club, to make 5 tricks for the defenders). Just as clearly South has the ♠K as declarer would have 5 winners for the last five tricks otherwise. For the same reason, South is also going to have ♦Q: declarer takes all the tricks easily if he had that card. Declarer probably has ♠Q, especially in this bidding sequence where he showed a high range point count. So shouldn't we make partner happy by leading that spade for him?

Not so fast. Try to analyse what will happen if you do that. Declarer has seen that nice big signal too, and even if not he probably won't play you for dangerously leading away from the ♠K when you could safely exit with a diamond. So declarer will go up with the ♠A, and play off the winning clubs. On the play of the last club, South will have to play a card from ♠K, ♦Q, ♦T, and with declarer sitting behind him with ♠Q, ♦A, ♦8, all of South's discards lead to declarer taking the rest of the tricks, simply by throwing the ♠Q unless it has become a winner. This is a squeeze, and it is the sort of squeeze declarers can sometimes fall into without preparing for it or even knowing it. After all, declarer does not know that North can't guard the diamonds, but that situation will leave South in difficulties regardless.

How can we spare partner this terrible indignity? By executing the main defence against a squeeze: attacking the communication suit. That suit is diamonds. It is known in squeeze parlance as an 'extended menace': the ♦8 threat card is accompanied by a winner that can be reached from the other hand, after the stiff winners (in clubs) are played. By ignoring partner's spade signal, and leading a diamond instead, we actually make sure of partner's spade trick. The ♦J lead runs to ♦A, and declarer now can only go to ♠A to cash the clubs and partner is untroubled to win ♠K at trick 13 to defeat the contract, and gain 75% of the matchpoints.

It is important to try to avoid what I call 'semaphore bridge', where the defenders signal to each other what they want led, and dutifully obey the signals without actually thinking. As a defender you need to think about the consequences of what partner is telling you about their hand, and play accordingly ... which may NOT always mean leading the suit they've signalled that they like.

Martin Clear (SBC Tuesday Night host)

## Repeat on Demand - The SBC Encore! Mid-Week Swiss Pairs



A lot of players really like the idea of a weekday congress and asked us to run it again. If you didn't manage to join our last time, here comes the opportunity!

The [SBC Encore! Mid-Week Swiss Pairs](#) is a one-day congress to be held on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 10am start. We will play six 8 boards round with a lunch break in the middle.

**RED masterpoints awarded.** BB\$12 per player. Winners (of 3 categories) will receive FREE entry to the NSWBA Online Teams of Three, details will be announced very soon!

[Enter in advance](#) required on the NSWBA website. We intend to run separate fields for Open and Restricted & Novice players, if number allows. Please nominate the field you would like to compete in.

## 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.