

THE HOLD-UP PLAY

WHAT? AND WHEN!

For those of you unfamiliar with the Hold-up Play this is a technique used typically when the opponents are creating tricks in a long suit and YOU (whether you be Declarer or a Defender) are attempting to create a situation where, after they have established their tricks, they are unable to win a trick, get on lead and take those tricks.

We'll be looking at this from the viewpoint of a Declarer, but remember; Defenders can use this effectively as well!

Let's look at an example. On the following hand you are South, and your contract is 3NT.

Board 1
 North Deals
 None Vul

♠ K 10 5 3
 ♥ A Q 6
 ♦ 10 3
 ♣ Q J 5 4



♠ A 7 6
 ♥ K 7 5
 ♦ A 8 5
 ♣ K 10 7 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♣	Pass	3 N
Pass	Pass	Pass	
Lead: ♦ 4			

What do we know? West has four or five diamonds.

North/South can win 2 spade tricks, 3 heart tricks, 1 diamond trick and 3 club tricks. In order to win 3 club tricks declarer must force out the ♣ A. If West has five diamonds AND the ♣ A, South cannot win 9 tricks BEFORE West wins 4 diamond tricks and the ♣ A, a total of 5 tricks. If West only has four diamonds, then when the ♣ A is won, the defenders can only win 3 diamond tricks and the ♣ A before Declarer cashes (wins) his 9 tricks.

What if East has 3 diamonds and the ♣ A? If wait to win our ♦ A until the third round of diamonds is played; then when East wins the ♣ A he will no longer have a diamond to play to West. Declarer holds the ♠ AK, the ♥ AKQ and the winning clubs. There is no way for East to lead a card that West can win in order to lead his winning diamonds.

South waiting to win his ♦ A until the third round is a '*Hold-Up Play*'

Bridge has very few rules, techniques and theories that are cast in stone. The next three hands reveal situations in which you should NOT hold-up.

It is much easier to learn the *helpful tricks...* “Always pull trumps” or “Second Hand Low” or “Third Hand High” etc.

What will serve you best is to understand the reason and logic behind these techniques you learn.

Each of these hands with the full layout of cards is included as the last four pages of this handout. Good Luck! I hope you enjoyed the class!

Patty

Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A 4
♥ 10 7 6
♦ J 10 4 3 2
♣ J 9 7



♠ K Q 10 6
♥ A 5 3 2
♦ K Q 5
♣ A 8

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♥	1 N
Pass	3 N	All pass	
Lead: ♥ 4			

West Leads partner's suit. South knows from the bidding that East holds 5 hearts. South suspects that East may hold the ♦ A.

South has 3 spades tricks, 1 heart trick, 4 diamonds and 1 club. Unfortunately South must lose the ♦ A to create their tricks, before they can win their four diamond tricks.

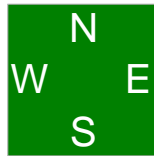
If East holds the ♦ A, South is going to be defeated. East will win the ♦ A and take (cash) his remaining four heart tricks.

However South knows, from the bidding, that East holds five hearts. South has seven hearts between their two hands. Therefore South knows that West has led a singleton. If West holds the ♦ A, he does not hold another heart to lead to East. South will make his contract.

Actually, on this hand he will take EXTRA tricks by winning his ♥ A on the first lead!

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ 10 8
 ♥ A K 5
 ♦ J 6 5
 ♣ K J 9 7 2



♠ K 6 3
 ♥ Q J 8 3
 ♦ K Q 4
 ♣ A 8 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 N
Pass	3 N	All pass	
Lead: ♠ 4			

After the lead of the ♠ 4, East plays the ♠ Q.

South has 4 heart tricks, 2 diamond tricks and 2 club tricks and 1 spade trick (after the spade lead). South has several things to consider.

1. To win 2 diamond tricks, he must allow the opponents to win the ♦ A.
2. South does not know how many spades East or West holds. The spades could be 4/4 in the opponent's hands or West could hold 5 spades
3. If South does not win his ♠ K at trick one, he will not win it. East will simply play a second spade and West will now capture the ♠ K with his ♠ A.
4. South does not know who holds the ♦ A, but rather East wins it or West wins it, that player will simply play spades and win those tricks.
5. South does not know who holds the ♣ Q.

Given all this factors, South's best chance to make his contract is to win the ♠ K and finesse the ♣ Q, hoping that he wins 5 club tricks for a total of 10.

Board 4
 West Deals
 Both Vul

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



♠ A 10 5
 ♥ K 4
 ♦ A 8 6
 ♣ A Q 9 7 6

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	1 N
All pass			
Lead: ♠ 4			

South has five tricks. 1 spade, 3 diamonds and 1 club. West can create additional tricks in the club suit by finessing for the ♣ K.

- If the ♣ K is in the East hand, South can win 5 club tricks.
- If the ♣ K is in the West hand, South can win 4 club tricks


South has no other source of tricks that would give him enough winners to make his contract other than clubs. South **MUST** take the club finesse and hope that East holds the ♣ K.

Since East opened the bidding, If East does not hold the ♣ K he must hold the ♥ A in order to hold enough strength to have opened.

South only has four hearts between his two hands and only one possible stopper. If the ♥ A is in West South is in danger of going down if the opponents play hearts.

South should not duck the ♠ A. Simply win the ♠ A, play a diamond to North and lead the ♣ J.

Board 1
 North Deals
 None Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♣	Pass	3 N
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Lead: ♦ 4			

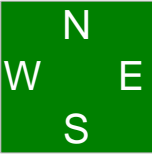
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Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♥	1 N
Pass	3 N	All pass	
Lead: ♥ 4			

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Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ A J 7 4 2 ♥ 10 4 2 ♦ 10 7 2 ♣ Q 6	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 10px; width: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 10 8 ♥ A K 5 ♦ J 6 5 ♣ K J 9 7 2	♠ Q 9 5 ♥ 9 7 6 ♦ A 9 8 3 ♣ 10 5 4
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	♠ K 6 3		
	♥ Q J 8 3		
	♦ K Q 4		
	♣ A 8 3		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3 N	All pass	1 N
Lead: ♠ 4			

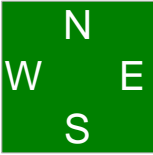
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Board 4
 West Deals
 Both Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	1 N
All pass			
Lead: ♠ 4			

South has five tricks. 1 spade, 3 diamonds and 1 club. West can create additional tricks in the club suit by finessing for the ♣ K.

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