The opening leader works in the dark, the declarer in the sunshine. Third hand, East, gets to see the dummy before his key play, so his information base is as large, if not as useful, as declarer's. Third hand must direct the defence, and his wrong views are

usually blameworthy - he is in the

hot seat. In each of the following deals you are East, sitting in the hot

seat playing match-pointed pairs.

East

Pass

KQ964

A109

7 104

♣ J63

All Pass

South

2NT\*

A853

J32

876

(Solutions overleaf)

Pass

Pass

\* 17-18

North/South Game.

North

## HOT SEAT QUIZ

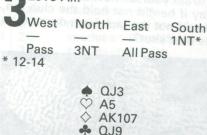
Partner leads the two of clubs (4th

best). Declarer plays the three from

dummy. What would you play?

Love All. North East South 10 Pass 10 Pass Pass 1NT All Pass Q53 AJ6 AQJ96 74 109 10632 W

Partner's lead of the spade six is taken by dummy's queen as declarer contributes the four. Declarer crosses to his king of hearts and plays the ten of diamonds which runs to your king - how do you proceed? Love All.

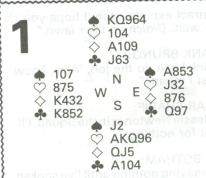


West leads the six of spades and the queen is played from dummy. What do you play? If you decide to win with the ace, what should you play next?

**J63** 

K742

## THE WINNING PLAY — REMEMBER AT PAIRS BEATING THE CONTRACT IS NOT EVERYTHING



You should play the queen of clubs, surrendering most chances to beat the contract. The temptation to insert the nine must be resisted in the interest of securing two tricks for your side.

It is hard for you to know how many tricks declarer will be able to amass. Partner's little something might include the spade jack or heart queen rather than his actual holding. You could dream of scoring his side card, your ace, and three club tricks. But it won't happen that way. With only one club stopper, South will hold up two rounds, knock out your ace and take the balance. Your only practical chance for a set is for partner to hold the ace and king of clubs, in which case the queen is obviously your winning choice.

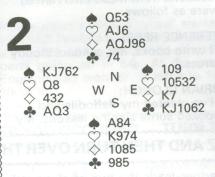
Realistically, though, declarer is bound to have a club stopper. You know that his finesses will work and the key heart suit is splitting. You must give up on partner holding K-10-x-x of clubs and be sure to establish one trick in the suit. Then partner can be praised for guessing the winning lead. Be careful to return the club seven when you win your ace, so that partner cannot be tempted to duck.

The easy way to resolve this problem is to ask yourself how declarer would play if he did not hold the club ten. Would not the jack from dummy be his best shot?



## SOLUTION: TO HOT SEAT QUIZ

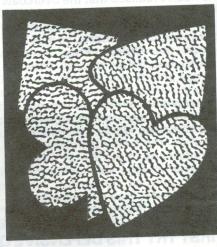
by DAVID WEISS

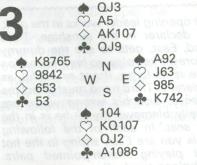


After winning the diamond king you should return the club ten. This is not a conventional lead, and it is a difficult card to find, but it is necessary. You know, and declarer is almost certain, that West has a high club honour. Leading a low club may cost three tricks on some lies, as declarer will play the nine if he happens to have Q-9-x. Leading the king first will have a similar effect; declarer will not put up his hypothetical queen on the second round. You must lead a middle honour to preserve the defence's technical options. But if you routinely play your jack first, you will trap partner if he has both the ace and queen. Only the ten caters to all possibilities. If declarer covers, partner will win the ace and you will run the suit. If declarer does not cover, you will continue with a low club and partner will win his ace whether or not he has the queen. Partner will know that you have the king, because if declarer had two honours (that is, king-jack) he would have covered your ten.

This is an interesting kind of improvisation. Some theorists have suggested that one should conventionally lead the ten from an interior sequence of this kind, but that agreement is not necessary here. As one might wish to lead the jack on occasion from such holdings such as A-J-x-x or K-J-x, a convention in which the jack would, by agreement, be the top card seems ill-advised.

If instead of switching to clubs you idly return a spade you will get the result you deserve. If declarer had the king of spades and not the ace he would have run the opening lead to his own hand. So on a spade return he will make two spades, four diamonds and three hearts when your partner's doubleton queen appears.





Win the spade ace and return the deuce. This is a difficult play to think of; habits control us all at times. But you can tell from the auction that partner's only high card is the spade king. If declarer has length in the rounded suits he will take 12 tricks when partner makes the normal play of ducking your return of the spade nine. This duck would be a necessary play if your club honour were the ace.

The spade deuce will persuade partner that you have no more spades, and so there will be no reason for him to refuse the trick.