

# The Hold-Up Play

## What the Evil Defence is Doing



- They try to force out your top cards to promote winners in their long suit
- If they get the lead when your last stopper has gone, you may go down
- You may be able to avoid defeat by breaking their communications
- That's what the hold-up play is trying to achieve

## How the Hold-Up Play Works

- Call the defenders Bill and Ben
- Let's say Bill has a dangerous long suit
- We know we will have to lose the lead at least once
- When we lose the lead we hope to lose it to Ben
- Try to arrange it so that Ben has no cards left in the danger suit when he gets the lead
- We have broken communication between Bill and Ben



## The Traditional Hold-Up

<p>West</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f0e0;"> <p>♠ 7 4 ♥ K 9 5 ♦ Q J 4 3 ♣ A Q J 5</p> </div>	<p>West: 1♦ East: 1♥ West: 1NT East: 3NT</p> <p>North leads K♠</p>	<p>East</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0f0e0;"> <p>♠ A 6 2 ♥ A 4 3 2 ♦ K 8 7 ♣ K 7 4</p> </div>
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There are seven sure tricks (1+2+0+4). The other two tricks will have to come from diamonds. We will need to lose the lead once. The spades suit is the danger. We suspect that North has long spades, so our plan is to allow South to run out of spades before we win with the ace. Then we hope that South has the ace of diamonds. There is no guarantee that this will work but it is a risk that needs to be taken.

So, win the third round of spades and start playing diamonds.

	North	
	♠ K Q J 5	
West	♦ T 9	East
♠ 7 4	South	♠ A 6 2
♦ Q J 4 3		♦ K 8 7
	♠ T 9 8 3	
	♦ A 6 5 2	

Since the defender's spades break evenly, it doesn't matter when we win the ace. We will lose one diamond and three spades.

	North	
	♠ K Q J 5 3	
West	♦ A 9	East
♠ 7 4	South	♠ A 6 2
♦ Q J 4 3		♦ K 8 7
	♠ T 9 8	
	♦ T 6 5 2	

It doesn't matter when we win the ace of spades. We will lose one diamond and four spades.

	North	
	♠ K Q J 5 3 ♦ T 9	
West		East
♠ 7 4 ♦ Q J 4 3	South	♠ A 6 2 ♦ K 8 7
	♠ T 9 8 ♦ A 6 5 2	

It is now very important when we win the ace of spades. We should allow the defence to win the first two spade tricks. When we finally win our ace, South will have no spades left. We can set up our diamonds safely. South will win the ace but cannot get to North's hand because communications have been broken.

### Two Stoppers

West		North:	2♥	East
♠ K 7 4 ♥ A 5 3 ♦ J T 5 4 ♣ K Q 5		East:	Double	
		West:	3NT	
		East leads Q♥		
				♠ A 8 6 2 ♥ K 4 ♦ Q 9 7 3 ♣ A 4 2

There are seven sure tricks (2+2+2+1). The other two tricks will have to come from diamonds. We will need to lose the lead twice. Hearts is the danger and we hope that North does not have both the ace and king of diamonds.

	North	
	♥ Q J T 9 8 7 ♦ A 2	
West		East
♥ A 5 3 ♦ J T 5 4	South	♥ K 4 ♦ Q 9 7 3
	♥ 6 2 ♦ K 8 6	

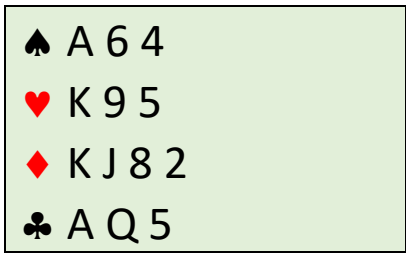
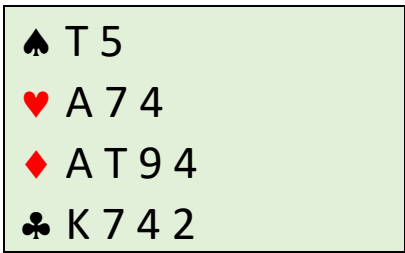
If we win the first trick, South will grab the first diamond trick and lead back a heart. That will take our last stopper and North's ♦ A will be the entry for the heart winners. Even with two stoppers, it is essential to duck the first heart trick. so that South is unable to play a heart after winning the king of diamonds.

### What about this one?

West		East:	1♣	East
♠ 7 4 3 ♥ A J 5 ♦ Q J 8 ♣ A Q 5 3		West:	3NT	
		North leads K♥		
				♠ K 6 ♥ 6 4 3 ♦ A K 7 ♣ K J 7 4 2

There are nine sure tricks (0+1+3+5). If we duck the opening lead, another heart from North will allow us to make an extra heart trick. That sounds attractive but we must win the first trick. Otherwise, North may switch to a spade and we could easily lose four or five spade tricks.

## Deal 1

North		South
	North: 1NT South: 3NT	
	East leads 8♠	

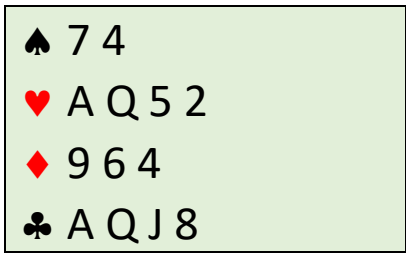
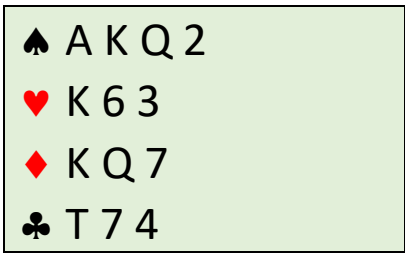
There are eight sure tricks (1+2+2+3). Clubs may provide an extra trick (1 chance in 3) but diamonds will guarantee at least one trick. The danger is that East may have five spades and West three. The defence may then take four tricks in that suit. If West started with four spades, East will also have four. Then, we can lose at most three tricks in spades and will make our contract.

Assume the worst that East started with five spades. Allow West to win the first spade and duck the spade return as well. Win the third spade with the ace. If West started with three spades, they will be all gone.

After winning the ♠A, lead the ♦8 and play the ♦4 from dummy. If the ♦8 wins, play the ♦J and take another finesse. If West wins with the ♦Q at some stage, she will not be able to play a spade. Win the return and cash the rest of your winners.

It would be a mistake to finesse the other way by leading the ♦T and playing the two from your hand. That would be finessing towards the danger hand.

## Deal 2

West		East
	East: 1NT West: 2♣ East: 2♠ West: 3NT	
	South leads 5♦	

There are seven sure tricks (3+3+0+1). The club suit will provide at least two more. We may need to lose the lead once and diamonds is the danger suit. From the opening lead, it looks like South has long diamonds.

To set up the club suit, we will finesse towards North. If North has the king, we must make sure that he has no diamonds left.

Allow North to win the opening lead and play the king on the return. Maybe that will win. Otherwise, South will win and force us to take the third diamond. Now take the club finesse. North may win. If North started with two diamonds, he will have none left to play. If North started with three diamonds, the defence can get only three diamond tricks anyway.

### Deal 3

<p>North</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>♠ A K Q 4 ♥ A Q 5 ♦ 9 6 4 ♣ T 8 7</p> </div>	<p>South:</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>North:</p> <p>2♣</p> <p>South:</p> <p>2♦</p> <p>North:</p> <p>3NT</p> <p>West leads 5♦</p>	<p>South</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>♠ 7 5 2 ♥ K 6 3 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A Q J 4</p> </div>
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This has a lot of similarities with deal 2. There are seven sure tricks (3+3+0+1). The club suit will provide at least two more. We may need to lose the lead once and diamonds is the danger suit. From the opening lead, it looks like West has long diamonds.

The big difference this time is that the **club finesse will be taken into West, the hand with the long diamonds**. If we hold up our diamond stopper until the third round and the club finesse loses, the defence will end up with four diamond tricks.

After East plays the ♦J to the first round of diamonds, it looks like West started with ♦ATxxx. If we win the first diamond trick with the king, we will be left with ♦Q7. That means if West is on lead, a diamond cannot damage us. If West leads the ♦A, our queen will win the next one. If West leads a small diamond, our queen will win straight away.

Therefore, win the first trick and it is safe to finesse the clubs into West's hand.

### Deal 4

<p>West</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>♠ A 6 2 ♥ A J 2 ♦ Q 9 4 2 ♣ A J 8</p> </div>	<p>West:</p> <p>1NT</p> <p>East:</p> <p>3NT</p> <p>North leads 7♠</p>	<p>East</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>♠ K 5 4 ♥ K Q 5 ♦ J T 6 5 ♣ K T 4</p> </div>
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There are seven sure tricks (2+3+0+2). Guessing the clubs may provide one extra trick but diamonds can provide two. We will lose the lead twice and spades is the danger suit. We are hoping that North with the long spades does not have both ace and king of diamonds. We must make sure that when South gets the lead, she has no spades to lead. So, it is essential to duck the first spade.

### Deals 1 to 4, The Full Hands

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