

Queen or Ten? -- Problem

**Board 23**

West Deals

None Vul

♠ A K Q 4

♥ A 10 4

♦ 8 6

♣ A Q 10 3



♠ J 9 8 5

♥ J 5

♦ A K 9 4 3

♣ 5 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	
4 ♠ by South			
Lead: ♥ 8			

Join me as South for three deals in a club game (matchpoint pairs).

Plan the play, before proceeding.

We could play to establish the diamonds. The trouble with that plan is that our only sure entry to hand the ♠ J, once we cash the diamonds and ruff one (high or low?). 4-2 diamonds or 4-1 spades may sink us.

Let's play this as a dummy reversal, ruffing out dummy's losers. Now the ♦ A-K provides us with two entries to hand.

We win the first heart, cross to hand with the ♦ A, and lead a club. What card have you planned to call from dummy, when West plays low?

Queen or Ten? -- Solution

**Board 23**

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 7♠; NS 5N; NS 5♦; NS 4♣; NS 2♥; Par +1510: NS 7♠=

*West      North      East      South*

Pass      1 ♣      Pass      1 ♠

Pass      4 ♠      All pass

4 ♠ by South

Lead: ♥ 8

Made 7 — NS +510

Looking at the club suit in isolation, the ♣ Q could let us win two club tricks, without losing any. However, if that works, we would still want to ruff two clubs, and after losing a heart, ruff a heart. In situations like this, it's often best to take the long view. If we insert the ♣ 10, it may force the king; then we would only need to ruff one club. If it loses to the jack, we still have the option of finessing again. Finally, maybe the ♣ K-J will both be onside, and we can get our heart away. We commit ourselves to this plan *before playing to trick one!*

West, a player of limited talent, dithers and produces the ♣ J. Of course, we cover with the ♣ Q, which wins. West's play assured us of three club tricks, whether we were going deep or not.

Of course, we return to the ♦ K, finesse again in clubs, and discard our losing heart.

Next, ruff a heart, ruff a diamond *high*, ruff the last heart and ruff another diamond high (East under-ruffing), producing this 3-card ending:

♠ Q 4   ♣ 3

(immortal)

♠ 10 7 6

♠ J 9   ♦ 9

All this, and a *trump coup!* We lead the club from dummy, and East is finished.

Diamonds were 4-2 and trumps 4-1, and we still take all the tricks for a cold top -- even though we only bid a game.

### The Queen Drops -- Problem

**Board 8**

West Deals

None Vul

♠ A 8  
♥ Q 3 2  
♦ 10 6 5 4 3  
♣ Q 8 2



♠ 5 3  
♥ A K 7  
♦ A K 9 8  
♣ A K 10 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	2 NT <sup>1</sup>
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. Balanced hand, 20-21 HCP.  
3 NT by South  
Lead: ♣ 6

Of course, we run the club around to hand, and the ♣ 10 wins. We cash the ♦ A, and West follows with the ♦ Q. Now what? And Why?

### The Queen Drops -- Solution

**Board 8**

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 6N; NS 6♦; NS 3♥; NS 4♣; EW 1♠; Par +990: NS 6N=

West North East South

Pass Pass Pass 2 NT<sup>1</sup>

Pass 3 NT All pass

1. Balanced hand, 20-21 HCP.

3 NT by South

Lead: ♣ 6

Made 7 — NS +520

We cross to dummy with a queen, lead a diamond, and, when East plays small, finesse them out of the ♦ J. Making 7: 1 spade + 3 hearts + 5 diamonds + 4 clubs = 13 tricks, again a cold top.

This play falls under the heading of *restricted choice*. This rule says that West had no choice of equivalent cards to play. In this application, when playing the ♦ Q or ♦ J, the rule says West does not have the other. There were four original cases, all of which are about as likely as each other:

West	East
1. Q-J	-
2. Q	J
3. J	Q
4. -	Q-J

Cases 3 & 4 have been eliminated. The other two cases are no longer equally likely. Because West could have played either honor in case 1, case 2 is about twice as likely.

If West would *always* play the "sneaky" queen from Q-J, consider playing for the drop of the jack -- but when that West drops the jack, the finesse is 100%. **Moral:** the defender should select such a card among equals at random.

**Rule:** After a 2 NT opening, make a passive lead at the final contract.

This rule is solid, but not perfect. The ♣ 5 opening lead on this deal was horrible, especially because dummy did not explore for a major suit fit. The ♥ 9 is a standout lead. At IMPs, the risky, aggressive lead of a spade strikes gold. Since the restricted choice play in diamonds would risk the contract, declarer should play for the drop and collect only the nine sure tricks. On a spade lead at matchpoints, nine tricks may be a poor result, so the two-to-one restricted choice finesse is still -- gulp -- an option after a spade lead.

### Strong Notrump in Response -- Problem

#### **Board 16**

West Deals  
E-W Vul



♠ K 9 4  
♥ A K 8 4  
♦ Q 10 8  
♣ A 8 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	?

To start off the last round, this is a nice 1 NT opening -- but partner beats us to the punch.

How many clubs should partner have? What strength?

What should our rebid be?

### Strong Notrump in Response -- Solution

#### Board 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

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

S 6N; S 6♦; S 6♣; N 4N; N 5♦; N 5♣; S 2♠; S 2♥; N 1♠; N 1♥;

Par +990: S 6N=

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	?

On this auction, North will almost always have six clubs. If partner has only five, then they should rebid 1 NT with a balanced hand, 1 ♠ with four spades, or 2 ♥ with three hearts and a side singleton or small doubleton.

Partner should open 1 ♦ with four decent diamonds and five clubs. The only practical case for a 5-card club suit is something like:

♠ A Q 5   ♥ 5   ♦ J 9 4 3   ♣ K Q J 10 5

Some partnerships permit a 1 NT rebid with a singleton in partner's major suit -- an agreement with substantial ramifications -- but we don't.

Our 2 ♦ bid here would be an artificial force, sometimes called third suit forcing. (Have we actually discussed that? Hmm...) Partner will tell us something over that, but will it be useful?

Also, we have vulnerable stoppers in both side suits. We want to grab the notrump. Because 2 NT would only be invitational, 3 NT is the obvious rebid.

Opener's maximum strength would be 15 HCP and six or seven losers. This hand lacks the high cards but has the playing strength (5 losers) of a jump 3 ♣ rebid, or better yet, a reverse to 2 ♦.

Over 2 ♦, 6 NT would be a practical rebid, giving up on a possible grand slam. 3 ♣ would be our strongest possible bid (playing lebensohl), but we want to declare, to protect the ♠ K. One pair did bid and make 6 NT.

Would you have reversed on the North hand? Are you confident that you can land on your feet after the reverse with only 13 HCP? Partner probably drives to game with {♠ K 9 4   ♥ A Q 8 4 3   ♦ 10 8 3   ♣ J 3}, maybe less. (Reverses are discussed in *EZ-Expert Bidding Tools*.)

With a fine ♥ J lead available, the opening lead was the ♠ 6! For the third time, we bid only game and took all 13 tricks (next to top score, this time).