

## 10. Declarer play at notrump - Answers

1. You need 7 tricks; you have 6 top winners; you need to develop 1 more trick. Play hearts – you have to lose these tricks whatever happens. West will make 4 tricks in clubs, and you will lose 2 heart tricks while establishing the 10 as a winner. If you try a finesse and it loses, you will still lose the 4 clubs and 2 hearts, and the finesse. Down one!

2. Win the king with the ace. Now you need to keep East off the lead, in order to protect your ♠J7 holding. So cross to dummy with a heart to the king, lead a diamond and, assuming East follows low, finesse the 9. West can win the trick but your ♠J is safe from attack, and you can now run the diamonds. You are sure to make at least 9 tricks (1 spade, 2 hearts, 5 diamonds and 1 club).

Is it necessary to hold up when you have two stoppers in the enemy suit? Yes, in this case you must hold up, and you must hold up on the opening lead of the ♠Q. Win the next spade lead. You need two diamond tricks – now, when East gets in with the ♦K, he is out of spades. If you hadn't held up the spades, East could lead one back to West and your last spade stopper would be gone, while West still had the ♦A as an entry. Down 2, instead of making an overtrick!

	♠ 8 2										
	♥ K 9 8 7										
	♦ J 7 6 4										
	♣ A Q 5										
♠ Q J 10 9 7 6	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 5 3
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	♠ A K 4										
	♥ A 10 5										
	♦ Q 10 9 8 5										
	♣ K 7										
3 NT by South											

Should you always hold up when you have only one stopper? West leads the ♠2 against 3NT. It is clearly 4<sup>th</sup> highest of a four card suit. You have 7 winners off the top (5 clubs and two major suit aces). You clearly need two tricks from diamonds.

What can go wrong if you do hold up? East can switch to hearts. Now you can lose 1 diamond trick and 4 tricks in hearts and spades. As soon as one of those aces is gone, the suit is wide open.

If you don't hold up nothing can go wrong. Win the first trick, and play diamonds. Defense can win the ♦A and 3 tricks in spades – and you make your contract! You should not usually hold up when you have a second suit that is as weak or even weaker than the first suit.

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...	♥ 9										
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♠ Q J 8 2	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 7 5
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