

11. Declarer play at notrump (2): Answers

Here are some suggestions for how the six hands should be played by declarer.

First board: The key play here is at trick one - do not cover the ♥10 opening lead. If you do, a sharp East will allow dummy's honor to win the trick. Then, when you start the clubs, East will hold off until the third round. With the ♥K sitting over dummy's heart honor, you can't get into dummy to take the two good clubs.

Second board: The key here is to put West back on lead to help you get into dummy or else give you a free finesse in clubs. Win the ♦K, unblock the heart ace and king, and lead a diamond back to West. He may lead a club, or a diamond or a spade. If he leads spades, take your three top spades and put West back on lead with a diamond or a spade, depending on what you have left in those suits. Never lead clubs! And if all the spades are gone, and West leads a club, let East win. He will either have to lead a heart, putting you in dummy where you have three tricks waiting, or he will lead a club, giving you a second finesse.

Third board. Win the heart, lead the jack of clubs and let it ride. If West plays the king, let him win the trick. Now, with a decent 3-2 break in clubs, you can run the suit as soon as you are back on lead. If you overtake the king, you can't run the clubs.

Fourth board. West is the dangerous opponent here - if the diamonds don't run for you, you need to develop a heart trick, but if West wins a diamond and leads a club you are in big trouble. So, win the ♠K and finesse the diamonds into East's hand. East can't hurt you with a club switch.

Play the diamonds, hoping that defenders make a spade discard that will help you. They don't. Duck a spade, then play your two spade honors. Cross to dummy and take your heart tricks. If dummy's last spade is good, you don't need the club finesse; if not, take the finesse.

Play the hearts, then the diamonds (they don't break), then the spades (they don't). Carefully watch the defenders' discards. Dummy's last spade is not good, but play it, putting West on lead when he must lead a club into your AQ, giving you the contract!