

## Making a Plan

By Mitch Towner

Similar to chess, expert bridge players are constantly planning ahead. Planning is important in the auction, play, defense, and projecting the play during the auction. During World Championships competitions everyone takes their time before starting the auction, leading, and after dummy hits (30 second rule!).

Benefits of making a plan:

1. Improves your score!
2. Helps to avoid (careless) mistakes
3. Reduces information given to the opponents
4. Avoids unauthorized information to partner
5. Improves your bridge logic

Planning is like counting, it is tough to do initially, but as you get better and practice it will become second nature.

### **Bidding:**

1. 1<sup>st</sup> Seat, None vulnerable ♠8♥K63♦KJ54♣AQ972
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> Seat, None vulnerable after 1♥-(P)? ♠8653♥-♦K2♣AQJT972
3. Common competitive situations e.g. competing in hearts over the opponents spades – For example, if they bid 4 spades over our 4 hearts, do we want to bid 5 hearts? 3H-(3S) unfavorable ♠4♥K32♦T42♣AQJ983?
4. Before bidding RKC: What are you doing over ALL responses? Will a response get us too high? Do we have room to ask for the queen? Is it better for my hand to RKC (only lack key cards) or respond to RKC (all points are key cards)?
5. Should we play 3N 99.99% of the time? Bid it! Don't want to risk an accident with partner or describe your hand to your opponents.

**Play:**

6.      North  
         ♠42  
         ♥32  
         ♦AK7643  
         ♣T32

West  
♥4 (lead)

South  
♠AQ6  
♥AQ7  
♦JT9  
♣A876

South opens 1N-(P)? All Vul at IMPs.  
North bids 3N because 2N is no man's land  
If Diamonds split or stiff Q do we have 10  
tricks? Is there a problem?  
Sometimes conventional logic fails

7.      North  
         ♠K42  
         ♥9432  
         ♦K63  
         ♣732

West  
♠J (lead)

South  
♠AQ7  
♥KJT  
♦A87  
♣AK86

2N-3N All Vul at IMPs.  
7 top tricks with prospects in ♣ and ♥  
Can we guarantee our contract?

8.

North

♠AK6

♥T64

♦J8

♣QJT73

1S-1N-2S-4S, auction thoughts?

Plan after AK of diamonds and heart shift?

No ruff needed => draw trumps?

Contract is cold if Clubs are 4-2 or better  
and spades are 3-1 or better. How?

West

♦A (lead)

South

♠QJ6532

♥AK2

♦T4

♣K5

9.

North

♠8742

♥AQJT

♦872

♣A4

You arrive in 4♠ unopposed at IMPs.

So you win the Ace and then start to think.

We draw trumps, finesse in hearts, and

worst case scenario hope the A♦ is on side.

75% game, unlucky if we go down.

Could we do better?

West

♣K (lead)

South

♠AKQJ653

♥42

♦K54

♣6

## Defense & Leads:

10. Why is the common advice to lead a trump opposite a two suited hand, e.g. 1S-1N-2D-All pass? How is Declarer going to play the hand?

11.

**N E S W:**

**1N P**

**2♣ P 2♠ P**

**4♠ (All Pass)**

North

♠QT85

♥KQ643

♦AQ3

♣Q

West

♠

♥2 (lead)

♦

♣

East

♠A63

♥A875

♦7

♣T8643

Your opponents bid starting with South  
1N-2♣-2♠-4♠. Partner leads the 2♥.

What is your plan?

The lead has to be a singleton.

Declarer has 15-17, => Partner has 0-2

How many spades does everyone have?

What happens if we give partner a ruff?

What's the plan?

## Play during Bidding:

There are players who can envision the play of the hand based on the bidding before they even see dummy.

When partner opens 1N. You are the captain. What sequence of questions do you want to ask? Are we simply running winners (3N?) or do we have a weak suit/need to ruff losers (4M?)

Famous John Kranyak 6♦ trump squeeze that he knew during the auction with ♠AK8♥Q653♦AJT♣KJT after 1♣-(2♣)-2♠-(3♥)?

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