

Sligo and Friends - Intermediate Championship - Thursday 1st June 2023

Board	Contract	By	Lead	Topic of the hand
1	3NT+1	N	S6	We have to keep West off lead because a spade from West through our spade holding will give East 4 spade tricks. To keep West off lead we need to arrange that if we have a diamond trick to lose that we lose it to East - so we win the spade lead and cash DK (just in case the DQ is singleton) then play a heart to dummy's Q, and play a diamond to the jack in our hand - if it loses it will lose to East and he can not do us any harm.
2	3NT	E	HK	Duck Heart lead (Bath Coup) - now South cannot play a second heart without gifting declarer a second heart trick.
3	3NT	S	HJ	It is best not to play HQ from dummy at trick 1. Instead win with the HA and finesse diamond into East who can't attack hearts - dummy's HQ cannot be attacked by East.
4	3NT+2	W	HJ	A spade lead is reasonable here too but it won't harm the declarer tonight. However HJ lead will cause problems. When your own hand is weak it often plays to try and hit your partner's suit i.e. what suit would your partner lead if he were on lead? Declarer should not play HQ at trick 1 and instead win the heart with the HA and finesse clubs into the safe hand - South.
5	7S	N	DK	Win with the DA and draw trumps. Keep hearts as entries to the club for 2 ruffs to set up for diamond discard
6	4H	E	CK	Win with the Ace and immediately play 3 rounds of diamonds discarding your spade loser. Now you can start playing trumps.
7	4S	S	HA and C4 switch	Win the club switch in hand with CK and cash 2 rounds of trumps - then play clubs discarding losing diamonds while you still have a trump in Dummy to stop the opponents cashing any heart winners - a nice play known as the 'Trump Policeman'.
8	4S	W	C7	Win club in Dummy, duck a spade, win club return in hand, cash SA, HA, HK and ruff a heart in dummy. Best play when our trumps are weak is to duck the first round, cash the ace on the second round and then abandon trumps.
9	4S	N	SA and CQ switch	Win with CA and play a diamond to the King and - crossruff the hand - nothing the opponents can do except sit back and enjoy the lesson in card play.
10	3NT-1	E	S10	North should let Souths S10 lead run - this forces declarer to win trick one with SJ and now the contract goes down (as long as South wins first club trick to continue the spade attack). If North plays SQ at trick one then declarer can hold up his SA and now the contract cannot be defeated.

11	3NT-1	S	DJ	West leads DJ and East encourages - East does not play his ace until dummy plays his king. West gets in with SA or CK and now a second diamond through dummy's king leads to the defence winning 3 diamonds, a club and a spade.
12	4S-1	W	HK	Declarer ruffs the third round of hearts and North should realise that he now has the same number of trumps as declarer (i.e. 4 each). North should wait til the third round of trumps before he takes his ace and now if he returns another heart, declarer will have to ruff in his hand with his last trump - and North will have the only trump left for the 4th trick for the defence. This is
13	7NT-1	N	H10	Discard diamonds on the run of Declarer's winners so that declarer is on a complete guess as to which way to finesse for the SQ. If East discards two spades then his Q will fall and if West discards three spades then he will show out on the first spade and disclose the location of his partner's SQ.
14	3NT-1	E	SQ	Declarer wins with the SK and takes a club finesse which you should duck as partner played C2 which indicates an odd number - 3 cards. Even if declarer goes up the Ace on the 2nd round of the suit he has only 8 tricks. As defenders we take our winners when declarer plays his last card from hand i.e. on the second round of clubs on this hand.
15	4S-1	S	HQ	Declarer wins with HA and tries to set up diamonds for a club discard. West wins second diamond and then switches to a club - through strength) as East has discouraged the heart lead.
16	4H-1	W	DA	South discourages the diamond lead so it is obvious for North to switch to a club at trick 2....North can't lead a spade from his king or a heart from his queen.
17	4H-1	N	DA	West wants a spade switch through dummy's king at trick 2 and the clearest message to suggest this switch to East is for West to follow suit to East's DA lead with his DQ - this screams for a spade switch. If West does not scream for a spade switch then from East's point of view he will not know whether to switch to a club or a spade - both suits look exactly the same to him.
18	4H-1	E	SA	South leads AK of spades - North discourages. Now South switches to the D9 and this kills the diamond entry to dummy before declarer has set up dummy's club suit.