

## TO COVER OR NOT TO COVER?

By Barbara Seagram

There is an old adage: "Cover an honour with an honour." Note that this applies only to a defender and is not always correct.

Here are some guidelines for what to do when dummy is on your right and you are in second seat (the same concept applies regardless of whether this is a notrump or a suit contract):

**A.** Q52 (Dummy)

K109 (you)

Declarer leads the queen from dummy and you have the K109. No declarer worth his salt would lead the queen without also owning the jack. Thus declarer must have the AJx. What should you do? You must cover with the king, so that your ten will ultimately become a winner.

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**B.** Q52

K64 (you)

The queen is led from dummy. This time you do not own the nine or the ten, so you have to hope that your partner holds a worthwhile card in that suit.

Q52

1083

K64 (you)

AJ97

On this layout, you must cover with the king, so that West's ten can develop into a winner. If you do not cover, declarer will repeat the finesse and score four tricks in the suit.

***Thus, when dummy is on your right, it is usually correct to cover an honour with an honour.***

C. Now let's look at a different scenario:

QJ109  
873                      K542  
A6

The queen is led from dummy. **When dummy is on your right and has more than one touching honour, you must cover the last honour.** (Here, the ten and the nine have grown up into honours, since they lie in sequence with the queen and the jack.) If you cover the first honour led, then declarer has four sure tricks. If you do not cover, then declarer may get only two tricks in this suit. (Declarer will be forced to play his Ace on round 2 of the suit)

Let's have a look at a variation in the context of a full deal:

				South Deals				
				♠ 4 3 2				
				♥ K J 5				
				♦ Q J 9 3				
				♣ A 4 3				
♠ AKQJ	<div style="background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;">             N W ↓ E S           </div>			♠ 9 8				
♥ 8 6 4				♥ 9 7 3 2				
♦ 10 8 6				♦ K 7 2				
♣ J 10 9				♣ 8 7 6 5				
				♠ 10 7 6 5				
				♥ A Q 10				
				♦ A 5 4				
				♣ K Q 2				
West	North	East	South					
			1 NT					
Pass	3 NT	All pass						
			3 NT by South					

### Opening lead: SA

West, your partner, takes the first four spade tricks and shifts to the CJ. Meanwhile, declarer counts his sure tricks: three hearts, one diamond and three clubs. Not enough! He realizes that his only hope is to score two extra tricks in diamonds. He wins with the CA in dummy and leads the queen of diamonds.

If you, as East, cover with the king, declarer will win with the D Ace and finesse your partner for the D10, resulting in nine tricks. If you refuse to cover the DQ, however, declarer will win that trick, but cannot now generate the three tricks he needs in the diamond suit. Your long-range plan should be to cover the second honour. This will beat the contract.

## THE LIGHTNER DOUBLE by Eddie Kantar

<p>East Deals</p> <p>♠ 9 ♥ 9 ♦ 9 8 6 5 4 3 2 ♣ J 10 9 8</p>	<p>♠ K ♥ J 5 4 ♦ A J 10 7 ♣ A K Q 7 4</p>	<p>♠ A Q J 10 7 6 3 ♥ 6 3 2 ♦ — ♣ 5 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 8 5 4 2 ♥ A K Q 10 8 7 ♦ K Q ♣ 6</p>			
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W → E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>				N	W → E	S
N						
W → E						
S						
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			
		3♠	4♥			
Pass	4 NT	Pass	5♠			
Pass	6♥	Dbl	Pass			
Pass	Pass					

Opening lead: ???

**Bidding commentary:** After South overcalls, North is surely worth a Roman Key Card Blackwood effort. Partner's response of 5S shows two key cards plus the H Queen. Given the bidding, it looks like all you are missing is the S Ace.

**Lead Commentary:** When a preemptive bidder doubles a slam contract with partner on lead, he tells partner: "Don't lead my suit, don't lead a trump. I almost certainly have a void. Lead it."

**Defensive commentary:** West can look at his hand and figure out that partner's void must be in Diamonds, so he should lead one! On the Diamond lead, East ruffs and cashes the S Ace for down one, plus 200. Any other lead results in minus 1660.

This double of a voluntarily bid slam is called a Lightner Slam Double after its originator, Teddy Lightner. The conventional double asks for **an unusual lead** (not the doubler's suit and not a trump, both common leads against slams).

**Further commentary:** Against a notrump contract, the double asks partner to lead dummy's first bid suit. When the double is made against a suit contract – especially by a player who has bid preemptively – it almost always means the doubler is void in a suit and is hoping the opening leader can work out which one.

## Have the opponents preempted? by Andrew Robson

When one opponent has shown a weak hand with a very long suit – by preempting – then your trump contracts can be wrecked by a bad trump split or the opponents unexpectedly trumping your winners. The solution is to choose Notrumps.

This week's declarer heeded this piece of advice - watch how he renders the preemptor's hand useless.

<b>East Deals</b>	<b>S 7 5</b>		
<b>N-S Vul</b>	<b>H K 7 5 4</b>		
	<b>D A J 10 9</b>		
	<b>C 7 5 4</b>		
<b>S 8 3</b>	<b>H Q 10 9 8 3</b>	<b>D 7 6</b>	<b>C J 9 8 2</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>E</b>	
	<b>W</b>	<b>S</b>	
			<b>S K Q J 10 9 4 2</b>
			<b>H J</b>
			<b>D Q 8 4</b>
			<b>C 10 3</b>
			<b>S A 6</b>
			<b>H A 6 2</b>
			<b>D K 5 3 2</b>
			<b>C A K Q 6</b>
<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>
		<b>3 S</b>	<b>3 N</b>
<b>Pass</b>	<b>Pass</b>	<b>Pass</b>	

South had a choice between doubling East's 3S opener – asking partner to speak – or bidding 3NT. Had he doubled, North would have replied 4H - not a happy contract with West holding five decent trumps. 3NT was a far pleasanter proposition.

West led S8 and declarer ducked East's S9. He won his SA on the next round and, crucially, he knew (assuming East held seven Ss for his three-level opener) that West had no more Ss left. He then turned his attention to Ds, making sure that East did not win the lead. He crossed to dummy's DA and ran DJ, not minding if it lost to West. In fact DJ won, so he followed with D9 to DQ and DK, and crossed to D10. He cashed C AKQ and CAK and so made his contract with an overtrick.

**ANDREW'S TIP: If in doubt, play in Notrumps after an opponent has preempted.**

# A Few Miscellaneous Tips by Tony Jackson

## Support With Support

If you have played bridge for a while, you've heard this maxim, but I'd like to highlight one specific auction. Your partner opens 1 heart and you have 3 hearts and 4 spades. What do you do, raise their hearts or bid 1 spade?



S: KJ84  
H: J93  
D: Q874  
C: J3

8 points and you have a choice of raising your partner by bidding 2 hearts or bidding your spades.

What if you bid your spades (and do not bid 2H) and your partner bids 1NT or 2 of a minor suit? What are you going to bid now?

1H - (P) - 1S - (P)  
1NT - (P) - ?

You would, of course, like to show your heart support, and since you aren't strong enough to jump to 3 hearts, you will bid 2 hearts. That's a problem because your partner is going to expect you are taking a preference back to their suit and that you hold only two hearts. And so, your partner is going to pass most of the time. But your partner might have a hand that would have pursued game if they knew you had 3 card support. Unfortunately, you have no way to show 3 card support.

You are better off just showing your 3 card heart support right away. Of course, if you had 10+ points and were planning to show your 3-card limit raise, then you can start with 1S or 1NT (forcing) and then jump to 3 hearts. But if you only have the values for a single raise (6 to a bad 10 count) then you are better off immediately showing support by raising partner's suit.

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If your partner opens a weak 2 bid, you should almost always raise to 3 if you hold 3 card support, even if you are very weak:

2H - (P) - 3H <==== ok to be very weak

After all, you are just raising the preempt, and the fact you have a 9-card fit means you should be safe at the 3-level. Raising when you are weak takes bidding space away from the opponents and makes it harder for them. Of course, if you are strong and interested

in game, then you shouldn't bid 3 of your partner's suit. Instead you should either directly raise to game or bid 2NT to ask about their hand.

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## Fast Arrival Does NOT Apply to Notrump

The concept of fast arrival is useful, for example, after your partner bids Jacoby 2NT:

1S - (P) - 2NT - (P);

4S <=== fast arrival says "I have no extra values" (and no singleton or void)

1S - (P) - 2NT - (P);

3S <=== going slow says "I have extra values" (and no singleton or void)

It applies because you are in a game forcing auction and have suit agreement. But it does NOT apply to notrump. I've seen people with 3000 masterpoints make this mistake:

1D - 2C

3NT <==== THIS IS NOT FAST ARRIVAL

In a notrump game-forcing auction, jumps are STRONG, not weak. (and honestly, in this case I don't think I would bid 3NT no matter what the strength. You could start with 2NT and then if you are strong and your partner bids 3NT, you could make a quantitative 4NT bid.)

## After 1NT Forcing, Rebidding your Major Shows a 6 Card Suit

After a 1NT forcing response, a rebid of your major suit promises a 6 card or longer suit. No exceptions!

## 3 Card Limit Raise Tip: For people who play the "2/1" system.

Here's one tip that I first learned from Max Hardy's famous "green book". If your partner opens 1 of a major suit and you hold a 3-card limit raise, you will generally plan to first bid 1NT forcing and then. you will jump to 3 of the major suit, like this:

1H - (P) - 1NT - (P)

2C - (P) - 3H

That's not the tip - that's just standard bidding for 2/1.

But what if your partner rebids 2 of their major suit, which promises a 6 card suit? Now your 3 card limit raise has increased in value and you should just bid game:

1H - (P) - 1NT - (P)

2H - (P) - 4H

9 card fits are so much better than 8 card fits that your hand is worth more most of the time. I suppose one exception would be if I had the "death distribution": 4333. Then I might just raise to 3 of the major suit since I am lacking any ruffing values.

One more thing: if your partner does rebid their major suit (after your 1NT response), showing 6, then if you raise to 3 you are showing the values for a limit raise but with only 2 card support. Your partner will know that if you had 3 card support you would have bid game.

1H - (P) - 1NT - (P)

2H - (P) - 3H <==== you show 2 hearts with 10-11 HCP

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### **Why is a 9 Card Fit So Much Better (than an 8 card fit)?**

Consider if you have a 5-3 trump fit. If you pull trump it will always take at least 3 rounds to do that and so if you pull trump first you will have no trump remaining in the short hand for ruffing. And of course you might face a 4-1 or even worse, a 5-0 fit.

But if you have a 5-4 trump fit, now you can quite often pull trump in 2 rounds and have 2 trump remaining in the short hand. And if the trump split 3-1 you can still have 1 trump remaining for ruffing. And of course, if you face a 4-0 trump split you can't pull trump and then ruff, but you can at least pull all trump.

One extra trump can often result in two extra tricks for the declarer! It really is powerful. So to summarize:

With 9 trump:

- You can more often have trump remaining in the short hand after pulling trump
- You can often pull trump in fewer rounds
- Even the worst possible split (4-0) is so much better than the worst possible split (5-0) when you hold only 8 trump.
- You NEVER have to worry about a 5-0 split when you have 9 trump

Axxx opposite xxxx has 2 or more losers. But Axxxx opposite xxxx may have only 1 loser.

## THIRD HAND HIGH by Barbara Seagram

When partner leads a small card and dummy comes down with small cards, third hand plays his highest card, unless he has equal high cards, in which case he plays the cheapest one.

### Dummy

753

<b>West</b>	<b>East</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>You (?)</b>

West leads the 6. 3 is played from dummy. What do you play as East? It does not matter whether it is a suit contract or a NT contract.

1. AQ9
2. AJ8
3. KJ2
4. AK8
5. KQ9
6. QJ105

### ANSWERS

1. A (3<sup>rd</sup> hand high)
2. A
3. K
4. K Play the cheapest of equals. If you play the Ace, it says you do not have the King.
5. Q Play the cheapest of equals. If you play the K, it says you do not have the Q. Partner will now know it is in declarer's hand.
6. 10 If you play the J, it says you do not have the 10. If you play the Q, it denies owning the J. And so, your partner will assume it is in declarer's hand.



**FRISKY ALEX**  
**by Barbara Seagram**

I picked up this hand some long time ago: Our side was vulnerable. Opponents were not vulnerable.

**S J4**  
**H AKQ2**  
**D AKJ1093**  
**C 9**

Alex was my partner. Imagine my surprise when he opened 3D. My RHO (Right Hand Opponent) said "Double". I had no idea what to bid so I said "Redouble" for now. My LHO bid 3S. Pass-Pass back to me.

Now I was really stuck. One is not supposed to bid Blackwood with either a void or with two or three little in a side suit. This rule exists to stop you from getting to slams missing the Ace and King in that sorry suit. My entire dilemma rested with the Spade suit. If partner had the Spade Ace, then all would be well. But if instead he had the Club Ace, then opponents could cash the Spade Ace and King very quickly. I could have used 4S as a forcing bid but could not see any merit in that.

I finally decided that Alex, being of sound mind, would never have opened 3D (VULNERABLE no less) on such a dreadful suit without having some good stuff in the rest of his hand. So I fell from grace and said a prayer and bid 4NT (Key Card Blackwood in support of Diamonds).

Alex responded one key card and I just fervently hoped that it was the Spade Ace and not the Club Ace. I bid 6D. My RHO led the Club Ace and I heaved an inward sigh of relief. He made 6.

Alex's hand:

**S A96**  
**H 9**  
**D Q876542**  
**C 73**

