

To Tighten the Thumb Screws

As we all should know by now, defenders don't like it when you play a long suit. They must throw away cards and sometimes this can be quite annoying. Even when you collect short suits, the pressure might be too much. Take this example:

Ben			
♠	107		
♥	107		
♦	A84		
♣	AK10964		
W	N	E	S
		P	1♣
2♠	3♣	P	3NT
P	P	P	
Marcelo			
♠	KQJ4		
♥	AKQ5		
♦	K107		
♣	J8		

With a six card in partner's opening suit, two Aces and a King, 3 Clubs are an underbid to my opinion. When partner has a Spade stopper, 3NT would be the right spot to be. A 3 Spades bid therefore would propel us to 6NT, but 3NT also is a contract where you can win the board, since you are compared with only one player at the IntoBridge website.

West leads the 5 of Spades against 3NT and the 10 wins the trick, as East plays his known singleton, the deuce. You could play a Heart to your hand and run the Jack of Clubs. If West has the Queen, we will have twelve tricks and when East has this lady, he might get in trouble in Hearts and Diamonds, after you run another 5 clubs. East needs to keep 6 cards and cannot hold four hearts and the diamonds, if he is the only one who guards this suit.

How would you play the hand?

Solution:

The screenshot shows a bridge game interface with the following elements:

- Top Left:** Menu, search, and share icons. A dummy hand icon with the number 14 and a diamond symbol.
- Top Middle (Ben's Hand):**
 - Spades: 107
 - Hearts: 107
 - Diamonds: A84
 - Clubs: AK10964
- Top Right (NT Trick Count):**

	N	S	W	E
NT	6	4	5	4
NT	4	5	4	5
NT	-	-	-	-
NT	-	-	-	-
- Middle Left (Ben's Hand):**
 - Spades: A98653
 - Hearts: 986
 - Diamonds: 52
 - Clubs: 52
- Middle Center (W N E S):**

W	N	E	S
		P	1♣
2♠	3♣	P	3NT
P	P	P	
- Middle Right (Ben's Hand):**
 - Spades: 2
 - Hearts: J432
 - Diamonds: QJ963
 - Clubs: Q73
- Bottom Left:** 3NT S contract. A score display showing 0 and 0.
- Bottom Middle (Marcelo's Hand):**
 - Spades: KQJ4
 - Hearts: AKQ5
 - Diamonds: K107
 - Clubs: J8
- Bottom Right:** Minimax score of 990 and navigation buttons.

In practice I played a Spade back at trick two and West took his Ace (East discarded the diamond 3). West continued with the Diamond 5, the 4 in dummy, East the Jack for the King in South.

Now I played two more Spades. East could let go a Diamond on the first Spade but had to play a Heart or a Club at the fourth round of Spades. He played a Heart when I continued with the last Spade and after that, I cashed four Hearts.

East really felt the pinch now, he was squeezed in the minors and threw away his fourth Diamond, and after two tricks in Diamonds all that was left in dummy were the Ace and King of Clubs....

That won the board as my opponent in the South chair, took the first spade in hand and took the Club finesse.

When he regained the lead, he gave away the Ace of Spades and quickly claimed 11 tricks....