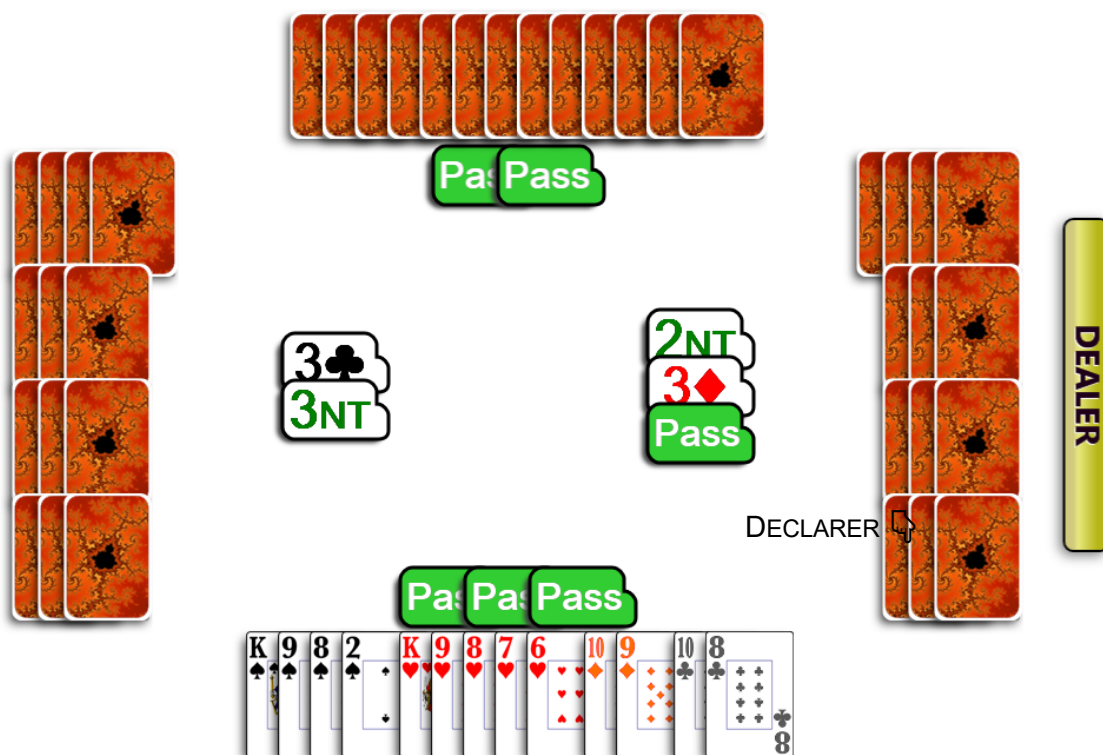


## REVISION EXERCISE 6

Dealer is east and ends up in 3NT with the bidding as shown:



**Which card will you lead?**

Give reasons for your decision.

**DO NOT GO TO THE NEXT PAGE UNTIL YOU HAVE ANSWERED.**

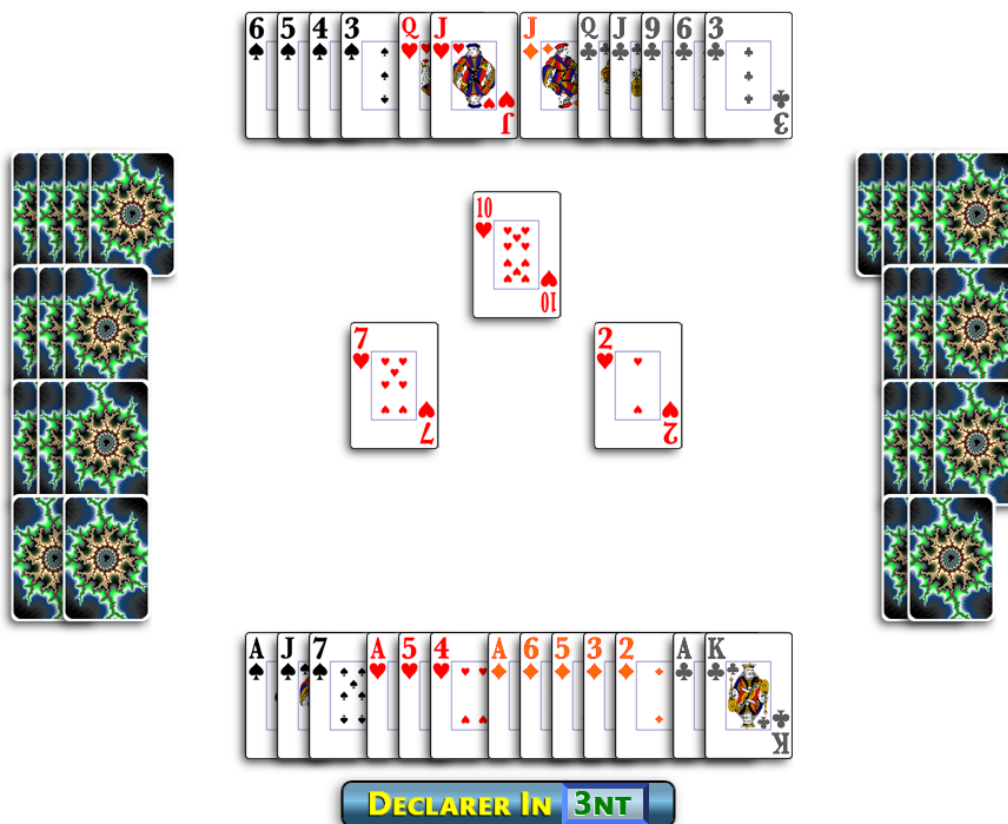
## **You choose the 7♥**

Against a no-trumps contract the lead from a reasonable long suit will be preferred. On this basis alone, hearts would be chosen. With no honour sequences of any kind, the fourth highest card is chosen. You might have thought about leading the top of a sequence and seen the 9, 8, 7, 6 in hearts. A top of sequence lead applies only when the highest card is an honour. If the sequence has been 10, 9, 8, 7 then leading the 10 would have been correct.

There is another good reason that can be seen in the bidding. Responder has used Stayman but opener's rebid of 2♦ has shown no more than three cards in either major. This will always suggest the lead of a long major suit lead, so again a heart lead fits the bill.

Using the opponents' bidding to inform your lead is really important. Should partner have made a bid, then it usually makes your choice of lead a lot easier.

Dealer is south and ends up in 3NT:



### Note on the bidding:

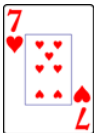

The bidding for this hand is shown in the previous example but with the hands rotated; south was previously east.

With 20 HCP and a balanced hand, south opens 2NT.

With enough HCPs for game, a 4-card major and a hand not ideally suited to playing in no-trumps, north tries Stayman to see if a spade fit exists.

South has no 4-card major, so bids 3♦. North simply bids game in 3NT.

### Initial play

The lead is  against  by south.

followed by the ♥10 from dummy (they all have equivalent rank so why wait?) and the ♥2 comes from east.

**Describe your play**

**DO NOT GO TO THE NEXT PAGE UNTIL YOU HAVE ANSWERED.**

## Analysis

Having already won the trick in dummy, you immediately play the ♥4 from hand. You expect to make 5 club tricks (barring a very bad break), 1 diamond, 2 hearts and 1 spade. Looks good. But you forgot to plan the play. Having unblocked clubs, how are you going to get to dummy to make the rest? Hearts look suitable, but...

First, we play our two clubs from hand to unblock the suit in preparation for entering dummy with a heart.

You could try leading a heart but the ♥K is immediately played preventing your entry to dummy. You are left with the ♥A which must win and you cannot get to dummy. [See this losing line of play here.](#)

OK, that didn't work so try playing the ♥A first. As expected, the ♥K fails to drop. You try your third heart, beaten by the opponent's ♥K. [See this losing line of play here.](#)

Could we have made the contract? Have we made a mistake somewhere?

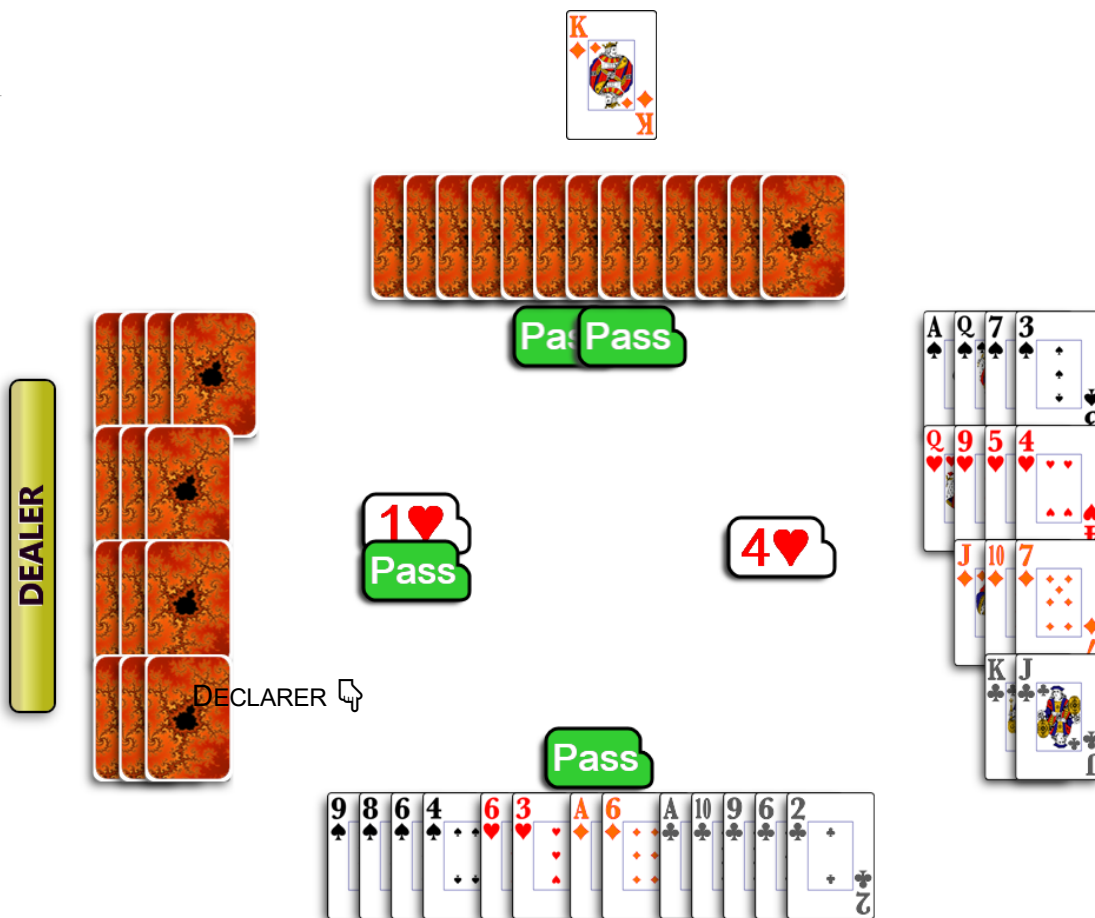
The mistake was on the first trick where we rushed ahead and played a low heart without thinking things through. We should have thought about entries to dummy and how to assure that could be done. Were the ♥A played, we definitely have a heart entry to dummy as one of the two remaining hearts can win and the defence can't stop it. Yes, we have won the trick 'twice' but it is the key to success. [See winning line of play here.](#)

An error on the first trick – surprisingly common. Once the opening lead is played, you must mentally play the hand to work out how it should be played to make or exceed your contract, or at the very least minimise your loss. Only then play the first card from dummy.

Far easier said than done!

Dealer is west and ends up in 4♥

Partner (north) leads ♦K and dummy is displayed



Initial play

North leads  against  by west.

Describe your play

Is there a way you might defeat the contract or is your cause hopeless?

**DO NOT GO TO THE NEXT PAGE UNTIL YOU HAVE ANSWERED.**

## Analysis

First, what do you think partner might hold?

A good working assumption is that the opponents have at least 25 HCPs or thereabouts and you have 8 HCPs. Partner can have no more than 7 HCPs.

Partner has led the ♦K, so what else does partner hold in diamonds.

- Leading a singleton king would be pointless
- Leading the king from a doubleton would be nearly as bad
- Leading the king from king, queen and other cards would be considered a good lead

We proceed on that assumption, in which case partner probably has no more than 2 further HCPs (the K, Q account for 5). It is up to us to defeat the contract if we can.

Play continues play playing the ♦7 from dummy. What do we do?

## We play the ♦6

Instinct takes over so the personal autopilot chooses the ♦6. Partner may well lead another diamond, quite likely the queen, which will be taken by our ace. We now have to lead another suit. We might choose the ♣A but after this declarer will take the lead, draw trumps and make 10 tricks as required. [See losing line of play here.](#)

## We play the ♦A

Why on earth would we overtake partner's winner? Let's continue.

At this point partner will probably think we have an ace singleton and will be disappointed that the king turned out to be of no value.

Now we continue and lead the ♦6 back. What will partner make of this? It seems totally pointless. Having first vowed to find a new partner, north puts a bit more thought into it and realises what is going on.

North wins the trick with the ♦Q as expected and is now certain what to lead back. North return another diamond. North reasons that south must have started with an ace doubleton and wants a third diamond back for an early ruff. Barring a bad diamond break, this succeeds, so the defence takes the first three tricks. The ♣A is still to come and the contract is defeated. [See winning line of play here.](#)

**END**