

Solving Guesses

Masterclass, 2024

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- Common guess situations
- Ways to solve your guess

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Dummy: ♠ KJ43

Declarer: ♠ 2

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- the ♠K, hoping that LHO started with the ♠A;

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You play the ♠2 and must now guess whether to play:

- the ♠K, hoping that LHO started with the ♠A;
- the ♠J, hoping that LHO started with the ♠Q.

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If you think that LHO holds the ♥Q, you should finesse by playing low to the ♥J.

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If you think that LHO holds the ♥Q, you should finesse by playing low to the ♥J.

If you think that RHO holds the ♥Q, you should finesse by playing low to the ♥T.

Common guess situations

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Dummy: ♦ AKT72

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If you think that LHO started with ♦ 64 and RHO with ♦ QJ, you should cash a second top diamond.

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LHO: ♦ 4 RHO: ♦ J

Declarer: ♦ 9853

If you think that LHO started with ♦ 64 and RHO with ♦ QJ, you should cash a second top diamond.

If you think that LHO started with ♦ Q64 and RHO with singleton ♦ J, you should finesse on the second round.

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OR

that the correct guess might just be more probable than the
alternative.

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- Did they fail to respond to their partner's 1x opening?

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- How many HCP did their bid show?
- Did they fail to respond to their partner's 1x opening?
- Did they fail to open the bidding?

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Food for thought:

- How many HCP did their bid show?
- Did they fail to respond to their partner's 1x opening?
- Did they fail to open the bidding?
- Have they shown a sequence of honours from their lead?

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If LHO passed initially but you have seen the ♣AKQ from him, he could have the ♣Q but not the ♣A. → play the ♠J

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If LHO passed initially but you have seen the ♣AKQ from him, he could have the ♣Q but not the ♣A. → play the ♠J

OR

If RHO did not respond to LHO's 1♣ opening but you have already seen a Q from his hand, RHO cannot hold the A too. → play the ♠K

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Food for thought:

- An opponent who has overcalled (showing a 5-card suit) has fewer vacant spaces (8) than an opponent who just supported their partner with 3-card support (10 vacant spaces).

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- An opponent who has led a 4-card suit against NT has more vacant spaces (9) than an opponent who could still have a 5-card suit.

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- An opponent who has led a 4-card suit against NT has more vacant spaces (9) than an opponent who could still have a 5-card suit.
- BUT perhaps the overcaller leads a singleton in a different suit and you realise that that gives his partner 5 cards in that other suit: then, you are comparing 6 vacant spaces to 8 and the probabilities are swayed!

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You should finesse against the opponent who has more vacant spaces that might be occupied by hearts.

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You should finesse against the opponent who has more vacant spaces that might be occupied by hearts.

Remember, the more spaces a player is likely to have for hearts, the more spaces he has for the ♥Q!

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When an opponent is dealt a singleton honour/intermediate, he has no choice but to play the card he has.

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When an opponent is dealt a singleton honour/intermediate, he has no choice but to play the card he has.

In that case, it is 100% that he will play the one you see.

Therefore, it is more likely that the card you saw was a singleton.

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PRC says that you should assume that RHO holds the singleton ♦J.

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LHO: ♦ 4 RHO: ♦ J

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PRC says that you should assume that RHO holds the singleton ♦J.

Therefore, you should take a finesse against LHO.

Now head to the
Solving Guesses tournament
and try the practice hands!