

AVOIDANCE OF DANGEROUS OPPONENT

PAUL MENDELSON 2024

Hand 1
Dealer N

♠ 54		
♥ 73		
♦ J4		
♣ AQ109854		
♠ 876	♠ QJ109	
♥ AQ962	♥ 1085	□
♦ 7652	♦ 1093	
♣ K	♣ J62	
	♠ AK32	
	♥ KJ4	
	♦ AKQ8	
	♣ 73	

N	E	S	W
3C	NB	3NT	

West leads 6♥. South must win (or lose 5 heart tricks). Although East is the danger hand, since he can lead a heart back through South's frail holding, the club suit must be attacked, South leads 3♣; West puts up K♣. Declarer must think! West is safe to be on lead and, if K♣ is single-ton, East holds ♣Jxx. So, duck. Now, whatever West leads, declarer is in control and, if West doesn't cash A♥ now, South makes 12 tricks.

Hand 2
Dealer E

♠ 74		
♥ AK54		
♦ 8743		
♣ AK10		
♠ KJ963	♠ Q85	
♥ J108	♥ Q93	□
♦ J106	♦ Q5	
♣ 73	♣ 98542	
	♠ A102	
	♥ 762	
	♦ AK92	
	♣ QJ6	

N	E	S	W
-	NB	1NT	NB
2C	NB	2D	NB
3NT			

West leads 6♠. South holds up twice to void East in spades, but must set up an extra trick in diamonds without West gaining the lead. South must strive to strand East on lead. Win A♠ at trick 3, cross to dummy and lead a diamond. When East plays low, South wins, crosses back to dummy and plays another low diamond. East plays Q♦, so South ducks! East is on lead, unable to return a spade.

Hand 3
Dealer S

♠ 643		
♥ 963		
♦ J107		
♣ A1052		
♠ J107	♠ KQ1098	
♥ KQJ107	♥ 42	□
♦ 832	♦ 965	
♣ 98	♣ Q76	
	♠ A5	
	♥ A85	
	♦ AKQ4	
	♣ KJ43	

N	E	S	W
-	-	2NT	NB
3NT†			

† two tens = 1pt

West leads K♥. Assuming that West has five hearts, South ducks only once. He then leads a low club and, when West plays low, he puts in 10♣ from dummy. East wins, but has no hearts left to lead. If South ducks trick 2, an entry-less West should switch to J♠. Now, only a guess in clubs can save South, whereas winning the heart at the correct moment and finessing into East is 100% safe.

Hand 4
Dealer W

♠ 643		
♥ Q3		
♦ K53		
♣ AJ1064		
♠ J5	♠ Q10982	
♥ AJ10972	♥ 65	□
♦ J102	♦ 8764	
♣ 85	♣ K3	
	♠ AK7	
	♥ K84	
	♦ AQ9	
	♣ Q972	

N	E	S	W
-	-	-	2H* * Weak 2
NB	NB	2NT†	NB † natural, 17-20pts
3NT			

J♥ led. Usually, when you hold king, queen you rise with the doubleton honour in dummy since this provides a chance to make two tricks. Here, West has six hearts; East two. You must finesse clubs into East. If you win trick 1 with Q♥, when you tackle clubs, East wins, returns a heart, and you are down. But, duck trick 1 in both hands and when West continues hearts, by the time East wins K♣, he will have no hearts left to lead back.

