

Unblocking via a Jettison Play

North

♠ J 9 8 5

♥ 8

♦ Q 10 9 8 5

♣ A K Q

West

♠ Q 4 3

♥ 10 6 5 3 2

♦ A 6

♣ 8 7 5

East

♠ A K 6 2

♥ 9 7 4

♦ K 4 3 2

♣ 6 3

South

♠ 10 7

♥ A K Q J

♦ J 7

♣ J 10 9 4 2

West	North	East	South
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		Pass	1 ♣
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Pass	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
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Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1NT
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Pass	3NT	all pass	
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West leads the ♥ 3 (phew!) You have nine winners, but the entry situation makes it difficult to enjoy them. Can you see a way to disentangle the situation?

If a partnership has a combined HCP count of 26 or more, they will usually bid at least game. This general principle is very useful for beginners but more experienced players realise the many limitations of this guideline. For instance, declarer will usually make more tricks if the HCP are evenly divided between his hand and dummy's than if the points are concentrated in one hand. It is much more likely that declarer will make 3NT with 26 points if the HCP are divided 14 and 12 rather than 24 and 2. When one hand has few HCP and possibly no entries, there is often a problem in communication. Declarer may find himself unable to take a much-needed finesse or use a long suit held by the weak hand.

On the illustrated hand North raised to 3NT with 12 HCP and a five card suit, and South became declarer with 24 HCP. Unfortunately, even though the points were evenly divided there was still a communication problem.

After seeing dummy, declarer's first reaction was a sigh of relief since the defence missed an opportunity to take the first five tricks (3 spade and 2 diamond tricks) His second reaction was to panic over the communication problem. Even though declarer seemed to have nine top tricks (5 club tricks and 4 hearts), after cashing the club A K Q, he was stranded in dummy. There was no entry to the south hand to cash the two additional club tricks. West's opening lead of a heart removed the one entry to the South hand. The contract would go down.

The only way to make this contract is to use a technique called a **jettison play**. This play goes against instinct since declarers usually discard losers rather than winners, the jettison play means you discard high cards to unblock a suit.

So, after winning the heart lead, declarer must play the other three top heart winners and discard the club A, K and Q! (Take time to observe and enjoy the shocked expressions on the faces of the others at the table) If declarer makes these unusual discards the success of the contract will depend on the clubs breaking 3-2 (a 68% chance) Since they do on this hand declarer can cash nine winning tricks.

The important features of this hand to observe are :

- 1 the obvious need to unblock the club suit
- 2 no entries to the south hand after the first trick.

Another example:

South in 7NT		♠	A Q		
		♥	K Q J		
		♦	3		
		♣	J 9 7 6 5 4 2		
♠	J 10 2	N W E S		♠	9 8 7 6 5 4 3
♥	10 8 7 4			♥	9 6 5 3 2
♦	J 7 5 2			♦	—
♣	8 3			♣	10
Lead: ♠J		♠	K		
		♥	A		
		♦	A K Q 10 9 8 6 4		
		♣	A K Q		

Bill Root is another famous bridge player, teacher and author, inducted into the American Contract Bridge League Hall of Fame in 1997.

One of the most famous hands in his books is a seven notrump contract requiring a very advanced **jettison play**.

Win the opening lead of ♠J with the ace, dropping the king of spades.

Cash the queen of spades, and jettison the ace of hearts from hand.

Now cash the top hearts in dummy and jettison the top three clubs from hand!

You can now run the clubs to discard diamond losers. This line of play has the advantage of trying out the club suit before seeing if the diamonds run.

Due to this particular hand layout, the diamonds don't run because of the 4-0 split, while the clubs run because of the singleton ♣10.

If the clubs did not split favorably, declarer could still try to run the diamonds using dummy's ♦3 to get back into declarer's hand.