

♠ 7 6

♥ K 10 7 5 2

♦ 10 9 6

♣ A 6 3

Suppose you are sitting south on this deal, both sides vulnerable.

West is the dealer and opens 1♣, partner, North, passes and East raises to 2♣, showing club support and about 6-10 points. Pass by you at South and West jumps to 3NT, everyone passes.

Partner leads the ♦2 and East puts down dummy:

♠ J 10 9
♥ A 9 6
♦ 8 4 3
♣ J 10 7 2

Declarer plays a low diamond from dummy, and you play the ♦9 which declarer wins with the ♦Q.

Declarer now leads the ♣K, obviously going to promote winners in the club suit, partner plays a low club, and a low club is played from dummy. What are you going to play to this trick? There doesn't seem much reason to hold up winning the Ace as declarer has an entry to dummy in hearts if need be. So, let's suppose you win the ♣A.

The guideline is to return partners suit, let's see what happens if you do. You return the ♦10 and declarer wins with the ♦A. Hopefully partners diamonds will be established now.

Declarer crosses to dummy with a club, plays the ♣J and then leads the ♠J from dummy.

Partner wins the trick with the ♠K, good news, hopefully partner has some diamond tricks to take.

Partner takes a trick with the ♦K, as everyone follows suit and then the ♦J.

You make an encouraging signal in hearts and partner plays the ♥3 which is taken by dummy's ♥A. Declarer can now take the rest of the club and spade winners making 3NT. That is too bad, you worked hard with partner to develop the diamonds but it wasn't good enough.

When this actual deal was played, sitting south in defence was Peter Pender a Canadian and US figure skating champion, accomplished pianist plus clever bridge player. His skating competitions often took him to Montreal and that is where he met Hugo Ross with whom he formed a lasting bridge partnership.

Lets go back and see how he managed to defeat the contract: The full deal is below -

	♠ K 8 3 2	
	♥ J 8 4 3	
	♦ K J 7 2	
	♣ 5	
♠ A Q 5 4		♠ J 10 9
♥ Q		♥ A 9 6
♦ A Q 5		♦ 8 4 3
♣ K Q 9 8 4		♣ J 10 7 2
	♠ 7 6	
	♥ K 10 7 5 2	
	♦ 10 9 6	
	♣ A 6 3	

North led the ♦2 against West's 3NT contract and Pender took careful note of this card. Partner was presumably leading the 4th highest card in the suit and since there were no diamonds lower than the ♦2, Pender knew partner had led from exactly a four card suit. A low diamond was played from dummy and Pender played the ♦9, declarer won with the ♦Q.

Declarer then led the ♣K, partner played a low club and a low club from dummy, then Pender made his first key play – he played a low club letting declarer win the trick. He realised there wasn't any hurry to win the first club trick. Declarer could not get nine tricks without developing the club suit. Even if partners diamonds were established, partner could have at most three diamond tricks, so there was no hurry to win and return a diamond. More importantly he wanted more information about the unseen hands before deciding what to do next.

Declarer continued with a low club to dummy's ♣J, on this trick North discarded a spade.... Now Pender played his ♣A.

He had all the information he needed! His next key play was to lead the ♥K!

Why did he make this unusual looking play? Pender knew from the first trick that partner held only a four card diamond suit, and when partner showed out on the second round of clubs, he also knew partner started with a *singleton club*. What was the distribution of partners remaining eight cards?

If partner held either five hearts or five spades, partner would have led from the five card suit so Pender drew the conclusion that partner must have started with exactly four hearts and four spades.

If partner held four hearts then how many hearts did declarer start with? Only one!

So Pender returned the ♥K to capture whatever singleton declarer held and to drive out dummy's ♥A.

When Pender led back the ♥K, declarer played the ♥Q (it was a good thing Pender led the king, not a low heart) Partner played an encouraging ♥8 and dummy's ♥A won the trick.

Next declarer tried the spade finesse losing to North's ♠K. North returned a heart and Pender won the trick with the ♥10 as declarer showed out. He then returned a heart to partner's ♥J and partner led back a heart to Pender's ♥7. Pender then took one more trick with the ♥2 which was the sixth trick for the defence. 3NT was defeated by two tricks, losing one club, one spade and four heart tricks.

After winning with the ♣A, Pender could tell from partner's *opening lead* that, even if the defence could take three diamond tricks, that wasn't going to be enough to defeat the contract. Once he took the time to work out declarer's distribution, he could see how the contract could be defeated. There are few players who would have the courage of their convictions and shift to the ♥K right into dummy's ♥A.

Pender won over a dozen national bridge championships and was part of the Bermuda Bowl World Championship team that won in 1985 and then took a silver medal in 1989. He was also a gold medalist for both the US and Canadian Figure Skating Associations.

Pender also provided a grant to develop the software needed to display the bidding and play of bridge deals on a large screen in front of big audiences. The software was developed by Fred Gutelman and was initially known as the Peter Pender Vugraph Theatre. It has since evolved into the Bridge Base Online Vugraph which is used by thousands of players today to watch bridge events on the internet.