

Discovery Plays

Last Revised May 23, 2016

by Warren Watson

Kootenay Jewel Bridge Club

<http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDeclarerPlay/DiscoveryPlays.pdf>

B-Bridge is an introductory game that teaches one about tricks and trump. On any given deal one must predict how many tricks one's hand will take. Unlike bridge, you have to get exactly your predicted number of tricks or you do not get the 10 point bonus for making your prediction.

Your RHO dealt eight cards to everyone and put the remaining cards face down off to the side. These cards are out of circulation.

Spades are trump. You predict first and will make the opening lead to trick one. You hold the following:

♠A3 ♥K ♦A432 ♣2

I would say two tricks and lead the ♥King. If it holds, I have enough diamond backing that I can likely pitch the ♦Ace on a Club before the fourth round of Diamonds is played. If it loses I would ruff a club with the ♠Ace and cash the ♦Ace. In the off chance it gets ruffed, I would hope to ruff another club. If the ♦Ace holds, I exit with the ♠3.

The ♥King is a discovery card. You discover whether the ace is out of circulation or the person with the ace wants to take it later, hoping to perhaps mess you up.

The ♥King is a bare or frozen honour and the ♦Ace is a buffered or guarded honour.

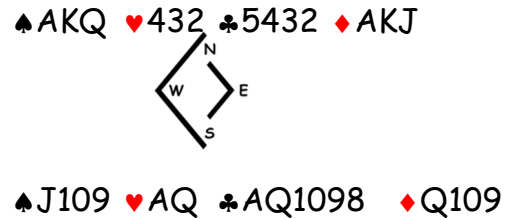
See <http://watsongallery.ca/bridge/aaDeclarerPlay/B-Bridge.pdf>

In Bridge, there are three types of discovery plays.

- Number-of-winners discovery play and
- Location-of-adverse-points discovery play
- Location-of-adverse-distribution discovery play.

Number-of-Winners Discovery Play

Example 1: (BM 2000:3 B-26)



West leads the 8♠ against 6NT. Win the opening lead (no choice) and take the heart finesse:

It wins:

take the club safety play:

Cash Ace♣ and then play up to the Queen♣

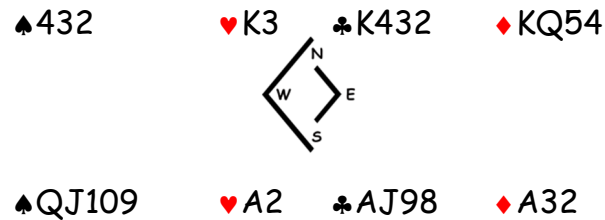
It loses:

Play clubs for no losers:

Play to the ♣Queen and cash the ♣Ace.

West must have a stiff Jack or a doubleton without the King.

Example 2: (BM 2000:4 A-3)



West leads the ♥Jack against 3NT.

Where do you win the lead?

In the South hand, keeping the ♥King in case you need to do a second club finesse.

What is the discovery play here?

Whether Diamonds are 3-3 or not.

How many heart stoppers are needed to develop spades?

Either three or two with a first round hold up.

What is the safety play here?

To play clubs for no losers, cash the ♣King and finesse to the ♣Jack.

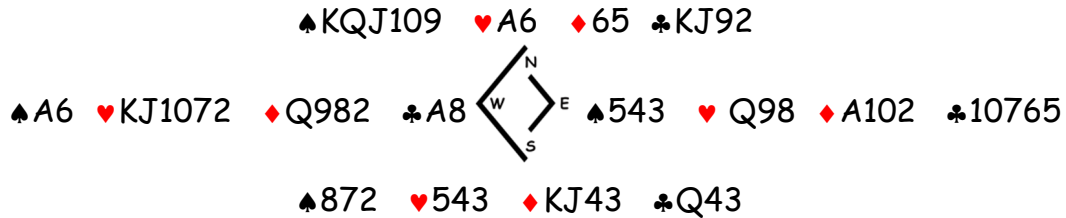
However, to play that combination for one loser ensuring there are not two losers (unless the suit breaks 5-0), cash the ♣Ace (top of the tenace you would finesse to if you were playing for no losers) and then play the ♣9. If West shows out or plays a higher card then win the ♣King otherwise duck.

See also BM2000 3B-9, 3C-16, 3C-28

Location-of-adverse-points discovery play

Example 3:

North South Vulnerable



W	N	E	S
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
3♥	3♠	All Pass	

♥8 is the opening lead. West plays the King and you duck. This ducking play is called an avoidance play. This ensures that East, the danger hand, does not lead Diamonds before you discover who has the ♣Ace. You are avoiding the danger hand being on lead.

West knows North has the ♥Ace because East would not underlead an Ace against a trump contract. North knows West does not have the ♥Queen because he played the ♥King. Furthermore, East cannot have ♥QJ8 because he would have led the ♥Queen. One typically leads 4th best or the smallest in partner's suit unless one has a doubleton or the top two cards are touching honours. Therefore East must have Qxx of Hearts.

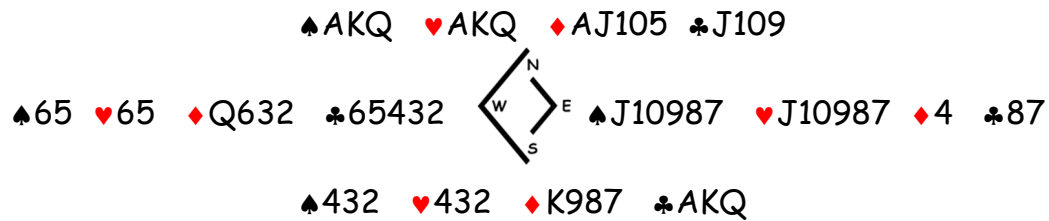
You draw trump and West wins the Ace. He cashes the ♣Ace to see if partner has the ♣King to get a ruff. This saves declarer from attacking clubs and declarer wins the second Club and draws trump.

Now that the ♣Ace has been located, declarer can decide how to play diamonds. If West has ♦Ace and ♦Queen, there is nothing he can do to make 3♠. If East has the ♦Ace and ♦Queen, declarer cannot go wrong on Diamonds. Therefore, the case of concern is when the honours are split. Is there a way to tell which opponent has which? Yes. East does not have the ♣Ace so he must have the ♦Ace. He will duck smoothly and you play the ♦King.

If East has the ♣Ace, he cannot have the ♦Ace or he would have had a limit raise for his partner and would have bid 2♠ showing either a limit raise or better with support or a full opener without support. In that case, you play East for the ♦Queen and play a small Diamond to the ♦Jack.

Location-of-adverse-distribution discovery play

Example 4:



W	N	E	S
	2♣	P	2♦
P	2NT	P	5NT
P	7NT	All Pass	

The Bidding:

2♣ then 2NT is 22 to 24 HCP's. 4NT is quantitative asking partner to bid 6NT with a maximum and pass otherwise. 5NT asks partner to bid 6NT with a minimum and 7NT with a maximum.

The Play:

Win the ♠Jack opening lead and cash all your winners. When West has a doubleton in both majors and East has a club doubleton, You know East is 5-5-1-2. Cash the ♦King (playing the ♦10) to remove East's singleton Diamond and then run the ♦9 through (playing the ♦5).