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WUH-WUH.

YOURS LOOKS

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OF.

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Getting Your Ducks in Order

When declarer has a choice of plays to make, the order in which he makes them is often of critical importance.

Here is a typical situation. South wins the diamond lead and has three different plays to consider. He can take a spade finesse, a heart finesse or lead a club to the king.

Since there is no urgency about leading spades or clubs, South starts by taking a trump finesse. If West has the king, South's troubles are over. However, East wins dummy's jack with the king and returns a diamond. Declarer wins, plays a trump to the queen and ruffs a diamond. This brings him to the point where he must decide whether to broach the clubs or spades next.

It should not take South long to see the advantage in leading a spade and finessing the queen, even though he has only a singleton spade. In the actual deal, the spade finesse wins and assures the contract, since South can discard a club on the ace of spades. He later loses two club tricks, but winds up making four. However, as can be seen, if declarer tackles clubs ahead of spades, he loses three clubs and goes down one.

There are two good reasons for taking the spade finesse before leading clubs. First, it costs nothing to try the finesse. If it is unsuccessful, declarer loses a spade trick unnecessarily, but is sure to get the trick back because the ace of spades is still available to take care of one of his club losers. The transaction amounts to an exchange of losers.

But the chief reason for playing spades first is that if the finesse fails, South retains his chance that West may have the ace of clubs, while if he tackles clubs first and the ace is in the wrong hand, he goes down with a club return by East. By tackling spades before clubs, South thus gives himself two chances to

South deal Neither sid	er. NOR ↓ J 5 3 ♥ K 7 4 ◆ K 10 9	able. FH 9 8 5	
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GROWN-UP.

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X M C U Q K C ' Z K K - Z M W B F D . Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF A COOLING DEVICE RUNS VERY WELL, I GUESS YOU WOULD HAVE TO SAY THAT IT'S FAN-TASTIC. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: Z equals R	J T U U R S R C T I I F - C R S N T K K M . Yesterday's Cryptoquip: WHEN TWO PEOPLE ARE PARTICIPATING IN AN ONLINE SPEED CONTEST, I'D SAY THEY'RE E-RACING. Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals Y



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Pyrenees

There are players who spend so much time memorizing complicated bidding conventions, or trying to master squeezes and other advanced plays, that their ability to reason correctly - which counts more than anything else you can name - frequently gets lost in the shuffle.

Take this case where East, playing more by rote than reason, misdefended three notrump. Declarer took West's opening heart lead with the queen, led the jack of diamonds and let it ride. East won with the queen and returned a heart, taken by South with the ace.

Declarer then led a diamond to dummy's eight, ducked by East, and a third diamond lead dislodged the ace. East shifted to a low spade, but declarer won and finished with 10 tricks, losing only a spade and two diamonds.

If East had taken the time early in the play to work out declarer's probable values for the jump to two notrump, he would have held South to just the eight tricks he was entitled to make.

To begin with, South had to have the K-Q of spades, A-Q of hearts and A-K of clubs for his twonotrump bid. This in turn meant that unless declarer had four spades, he could score only two spade tricks, three hearts and two clubs and would therefore need to make two diamond tricks. East's defense consequently should have been aimed at limiting South to one diamond trick.

To accomplish this, all East had to do was to let South's jack of diamonds hold at trick two. That would have effectively killed dummy's remaining diamonds, and no matter how South continued, he could not have come to nine tricks.



"When you're dunkin' cookies in milk, you're not supposed to let go."