

FIRST STUDY THE PLAY PROBLEMS AND CHOOSE YOUR LINE OF PLAY BEFORE READING

My friend Jude has earned his sobriquet by choosing lines of play that most of us would overlook. When the cards distribute themselves properly, he can be deadly. See if you can find his winning line. Here is a hint: although a master of the form, Jude thinks squeezes are boring, so he doesn't tell me about them.

Game All. Pairs.

♠ A4
♥ Q87
♦ QJ43
♣ AK105

N
W E
S

♠ KQ107
♥ A932
♦ A7
♣ Q82

West	North	East	South
—	—	Pass	1NT*
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

* 13-15

The opening lead of the club four rode to East's seven and Jude's eight. How would you play?

Jude played the heart three, and when West followed with the four, Jude called for dummy's seven. East won the ten and returned a spade, taken by declarer's ten. A spade went to the ace and the queen of hearts followed. Jude quickly wrapped up 12 tricks, as the full deal was:

♠ A4
♥ Q87
♦ QJ43
♣ AK105

♠ 9852
♥ J5
♦ 86
♣ J9643

N
W E
S

♠ J63
♥ K1064
♦ K10952
♣ 7

♠ KQ107
♥ A932
♦ A7
♣ Q82

"Why the intra-finesse, Jude?" I asked. "Wouldn't you feel silly losing three heart tricks if West began life with K-J-5?" "I suppose it was a gamble," Jude replied, "but West had five clubs to East's one, so he is likely to have been dealt fewer hearts than his partner. Besides, with that powerful dummy in view, wouldn't West grab the king when the three was led?"

Then Jude complained about bad luck on the deal. "Everyone will make six

JUDE THE OBSCURE

by DAVID WEISS

given the diamond lie. Two rounds of diamonds and eight black winners, then put East in with a diamond to lead from his heart king. Maybe we should have bid the slam."

Jude was kidding, I think. He just loves to play three no-trumps. Even this sub-optimal contract pleased him.

Love All. Pairs.

♠ K98
♥ 7
♦ J87
♣ K109875

N
W E
S

♠ AQJ7
♥ AK32
♦ 52
♣ AJ2

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	1♣
Pass	3♣*	Pass	3NT

* inverted raise

The opening lead was the diamond ten, which conventionally showed 0 or 2 higher. The defence rattled off four tricks in that suit, ending in the East hand, and the heart four came through. How would you play? What's your club guess?

Having pitched two hearts from hand (and one club from dummy — Jude has had great success with the ploy of discarding the suit he wants the opponents to release), Jude won the ace. He then took his spade tricks, noting that East discarded the six and nine of hearts on the last two. Cashing the heart ace, he felled East's jack. Now Jude knew what to do. Are you with him?

Since East had not exited with the queen, jack or ten of hearts, Jude assumed he didn't have a sequence. Therefore West remained with the queen and ten. This gave West four spades, four hearts and four diamonds. So Jude knew how to play the clubs, the full deal being:

♠ K98
♥ 7
♦ J87
♣ K109875

♠ 10643
♥ Q1085
♦ AK109
♣ 3

N
W E
S

♠ 52
♥ J964
♦ Q643
♣ Q64

♠ AQJ7
♥ AK32
♦ 52
♣ AJ2

"Don't they ever falsecard against you, Jude?" I asked with an aggrieved tone (I had failed in the same lovely contract, when West led a heart). "It would be perfectly safe for East to play his hearts randomly once you pitched two of them." "Perhaps so," Jude answered, "but I would know if he had. Anyway, people who use informative lead conventions can't abide misleading partner early in the hand."

Jude is supremely confident in his guessing ability (of course, he calls it deduction). He actually thought this game contract a reasonable one. Perhaps it was, with Jude declaring:

North/South Game. IMPs.

♠ A
♥ 10853
♦ Q1064
♣ AQ109

N
W E
S

♠ Q1063
♥ AKQ2
♦ 75
♣ 653

West	North	East	South
—	—	—	Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
All Pass			

West led the club eight, using a count-orientated agreement in which a high spot showed an even number and the lowest spot an odd number. Jude tried the nine, which drew East's king. Back came the club deuce. Jude now demonstrated the frigidity of this optimistic contract. Can you match his play? ▶

ON TO SEE IF YOU WOULD HANDLED IT AS SUCCESSFULLY AS JUDE THE OBSCURE

After cashing two rounds of hearts to confirm the break, Jude made the key play. He took the ace of spades before drawing the last trump and pushing a diamond towards the ten. Since East did not have the jack of diamonds, he was dead. Winning the trick, East tried a spade; but Jude inserted the ten (obvious, he said) and established the fulfilling trick.

"I guess this one was a little lucky," Jude admitted. "I would have gone down if East had the diamond jack or if West had both spade honours. But the defenders were lucky too. They avoided the ignominy of the play I was planning if West had held one of the high diamonds. His best defence would have been to grab it and exit safely in clubs. Then I would have played the queen of diamonds from dummy and forced East to either give me a spade trick or allow his partner's diamond jack (third) to be ruffed out."

"So why was it obvious that West was the one with the spade king?" I asked. Jude smiled, "Remember I didn't know that East had both high diamonds; after all, a lesser defender might have tried for a ruff when he was in with the club. If West could win

the first diamond, he could beat me by playing a spade unless he had the king. That's why I guessed, as you so crudely put it, the spade position."

The full deal:

♠ K852	N	♠ J974
♥ J6	W	♥ 974
♦ J92	E	♦ AK83
♣ J874	S	♣ K2
		♠ Q1063
		♥ AKQ2
		♦ 75
		♣ 653

Jude also defends differently. Here he is at work against his favourite contract:

Love All. IMPs.

♠ Q104	N	♠ AJ65
♥ Q9632	W	♥ 107
♦ 83	E	♦ AK7
♣ A96	S	♣ KQ85

West	North	East	South
—	1♣	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Jude led a normal heart, won by partner's king. East's jack held the second trick, and declarer took the third heart with his ace. Are you ready for South's next play, whatever it might be?

We're all prepared for a club or a diamond, but Jude had the spade queen on the table when South tried the two of that suit. And down two was the inevitable result.

♠ Q104	N	♠ 873
♥ Q9632	W	♥ KJ5
♦ 83	E	♦ 10952
♣ A96	S	♣ J74
		♠ K92
		♥ A84
		♦ QJ64
		♣ 1032

It's not really that Jude had the whole deal worked out; it's just that he has a rule: when Q-10-x is situated in front of four or five headed by the ace-jack, insert the queen. ■