

**Duck or Fly?
by Roger Lord**

Dealer: North
Vul: East-West

	North		
	♠ QJ9543		
	♥ 643		
	♦ A2		
	♣ Q5		
West		East	
♠ K8		♠ A72	
♥ Q52		♥ 1097	
♦ 843		♦ Q1076	
♣ KJ964		♣ 1072	
	South		
	♠ 106		
	♥ AKJ8		
	♦ KJ95		
	♣ A83		

North	East	South	West
2 Spades	Pass	2 Notrump*	Pass
3 Clubs**	Pass	3 Notrump	All Pass
*Ogust, asking		**bad suit, bad hand	

Contract: Three Notrump

Opening Lead: Club Six

You are East. Cover the South and West cards. In a Bridge Center pairs game, North opened two spades. South was unsure which game his side should play, four spades or three notrump. To discover, he employed the Ogust convention, whereby two notrump asks for information. North's reply, three clubs, was meant to show a broken suit and a poor hand overall.

North chose to play three notrump, and South saw no reason to overrule partner's decision. Your partner West leads the fourth-best six of clubs. North's queen is played, winning. Declarer leads the spade three off the table, and you are next to follow. What do you play?

Despite your having been trained to play second-hand low, this is a case for flying up with the ace. The aim is to seize the lead and fire back a club, enabling partner either to run clubs or, as the cards lie here, to knock out declarer's second club stopper. East's precipitant defense is necessary to preserve West's spade-king entry to his clubs once they are set up. Now, East-West will get three club tricks to go with the ace-king of spades, for down one.

From East's point of view, it might be South who holds the spade king. In that case, it would be futile to duck, trying to cut declarer off from dummy, since the diamond ace would furnish a later entry anyway.

There is more to this deal than meets the eye. At trick two, suppose East errs and plays low. Then West could shine—he could make the counterintuitive play of ducking, holding up with his doubleton king! The spade ten would be declarer's only spade trick, since dummy would have just one more entry while needing two.

However, at this stage, declarer can come to nine tricks by switching horses. Discontinuing spades, he can take three diamond tricks via a finesse of the jack, and three heart tricks by leading out ace, king and another, establishing South's jack. Two club tricks and the sole spade trick make nine.

Now that you have witnessed the second-hand high and fourth-hand low ploys, perhaps you will get a chance to enact one of them yourself. Let us know when you do. .