

# Unexpected Dummy Entry. . .with John Koch

Playing at the local club against capable opponents, I hold:

♠K J 5 ♥A Q 2 ♦A J 8 3 ♣J 10 4

East, on my right, opens **one spade**. I have a classic **one notrump** overcall. Three passes follow, although partner gives the matter ten seconds of thought. The full auction:

East	South	West	North
1♠	1NT	All Pass	

West leads the ♠8 and partner produces eight points, amply justifying his pause:

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

♠8 led

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

### Preliminary analysis:

I have only two tricks on top, but there are another six that can be readily developed. East follows to the opening lead with the ♠6 and I win the ♠K. I start with the ♣J and see the ♣3 and the ♣2. The opponents are playing standard count signals so I suspect that clubs are breaking 3-3. This means that I can use the clubs as an early entry to dummy so I cross to the ♣K, which also holds. Now I finesse the ♥Q, which wins. This marks East with the ♥K because West would surely win the king to continue the attack on spades. *What now?*

I must knock out the ♣A, so I lead the ♣10. When West follows small, I overtake with the ♣Q and East takes his ace. He shifts to the ♦7. *What do I make of that?*

East appears to have both black aces and the ♥K—enough for

an opening bid under today's standards. The ♦7 appears to be top of nothing. I suspect both top diamonds are with West. In that case, if I unblock the ♦J, I may gain an unexpected dummy entry with the ♦10. I try the jack and it holds!

Would East underlead the king and queen of diamonds? Not a chance because he would want to establish his spade tricks and use his diamonds as entries. Instead, I think the explanation is that West has both diamond honors, and has decided to deny me a diamond entry to the long club. I have nothing better to do than to continue a small diamond. West wins the queen, and reverts to spades. East ducks and I win with the ♠J.

Eight tricks have been played and the defenders have ducked five times, once with multiple stoppers. I think I can place the cards pretty accurately at this stage:

	♠ Q	
	♥ J 9	
	♦ 10	
	♣ 7	
♠ —		♠ A x x
♥ (10) x x		♥ K (10)
♦ K 9		♦ —
♣ —		♣ —
	♠ 5	
	♥ A 2	
	♦ A 8	
	♣ —	

If West has the ♥10, I can play the ace and another diamond, leaving her on play at the 11<sup>th</sup> trick. On a forced heart lead, if she also has the ♥10, the 9 will force East's king and I will have ten tricks. But there is no assurance that West has the ♥10. There is a better option to nine tricks, which I think will be enough. I cash the ♦A and watch closely as East throws a spade. East appears to be down to ♠Ax ♥Kx, so I exit

with my little spade. East wins two spades but is forced to lead from ♥Kx and I take the last two tricks with the jack and ace of hearts. Making +150 for a top.

The full deal:

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

### Points of Interest:

- West had the ♥10 all along, so she would have been endplayed in hearts. That would have produced a tenth trick, but I was already a trick ahead of the field and didn't need to take chances for a better score.

- There were several card reading lessons. The ♠8 and ♦7 were apparent top-of-nothing leads, and the count signaling in clubs allowed declarer to win the second round of clubs in dummy.

- The finesse of the ♥Q was win-win for declarer. If the queen held, it represented declarer's seventh trick. If it lost, the ♥J became the seventh trick *and* an entry to the long club. The bonus was clarifying the location of the opponents' high-card values.

- Declarer's unblock of the ♦J is rare and would have facilitated an unlikely dummy entry had East not ducked her two honors.