

Declarer Mistake: Not Considering Overtricks

You want to think about overtricks, particularly if you play a lot of duplicate. In a matchpoint event, 3NT making 3 can be a disaster! Always consider ways to potentially find extra tricks.

Deal 1

N North

♠ 54

♥ 103

♦ KQJ1032

♣ 1032

West	North	East	South
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

W West

♠ KJ8

♥ A9542

♦ 84

♣ K97

S South

♠ AQ102

♥ KQ6

♦ A975

♣ AQ

E East

♠ 9763

♥ J87

♦ 6

♣ J8654

3NT South

NS 0 EW 0

Here, you have many options for a 10th trick and 11th trick, on the lead, you have 9 tricks (a spade, a heart, 6 diamonds and a club). Play the h10 at trick one in case West had the J, this guarantees two tricks. Play two rounds of diamonds and then play a spade to the 10. If you play too many diamonds first, you won't have transportation. Playing two rounds guarantees that West is out of "safe" exit cards and will have to give you 10th trick regardless of which cards are where. You might be able to find an 11th later.

Deal 2

D

North

West

East

South

4♠ South

NS 0 EW 0

Here we have what seems like a friendly lead. We started with two heart losers, one club loser and one diamond loser. The lead means we won't lose a club trick. Great! But if we take the gift, we will lose those other three tricks. Instead,

win the first trick with the ace, draw trump, and play a club (overtaking) so that you can set up two more club tricks to throw away two of your other losers. Notice that you can't do this if you win trick one with the jack.

Deal 3
D

North: ♠ K64 ♣ K65310986 ♠ AQ

West: ♠ 752 ♣ J98454 ♠ J987

East: ♠ 1098107 ♣ KQJ32 ♠ K104

South: ♠ AQJ3 ♣ AQ2A76532

3NT South | NS 0 EW 0

Here we get a club lead after a lead directing double. If we take the diamond finesse, we will wind up with 9 tricks. Don't hold up either! If you hold up, your natural club promotion goes away. Instead, win the cJ with the ace and play on clubs and force East to do something. We'll take at least 10 tricks.

Deal 4
D

N North	♠ Q8 ♥ AQ3 ♦ A1087 ♣ AJ102	E East	♠ AJ109 ♥ 654 ♦ 943 ♣ Q85
W West	♠ 653 ♥ J10982 ♦ 65 ♣ K93	S South	♠ K742 ♥ K7 ♦ KQJ2 ♣ 764

3NT South | NS 0 EW 0

Win the first trick in South. If you play off your diamonds, you're going to run into communication issues. Instead, win the first trick and get to work on clubs immediately. East can't successfully attack any other suit. Don't worry about the heart suit—you'd have to be very unlucky to go down.

Deal 5 D	N North	West	North	East	South
	♠ A93 ♥ K9 ♦ A9832 ♣ A53	Pass	4♠	Pass	3♠ Pass
W West		E East			
♠ J ♥ Q762 ♦ K765 ♣ QJ109	S South	♠ 42 ♥ AJ1083 ♦ QJ10 ♣ 874			
	♠ KQ108765 ♥ 54 ♦ 4 ♣ K62	4♠ South		NS 0 EW 0	

The ♣Q is led, and you only have three potential losers (two in hearts and one in clubs). Instead of relying on the heart ace to be onside for an overtrick, check out that diamond suit! You'll take an extra trick if the diamonds split 4-3 so get working on that immediately (you can draw one round of trump).