

A blocked suit might refer to any of the examples below :

	KQ	AJ	Q	AKQ
(i)	AJxxx	KQxxx	AKJxxx	Jxxxx

In each case it is normal to cash North's blocking honour card(s) first and then cross to the South hand to enjoy the remaining tricks in the suit. In order to do this, you just need an entry to the South hand in a different suit.

If you did not have an outside entry to the South hand, you would have to play the combination differently. You would (i) cash the King and then overtake the Queen, (ii) cash the Ace and then overtake the Jack and (iii) overtake the Queen. In each case you would make five tricks (six in example iii) if the opponents' cards were split 3-3. Example (iv) is different. You cannot overtake any of North's cards so, if you have no entry to South's hand, you will make only three tricks.

Even if you did have a sure outside entry to the South hand, you might still play a blocked suit in a different way. For example, you might be able to combine the unblocking of the suit with using the blocking cards themselves as entries.

If that sounds a bit confusing, take a look at board 21 from the Shoreham duplicate on 30th April. The contract was 2NT by South and the declarer was the computer program, Blue Chip Bridge :

A543	
10764	
KQ	
1043	
K1082	Q96
QJ8	K932
J63	874
J86	A97
J7	
A5	
A10952	
KQ52	

West led the two of spades and Chip played low from dummy. East won with the Queen and continued with a second spade to the Jack, King and Ace. Chip thought about ducking the second trick too - maybe he was worried about a switch to hearts.

Look at the diamond suit in isolation. You would normally cash the King and Queen to unblock and then cross to the South hand to reach the remaining cards in the suit. See what would happen if you followed that line of play. You win trick 2 with the Ace of spades, cash the King and Queen of diamonds and then lead a club to the King, which wins the trick. Then you cash your winning diamonds and the Ace of hearts, and that's 8 tricks in total.

At trick 3 Chip cashed the King of diamonds and then, leaving the Queen in dummy and the suit still blocked, continued by leading a low club. East played low and Chip won with the King in hand. Now Chip unblocked the diamond suit by leading low to dummy's Queen. A second club lead from dummy came next and whether East ducked again or won with the Ace, the 3-3 splits in both minor suits meant that Chip finished with 10 tricks (five diamonds, three clubs and both major suit Aces). So instead of following the normal procedure of unblocking the suit immediately, Chip kept dummy's second diamond honour as an entry that allowed him to lead a second club towards his hand. Nicely played for 10 tricks.

Enjoy your bridge !