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## "THINKING BRIDGE" FOR SWISS TEAM PLAY

Much of the strategy in this game is dictated by the form of scoring. At Swiss Team bridge (IMPs), you're trying to beat the opponents sitting at your table. This means you should "think bridge" differently on the game. Examples:

**Say you're declaring 3NT after the auction 1NT – 3NT, and your LHO leads the 4♠.**

♠ 5 3 2  
♥ A K Q  
♦ Q 9 5 4  
♣ J T 4

You have 6 top tricks, and 2 more once you drive out the A♦. When you do that, your RHO wins and returns the 6♠. You now have 9 tricks, but no spades stoppers.

♠ A K  
♥ 9 4 2  
♦ K J T 3 2  
♣ A Q 2

At IMPs, you should just cash your 9 winners—make the safe play to ensure your contract. At MPs, I think it's definitely worth trying for the club finesse. The opponent's lead of the 4♠ (appears to be 3th best) and return of the 6♠ (looks to be present count of 3) are probably honest count, so even if the club finesse loses they likely only have two spades to cash.

**Again you reach 3NT after the auction 1NT—3NT, and your LHO leads the K♠.**

♠ 7 6  
♥ 7 5 3  
♦ K Q J T 9  
♣ A J 3

You have 6 top tricks (4 clubs and 2 aces) and need to establish 3 more. Diamonds will provide 4 tricks one the ace is knocked out, and there is a double finesse position in hearts. How to play?

♠ A 9  
♥ A Q T 9  
♦ 8 4 2  
♣ K Q 4 3

At MPs, you should spurn the hearts for the sure four tricks in diamonds. Yes, once the opponents win their A♦, they will have at least four spades to cash for down one. But you risk being down more if the heart finesse loses, as the opponents would have the same winners to cash. You're in a normal contract, so just take your down one.

At IMPs, you should try leading toward the 9♥. Although this will only work when your RHO has both the K and the J (25%), at IMPs a small chance is better than no chance.

**Again 3NT contract, this time after the auction 1♣ - 1♥ - 1NT—3NT and the lead is the 7♥**

♠ K Q 5 3  
♥ A 8 6 5  
♦ Q 6 2  
♣ A 3

Because of your 8-card spade suit, you are not in the "field" contract. Most pairs will play this hand in 4♠, which will make on almost any lie of the cards. On a 3-2 spade split, the result will be +450 for 11 tricks or +480 for 12 tricks: there is one sure heart loser and a possible diamond loser depending on the finesse.

♠ A 9 4 2  
♥ 9 3  
♦ A J T 9  
♣ K Q 7

At IMPs, focus on making the contract, since the opponents at the other table are almost certainly going to make theirs. First, test the spades. If they don't split, you can take the diamond finesse. You can get some extra insurance by ducking the first 2 rounds of hearts. That way, if diamond finesse loses, LHO may be out of hearts.

At MPs, your choices are less clear. The diamond finesse is only 50%, and the opponents have hearts to cash, so playing for overtricks risks the contract. However, you can't beat the pairs in 4♠ if the diamond finesse fails. Therefore, hope that it wins and that you can beat them by taking 12 tricks (11 if the spades don't split), for +490 or +460 and a top board. (Best still ... to duck one round of hearts because you can't take more than 12 tricks anyway.)