



**MATCHPOINT**  
**TRICKS**  
B AXELSEN & VILLY DAM

MASTER POINT PRESS | TORONTO, ONTARIO

© 2004 Ib Axelsen & Villy Dam

All rights reserved. It is illegal to reproduce any portion of this material, except by special arrangement with the publisher. Reproduction of this material without authorization, by any duplication process whatsoever, is a violation of copyright.

### **Master Point Press**

331 Douglas Ave.

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

M5M 1H2

(416) 781-0351

Website: <http://www.masterpointpress.com>

<http://www.masteringbridge.com>

<http://www.ebooksbridge.com>

<http://www.bridgeblogging.com>

Email: [info@masterpointpress.com](mailto:info@masterpointpress.com)

### **National Library of Canada Cataloguing in Publication**

Axelsen, Ib

Matchpoint tricks / Ib Axelsen & Villy Dam.

ISBN 978-1-55494-099-8

1. Contract bridge--Dummy play. I. Dam, Villy, 1945- II. Title.

GV1282.435.A93 2004

795.41'53

C2003-906625-8

Editor

Ray Lee

Cover and interior design

Olena S. Sullivan/New Mediatrix

Interior format and copy editing

Luise Lee

Printed in Canada by Webcom Ltd.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

09 08 07 06 05 04

# INTRODUCTION

Are you a careful declarer who always plays as safely as possible to make your contract? Then it is really important for you to read this book if you want to win at matchpoints. Are you a matchpoint shark? If so, you will enjoy the problems in store for you.

Most books on declarer play concentrate on how to make the contract. The techniques encountered in these books are certainly useful at matchpoints (or board-a-match) which is the type of scoring that we are assuming in this book. At matchpoints you must always be on the lookout for overtricks. You will never become a winner unless you fight hard, hand after hand, to score 10, 20, or 30 points more than the rest of the field. If you have bid to an easy 3NT with a total of 27 HCP, you must expect everybody else to have bid it too, and get the hunt for overtricks under way.

But your chances for a better score must always be weighed against the risks. This book challenges you to play for overtricks on occasion even at the risk of going down in your contract. To find the best chance for an overtrick. To spot the chances for overtricks that nobody else can see. To use logic and technique, but especially imagination and psychology. You will often be surprised by an unusual possibility that might produce an overtrick. Or the way in which it can be made to happen.

In the first section of the book are the problems, two to each page. It is our opinion that the time you invest in solving the problems is better spent than the time you use to study the solutions, which are given later.

The level of difficulty increases throughout the book, but what some find difficult others might find easy. In some cases the deals are complicated, but often the difficulty lies only in opening your eyes and your mind to see the solution. If you solve as many as half of these problems you will be a dangerous opponent for everybody at the bridge table.

Read the book before your partner. You might not end up taking more tricks than he does – but often you will end up with more tricks than he expects you to take. Have a good time!

*Ib Axelsen and Villy Dam*  
*September 2003*



# PROBLEMS

TRAVELING SCORE

Northwestern University

Date:  19

Mile Per No.	CON- TRACT	EV	Make	Days	SCORE		C-10 Per No.	Match- points
					7-5	2-4		
1	48	N	4		400		4	
2	49	N	4		400		4	
3	JMP	S	3		400		4	
4	36	N	4		250		4	
5	49	N	4		400		3	
6	48	N	4		400		3	
7	48	N	4		400		4	
8	48	N	3		400		4	
9	48	N	4		400		4	
10	JMP	S	3		400		10	
11					400		4	
12								
13								

# PROBLEM 1

**E-W vul.**

W	N	E	S
		pass	1♥
pass	3♥	pass	4♥
all pass			

**Lead:** ♠5

♠ A Q J 4 3  
 ♥ Q 10 5 3  
 ♦ 8 7  
 ♣ 10 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 2  
 ♥ A K J 9 2  
 ♦ J 5  
 ♣ A K 6 4

Do you finesse in spades at Trick 1?

[To Hint](#)

[To Solution](#)

# PROBLEM 2

**N-S vul.**

W	N	E	S
			1♥
pass	2♣	pass	2♥
pass	3♥	pass	4♥
all pass			

**Lead:** ♦Q

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

West's lead of the ♦Q is taken by East with the ♦A and a trump is returned to the queen in dummy. Even if the clubs are 3-3, you no longer have the entries to enjoy the suit. You might not even make your rather pushy contract. How do you play from here?

[To Hint](#)

[To Solution](#)

# PROBLEM 3

**Both vul.**

W	N	E	S
		pass	2♣
pass	2♦	pass	2NT
pass	3♣	pass	3♦
pass	3NT	all pass	

**Lead:** ♠K

♠ A 10 4 2  
♥ 6 4 3  
♦ 8 7 5 4  
♣ 5 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 7 6 3  
♥ A K 5  
♦ A K Q 10  
♣ A K 8

If the diamonds behave, you can count  $1 + 2 + 4 + 2 = 9$  tricks. Do you have a plan for an overtrick?

[To Hint](#)

[To Solution](#)

# PROBLEM 4

**N-S vul.**

W	N	E	S
		pass	1NT
pass	3NT	all pass	

**Lead:** ♦J

♠ A J 3 2  
♥ K 8 4  
♦ Q 8 3  
♣ A 6 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 10 9 8  
♥ A 7 2  
♦ A K 6  
♣ K 7 5

With the sterile distribution of the North hand, plenty of high-card strength and honors in all suits, this is obviously the time *not* to use Stayman. Seven tricks in the three lowest suits plus the ♠AK make nine. If you can find the ♠Q, it will be eleven. You have a two-way finesse. Can you make it any better than a fifty-fifty guess?

[To Hint](#)

[To Solution](#)



# PROBLEM 5

**N-S vul.**

W	N	E	S
pass	4♠	1NT <sup>1</sup> all pass	2♠

1. 11–14 HCP.

**Lead:** ♦Q

♠ K 9 8  
♥ K 8 3  
♦ K 7 3  
♣ A Q 7 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A J 7 5 4 3  
♥ A 9 7 5  
♦ 5  
♣ J 4

How do you plan the play as declarer when the defense continues diamonds (of course East has the ace)?

[To Hint](#)

[To Solution](#)

# PROBLEM 6

**Both vul.**

W	N	E	S
pass	1♥	pass	1♣
pass	3♣	pass	2♣
pass	4♣	pass	3♦
pass	4♣	all pass	

**Lead:** ♠A

♠ 8 7 5  
♥ A 9 5 3  
♦ J 6 3  
♣ A J 7

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 2  
♥ K 2  
♦ A K 10  
♣ K 10 6 5 4 3

The defense starts with three rounds of spades (not a surprise, given your auction!), East apparently holding five to the king jack. You ruff the third round, and a small club to the ace sees the queen drop from East. Your plan?

[To Hint](#)

[To Solution](#)

# HINTS

TRAVELING SCORE

North player scores only

Score No.

Hole No.	CON- TRACT	EV	Make	Down	SCORE		C-10 Dist No.	Match- points
					H-10	C-10		
1	48	N	4		400		#	
2	45	N	4		475		#	
3	3MY	J	3		400		#	
4	38	N	4		270		#	
5	49	N	4		400		J	
6	48	N	4		400		J	
7	40	N	4		400		#	
8	40	N	3		400		P	
9	45	N	4		400		#	
10	3MY	J	3		400		10	
11							#	
12								
13								

**Problem 1:** Remember you are playing matchpoints.

**Problem 2:** With the ♠K onside you have a good chance to make the contract. So hope for that and go for eleven tricks! [To Problems 1/2](#)

**Problem 3:** If you let the ♠K hold the first trick, West will continue with the ♠Q.

**Problem 4:** Use psychology! [To Problems 3/4](#)

**Problem 5:** Who has the missing honors? What line will you take if trumps turn out to split 2-2?

**Problem 6:** You can finesse in diamonds for an overtrick, but there is an extra chance you can give yourself. [To Problems 5/6](#)

# SOLUTIONS

TRAVELING SCORE

North please check score

Event No.

Mile Per No.	CON- TRACT	EV	Make	Down	SCORE		C-10 Dist No.	Match- points
					H-S	C-10		
1	48	N	#		400		#	
2	45	N	#		475		#	
3	3MF	J	J		400		#	
4	35	N	#		275		#	
5	49	N	#		400		J	
6	48	N	#		400		J	
7	40	N	#		400		#	
8	40	N	J		400		P	
9	45	N	#		400		#	
10	3MF	J	J		400		10	
11							#	
12								
13								

# SOLUTION 1

<p>♠ K 10 6 5 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A Q 9 2 ♣ J 9 3</p>	<p>♠ A Q J 4 3 ♥ Q 10 5 3 ♦ 8 7 ♣ 10 5</p> <table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W      E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 8 2 ♥ A K J 9 2 ♦ J 5 ♣ A K 6 4</p>	N	W      E	S	<p>♠ 9 7 ♥ 8 6 ♦ K 10 6 4 3 ♣ Q 8 7 2</p>
N					
W      E					
S					

In a team match you would play safe to make your contract. If the lead is a singleton, it might cost you the contract to finesse in spades, the opponents scoring the ♠K, a spade ruff and two diamond tricks. At matchpoints you should not play safe in a normal contract when you have a line where your chances of making overtricks are better than your chances of going down. Playing the ♠A at Trick 1 will make sure that you make ten tricks, but since the chance that the ♠K is inside is much greater than the risk that West led a singleton, you should certainly finesse in spades!

How many tricks will a successful spade finesse give you? After the ♠Q and ♥AK you repeat the finesse in spades before discarding a diamond on the ace of spades. Next a spade ruff will set up the fifth spade in dummy. You continue with ♣AK and a club ruff followed by the ♠4 saying goodbye to the last diamond in your hand. Later you can also ruff your last club in dummy. You end up with thirteen tricks: 7 tricks with trumps, 4 in spades, and the ♣AK.

With a diamond lead you make eleven tricks (a later finesse in spades). The spade attack offered you the 'choice' between ten and thirteen tricks.

[To Problem](#)

# SOLUTION 2

	♠ 9 2											
	♥ A Q											
	♦ 7 6 4 3											
	♣ A 10 9 8 3											
♠ J 8 6 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 10 7 3	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ J 6		♥ 7 5 2										
♦ Q J 10 8		♦ A 9 2										
♣ K 4 2		♣ Q J 5										
	♠ A Q 5											
	♥ K 10 9 8 4 3											
	♦ K 5											
	♣ 7 6											

Just embark on your project: finesse the queen of spades. If the finesse succeeds, you can cash the ♠A and ruff the ♠5 with dummy's ace of trumps! Then you enter your hand with the ♦K and cash the ♥K. When the jack of trumps drops, you get your deserved reward: eleven tricks. Even if the ♥J does not drop, you are certain to score the necessary tricks to make your contract — even in the case where one of the defenders has ♥Jxxx.

[To Problem](#)

# SOLUTION 3

<p>♠ K Q J 9 ♥ Q 10 2 ♦ 9 6 ♣ J 9 7 3</p>	<p>♠ A 10 4 2 ♥ 6 4 3 ♦ 8 7 5 4 ♣ 5 4</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 8 5 ♥ J 9 8 7 ♦ J 3 2 ♣ Q 10 6 2</p>		N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	<p>♠ 7 6 3 ♥ A K 5 ♦ A K Q 10 ♣ A K 8</p>										

Let West's ♠Q hold at Trick 2. On the third round of the suit you finesse the ♠10, which gives you a tenth trick. Notice that you had to hold up the ace of spades twice since there are no side entries to the dummy.

The plan would fail with a tricky lead from KQx, since in that case you would get no spade trick at all — and you would have to score up 3NT down one! But such a lead would be very unusual against a declarer known to have a balanced 22-24 HCP. The risk is worth running at matchpoints. In a team game you would just cash your nine tricks and run.

Maybe you are wondering if ten tricks are still possible if West switches after holding the first trick with the ♠K — for example, if he plays a club. In fact, the same plan will work fine. You win the club trick, then play a small spade towards the dummy and duck when West splits his Q-J of spades. On the next round of the suit you finesse the spade ten. This way you actually get the chance to cash the ♦A and the ♦K first, and if East turns out to have ♦Jxxx, you know to finesse in diamonds when you're in dummy with a spade.

[To Problem](#)

# SOLUTION 4

<p>♠ Q 6 5 ♥ Q 9 3 ♦ J 10 9 5 ♣ Q 8 2</p>	<p>♠ A J 3 2 ♥ K 8 4 ♦ Q 8 3 ♣ A 6 4</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 7 4 ♥ J 10 6 5 ♦ 7 4 2 ♣ J 10 9 3</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ K 10 9 8 ♥ A 7 2 ♦ A K 6 ♣ K 7 5</p>											

It is up to you to make the defender with the ♠Q cover one of your honors. However, playing the jack from the dummy will probably not tempt any East player to cover with Qxx. After all, who would play like this without K10xx in the South hand?

Take the first trick with the ♦A, and attack spades by playing the ten from your hand in Trick 2. West might be tempted to cover hoping to create a double stopper for his partner's K-9-x (if you have only 10-x-x in your hand). If West plays low without hesitation, you can rise with the ace and play East for the ♠Q.

[To Problem](#)



# SOLUTION 5

	♠ K 9 8											
	♥ K 8 3											
	♦ K 7 3											
	♣ A Q 7 5											
♠ 6 2 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ Q J 6 2 ♣ 10 9 8 6	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 ♥ Q 10 6 ♦ A 10 9 8 4 ♣ K 3 2	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ A J 7 5 4 3											
	♥ A 9 7 5											
	♦ 5											
	♣ J 4											

You are missing 15 HCP and West has already shown up with ♦QJ on the opening lead, so East must have the missing critical cards: the ♠Q and ♣K. You ruff the second round of diamonds and continue with a spade to the king and another trump intending to finesse, but the defenders' trumps come down in two rounds. It looks like a loser in each of the three lowest suits, but you should take advantage of your knowledge about the location of the ♣K.

Play a trump to the nine to play a club towards your hand. If East does not rise with the ♣K, you will only have two losers, one in each of the red suits. If on the other hand East takes the trick with the ♣K and plays a diamond (for example), you can ruff, cash the ♣J, and when in dummy with the ♥K discard two heart losers on ♣AQ. Again you will make an overtrick as a result.

This play is known as a Morton's Fork. Pretty smart, don't you think? At the 2003 Danish Mixed Pairs Championship, where this deal was played, most of the declarers managed to end up with eleven tricks.

[To Problem](#)

# SOLUTION 6

<p>♠ A Q 6 ♥ Q J 10 ♦ Q 7 5 4 ♣ 9 8 2</p>	<p>♠ 8 7 5 ♥ A 9 5 3 ♦ J 6 3 ♣ A J 7</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ K J 10 4 3 ♥ 8 7 6 4 ♦ 9 8 2 ♣ Q</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ 9 2 ♥ K 2 ♦ A K 10 ♣ K 10 6 5 4 3</p>											

Before putting all your money on a diamond finesse, you should test the heart suit for an extra trick. After playing the ♣A, you should cash the ♥K and the ♥A and ruff a heart with the ♣10. When, miraculously, the ♥QJ10 show up in three rounds, you have the good heart nine in the dummy. After cashing the ♣K and the ♣J, you discard your ♦10 on dummy's ♥9.

You won't get that lucky very often, of course, but spotting this kind of small extra chance makes life at the bridge table fun!

The alternative line of running all your clubs and playing for a red-suit squeeze is definitely inferior. For this to work, hearts must be friendly while the diamond queen either drops in two rounds or is in the hand guarding hearts. We'll leave you to figure out the odds, but given that our line is better than 50%, it's clearly preferable.

[To Problem](#)

# BRIDGE PROBLEMS WITH A DIFFERENCE!

E-W vul.

W	N	E	S
1NT <sup>1</sup>	pass	2♦ <sup>2</sup>	pass
2♥	pass	pass	2♠
all pass			

- 15-17 HCP.
- Transfer.

**Lead:** ♥J

It looks like three losers in the minors plus one or two losers in trumps. What is your plan as declarer?

**Hint:** Think about which of the opponents has the honors in diamonds, and remember that your opponents cannot look through the backs of your cards.

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 10 9 8 6  
 ♥ A Q  
 ♦ 9 6  
 ♣ J 9 4 2

At first glance, this may seem to be just another book of declarer play problems – but it isn't. Here the scenario is matchpoints, the scoring method that makes every trick vital. How are you going to manufacture that vital overtrick, or, just as importantly, give the defenders a chance to go wrong? These are situations any duplicate player will come across in every session.

**IB AXELSEN** is a well-known Danish bridge journalist and publisher. **VILLY DAM** is a Danish international and a prominent bridge writer and teacher.

