

**Lead Transfer
By Roger Lord**

**Dealer: North
Vul: Both**

North
 ♠ 1084
 ♥ Q10
 ♦ Q107
 ♣ 108632

West
 ♠ Q9753
 ♥ 9764
 ♦ 654
 ♣ A

East
 ♠ K62
 ♥ K82
 ♦ 92
 ♣ KQ974

South
 ♠ AJ
 ♥ AJ53
 ♦ AKJ83
 ♣ J5

North	East	South	West
Pass	Pass	1 Diamond	Pass
Pass	2 Clubs	2 Hearts	Pass
3 Clubs	Pass	3 Notrump	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Contract: 3 Notrump Opening Lead: Club Ace

This deal sparked the interest of both sides. It was #13 in a Saturday afternoon game at the St. Louis Bridge Center January 31, 2015.

After two passes, South opens one diamond, and West and North pass. A variety of reopening actions are available to East. He could double, lacking four of either major. He could balance with one notrump, lacking a diamond stopper. He could pass, but allowing opponents to play at the one level usually is not conducive to many matchpoints. Or, he could take the lesser of evils and overcall with a dangerous two clubs.

If South doubles two clubs for takeout, it might be left in, for a big North-South profit. But doubling with a doubleton spade seems to ask for trouble. Instead, South can bid two hearts, which, considering his partner's prior passes, promises a big hand with 4-5 or longer in the red suits. West passes, and North reassesses his values. His hand can no longer be counted as a mere four points, inasmuch as the Q-10 combinations will solidify both of partner's suits. The hand now merits promotion to game-going status.

How is North to know whether South's distribution is suitable for five diamonds or whether a nine-trick contract of three notrump might work? He can cuebid below three notrump and leave the decision up to partner. Widely accepted practice is to cuebid opponents' suit to ask for a stopper. However, in this auction, the unbid spade suit is tantamount to one of the opponents' suits. Consequently, since there are two suits to worry about, it is advantageous to deem either cuebid as showing something in the suit bid. North can stretch the holding of 10xxxx of clubs into "something" and cuebid three clubs, over which South, with the AJ of spades, is happy to say three notrump.

Suppose you are declarer, with West leading the club ace, obviously a singleton in East's suit. West switches to a spade, and you overtake East's king. Entering dummy with a diamond, you lead the heart queen for a finesse and, when East covers, you can maneuver to take three hearts to go with five diamonds and the spade ace you already played, for a total of nine tricks.

With three cards left, don't concede the rest of the tricks. Lead the spade jack. West wins the queen and cashes the nine of hearts. At trick 13, West is left with the spade nine, which is led to dummy's ten for an overtrick.

Deep Finesse (the computer program that analyzes the deals) discloses that the maximum number of tricks South can take is nine. Can you find the defense to hold declarer to his contract?

Back at trick two, West must make the counterintuitive switch to the spade queen! This sets up East's king for an entry. Ducking the queen doesn't help—declarer cannot make a second spade trick without losing the lead to East.

Oh, yes – what is that lead-transferring play called? Right, a Deschappelles Coup!