

DEFENSE

THIRD HAND PLAY

Bridge Lab

with the Monroes

DEFENSE PLAY

THIRD HAND. The player who contributes the third card to a trick is the partner of the player leading to the trick

The card played by **Third Hand** depends on:

- The cards you hold in the suit.
- The card led by partner.
- The second card played to the trick.

Guidelines are useful, but consider the logic of each situation and use judgment.

- Try to visualize the trick-taking cards in partner's hand based on the opening lead.
- Work with partner and focus on the goal of defeating the contract.

GUIDELINE: THIRD HAND HIGH

When partner leads a low card, **Third Hand** plays a high card to try and win the trick.

- Even if Third Hand doesn't win the trick, playing high helps to promote a winning trick for partner.
- Play **only as high as necessary**.
 - Play the lowest of touching cards.
 - Play only as high as logical. Use high cards to capture Dummy's high cards.

Lead	Dummy	Third Hand High – But Only as High as Necessary	
2	7 6 5	A 4 3 K J 3 K 4 3	Win the trick with the Ace. If the King doesn't win the trick, force declarer to win the trick with the Ace.
2	K 9 3	Q 10 5	If a low card is played from Dummy, try to win the trick. If the King is played from Dummy, play low.
4	8 5 3	Q J 2 K Q 2	Play lowest of touching cards. The Jack denies the Ten, but does not deny the Queen. The Queen denies the Jack, but does not deny the King.
4	K 5 3	A Q 4 2	Win the trick with the Queen, and wait for partner to lead the suit again so the King can be captured.
3	Q 5 Q 7 2	K J 8 4 K 10 4	Play only as high as you can afford. Use the King to capture Dummy's Queen.
J	7 6 2	K 8 3	Declarer is marked with the Queen. Play high.
J	Q 7 4	K 8 5	No need to play the King until the Queen is played. Encourage continuation by playing the 8 (high).

Bridge With The Monroes

www.bridgewiththemonroes.com

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LARRY'S BRIDGE QUIZ

THIRD HAND PLAY

North Deals
None Vul

	♠ A K		
	♥ 10 6 4		
	♦ Q J 10 9 7 3		
	♣ A 10		
♠ J 9 7 4 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 8 5 3	
♥ 7 3		♥ A K 9 5 2	
♦ K 8 2		♦ 4	
♣ 7 4 3		♣ Q J 8 5	
	♠ Q 10 6		
	♥ Q J 8		
	♦ A 6 5		
	♣ K 9 6 2		

	14		
	4 10		
	12		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	1 ♥	2 N ¹
Pass	3 N ²	All pass	

1. 11-12 points, heart stopper(s).
2. Most likely game.

CONTRACT: 3 NT by South **OPENING LEAD:** ♥ 7 Partner's suit, top of doubleton

Declarer Play. There are five sure tricks, four more are needed. Extra tricks can be developed in the ♦ suit. Play the ♦ Q from Dummy, finesse East for the ♦ K. If successful, the lead will not be given to the defense. Keep an entry in Dummy to access the ♦ tricks. In ♠s, play the high card from the short side first to unblock and win all three ♠ tricks.

Defense. Lead partner's suit. Choose the card: Doubleton lead high-low (7-x, J-x); lead top of touching honors (Q-J-x); three or more, lead the **Ace** or lead low (Q-x-x, A-x-x); any **singleton**. Failure to lead partner's suit shows a **void** or a strong source of tricks.

Third Hand High. Following the guideline of Third Hand High, East wins the ♥ A and ♥ K, then plays a small ♥ to drive out South's only stopper. West wins the ♦ K, but does not have a ♥ to return. East has no other entry to claim the two established ♥ winners, and Declarer makes the contract.

Third Hand Not So High. Before playing to trick one, East considers how to defeat the contract rather than immediately winning the first two ♥ tricks. West's lead of the ♥ 7 must either be a singleton or doubleton with no ♥ honor. South bid NoTrump and must have a heart stopper, minimum of three hearts with the ♥ Q♥ J. With focus on defeating the contract, East plays the ♥ 9 to encourage continuation, and South wins trick one. West regains the lead with the ♦ K and has a heart to return to East. Five tricks for the defense.

With no side suit entry in the East hand, the only chance East has to defeat the contract is for West to gain the lead and have a second heart to return. Winning the first ♥ trick strips West of the valuable link card needed to defeat the contract.

Third Hand Play

Third Hand High

Board 1

South Deals

	♠ K 10 7 2		
	♥ A K Q 8		
	♦ 8 7 4		
	♣ J 5		
♠ 9 6	N	♠ 5 4 3	
♥ J 7 6 2	W	♥ 10 9 4	
♦ K 10 6 3	E	♦ A J 5	
♣ A 8 3	S	♣ 9 7 6 4	
	♠ A Q J 8		
13	♥ 5 3		
8 5	♦ Q 9 2		
14	♣ K Q 10 2		
West	North	East	South
			1 ♣
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	4 ♠ ¹	All pass	
	1. 4-♠s, Opening Hand		

Contract: 4 ♠ South, 10 Tricks
Lead: ♦ 3, 4th highest, East plays ♠ A
Losers: 3-♦, 1-♣ = 4.

Play: If defenders do not win three ♦s, South discards a ♦ on a ♥ winner, after drawing trump. ♣s are then promoted.

Wait, Capture ♠ K with ♠ A

Board 2

North Deals

	♠ K 8 3		
	♥ 10 8 4		
	♦ A 9		
	♣ K Q J 10 4		
♠ 6 5	N	♠ A J 10 9 4	
♥ 9 7 5 2	W	♥ A K 6	
♦ Q J 10 4	E	♦ 8 5 3	
♣ A 7 5	S	♣ 6 2	
	♠ Q 7 2		
13	♥ Q J 3		
7 12	♦ K 7 6 2		
8	♣ 9 8 3		
West	North	East	South
			1 N ¹
All pass	1 ♣	1 ♠	
	1. ♠ Stopper, 6-10 Points		

Contract: 1 NT South, 7 Tricks
Lead: ♠ 6, partner's suit, East plays ♠ 9
Sure Tricks: 2-♦ = 2.

Play: South wants to promote four ♣s. West wins the ♣A and returns the ♠5 so East captures the ♠K, wins four ♠s and wins the ♥AK, setting the contract.

Play Lowest of Equal Cards

Board 3

South Deals

	♠ 10 5 3		
	♥ K 6 5		
	♦ A K 3		
	♣ Q 7 5 4		
♠ K 8 7 4 2	N	♠ Q J 6	
♥ J 10	W	♥ 9 7 4 3 2	
♦ 8 7	E	♦ J 10 9 4	
♣ K 10 9 6	S	♣ 2	
	♠ A 9		
12	♥ A Q 8		
7 4	♦ Q 6 5 2		
17	♣ A J 8 3		
West	North	East	South
			1 N
Pass	3 N	All pass	

Contract: 3 NT South, 9 Tricks
Lead: ♠ 4, 4th Best, Easy plays ♠ J
Sure Tricks: 1-♠, 3-♥, 3-♦, 1-♣ = 8.
Play: South tries ♦s, if they split 3-3, the last ♦ is a winner. Since ♦s don't split, the ♣ finesse is attempted. When South wins the ♠ A, West knows East has the ♠ Q.

Save Honor to Capture Honor

Board 4

South Deals

	♠ 10 9 5		
	♥ J 7 2		
	♦ K J 7 5		
	♣ A Q 5		
♠ K 8 2	N	♠ A 7 4	
♥ Q 9 6 3	W	♥ K 10 5	
♦ 9 6 2	E	♦ 10 4 3	
♣ 10 9 3	S	♣ J 7 4 2	
	♠ Q J 6 3		
11	♥ A 8 4		
5 8	♦ A Q 8		
16	♣ K 8 6		
West	North	East	South
			1 N
Pass	3 N	All pass	

Contract: 3 NT South, 9 Tricks
Lead: ♥ 3, 4th highest, East plays ♥ 10
Sure Tricks: 1-♥, 4-♦, 3-♣ = 8.

Play: South hopes to promote a ♠ trick, but the defenders can win three ♥s if East saves the ♥ K to capture dummy's ♥ J.