

Mid-Play By Roger Lord

Dealer: South
Vul: Both

	North		
	♠J		
	♥10754		
	♦K10876		
	♣1076		
West		East	
♠AK104		♠765	
♥AQ86		♥932	
♦5		♦9432	
♣KQJ4		♣983	
	South		
	♠Q9832		
	♥KJ		
	♦AQJ		
	♣A52		

South	West	North	East
1 notrump	double	all pass	

Opening Lead: Club Queen

Look only at the South cards. On these 17 HCP, would you open one notrump? Or, with a weak five-card major, would you open one spade? The battle of opinions ensues and ends never.

At the *St. Louis Bridge Center*, with both sides vulnerable, South at our table opened one notrump. West doubled (for penalty), which was passed back to opener. South's choices were to pass, or run to two spades, or redouble. The latter call would enable partner to play there or escape, perhaps into the fire or perhaps to an undoubled contract, making or not.

South made a pressure pass, and the battle began for the seventh trick and a full-board swing.

The club queen was led and ducked, East signaling discouragement. West switched to the spade king, removing the singleton jack, then switched back to the club jack, East following. Would you allow West's jack to hold, and if so, why?

South ducked the club jack, presumably to keep East from getting in later with the club king and attacking one of opener's majors. West continued with the club four, East following small, South winning perforce.

Declarer ran five diamond tricks, leaving dummy with four hearts. West simply showed his hand, as he held S A H A Q D -- C K.* The result was one down, 200 for East-West, for 10 out of 11 matchpoints.

*Yes, West held—and hid—the club king. Why else would East have signaled that he didn't like the opening lead?

Declarer can make one notrump doubled by winning the second club trick, laying down the diamond ace and queen (watching LHO show out on the second diamond), and temporarily abandoning the suit. Instead, South throws West in with a club (dummy's ten forces the king). West can cash his fourth club, but then he has to give South the seventh trick in one of the majors. Dummy's three remaining diamonds account for the contract, plus 180 for North-South.

About the auction, East passed partner's double, although she held a true Yarborough.** The partnership agreement was that a direct double of a notrump opening at any level indicated a desire to set the contract. Many people say their double of one notrump promises "an opening notrump." Some play the double as conventional, showing a one-suited hand or some other distribution, etc. We like it the old-fashioned way.

**A Yarborough is a hand with no honor card—no card higher than a nine. This occurs only once in 1827 hands of 13 cards.