

**Deal 1**

North Deals  
None Vul

♠ Q J 9 5  
♥ J 4  
♦ K 10 8 2  
♣ J 7 3

17  
8 8  
7

West

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



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

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

2 ♥

Pass

2 ♠

Pass

3 ♠

Pass

4 ♠

Pass

Pass

Pass

4 ♠ by North

Lead: ♥ K

Partner's 2 ♥ bid is a transfer; you respond 2 ♠.  
Partner now bids 3 ♠. What do you bid?

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Partner now bids 3 ♠. What do you bid?

You wouldn't have chosen ♠s for a trump suit.

But you aren't doing the choosing, partner is. He has set the trump suit as ♠s and asks that you bid game if you have a maximum 1 NT opening. So you bid 4 ♠, as instructed.

East leads ♥ K, West plays ♥ J. You have no reason to hold up so you win the ♥ A.

Things look simple. You can afford one ♠ loser so as long as they split 3-2 you will succeed. So you play ♠ A, ♠ K; East follows to the first and discards a ♦ on the second.

OK, West has two trump tricks, but don't give up. Maybe, just maybe, there is a way out. Check your winners: You have won 3 tricks - ♥ A and ♠ A K. You have 4 more top winners - ♦ A and ♣ A K Q. If you can somehow add 3 more small trumps that

will be the T you need.

Play dummy's ♦ 7 to your ♦ A, then ruff a ♦. Play a ♣ to your hand and ruff another ♦. Play another ♣ to your hand and ruff your last ♦. While you are ruffing these three ♦s West is helplessly following suit.

Now play to your good ♣ while West again has to follow suit.

You have taken the first T tricks. Poor West is going to end up ruffing his partner's ♦ winner with one of his master trumps.

When they split badly, sometimes you can recover by ruffing with small trumps while the trump-heavy defender has to follow suit.

This is called "trump elopement".

**Deal 2**

South Deals  
None Vul

♠ A K J  
♥ A 7 2  
♦ K Q 7 6  
♣ A 9 4

♠ Q 5 3  
♥ K 9 6  
♦ 10 9 8 3  
♣ 7 6 2



♠ 10 9 4 2  
♥ J 10 4 3  
♦ 5 4  
♣ 10 8 5

21  
5 1  
13

♠ 8 7 6  
♥ Q 8 5  
♦ A J 2  
♣ K Q J 3

West North East South

Pass 6 NT Pass 2 NT

Pass

6 NT by South

Lead: ♦ 10

Sometimes bidding is easy. Partner has 20 or 21 points, balanced. You have 13 points, balanced. Total = 33 or 34 points, balanced. So you close your eyes and bid 6 NT.

The contract would be 6 NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 6 NT. East leads the ♦T. Too bad East didn't lead a ♠. Oh, well.

There is no way to get more than 4 winners in each minor suit, so you need to win either the ♠J or ♥Q.

Which one should you try?

Why not try both? If you make sure you try them in the right order you can have both chances.

Suppose you lead a small ♠ from dummy and play your ♠J, and it loses to East's ♠Q. If you then try leading a small ♥ toward dummy's ♥Q, obviously the defender with the ♥K will grab it to set the

contract.

Instead, try the effect of leading toward the ♥Q first. If East has the ♥K then you will succeed in creating the extra winner you need. But what if you play the ♥Q and West takes it with his ♥K? Too bad, but at least you are not dead yet. You still have a chance to finesse West for the ♠Q.

There are two critical cards, the ♠Q and the ♥K. However they are not the same degree of criticality.

If the ♠Q is in a favorable position, (with West), you are always going to make your contract no matter which you try first.

But if only the ♥K is in a favorable position, (with East), you can make the contract only if you try ♥s first.

**Deal 3**

North Deals  
None Vul

♠ 10 8 5  
♥ 3  
♦ K 10 9 2  
♣ 7 6 5 4 2

16  
3 11  
10

West

Pass

Pass

Pass

4 ♥ by North

Lead: ♣ J

♠ A K Q J

♥ 7 4 2

♦ J 8 6 4

♣ K Q



♠ 7 4 2

♥ K Q J 6 5

♦ 7 3

♣ A 8 3

North

1 NT

2 ♥

4 ♥

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

2 ♦

3 NT

Pass

Partner's 2 ♦ bid is a transfer; you respond 2 ♥.  
Partner now bids 3 NT. What do you bid?

Partner's 2 ♦ bid is a transfer; you respond 2 ♥.  
Partner now bids 3 NT. What do you bid?

Partner tells you that he has enough points to be in game, and that he holds exactly 5 ♥s. With your 3 ♥s you know of an 8-card Major fit so you correct the contract to 4 ♥.

You win the opening lead with your ♣ Q.

The 2 ♦ losers are unavoidable, and even you will have to give up a trick to the Ace of trumps. So you have to make sure not to lose a second ♥.

Win the ♣ Q and play a small ♥ to dummy's ♥ J, which holds the trick.

I hope you didn't continue drawing trumps by playing the ♥ K. If you did then you are going down in an ice-cold contract.

The way to lose only one ♥ trick is to keep leading toward dummy's honors. So come to your hand

with a black card and play another ♥ in that direction, leading through East's ♥ A. When you win that trick repeat the maneuver.

to see why this was necessary (but you've already figured it out, right?).

In fact it would only occur perhaps one time in seven.

But there is no reason to go down once every seven times when you don't need to.

**Deal 4**

South Deals  
None Vul

♠ 8 7 6 3  
♥ 9 4  
♦ 10 5 2  
♣ Q J 10 4

17  
3 5  
15

West

Pass  
Pass  
Pass

6 ♥ by South  
Lead: ♣ Q

♠ A K J 5  
♥ A J 10 5  
♦ A 6 4  
♣ 8 3



♠ Q 4  
♥ K 8 6 2  
♦ K Q J 3  
♣ A 7 5

North

2 ♣  
6 ♥

East

Pass  
Pass

South

1 NT  
2 ♥  
Pass

The 2 ♣ bid was Stayman, so you bid your ♥s.

Partner takes the direct approach and puts you in slam.

West finds their best lead, exposing your ♣ loser right off the bat.

If you can guess the ♥ finesse correctly you will make 7, discarding dummy's ♣ loser on the fourth ♦. But if you guess wrong they will immediately set you with a ♣ trick.

There is a better way - one that combines two chances. Win the ♣ A. Then play your ♥ A and ♥ K. If the ♥ Q happens to fall, pull the last trump and run your winners.

If the ♥ Q DOESN'T fall, (she won't of course), switch to ♦s. On the fourth round of ♦s discard dummy's ♣, whether it is ruffed with the ♥ Q or not.

But playing the deal as described will win whenever the ♥ Q is doubleton, OR when the player with the protected ♥ Q holds at least 3 ♦s.

Pretty good odds, better than the going rate for finesses, which is 50% off.

There was an alternate plan, just as good. After taking the two top trumps, run the ♠s, discarding two ♣s from your hand. As you see, either would have worked.