

Deal 1 ♠ 7 6 2
 South Deals ♥ K 8 7 5 4
 None Vul ♦ 6 5
 ♣ A 8 3

♠ Q 10 8 3
♥ J 10
♦ J 9 8 3
♣ K 10 4

♠ J 9 4
♥ 6 2
♦ A 10 7 2
♣ Q J 9 7

7 7 18	♠ A K 5 ♥ A Q 9 3 ♦ K Q 4 ♣ 6 5 2
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<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			
4 ♥ by North			
Lead: ♣ Q			

low. Pull a round of trumps with ♠ A, then another, getting back to your hand with ♠ K. Play your other ♦. If East doesn't take his ♦ A now then you no longer have a ♦ loser, so assume he takes it. The defense can now take their two ♣ winners, but when you get the lead again you can discard your ♣ loser on dummy's good ♦ K.

This wasn't a guaranteed Plan like some. If West held the ♦ A then you would go down.

You are North and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

You certainly want to show a Major suit so you respond 1♥.

Partner jumps to 3 ❤️. What do you say?

Your response showed 6-10 points and at least four ❤️s.

Partner is inviting you to game if you are in the top of that range. With 9 points you certainly are so you bid the game.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♣ Q.

Losers: ♠ 1 : ♥ 0 : ♦ 1 : ♣ 2 : Total = 4

The defense will take their two ♣ tricks as soon as they get the lead. But you can discard your "slow" ♠ loser on one of dummy's ♦ honors IF East has the ♦ A and IF you act quickly.

Win the first trick with your ♣A. Immediately play a ♦, putting up dummy's ♦Q if East plays

etting back to your hand with ♥ K. Play your other ♦. He will have a ♦ loser, so assume he takes it. The defense can't afford again you can discard your ♠ loser on dummy's

Deal 2	♠ 4 2		
North Deals	♥ J 10 8 3		
None Vul	♦ A 9 2		
	♣ Q 10 7 3		
♠ Q J 5	♠ A 10 8		
♥ 7 6 4	♥ A K 9		
♦ K Q 10 6 3	♦ J 8 7		
♣ 6 5	♣ A 9 8 2		
	♠ K 9 7 6 3		
8 7	♥ Q 5 2		
9	♦ 5 4		
	♣ K J 4		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
3 NT by East			
Lead: ♠ 6			

You are East and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

With a balanced hand and 16 points you open 1 NT. In the Bridge dictionary under "Opening 1 NT Bid" they probably have a picture of this hand. Partner responds 2 NT. What do you bid?

Partner's 2 NT bid is invitational. Specifically it tells you to pass with 15 points or bid 3 NT with 17 points. But it doesn't tell you what to do when you have 16 points. So you have to make a judgement about your hand. Is it closer to 15 or closer to 17? The answer is definitely "closer to 17". Aces are actually worth a little more than 4 points and you have three of them. Also, most of your spot cards are higher than average, with only one card below a 7. So you bid 3 NT.

East plays 3 NT. South leads the ♠ 6, North plays ♠ 2.

Winner count: ♠ 2 : ♥ 2 : ♦ 0 : ♣ 1 : Total = 5

You are bound to get 2 winners in ♠s. You need to create 4 winners and the ♦ suit offers the perfect opportunity. Drive out the ♦ A and the other four ♦s are winners. But there is a very critical problem. If the defenders hold up their ♦ A until the third round of the suit you may be locked out of dummy.

Suppose you win the first ♠ with your ♠ 8. Then you start on ♦s and the defense wins the third one and leads a ♥. You win the ♥ but your only hope of reaching dummy is with a ♠. If you take your ♠ A, then lead a low one South will take his ♠ K and two more. Suppose you try to sneak over to dummy by playing your ♠ T. South will jump up with ♠ K, then lead another which you must win with your ♠ A. No entry.

In hindsight the answer is simple. Win the very first ♠ trick with your ♠ A. That leaves dummy with the ♠ Q J and a sure entry. It seems strange to win a trick with a higher card than necessary but it is the only way to make this contract.

to see the effect of your play to the first trick.

Notice that no matter what you try South can prevent you from reaching dummy.

to see how the correct play works.

Notice that South cannot prevent you from reaching dummy with the ♠ Q J.

Deal 3

East Deals	♠ 7 6 5
None Vul	♥ A 7 3 2
	♦ Q 6 4
	♣ 9 5 3

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

N	W	E	S
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6	♠ J
7	♥ K Q J 10 8 5
13	♦ 8 3
14	♣ A Q J 2

West	North	East	South
		1 ♦	1 ♥
1 ♠	2 ♥	2 ♠	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

4 ♥ by South

Lead: ♠ A

You are South and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

You surely want to compete and must choose between a Takeout Double and an overcall.

To make a Takeout Double followed by a bid of your own suit you should have 17 points or more. Since you don't quite measure up you overcall 1 ♥. The opponents find a ♠ fit and partner raises your ♥s.

If you bid 3 ♥ now partner would not take it as invitational, he would just assume you were competing for the partscore.

The truth is that you don't know if you can make game or not. If you are feeling very conservative then perhaps a 3 ♥ bid is ok. But the bold will bid 4 ♥.

South plays 4 ♥. West leads the ♠ A then the ♠ 8.

Losers: ♠ 1 : ♥ 0 : ♦ 2 : ♣ 2 : Total = 5

You cannot avoid losing the two ♦s and since you have already lost a ♠ you must not lose any ♣s. So you have to find East with the ♣ K. But that isn't all - you also need to get to dummy twice to make two finesses. The ♥ A is one entry and the other one will have to be the ♥ 7.

Be very careful. Ruff the second ♠ with the ♥ 8 saving your ♥ 5. Pull one round of trumps with ♥ K, then lead ♥ T to dummy (still saving the ♥ 5). Play a ♠ and finesse the ♠ J. Lead your ♥ 5 to dummy's ♥ 7, then another ♠, finessing the ♠ Q. Now play ♠ A and ruff your last ♠ with dummy's last ♥.

If you hadn't been able to find that extra entry you would have had no choice but to play East for the doubleton ♣ K x.

Deal 4

West Deals

None Vul

♠ A J 9 7 5**♥ J 2****♦ A K 5 3****♣ A Q****10
19
7
4****♠ 10 4
♥ A K 8 3
♦ Q J 8 6
♣ 10 6 4****♠ K Q 3 2
♥ Q 6 4
♦ 9 7 4 2
♣ 8 2****♠ 8 6
♥ 10 9 7 5
♦ 10
♣ K J 9 7 5 3**

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

4 ♠ by WestLead: **♥ A**

You are West and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

Make a choice. With 20 points you are strong enough to open 2 NT. But, with two doubletons you can't really call this a balanced hand. So you should open 1 ♠.

Partner responds 2 ♠. What do you bid?

There should be no doubt about this bid. Partner has at least 6 points so you know there is enough for game. You bid 4 ♠.

West plays 4 ♠. North leads ♥ A, ♥ K, ♥ 3 and South follows to all three.

Losers: ♠ 0 : ♥ 2 : ♦ 2 : ♣ 1 : Total = 5

The 5 loser count isn't actually right because at this point you can dump one of those losers on dummy's ♥ Q. The question is: Which one?

You have two chances to set up an extra winner - if the ♦s split 3-2 or if the ♣ K is with South. If you discard the ♣ Q right now you will be pinning all your hopes on the ♦ split. By discarding a ♦ instead you keep both possibilities alive.

So discard the ♦. Pull trumps with ♠ A J (it takes two rounds) then play ♦ A and ♦ K. Bad news, South shows out. So now you take your second chance. Enter dummy with a trump and play a ♣, finessing South for the ♣ K. Good news, this works. Two chances are better than one.

The percentages are right but the logic is wrong. If you are going to benefit from a 3-2 ♦ split it is only necessary for you to keep 4 ♦s in one of the hands, not both. So the fourth ♦ in your hand was unimportant while the ♣ Q gave you an extra shot.

Deal 5

North Deals	♠ 6 5
None Vul	♥ A K Q 7 4
	♦ A 9 4
	♣ 7 6 3
♠ A K 7 2	♠ Q J 10 4
♥ 3	♥ J 10 9 2
♦ 10 8 6 5 2	♦ 7
♣ J 10 8	♣ Q 9 5 2
13 8 6 13	♠ 9 8 3 ♥ 8 6 5 ♦ K Q J 3 ♣ A K 4

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

4 ♥ by North

Lead: ♠ Q

You are North and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

You have an easy 1 ♥ opening bid.

Partner responds 2 ♦. What is your next bid?

No matter how much you learn about bidding you will always come across hands which defy you to find anything reasonable to say. This is one of them.

You can't pass. Partner's 2-level response forces you to bid again. You can't raise his bid to 3 ♦ with only 3-card support. You shouldn't rebid your ♥ suit without 6 of them. And you hate to bid 2 NT with your black suit holding. Whenever you get into a situation like this you should admit to yourself that whatever you say is going to be a lie, then try to find the bid that is likely to get you into the least amount of trouble.

In this case that bid is 2 ♥. Although you only have 5 of them, at least you have the top 3.

After all that worrying partner bids 4 ♥ and you pass.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♠ Q and the defense plays three high ♠s.

Losers: ♠ 2 : ♥ 0/1 : ♦ 0 : ♣ 1 : Total = 3/4

If the trumps split 3-2 you are going to make 11 easy tricks.

So you ruff the third ♠ and play ♥ A, ♥ K. West shows out.

Decide whether to revise the Plan, then

Don't change plans, the old one was doing fine. Pull one more trump with the ♥ Q. That leaves East with ♥ J and you with ♥ 7. Don't panic, just don't lead any more ♥s. Start playing ♦ winners, then ♣ winners. Let East ruff with his ♥ J any time he wants to, your ♥ 7 will then be able to take care of a ♠ return and let you get back to minor suit winners.

This deal is a good example of that principle.

Deal 6	♠ 5 4		
East Deals	♥ J 7 3		
None Vul	♦ K Q 4 3		
	♣ A 10 5 2		
♠ A K J 9 6 2	♠ Q 7		
♥ 9 6 5	♥ A 8 2		
♦ A 6	♦ 10 9 7 5 2		
♣ K 3	♣ Q J 8		
	♠ 10 8 3		
10	♥ K Q 10 4		
15 9	♦ J 8		
6	♣ 9 7 6 4		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♠	Pass
1 NT	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
4 ♠ by East			
Lead: ♥ K			

You are West and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

With 10 points you aren't strong enough to respond at the 2-level, particularly with that weak ♦ suit.

So you bid 1 NT. Partner jumps to 3 ♠.

What do you bid?

Your 10 points are looking better now that you know partner has at least 16. That puts you at game-going strength.

And your ♠ Q 7 looks better too, knowing that partner has 6 ♠s.

So you bid 4 ♠.

East would play 4 ♠.

West plays 4 ♠. North leads the ♥ K.

Losers: ♠ 0 : ♥ 2 : ♦ 1 : ♣ 1 : Total = 4

You have one loser to get rid of. Your best approach is to establish a ♣ in dummy to take care of your ♦ loser. You can't pull trumps yet because you need the ♠ Q as an entry.

Win the ♥ A. Play a ♣ to the ♣ K, then another ♣. A defender will probably win this one and they will take two ♥s. But then they must give you the lead. You enter dummy with the ♠ Q and dump your ♦ 6 on the good ♣. Then you pull trumps and claim.

If the opening lead had been a ♦ you would first take the ♦ A, then pull trumps, then establish a ♣ to discard a ♥ loser, using the ♥ A as an entry.

If the opening lead had been a ♠ you would pull trumps, then establish a ♣ to discard a red loser on, using the ♥ A as an entry.

The same general plan, but with slightly different details, applies with all opening leads.