

Deal 1

North Deals

None Vul

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

16	♠ 9
8 1	♥ A Q 5
15	♦ A J 10 8 5 3
	♣ K J 6

West	North	East	South
	1 NT	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	4 ♦	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	4 ♣	Pass	6 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

6 ♦ by South
Lead: ♠ K

With 17 points and a 6-card suit you are definitely thinking about slam. The way to suggest slam to partner is to jump in a suit, so you bid 3 ♦.

Partner says 4 ♦, bypassing 3 NT and agreeing to your suit; what do you bid?

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When partner shows first round ♠ control you know you don't have two quick losers, so you bid 6 ♦.

You win West's opening lead with dummy's ♠ A.

You only have one too many losers, and you have a very obvious finesse for the ♥ K. But first you pull trumps in two rounds. Do you take the ♥ finesse now?

No you don't. In fact you won't need to take it at all, not with that very valuable ♠ J in dummy.

Play a ♣ to dummy's ♣ Q, then ruff the ♣ 7 in your hand. Next play ♠ K, then another ♣ to dummy's ♣ A. Play the ♠ J from dummy and discard your ♥ 5. West will win this trick, (from the opening lead you knew he had the ♣ Q), but he will be end-played. A ♠ or a ♣ will give you a ruff/sluff, but a ♥ will give you a free finesse into your ♥ A Q.

Sometimes being about 50% of the time on average.

So whenever you see your contract depending on a finesse, just look again and see if perhaps an elimination play is available.

Deal 2

East Deals

None Vul

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

13
2 8
17

West
 Pass
 Pass
 3 NT by South
 Lead: ♥ 10

♠ A Q 6

♥ 4 2

♦ K J 5 4

♣ K 7 3 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

♠ 10 8 5
 ♥ A K 7
 ♦ A 7 3
 ♣ A Q 6 5

North East South
 3 NT 2 ♥ 2 NT
 Pass Pass Pass

trick.

But it wouldn't matter, you would still play the same way. As long as you can strip East of any ♣s you can make the throw-in.

Over an opponent's Weak 2-bid a 2 NT overcall is used to show basically the same as a 1 NT opening bid, but promising stopper(s) in their suit.

Partner bids 3 NT.

As expected, West leads his partner's ♥ suit.

You need only one more winner; the best chance will be a 3-2 split in ♣s. But if that doesn't happen you might have to try the finesse in either ♠s or ♦s. The problem is that both finesses go into the East hand. Because of that fact there is no reason to hold up on the first trick so you win the ♥ A. Then you play the ♣ A... and East discards a ♦!

Don't be sad that the ♣s didn't split, your contract is now guaranteed! Well, guaranteed as long as East has only a 6-card ♥ suit.

Play your ♥ K, and when West follows suit play your ♥ 7. East wins this trick and he can also win 3 more ♥ tricks. But when he runs out of ♥s he will be forced to play a ♠ or a ♦ because he doesn't have any ♣s. Either one will give you your ninth

Deal 3South Deals
None Vul

♠ K 7 3
♥ K 9 2
♦ 10 7 4
♣ K Q J 4

15
12 11
2

West
Pass
Pass
2 ♠ by South
Lead: ♣ K

♠ Q J 9 4
♥ A 5 3
♦ A 8
♣ A 8 6 3

	N		♠ A 5
W		E	♥ Q J 6
	S		♦ K J 9 2
			♣ 10 9 5 2

♠ 10 8 6 2
♥ 10 8 7 4
♦ Q 6 5 3
♣ 7

North East South
Pass Pass 1 NT

2 ♠ Pass

You have a bad hand. Bad, bad, bad hand. But you think playing in ♠s, ♥s or ♦s would be better than playing 1 NT. Can you get partner to bid one of those suits? Sure, you just say 2 ♡. Partner says 2 ♠. Your call.

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Your dream just came true. So pass and it won't turn into a nightmare.

The contract would be 2 ♠ played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 2 ♠. East leads the ♣ K.

That is a lot of losers. But it makes the plan that much easier. You will try to make as many of dummy's small trumps as you can, and you will do that by ruffing ♣s.

Win the ♣ A and ruff a ♣ in dummy. Return to your hand with the ♦ A and ruff another ♣. Back to your hand with the ♥ A and ruff another ♣.

You have taken 6 tricks already and cannot be prevented from winning two more trumps.

Lucky for you the defenders didn't see the advantage of playing three rounds of trumps right off the bat.

It would be tough for East to come up with a ♠ lead from ♠ K 7 3, but it would have been great defense.

Deal 4South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 8 2
♥ 9
♦ K 9 7 4
♣ K Q J 9 2

17
11 1
11

West
Pass
Pass
3 NT by South
Lead: ♣ K

♠ A J 7
♥ Q 8 6 4
♦ A Q 6
♣ A 10 3

N
W E
S

♠ 10 9 5 4
♥ 10 7 5 3
♦ J 10 3
♣ 8 5

♠ K 6 3
♥ A K J 2
♦ 8 5 2
♣ 7 6 4

North East South
3 NT Pass 1 NT
Pass

Holding a 4-card ♥ suit some bidders would use Stayman. However, when you have 4-3-3-3 distribution there is little chance of ruffing so others prefer not to use Stayman. You take the latter view and bid 3 NT with your 11 points.

The contract would be 3 NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 3 NT. East leads the ♣ K and West follows with the ♣ 5.

Do you hold up? If so, how many times?

Your ninth trick will be either the ♠ J or the ♦ Q. In both cases the finesse would be into the East hand so the question of disrupting opponent's communications doesn't arise - West is not going to get the lead.

Nonetheless it is a good idea to hold up - but only once.

East then plays the ♣ Q which you win as West follows. Next you run four ♥ tricks, ending in dummy. You play dummy's ♣ K, your sixth trick so far. It is crunch time. Do you now finesse for the ♦ K or the ♠ Q?

The answer is NO, you do not take either finesse. Instead you play a ♣, hoping East must take the trick. And he does. East then cashes two more ♣ tricks but then he is out of ♣s. Since he is also out of ♥s he is going to have to play either a ♠ or a ♦, either one of which will make you very happy!

If West had not followed to the second ♣ you might not have been able to use the endplay. Instead you would have run the ♥s, and if East did not discard a ♣, you would have to guess as to which finesse to try. With the cards as shown neither would have worked.

Deal 5

South Deals

None Vul

♠ 7 3
♥ A 9 5 3
♦ 8 7 6
♣ Q J 10 2

8
7 9
16

N
W
S
E

♠ K Q 9 8 4 2
♥ 8 6
♦ K 10 2
♣ 5 3

♠ A 6
♥ K 7 4
♦ A J 9 3
♣ A 9 7 4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	1 NT
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	2 ♠
Pass			Pass
4 ♠ by South			
Lead: ♣ Q			

Partner transfers and you naturally respond 2 ♠.
Partner bids the ♠ game and you pass.

East plays the ♠ 8 and your first decision is whether to hold up.

You should certainly hold up. East is the Danger hand here because if East ever gets the lead he can play a ♥ through your unprotected ♥ K, possibly giving you two ♥ losers. If you take the first trick with the ♣ A you open the door for East to gain entry with the ♣ K which you know he has.

Next pull three rounds of trumps. Fortune smiles and they split 3-2.

Now it's time to play on ♦s. Do you finesse for the ♦ Q? and if so, which way do you finesse?

Missing 6 ♦s to the Queen of course you should finesse. And you will finesse through East, of course, because he is the Danger Hand. So play dummy's ♦ K, then play the ♦ T and let it ride.

to see how your Plan turned out.

Another time West will hold the ♦ Q and you will make the contract, but no overtrick.