

Deal 1

North Deals

None Vul

♠ Q 9 4
♥ J 9 8 5
♦ Q J T 5
♣ J T

17
7 5
11

♠ A J
♥ K Q 4 3
♦ A 7 3
♣ K 6 5 2

N
W E
S

♠ 8 6 5 3
♥ A 7 2
♦ K 6 4
♣ A 8 7

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

3NT by South

Baker ThirdHand 1

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♠2, dummy played the ♠3 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

This is a perfect example of why you should **USUALLY** play Third-hand-high.

If you do not put your ♠Q on this trick declarer will get an undeserved winner with his ♠J. In this Deal it will be his ninth trick. Play Third-hand-high and he will go down, otherwise he will make his contract.

Deal 2South Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 5
♥ Q J 9 5
♦ A J 6 2
♣ 9 7 4

10
8
15

♠ K T 7 4
♥ T 4
♦ 9 5 3
♣ A Q J 3
N
W E
S
♠ 2
♥ A 8 7 6 2
♦ K 8 4
♣ T 8 5 2
♠ A Q J 8 6 3
♥ K 3
♦ Q T 7
♣ K 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠
All Pass			4♠

4 ♠ by South

Baker Third Hand 2

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♥Q, dummy played the ♥4 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

You dare not play low for fear declarer might win a singleton ♥K.

And when you win the first trick, (the ♥K does NOT fall), you have to decide what to do next. Do not just return the suit like a robot since it is obvious that you have no more ♥ winners and you surely won't win any ♣ tricks.

You need to switch to a ♦, and the ♦4, (low from an honor) is recommended.

Played this way you will defeat the contract by one trick. If you allow declarer to win the first trick he will pull trumps and discard two red losers on dummy's ♣ and make an overtrick.

Deal 3

North Deals

E-W Vul

♠ Q 7 4 2
♥ 9 7 4 3
♦ 8 7
♣ Q J 2

15
5 10
10

♠ A T 6

♥ K J 2

♦ A T 5 3

♣ K 8 5

N
W E
S

♠ J 5 3

♥ Q T 6

♦ K 6 2

♣ A T 6 4

♠ K 9 8
♥ A 8 5
♦ Q J 9 4
♣ 9 7 3

West North East South
All Pass 1NT Pass 3NT

3 NT by South

Baker Third Hand 3

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♣4, dummy played the ♣3 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

But that doesn't mean you should blindly play your HIGHEST card, rather you should play the LOWEST of high-equals.

In other words, in this case you should play the ♣J, which is equal to the ♣Q.

If instead you play the ♣Q, figuring it makes no difference, you'd be right that it makes no difference to you. But partner would then assume that it is declarer with the ♣J, and when he obtains the lead with the ♦K he will be unlikely to lead another ♣, which would be too bad for your side.

Deal 4

South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 8 7 3
♥ T 5
♦ A 5 4 2
♣ 8 4 2

12
6 10
12

♠ J 6 4
♥ Q 8
♦ K 9 7 3
♣ K Q J T

N
W E
S

♠ K T 2
♥ 6 4 3
♦ Q J T 6
♣ A 6 5

♠ A 9 5
♥ A K J 9 7 2
♦ 8
♣ 9 7 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	2♥

4♥ by North

Baker ThirdHand 4

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♠3, dummy played the ♠4 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Partner's low ♠ lead tells you that he has an honor in the suit. There are only two ♠ honors you can't see, and you know he wouldn't underlead an Ace at a suit contract. So partner holds the ♠Q.

You can see clearly what would happen if you played Third-hand-high and put on your ♠K. Declarer would win his ♠A and could then set up a second ♠ trick by leading toward dummy's ♠J.

By playing the ♠T you force declarer to win with the ♠A if he wants the trick. But however he plays he can only make one ♠ trick when you play correctly.

For your side, 2 ♠ tricks and the two minor Aces spell defeat.

Deal 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A J 9 2
♥ T 7 5 3
♦ A 4 2
♣ 9 7

16
9 2
13

♠ 6 4
♥ K Q 2
♦ K J T 3
♣ A K 8 3

N
W E
S

♠ Q T 8 7
♥ 9 6 4
♦ 8 7 5
♣ T 6 4

♠ K 5 3
♥ A J 8
♦ Q 9 6
♣ Q J 5 2

West North East South
All Pass 1NT Pass 3NT

3NT by South

Baker Third Hand 5

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♠ 7, dummy played the ♠ 3 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Partner has led a small card, so it is surely fourth-down. That means you should automatically apply the Rule of Eleven.

11 minus 7 equals 4, so there are just 4 cards higher than the 7 between dummy, you, and declarer. AND YOU CAN SEE ALL FOUR OF THEM.

Declarer has no card that can beat the ♠ 7, and the only way you can beat this contract is to let partner's ♠ 7 hold the trick. He will continue the suit, allowing you to pick up dummy's ♠ K and four ♠ winners. Along with the ♦ A you will defeat the contract.

If you play ANY card except your ♠ 2 on the first trick you will not be able to win four tricks in the suit because you cannot get East back into the lead. And declarer will make the contract easily.

Deal 6

East Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 3
♥ 8 2
♦ T 9 5 4 2
♣ K 8 6 3

9
3 13
15

♠ K T 7 5
♥ 6
♦ K 8 3
♣ Q J 9 5 2

N
W E
S

♠ A Q J 8 2
♥ A Q J 5
♦ J 6
♣ 7 4

♠ 6 4
♥ K T 9 7 4 3
♦ A Q 7
♣ A T

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

4 ♠ by South

give South the contract.

Baker Third Hand 6

The bidding has been as shown. North's 2♥ bid shows good ♠ support with at least 10 points.

Partner led the ♥8, dummy played the ♥6 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Partner's ♥8 lead is a high spot card, either top-of-nothing, or a singleton or doubleton. He definitely does not have an honor, which means that South holds ♥ A Q J.

In other words, your ♥K is dead in the water. BUT, if you play it to this trick you hand South three ♥ tricks, while if you play a low ♥ he can only get 2 winners in the suit.

The extra winner would permit South to discard 2 of dummy's ♦ losers, and this would

Deal 7

North Deals

Both Vul

♠ J 9 8 5
♥ K 7
♦ 9 7 4 3
♣ 8 7 2

16
4 9
11

♠ A T 2
♥ A 8 2
♦ A Q T 2
♣ Q 6 3

N
W E
S

♠ Q 6 4
♥ Q J T 5 3
♦ 8 5
♣ A T 4

♠ K 7 3
♥ 9 6 4
♦ K J 6
♣ K J 9 5

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

3NT by South

you switch to another suit. He will have time to drive out the ♣A while he still has ♥s stopped.

It was a good thing you held the ♥K rather than declarer, but it is a nuisance that you must get out of the way on the very first trick.

Baker Third Hand 7

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♥Q, dummy played the ♥4 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Admittedly you have a terrible hand. But that's no reason to be careless. YOU can beat this contract, but you have to do it right now by unblocking the ♥K. If declarer holds up you will continue with your ♥7 and partner will establish his suit while he still has the ♣A for an entry. If declarer doesn't hold up it will be just as bad for him.

But suppose you say "Well, partner's ♥Q is just as good as my ♥K so I'll just save the King for later" as you play low. Declarer will love you. He will hold up on the ♥Q, then again on trick two when you play the ♥K. AND HE WILL STILL HAVE HIS ♥A when

Deal 8

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 8 3
♥ J 9 6 2
♦ A 7 3
♣ Q T 8

19
7 8
6

♠ A Q J T 7

♥ A 5
♦ K 4 2
♣ A J 2

N
W E
S

♠ K 6 2
♥ K Q 3
♦ T 9 8 5
♣ 9 7 3

♠ 5 4
♥ T 8 7 4
♦ Q J 6
♣ K 6 5 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3 NT by North

Baker Third Hand 8

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♥2, dummy played the ♥A and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

You know partner has a 4-card ♥ suit, (he led the deuce), and you know it is headed by an honor. You hope the honor is the ♥J, but in any case you must get your high ♥s out of the way.

Declarer will probably come to his hand and then take a ♠ finesse. You win the ♠K, take your other high ♥, then lead your ♥3 toward your partner.

As you see, partner did hold the ♥J 9, so your side wins 3 ♥ tricks.

If declarer played low on the first trick you would win the ♥Q, then play the ♥K to dummy's ♥A.

Deal 9South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A J 7
♥ 6 4 2
♦ T 9 8 5
♣ 9 7 3

13
5 9
13

♠ Q 4 3
♥ J 7
♦ K J 4 3
♣ K Q J 5

N
W E
S

♠ T 8 6 5
♥ A K 3
♦ Q 7 2
♣ 8 4 2

♠ K 9 2
♥ Q T 9 8 5
♦ A 6
♣ A T 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

3NT by South

another ♥ and be able to cash his last ♠.

Note that if dummy's ♠9 was played you would cover with your ♠J, leading to the same situation.

Baker Third Hand 9

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♠5, dummy played the ♠2 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Partner's low ♠ lead tells you he has an honor in the suit, so it must be either the ♠Q or the ♠T. North's jump to 2NT makes it almost certain that he holds the ♠Q, so you can figure partner probably led from ♠ T x x 5.

Apply the Rule of 11. 11 minus 5 = 6 cards higher than the ♠5 held by dummy, you, and declarer. Since you can see 5 of the 6 you conclude that that declarer will have to play his ♠Q to beat your ♠7.

North will take the ♠Q at trick 1, but when East wins a high ♥ he will play another ♠ through dummy's ♠ K 9 to your ♠ A J. Once you clear dummy's ♠ away partner will win

Deal 10

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K 8 5 2
♥ J T 6 5 2
♦ 6 4
♣ 9 3

10
4 10
16

♠ J 6 4

♥ 9 8
♦ A 5

♣ A J T 7 4 2

N
W E
S

♠ 9 7 3
♥ A Q 7
♦ J T 8 7 3
♣ K 6

♠ A Q T
♥ K 4 3
♦ K Q 9 2
♣ Q 8 5

West North East South
Pass 3NT All Pass 1NT

3 NT by North

Baker Third Hand 10

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♥5, dummy played the ♥8 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

The Rule of Eleven tells you there are 6 cards in North, East and South that are higher than the ♥5. You can see 5 of them, so that leaves just one of them for South.

West cannot have all three of the outstanding honors, because from ♥ K J T x x his correct lead would be the Jack. So you can deduce that South must hold exactly one of ♥K, ♥J, or ♥T.

If his honor is not the ♥K then it won't matter whether you play ♥A or ♥Q to the first trick; you will win your two top cards and then play your small one back to West.

So assume South actually holds the ♥K x x. If you play the ♥A to trick one, then lead ♥Q, South will hold up on the second trick, and win the third ♥. Then, when you win your ♣K you will not have a ♥ to return to partner and declarer will make the contract.

So what happens if you play the ♥Q at trick one? South could still make the contract by holding up, but he will be afraid to do so. After all, from his perspective it looks like West probably holds the ♥A and he will be afraid of losing the first 5 ♥ tricks, perhaps even when the ♣K finessing is working!

Deal 11

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 7 4
♥ A K 4
♦ T 9 8 4
♣ T 8 4 2

6
7 12
15

♠ J T 9 6 2

♥ 8 5 3

♦ K J 3

♣ J 6

N
W E
S

♠ K 5
♥ Q J 9 7 2
♦ A Q 6
♣ 9 7 3

♠ A Q 8 3
♥ T 6
♦ 7 5 2
♣ A K Q 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♥	3♣
All Pass			3♠

3 ♠ by South

Baker Third Hand 11

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♥Q, dummy played the ♥6 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Your side needs to take 5 tricks to defeat this contract. Two of them will be ♥s, but it doesn't look like you can win any ♣s or ♠s.

That means you need to win 3 ♦ tricks and the only way that can happen is if you play ♦s from your side.

So win the first ♥K (so partner will know you also have the ♥A), and play the ♦T. Presumably North will play an honor, but East will take the trick and put you back on lead with your ♥A. You play the ♦9 and your side will collect 3 ♦ tricks to go with your 2 ♥s.

Deal 12

North Deals

None Vul

♠ A K Q 8 6 4

♥ 8

♦ 7 4 2

♣ A J 9

16
14 2
8

♠ J 3

♥ K Q J 6

♦ A K Q T 5

♣ 6 2

	N		♠ T
W		♥ 7 3 2	
	E		♦ 9 8 6 3
	S		♣ Q 7 5 4 3

♠ 9 7 5 2
♥ A T 9 5 4
♦ J
♣ K T 8

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

4 ♥ by North

now you get to play a ♣ through South's ♣ K at trick 3.

Baker Third Hand 12

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♠ A, then the ♠ K. Dummy follows suit and it is your play to the second trick.

When you have made your choice

It is obvious that your side can only get 2 ♠ tricks. And assuming that South has the Ace of trumps you will not make a single trick in the red suits. So you need to make 2 ♣ tricks.

If partner has the ♣ A K then he will take them, but if he has the ♣ A J he cannot win 2 ♣ tricks from his side.

To allow for this situation it will be better to play ♣s from your side of the table, and the way to make that happen is for you to ruff partner's ♠ K with an otherwise useless trump. You still get your two ♠ winners (sort of) but

Deal 13

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 8 3
♥ A K 9 7 5
♦ Q 9 5
♣ 6 3

13
10 3
14

♠ K Q 6

♥ Q T 4

♦ J

♣ A J 9 8 4 2

N
W E
S

♠ 9 7 5 2

♥ 8 2

♦ T 7 6 4 3

♣ K 7

♠ A T 4
♥ J 6 3
♦ A K 8 2
♣ Q T 5

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♣	Pass	1♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	3♣

3NT by North

Baker Third Hand 13

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♥8, dummy played the ♥J and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

North played dummy's ♥J to tempt you to cover. Don't fall for it.

Partner's lead of a high spot card shows no honors in the suit. That added to the fact that North bid Notrump after you had mentioned ♥s is pretty good evidence that North holds at least ♥ Q x x.

To maintain communication with partner your best hope is to duck the first ♥, but to signal encouragement with the ♥9.

North wins the first trick easily, but must try to establish ♣s. He will enter dummy with the ♠A, then try to run the ♣Q.

Not today. Partner takes the ♣K and returns his ♥2 to your four winners.

Deal 14

South Deals
None Vul

♠ K 6 2
♥ T 6 4
♦ A J 6 5 4
♣ 9 2

12
8 4
16

♠ Q J 9 3

♥ K Q J 5

♦ 9 3

♣ Q J T

N
W E
S

♠ 8 4
♥ 9 7 3
♦ T 8 7 2
♣ A 6 5 3

♠ A T 7 5
♥ A 8 2
♦ K Q
♣ K 8 7 4

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

4 ♠ by North

Baker Third Hand 14

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♣9, dummy played the ♣T and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Partner's ♣9 is likely from a short suit. If it is a singleton, you should take the ♣A immediately and return the suit for a ruff. If it is a doubleton, you should NOT take your ♣A now, but should hope partner can get the lead and play his second ♣ to your Ace so you can give him the ruff.

You can figure out which it is.

If it is a singleton, then South must hold 5 ♣s. But you know South has 4 ♠s, so if he also has 5 ♣s then he only has 4 red cards, and he would not have opened 1NT with either 5-4-2-2 or 5-4-3-1 distribution.

So partner's ♣9 is not a singleton, and you should wait. Declarer then runs dummy's ♠Q. Partner wins the ♠K, returns his OTHER ♣ to your ♣A, and NOW you give him the ruff. He takes the ♦A for down 1.

Deal 15

West Deals

N-S Vul

♠ Q J 9 7
♥ K Q 6 5 3
♦ T
♣ A 6 4

20
12 3
5

♠ A K 4

♥ A 7 4

♦ A K 7 3

♣ Q 5 2

N
W E
S

♠ T 8 3

♥ T 2

♦ Q J 8 6 4 2

♣ 8 3

♠ 6 5 2
♥ J 9 8
♦ 9 5
♣ K J T 9 7

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

3NT by South

Baker Third Hand 15

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♥T, dummy played the ♥J and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Declarer gets two ♥ winners whether you play one of your honors on this trick or not. So why does it matter what you do?

Suppose you cover with your ♥Q. North will win his ♥A, then play ♣s until your ♣A is forced out on the third round. He can then force an entry to dummy in the ♥ suit to reach the two ♣ winners.

Now suppose you duck the ♥J. Again North will push ♣s, and again you hold up until the third round. Ahh, what a difference. Now declarer cannot use the ♥s to enter dummy and he will never get to enjoy those two ♣ winners.

Deal 16

North Deals
None Vul

♠ Q
♥ T 9 6 5 2
♦ J 8 6 3
♣ 6 4 2

13
3 11
13

♠ 7 5 4 2
♥ K Q
♦ A 5
♣ K J T 8 5

N
W E
S

♠ K T 9 8 6
♥ 8 7 4
♦ Q 7 4
♣ A Q

♠ A J 3
♥ A J 3
♦ K T 9 2
♣ 9 7 3

West	North	East	South
	1♣	1♠	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3 NT by North

Baker Third Hand 16

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♠Q, a low card was played from dummy, and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

It seems that perhaps you should play low and let partner's ♠Q force out South's ♠A. Then, when you get the lead with a high ♣ you can force out South's ♠J. Get the lead with your other high ♣ and set the contract with ♠s.

Suppose you try that. Play low on the first ♠. South will also play low and West will be left holding the trick, and also holding the bag! With no more ♠s West will have to play one of the other three suits, and that is just what South wants to have happen. The contract could no longer be beaten.

Now do it the right way. Play your ♠K on partner's ♠Q. Assume South takes the trick, although it doesn't matter whether he wins the first one or holds up. When you win your first ♣ drive out South's ♠J. When you win your second ♣ trick your ♠s will be good. If you overtake the first trick the contract can no longer be made.

Notice that South will always make two ♠ tricks, so your overtake costs nothing.

Deal 17
 South Deals
 None Vul
 ♠ K 8 7 5 4 2
 ♥ Q T 4
 ♦ 8 3
 ♣ A 6

14
 9 5
 12

♠ Q J T
 ♥ A 7
 ♦ A K 7 5
 ♣ T 7 5 3
 ♠ 9 3
 ♥ J 8 6 5 2
 ♦ J T 9 4
 ♣ K 4
 N
 W E
 S
 ♠ A 6
 ♥ K 9 3
 ♦ Q 6 2
 ♣ Q J 9 8 2

West	North	East	South
2♠	2NT	Pass	3NT

All Pass

3NT by South

dropping North's ♠Q, and your other three good ♠s.

Just like the previous deal, North gets two ♠ tricks either way, but one way he makes an overtrick, the other way he goes down 2.

Baker ThirdHand 17
 The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♠9, dummy played the ♠6 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

You could easily win the ♠K, then play a small ♠ to drive out dummy's ♠A. But North bid Notrump over your 2♠ overcall, so he surely holds ♠ Q J T. So when you get the lead with your one ♣A entry you can establish your ♠s, but you won't get into the lead to cash them.

Look what happens when you duck the first trick. North will win the trick with his ♠T, and start on dummy's ♣ suit.

East (your wonderful partner) will win the first ♣ and return his final ♠ to dummy's ♠A.

North will have to keep working on ♣s, but now you can win the ♣A and play your ♠K, ♠s.

Deal 18

South Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 8 3
♥ 6
♦ J T 7 2
♣ K Q J T

11
13 4
12

♠ J T 6 4
♥ Q J T
♦ A K 6
♣ 9 4 2

♠ 7 2
N
W E
S
♣ A 8 7 5 3

♠ K 9 5
♥ A K 9 7 5 2
♦ Q 8 3
♣ 6

West	North	East	South
2♣	Pass	3♣	1♥
Pass	4♥	All Pass	3♥

4♥ by North

Baker Third Hand 18

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♣K, dummy played low and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

You are pretty sure partner would not have supported your ♣s unless he had 4 of them, which means it is very likely that South has a singleton. (he might even be void)

So if you are to set this contract partner is going to have to have some ♠ winners. It might not matter, but it also might be vital that the first ♠ lead comes from your side of the table so after you overtake with the ♣A you switch to the ♠7.

Partner loves it - whatever South does West takes the next two ♠s, then leads a third ♠ for you to ruff. Down 1.

Deal 19South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A 4 2
♥ 5
♦ T 9 6 3
♣ A 8 6 4 3

12
8 7
13

♠ Q J 9 6 5
♥ K T 6
♦ K Q 2
♣ J 2

N
W E
S

♠ 7
♥ Q 8 7 3 2
♦ 8 5 4
♣ K Q 9 5

♠ K T 8 3
♥ A J 9 4
♦ A J 7
♣ T 7

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

4 ♠ by North

Baker Third Hand 19

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♣K, dummy played the ♣7 and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

As soon as you see the opening lead and dummy you should start figuring out just how you can defeat the contract. Hopefully this plan came to your mind.

From his lead, you know partner also holds the ♣Q. Overtake the ♣K. Play your singleton ♥5. When North starts on trumps, win the first one with your ♠A. Put partner back on lead with a small ♣ to his known ♣Q.

If you have a partner who pays attention he will now play a ♥ for you to ruff. Two ♣s, the Ace of trumps, and a ♥ ruff makes down 1.

Deal 20

South Deals

None Vul

♠ J T 9 8
♥ 7 3
♦ K Q T 9 3
♣ A 9

13
10 4
13

♠ Q 7 4
♥ A Q J 5
♦ 8 6 2
♣ K J 4

N
W E
S

♠ 6 3 2
♥ K T 8 6 2
♦ J 4
♣ 8 7 3

♠ A K 5
♥ 9 4
♦ A 7 5
♣ Q T 6 5 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3NT by North

Baker Third Hand 20

The bidding has been as shown. Partner led the ♦ K, dummy played low and it is your play.

When you have made your choice

Put yourself in partner's shoes. He almost surely has ♦ K Q T x (x). When South holds up on his ♦ A, which he almost surely will, West may think he is holding up with ♦ A J x, and be afraid to continue the suit.

You can help your partner figure out the true situation by merely playing your ♦ J so he can see that South doesn't have it.

With this good play West will be able to continue ♦ s and defeat the contract.