

Deal 1

North Deals	♠ 8 4
None Vul	♥ A 8 7 2
	♦ A 9 6 4
	♣ A K Q

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

¹⁷ 8 8 7	♠ A K 7 6 3 2 ♥ 6 5 3 ♦ 7 ♣ 10 8 6
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West	North	East	South
	1 NT	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	Pass	Pass

4 ♠ by North
Lead: ♥ K

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".

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

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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

Deal 2
 East Deals
 None Vul

♠ A K J
 ♥ A 7 2
 ♦ K Q 7 6
 ♣ A 9 4

1
21 13
 5

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

♠ 8 7 6
 ♥ Q 8 5
 ♦ A J 2
 ♣ K Q J 3

N
 W E
 S

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
6 NT	Pass	2 NT	Pass
6 NT by East			
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 East.

To make West the declarer ROTATE.

West plays 6 NT. North leads the ♦T. Too bad North 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.

obviously the defender with the ♥K will grab it to set the contract.

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

Suppose you lead a small ♠ from dummy and play your ♠J, and it loses to North's ♠Q. If you then try leading a small ♥ toward dummy's ♥Q,

Deal 3
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ 9 6 3
 ♥ A 10 9 8
 ♦ A Q 5
 ♣ J 10 9

10
11 3
16

♠ 7 4 2
 ♥ K Q J 6 5
 ♦ 7 3
 ♣ A 8 3

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

♠ A K Q J
 ♥ 7 4 2
 ♦ J 8 6 4
 ♣ K Q

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

4 ♥ by South
 Lead: ♣ J

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

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 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 West'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

West Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 4
♥ K 8 6 2
♦ K Q J 3
♣ A 7 5

3
15 17
5

West North East South
1 NT Pass 2 ♣ Pass
2 ♥ Pass 6 ♥ Pass
Pass Pass
6 ♥ by West
Lead: ♣ Q

♠ 8 7 6 3
♥ 9 4
♦ 10 5 2
♣ Q J 10 4

N
W E
S

♠ A K J 5
♥ A J 10 5
♦ A 6 4
♣ 8 3

♠ 10 9 2
♥ Q 7 3
♦ 9 8 7
♣ K 9 6 2

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.

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

Partner takes the direct approach and puts you in slam.

North 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

Deal 5

North Deals

None Vul

♠ K 9 7
♥ 8 7 6 4 2
♦ A 9
♣ 10 8 2

¹⁷
7 7
9

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 NT	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
3 NT by North			
Lead: ♠ 5			

♠ Q J 4
♥ Q J 3
♦ K Q J 2
♣ A J 5

N
W E
S

♠ A 10 8 5 3
♥ K 5
♦ 8 7 4 3
♣ 9 3

♠ 6 2
♥ A 10 9
♦ 10 6 5
♣ K Q 7 6 4

Partner's 2 NT bid invites you to bid game if you have a maximum hand. You aren't thrilled by all the Quacks in your hand but with 17 points you bid 3 NT.

West wins the first trick with the ♠ K and returns the ♠ 9. East plays the ♠ 3 under your ♠ J.

You need 2 more tricks, and the ♦ suit will provide them after you drive out the ♦ A.

Is that what you should do?

That is definitely NOT what you should do. East led the ♠ 5, then played the ♠ 3 to the second trick. You have seen the ♠ 4 and ♠ 2 so it is clear that East started with a 5-card suit. That means West still has a ♠. The instant you play a ♦ one of the defenders will grab the ♦ A and East will take his three more ♠ tricks.

As much as you hate to put your contract in the hands of a 50% finesse chance, that is what you must do. Forget the ♦ suit and finesse East for the ♥ K, trying for two extra tricks in ♥s.

So you have to play well and stay away from ♦s.

Deal 6
 West Deals
 None Vul

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

3		♠ 7
15 14		♥ K Q J 9 8 7 5
8		♦ A
		♣ A 8 4 2

<i>West</i> 1 NT 4 ♠ Pass 6 ♥ by East Lead: ♠ Q	<i>North</i> Pass Pass Pass	<i>East</i> 4 ♣ 6 ♥	<i>South</i> Pass Pass
<i>North</i> Pass Pass Pass	<i>East</i> 4 ♣ 6 ♥	<i>South</i> Pass Pass	
<i>East</i> 4 ♣ 6 ♥	<i>South</i> Pass Pass		
<i>South</i> Pass Pass			

about the other two?

Suppose you win the ♠ and unblock the ♦ A. Play ♥ K, then to dummy's ♥ A. Take one ♣ discard on the ♠ K, then play the ♦ Q and discard a second ♣.

It won't work. You would establish the ♦ for your last discard but you have no entry to it.

This will work. At trick 2 discard the ♦ A on dummy's ♠ K. Play the ♦ Q and discard a ♣ when North doesn't cover. South will take the ♦ K and attack ♣s but you are in control now. You win your ♣ A, pull trumps, ending in dummy, and discard the remaining 2 ♣ losers on dummy's ♦ J T.

for the full layout.

If North held the ♦ K the play would be slightly different; you would have to ruff when he covered. But the result would be the same.

Did you notice that you started with 3 ♣ losers and no ♦ loser, but you ended up losing 1 ♦ and no ♣s?

There would be nothing wrong with a transfer bid here, but probably no advantage either. What you really want to know is how many Aces partner has. So you ask him with a Gerber 4 ♣ bid.

Partner says 4 ♪ (2 Aces), what do you bid?

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Partner says 4 ♪ (2 Aces), what do you bid?

Looking at three possible ♣ losers you bid 6 ♥.

The first trick is easy; you win with dummy's ♣ A.

It can't do any good to ruff your fourth ♣ in dummy because you would have to lose two before that could happen. Of course one of your ♣s can be discarded on dummy's ♠ K but what