

Deal 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 10 7
♥ J 9 3
♦ A J 4
♣ 9 7 2

15
9 10
6

West

North

East

South

Pass
Pass
Pass

1 ♥
3 ♦
Pass

Pass
Pass
Pass

2 ♥
4 ♥

4 ♥ by North

Lead: ♣ A

♠ A 5
♥ A K Q 7 6 4
♦ Q 7 3
♣ 8 5



♠ K 8 6 4
♥ 10 5 2
♦ K 8
♣ 10 6 4 3

♠ 9 3 2
♥ 8
♦ 10 9 6 5 2
♣ A K Q J

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

You have a straightforward 1 ♥ opening bid.

Partner responds 2 ♥.

With 17 points and two doubletons you are on the borderline between passing and bidding game. If partner has the top of his 6-10 points you want to be in game, if he is at the bottom you don't.

A reasonable bid would be 3 ♥, inviting partner to bid game with a maximum.

A better bid is 3 ♦, a Help Suit Game Try. This says the same thing, bid game with a maximum, but also says "Use your ♦ holding to help you decide."

That was just what South needed. He only had 7 points but decided the ♦ help was worth an extra point or two.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♣ A, ♣ K, ♣ Q.

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

You must eliminate one ♦ loser, that means ruffing it in dummy. You would like to pull trumps first but you cannot chance pulling two rounds because if they don't split 2-2 you would have to leave one out until after you had ruffed the ♦. The problem would then be that the defender who took the ♦ A might lead the third trump, preventing your ruff.

So first you must drive out the ♦ A. After you ruff the ♣ you play a ♦ to dummy's ♦ K. West takes the ♦ A and leads a trump. You win in your hand, pull one more trump, then play ♦ Q, ♦ 7, ruffing in dummy. Back to your hand with the ♠ A, pull the last trump and claim.

And you couldn't get the ♦ ruff until after you had forced out the ♦ A.

Deal 2

West Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 5
♥ K Q J 10 9 2
♦ Q J 4
♣ Q J

15
12 2
11

West

1 ♥

Pass

Pass

4 ♠ by South

Lead: ♥ K

♠ A J 4 3

♥ 4

♦ K 7 3 2

♣ A K 7 3



♠ K 7 6 2

♥ A 7 6 3

♦ A 5

♣ 9 6 2

North

Dbl

4 ♠

East

Pass

Pass

South

2 ♠

Pass

♠ Q 10 9

♥ 8 5

♦ 10 9 8 6

♣ 10 8 5 4

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

When responding to partner's Takeout Double:- with 0-8 points you bid cheaply- with 9-11 points you jump in a suit- with 12 or more points you cue-bid their suit

You have 11 so you jump to 2 ♠. Partner bids 4 ♠ and you pass.

South plays 4 ♠. West leads the ♥ K.

Losers: ♠ 1 : ♥ 3? : ♦ 0 : ♣ 1 : Total = 5?

The loser count is somewhat misleading because obviously you can ruff some ♥s in dummy.

Sometimes it is better to count winners, even though it is a suit contract. Winners: ♠ 2 : ♥ 1 : ♦ 2 : ♣ 2 : Total = 7

Thinking like this makes it clear that you must win 3 of your 4 small trumps. The best way to do this is to win the ♥ A and pull 2 rounds of trumps

with ♠ A and ♠ K, spurning the finesse. Trumps split 3-2, so leave the master trump out and cash your other high card winners. Then start cross-ruffing, ♥s in dummy and ♦s in your hand. The defender with the master trump is welcome to ruff with it whenever he wants - it won't stop you from coming to T tricks.

If you tried that East would have won his ♠ Q, then played another ♠. That would leave both you and dummy with only one trump each and you would have come up a trick short. You can afford to pull just two rounds of trumps, then must cross-ruff with your remaining four.

Deal 3

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 10 5 4
♥ J 5
♦ 9 6
♣ K 9 7 5 2

13
8 9
10

West

Pass
Pass

4♥ by North

Lead: ♣ 4

♠ Q 7 3
♥ A Q 6 4 3
♦ 8 5 2
♣ A J



♠ 8 6 2
♥ K 9 8 7
♦ A Q J 10
♣ 8 3

North

1♥
4♥

East

Pass
Pass

South

3♥
Pass

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

You open 1♥, partner responds 3♥.

What is your next bid?

Partner's 3♥ response shows 11-12 points with good trumps.

With your 14 points you decide to bid the game.

North plays 4♥. East leads the ♣ 4, West plays the ♣ K.

Losers: ♠ 3 : ♥ 0 : ♦ 2 : ♣ 1 : Total = 6

There is no hope of extra winners except the ♦ suit. You are wide open in ♠s, so you have to hope that East holds the ♦ K. But that won't be enough by itself, in case he has ♦ K x x x you also have to have three entries to your hand. Two of them will be the ♥ A and ♥ Q and the third entry must be the ♣ A.

So you win the first trick with the ♣ A and immediately take your first ♦ finesse. It wins, so you return to your hand with a ♥ to the ♥ Q and take another ♦ finesse. Back to your hand with the ♥ A (pulling the last trumps) and take a third ♦ finesse. Finally on the ♦ A you can discard either your ♣ loser or a ♠. You will have to give up three tricks at the end.

Any other plan that was based on East holding the ♦ K would work ALMOST 50% of the time but would fail when East had three protectors for the ♦ K.

Deal 4

South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 10 8
♥ 9 4
♦ A 6 3 2
♣ 10 9 6

15
7 7
11

West

Pass
Pass

4 ♥ by South
Lead: ♠ Q

♠ A 4 2
♥ Q J 10 5 3
♦ K J 7
♣ A 3



♠ K 7 3
♥ A 8 6 2
♦ Q 4
♣ Q 7 5 4

North

3 ♥
Pass

East

Pass
Pass

South

1 ♥
4 ♥

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

You have 11 (perhaps 12) points and four trumps. Just right for a limit raise.

So you bid 3 ♥ and partner goes to game.

South would play 4 ♥.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♠ Q.

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

You know you can't get rid of the ♦ loser, and it's hard to imagine a way that would let you get rid of the ♣ loser. The ♥ loser depends on the finesse. So you should try to find somewhere to put the ♠ loser.

First you win the ♠ A. You know that you will eventually take the ♥ finesse, so should you take it now? Visualize the likely defense actions if you do. Say West wins the ♥ K. He will surely play another ♠, knocking out dummy's ♠ K. Whenever

you try to set up ♦s the defense will take their ♠ trick and you will eventually go down.

What happened is that you gave the defense a tempo and let them control the timing of the play. You should not have rushed into the ♥ finesse. Instead suppose that you win the first trick with dummy's ♠ K and immediately play the ♦ Q. The defense can take their ♦ A when they want to and push another ♠, but now the timing is on your side. You can discard a ♠ from dummy on your good ♦ in time.

Set up the ♦ winner before you take the ♥ finesse and you will always be able to dump the ♠ loser no matter who has the ♥ K.

Deal 5

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 6 5
♥ 9 7 3
♦ Q 10 6 3
♣ A 9 2

15
6 7
12

West

Pass

Pass

3 NT by North

Lead: ♦ 2

♠ A J 9 3
♥ K 8 2
♦ A 8
♣ Q J 5 3



♠ Q 10 4
♥ A Q J 6
♦ 7 5 4
♣ K 10 8

North

1 NT

2 ♠

Pass

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

2 ♣

3 NT

♠ K 7 2
♥ 10 5 4
♦ K J 9 2
♣ 7 6 4

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

With 15 points and a balanced hand of course you open 1 NT.

Partner's response is 2 ♣. What do you bid?

Partner's 2 ♣ bid is Stayman asking you to name a 4-card Major.

You bid 2 ♠, but that must not have been the Major he wanted so he bids 3 NT.

North plays 3 NT. East leads the ♦ 2. West plays ♦ Q. You hold up on this trick and West returns the ♦ 3.

You hold up on this trick and West returns the ♦ 3.

Winners: ♠ 1 : ♥ 4 : ♦ 1 : ♣ 0 : Total = 6

You need to get three more winners and you have two very clear possibilities.

If West holds the ♠ K you can finesse him out of it and win an additional 3 tricks in the suit. The problem with this approach is that half the time East will hold the ♠ K and you will go down.

Or you can drive out the ♣ A and definitely set up an additional 3 tricks in that suit. The problem with this approach is that if the defender's ♦s split 5-3 they will be able to win 4 ♦s and the ♣ A.

If you pay attention to the opening lead this becomes a simple decision. East led the ♦ 2. Assuming that was fourth down then he must have led from a 4-card suit. So it looks like the ♦s must be splitting 4-4 and it is safe for you to establish ♣s. So you drive out the ♣ A. The defenders take their other 2 ♦s but you make the game losing only 3 ♦s and the ♣ A.

East's lead of the ♦ 2 should have made you pretty sure that he had led from a 4-card suit. If the ♦ 2 is fourth down, there cannot be a fifth down. Additionally, West's return of the ♦ 3 confirmed that conclusion. If West had started with only 3 ♦s, (say ♦ Q 6 3) his correct return at trick 2 would have been his next highest, the ♦ 6. With 4 cards in the suit his correct return is his original fourth down.