

**Deal 1**

South Deals	♠ Q 10 9 8 4
None Vul	♥ A 4
	♦ Q 7 2
	♣ 8 6 5

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

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

West	North	East	South
			1 NT
Pass	2 ♥	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

3 NT by South  
Lead: ♥ 5

West has a 5-card suit, which means that East has 2 ♥s. West's suit is definitely NOT ♥ K Q J 5 2; he would have started with the ♥ K, not the ♥ 5. So you can be sure that East holds either ♥ K x, ♥ Q x or ♥ J x. So what?

So you should play the ♥ A immediately. If East puts on his small ♥ then his lone honor will block the suit the next time it is played. But if he unblocks the honor under dummy's ♥ A then your ♥ T 9 7 will be promoted into a second stopper.

Play the ♥ A on the first trick and East is hog-tied. If he plays low the suit blocks, if he sacrifices his ♥ Q then your ♥ T 9 7 prevents West from running the suit.

Partner's 2 ♥ is a transfer, so you bid 2 ♠. Partner now bids 2 NT. What do you say?

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Partner is only inviting, so he must have either 9 or 10 points. And since he chose 2 NT as the invitation he must have only 5 ♠s. You will accept the invitation since you have a maximum 1 NT opener, and you choose 3 NT since you know there is no 8-card ♠ fit.

When West leads the ♥ 5 you have an immediate decision to make.

It is pretty clear that the 4 additional winners you need will be ♠s. The danger is that when you force out the ♠A the defenders might be able to cash 4 ♥s right away. So the immediate decision is whether you take the ♥ A on the first trick or wait until the second.

If West has only 4 ♥s it will make no difference what you do because they will only win 3 ♥ tricks and you will make your contract. So assume that

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**Deal 2**

South Deals	♠ A 10 7 3
None Vul	♥ 9 7
	♦ K Q J
	♣ K Q J 7

♠ 5	♠ Q J 4 2
♥ K Q J 6 5 2	♥ 8 3
♦ A 6 4	♦ 9 8 3
♣ 9 4 3	♣ 10 8 6 5
16	♠ K 9 8 6
10 3	♥ A 10 4
11	♦ 10 7 5 2
	♣ A 2

West	North	East	South
			1 NT
2 ♥	2 NT	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	4 ♠	ALL	Pass
4 ♠ by South			
Lead: ♥ K			

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Now you cue-bid 3 ♥. An immediate cue-bid would have been Stayman, (for the other Major), but the cue-bid following the lebensohl 2 NT also promises a stopper in the enemy suit. In any case, partner replies 3 ♠. Next?

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You bid 4 ♠.

The contract would be 4 ♠ played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 4 ♠. East leads the ♥ K. Do you take the first trick or not?

You should not hold up on the ♥ for two reasons. First, West might have a singleton. Second, you might not have a ♥ loser at all (if you can discard both of dummy's ♥ losers on your ♣s).

So win the ♥ A and start on trumps by playing ♠ A, then ♠ K. Uh Oh. West discards a ♥ on the second ♠ so you have two ♠ losers.

Now you will have to be lucky. Leave the two master trumps undrawn and start running the ♣s. Fortunately West has 4 ♣s and you are able to discard both of dummy's ♥ losers. Play a ♦ next and your luck continues when it is East who takes the trick. Since West can't get in to pull your trumps, you cannot be defeated. You play your ♦ winners and ruff a ♥ in dummy. West will get his two trumps at the end.

West would have taken the two trump tricks, then East would have taken 5 ♥ tricks and the ♦ A.

**Deal 3**

North Deals

None Vul

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

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

Typically you start showing controls, up the line. So you bid 4 ♥, showing the ♥ A. Partner then bids 4 ♣. What do you bid next?

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?

Typically you start showing controls, up the line.

So you bid 4 ♥, showing the ♥ A. Partner then bids 4 ♣. What do you bid next?

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 4**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 5**  
 South Deals  
 None Vul

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

15  
 12 11  
 2

West      North      East      South  
 Pass      2 ♣      Pass      1 NT

Pass      Pass      Pass

2 ♣ by South

Lead: ♣ K

♠ Q J 9 4  
 ♥ A 5 3  
 ♦ A 8  
 ♣ A 8 6 3

♠ A 5  
 ♥ Q J 6  
 ♦ K J 9 2  
 ♣ 10 9 5 2

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

N  
 W   E  
 S

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.

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.

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 6**

South 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

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.