

Deal 1	♠ K 8 2		
South Deals	♥ 6 4		
None Vul	♦ Q J 9 8 6		
	♣ A 7 6		
♠ Q 7 5	♠ 10 9 6 3		
♥ Q J 10 8 5 2	♥ 9 3		
♦ A 3	♦ K 5		
♣ Q 5	♣ 10 9 8 4 2		
10	♠ A J 4		
11 3	♥ A K 7		
16	♦ 10 7 4 2		
	♣ K J 3		
West	North	East	South
2 ♥	3 ♦	Pass	1 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	3 NT
3 NT by South			
Lead: ♥ Q			

Partner's 3 ♦ bid shows a 5-card suit and is forcing to game. While 5 ♦ is possibly the best contract your double ♥ stopper should sway you to 3 NT instead. This is the old "9 tricks are easier than 11" principle.

As expected, West attacks in his ♥ suit.

Even if East holds both black Queens, (not likely), you can only finesse your way to 8 tricks. Since you need 9 tricks you must establish the ♦ suit.

If West holds both the ♦ A and ♦ K then you are going down, because they will win the race to establish ♥s before you can establish ♦s.

But when the ♦ A and ♦ K are in different hands you have a good chance for success; it depends on East having no ♥ at the time he takes his ♦ winner.

So you should hold up on the first ♥ trick and win the second. If West started with 6 ♥s then East will be out. So whether he wins his ♦ trick first or second he still won't be able to continue ♥s.

On the other hand, if West takes the first ♦ trick he can certainly drive out your last ♥ stopper. But then, when East takes HIS ♦ winner he will have no ♥.

Finally, if West had only a 5-card ♥ suit, good defense would beat you. But they have to be sure East wins the first ♦ trick, and they might slip up.

Deal 2

South Deals	♠ J 9 6
None Vul	♥ A 8
	♦ A K 10 5 3
	♣ A K 6

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



19	♠ K 5
4 11	♥ J 7 5 3
6	♦ Q 6 2
	♣ 8 5 4 2

West	North	East	South
			2 NT
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♦
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
3 NT by South			
Lead: ♠ 3			

that East can cash 3 more ♠ tricks.

That means you need all 5 ♦ tricks. The good news is that the 5 missing ♦s will split 3-2 about two-thirds of the time. The bad news is that they will be 4-1 about one-third of the time. Can you protect yourself against a 4-1 break?

Maybe and maybe not. If East has ♦ J x x x there won't be anything you can do about it. But if West has this holding then you can succeed if you play your cards right.

Did you like that "play your cards right" quip? First play a ♦ to your ♦ K; both defenders follow. Next play a ♦ to dummy's ♦ Q. East discards a ♣. You are conveniently in dummy so you play dummy's last ♦ and West's ♦ J 9 are caught in a pincer movement by your ♦ A T 5.

Suppose your first ♦ play had been dummy's ♦ Q. You could make your contract if you play a small ♦ and finesse the ♦ T. But at that point you wouldn't know whether the ♦s were splitting evenly or not. You'd be risking defeat on a hand where everybody who played for the 3-2 split was making the contract.

By taking the SECOND ♦ trick with dummy's ♦ Q the 4-1 split is exposed at the right time.

Partner's 2 NT opening shows 20-21 points so you know you want to be in game. To find out which game you bid a Stayman 3 ♣. Partner replies 3 ♦. What do you say now?

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You don't have a 4-4 ♥ fit, so you bid 3 NT.

The contract would be 3 NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 3 NT. East leads the ♠ 3. Your first problem is which ♠ to play from dummy. That is an easy problem. If you play the ♠ K you might lose the first five or six tricks. If you play low you guarantee a ♠ stopper. West plays the ♠ A and returns the ♠ 7 to dummy's ♠ K. East plays the ♠ 2 on this trick.

You need 2 more winners, and you need to get them before you lose the lead because it appears

Deal 3

South Deals
None Vul

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

5	8
6	21

W	N
S	E

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

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

3 NT by South
Lead: ♠ Q

then you . . .

. . . to see if the finesse worked.

But don't get too smug. A lot of the plays work in these practice deals because they are set up to reward the correct Plan. In real life finesses only work half the time.

Partner's 3 ♦ bid is a transfer; you dutifully reply 3 ♥. Partner now bids 3 NT. What do you say?

Partner has just a 5-card ♥ suit. He doesn't have 4 ♠s or he would have used Stayman.

With no 8-card Major fit you pass 3 NT.

West leads the ♠ Q on which East plays the ♠ 7.

You might get one more winner from the ♣ finesse, but basically you are going to have to establish dummy's ♥s.

You don't have the entries to think about going over to dummy to finesse the ♥ K, so you play the ♥ A then the ♥ Q, hoping a defender will grab their ♥ K and set up three ♥ winners in dummy.

But they allow your ♥ Q to hold the trick.

Now you are desperate. You need two entries to dummy, one so you can play ♥s to force out the ♥ Q, and another to enjoy the good ♥s. One of these entries will be the ♣ K and the second will have to be the ♣ J. So you play a ♣ to the Jack and

Deal 4
South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 10 7
♥ K 9 8 2
♦ J 10 8 2
♣ Q 10

17
8 8
7
♣ 7 3

West North East South
Pass 2 ♦
Pass 3 ♥
Pass Pass
4 ♥ by South
Lead: ♦ J

♠ A J 5
♥ 7 5
♦ A K 7 3
♣ A J 4 2

♠ K 9 8 3
♥ 4
♦ Q 9 6
♣ K 9 8 6 5

♠ 6 4 2
♥ A Q J 10 6 3
♦ 5 4
♣ 7 3

1 NT
Pass 2 ♥
Pass 4 ♥
Pass

You have 9 points, an invitational strength hand. With 6 ♥s you transfer partner by bidding 2 ♦. Partner replies 2 ♥. What do you say now?

You have 9 points, an invitational strength hand. With 6 ♥s you transfer partner by bidding 2 ♦. Partner replies 2 ♥. What do you say now?

Remember, you have invitational strength, so even with a great trump suit you bid just 3 ♥. Partner puts it in game at 4 ♥.

The contract would be 4 ♥ played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♦ J and West plays the ♦ 9.

Losers are as seen from dummy, the long-trump hand.

You might get lucky in one of the black suits, but your best hope is that East holds the ♥ K.

which wins the trick. You smile. Return to your hand with the other ♦, then play your last ♥ to dummy's ♥ T, which wins the trick. But this time you don't smile because West discards! East still holds ♥ K 9 and you have no more ♥s to lead for a finesse. Does that finish you?

Never say die. Return to your hand with a black Ace and ruff a ♦ in dummy. Dummy's trumps are now ♥ A Q 6 and East still has ♥ K 9.

Back to your hand with the other black Ace and ruff another ♦ in dummy. Dummy's trumps are now ♥ A Q and East still has ♥ K 9. Play any black card from dummy, then sit back and wait for your two trump tricks!

The coup is accomplished by ruffing to shorten the trump holding so you won't have to play trumps from that holding.

Pretty much like this hand.