

Board 1

South Deals
None Vul

 ♠ A 6 2
♥ K J 8 5 2
♦ 9 8
♣ T 7 3

♠ Q T 9 8 4

♥ A 4

♦ Q 7 2

♣ 8 6 5

N
W E
S

♠ 7 5 3

♥ Q 6

♦ J T 6 4

♣ K J 9 2

♠ K J

♥ T 9 7 3

♦ A K 5 3

♣ A Q 4

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

3 NT by South

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 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.

Baker 100NT 79

Partner's 2♥ is a transfer, so you bid 2♠. Partner now bids 2NT. 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 2NT as the invitation he must have only 5 ♠s. You will accept the invitation since you have a maximum 1NT opener, and you choose 3NT 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.

Board 2

South Deals

N-S Vul

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

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

♠ K 9 8 6
♥ A T 4
♦ T 7 5 2
♣ A 2

West	North	East	South
2♥	2NT	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	3♠

4♠ by North

stopper in the enemy suit. In any case, partner replies 3♠. Next?

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.

Baker 100NT 80

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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 2NT also promises a stopper in the enemy suit. In any case, partner replies 3♠. Next?

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Board 3

North Deals

None Vul

♠ K Q T 4 2
♥ K 8 2
♦ 4
♣ T 8 5 3

♠ A J 7

♥ 7 6 4

♦ K Q 9 7

♣ A Q 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 6 5 3
♥ J T 9 3
♦ 6 2
♣ 9 7 4

♠ 9
♥ A Q 5
♦ A J T 8 5 3
♣ K J 6

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	6♦
All Pass			

6♦ by South

Partner says 4♦, bypassing 3NT 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.

Baker 100NT 81

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♦.

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Board 4

East Deals

None Vul

♠ J 9 4 2

♥ T 3

♦ T 9

♣ J T 9 8 4

♠ A Q 6

♥ 4 2

♦ K J 5 4

♣ K 7 3 2



♠ K 7 3

♥ Q J 9 8 6 5

♦ Q 8 6 2

♣ -

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3NT by North

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 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.

Baker 100NT 82

Over an opponent's Weak 2-bid a 2NT overcall is used to show basically the same as a 1NT opening bid, but promising stopper(s) in their suit.

Partner bids 3NT.

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 finesesses 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.

Board 5
 South Deals
 N-S Vul
 ♠ K 7 3
 ♥ K 9 2
 ♦ T 7 4
 ♣ K Q J 4

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

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

2 ♠ by South

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.

Baker 100NT 83
 You have a bad hand. Bad, bad, bad hand. But you think playing in ♠s, ♥s or ♦s would be better than playing 1NT. Can you get partner to bid one of those suits? Sure, you just say 2♣. Partner says 2♠. Your call.

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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.

Board 6

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ Q 8 2

♥ 9

♦ K 9 7 4

♣ K Q J 9 2

♠ A J 7

♥ Q 8 6 4

♦ A Q 6

♣ A T 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ T 9 5 4

♥ T 7 5 3

♦ J T 3

♣ 8 5

♠ K 6 3

♥ A K J 2

♦ 8 5 2

♣ 7 6 4

West	North	East	South
			1NT

Pass 3NT All Pass

3NT by North

Baker 100NT 84
 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 3NT with your 11 points.

The contract would be 3NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 3NT. 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.