

**Board 1**

South Deals

None Vul

♠ Q 7 5  
♥ Q J T 8 5 2  
♦ A 3  
♣ Q 5

♠ K 8 2

♥ 6 4

♦ Q J 9 8 6

♣ A 7 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

♠ A J 4  
♥ A K 7  
♦ T 7 4 2  
♣ K J 3

West	North	East	South
2♥	3♦	Pass	1NT
All Pass			3NT

3NT by South

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.

**Baker 100NT 41**

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 3NT 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

**Board 2**

South Deals

N-S Vul

♠ Q T 8 3 2  
♥ Q 9 6  
♦ 8  
♣ T 9 7 3

♠ J 9 6

♥ A 8

♦ A K T 5 3

♣ A K 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

West	North	East	South
			2NT
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♦
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

3 NT by North

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 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.

**Baker 100NT 42**

Partner's 2NT 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?

Partner's 2NT 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?

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

The contract would be 3NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 3NT. 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

**Board 3**

South Deals

None Vul

♠ Q J T 5 2  
♥ 8 4  
♦ J 8 3  
♣ Q 9 6

♠ 8 4

♥ J T 9 7 3

♦ 6 4 2

♣ K J 5

N  
W E  
S

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

♠ A K 6 3  
♥ A Q  
♦ A T 7 5  
♣ A 8 3

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

3 NT by North

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 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 finesse only work half the time.

Baker 100NT 43

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

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.

**Board 4**

South Deals

Both Vul

♠ Q T 7  
♥ K 9 8 2  
♦ J T 8 2  
♣ Q T

♠ A J 5

♥ 7 5

♦ A K 7 3

♣ A J 4 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ K 9 8 3  
♥ 4  
♦ Q 9 6  
♣ K 9 8 6 5

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

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♥

All Pass

4♥ by South

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

You win the first ♦ and play a ♥ to dummy's ♥T, which wins the trick. You smile. Return to your hand with the other ♦, then play your last ♥ to dummy's ♥J, 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.

**Baker 100NT 44**

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.

**Board 5**

South Deals

None Vul

♠ K Q T 4

♥ 9 8 6 2

♦ 5 4

♣ 8 5 3

♠ A 6 3

♥ K Q 7 3

♦ Q 8 7

♣ J 7 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 5 2

♥ J T 4

♦ 9 6 2

♣ Q T 9 4

♠ J 9 7

♥ A 5

♦ A K J T 3

♣ A K 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	4NT	Pass	2NT
All Pass			6NT

6NT by South

to win with your ♣K.

Your chances for success are slipping away and you are down to your last hope. Your ♠J is a threat that only West can guard against. If West also is the defender with long ♥s then he would also have to guard dummy's fourth ♥. In that case you could squeeze him. But there is one important play you must make for the squeeze to function.

You must play dummy's ♠A to unblock so your ♠J can be the threat you need. Then play the ♥A, ♣A and 5♦ winners.

If West has thrown the ♠Q you win your ♠J and dummy's two high ♥s. But since he probably held onto the ♠Q you just play a ♥ to dummy and hope all three ♥s are winners.

to see if they are.

You were lucky it wasn't East with the 4 ♥s.

**Baker 100NT 45**

Because of his 3-4-3-3 distribution, partner chose not to look for a ♥ fit. If he had opted for Stayman the contract would have turned out the same. The 4NT response is quantitative, inviting you to bid 6NT if you have a maximum.

You do. 6NT.

You will have to make an early decision on whether to hold up or not.

Only one more winner is needed. You should play a low ♠ from dummy in the hope that West will lead the suit again, giving you a trick with your ♠J (you know West holds ♠Q). In fact, you should even give him some incentive to play another ♠ by dropping your ♠9, pretending to hold just the ♠J 9. But West noticed his partner's discouraging ♠2 and switched to the ♣8.

You try the ♣J but East plays the ♣Q and you have

to win with your ♣K.