

**Deal 1**

North Deals

None Vul

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

<sup>17</sup>  
7 8  
8

	N		E	
W				S

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

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

West	North	East	South
	1 NT	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
3 NT by North			
Lead: ♥ 5			

East has a 5-card suit, which means that West has 2 ♥s. East'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 West holds either ♥ K x, ♥ Q x or ♥ J x. So what?

So you should play the ♥ A immediately. If West 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 West is hog-tied. If he plays low the suit blocks, if he sacrifices his ♥ Q then your ♥ T 9 7 prevents East 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 East 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 East 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

they have 5 ♥s. If you take the ♥ A on the first trick, West will cash his ♥ T 9 7 and you will lose 1 trick. If you wait until the second trick, West will cash his ♥ T 9 7 and you will lose 2 tricks.

**Deal 2**  
 East Deals  
 None Vul

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

3  
16 11  
10

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

West      North      East      South

2 NT      Pass      1 NT      2 ♥

3 ♥      Pass      3 ♣      Pass

4 ♠      ALL      Pass

4 ♠ by East  
 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 East.

To make West the declarer ROTATE.

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

You should not hold up on the ♥ for two reasons. First, South 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. South 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 South has 4 ♣s and you are able to discard both of dummy's ♥ losers. Play a ♦ next and your luck continues when it is North who takes the trick. Since South can't get in to pull your trumps, you cannot be defeated. You play your ♦ winners and ruff a ♥ in dummy. South will get his two trumps at the end.

South would have taken the two trump tricks, then North 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**

South Deals  
None Vul

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

<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>17</sup>   <sup>13</sup>  
8

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
3 NT by West			
Lead: ♥ 10			

♠ J 9 4 2  
♥ 10 3  
♦ 10 9  
♣ J 10 9 8 4

N  
W    E  
S

♠ 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

♣ —

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, North 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 South 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 South discards a ♦!

Don't be sad that the ♣s didn't split, your contract is now guaranteed! Well, guaranteed as long as South has only a 6-card ♥ suit.

Play your ♥ K, and when North follows suit play your ♥ 7. South 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 South of any ♣s you can make the throw-in.

**Deal 5**  
 North Deals  
 None Vul

<b>♠ A 5</b> <b>♥ Q J 6</b> <b>♦ K J 9 2</b> <b>♣ 10 9 5 2</b>  <b>2</b> <b>11 12</b> <b>15</b>	<b>♠ 10 8 6 2</b> <b>♥ 10 8 7 4</b> <b>♦ Q 6 5 3</b> <b>♣ 7</b>  <b>♠ K 7 3</b> <b>♥ K 9 2</b> <b>♦ 10 7 4</b> <b>♣ K Q J 4</b>  <b>♠ Q J 9 4</b> <b>♥ A 5 3</b> <b>♦ A 8</b> <b>♣ A 8 6 3</b>	<b>♠ K 7 3</b> <b>♥ K 9 2</b> <b>♦ 10 7 4</b> <b>♣ K Q J 4</b>  <b>♠ Q J 9 4</b> <b>♥ A 5 3</b> <b>♦ A 8</b> <b>♣ A 8 6 3</b>	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i> 1 NT	<i>East</i> Pass	<i>South</i> <b>2 ♣</b>
Pass Pass <b>2 ♣</b> by North Lead: ♣ K			

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 North.

To make South the declarer ROTATE.

South plays 2 ♣. West 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 West to come up with a ♣ lead from ♣ K 7 3, but it would have been great defense.

**Deal 6**  
 East Deals  
 None Vul

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

1  
 17 11  
 11

♠ 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

♠ Q 8 2  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ K 9 7 4  
 ♣ K Q J 9 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

3 NT by East  
 Lead: ♣ K

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 East.

To make West the declarer ROTATE.

West plays 3 NT. North leads the ♣ K and South 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 North hand so the question of disrupting opponent's communications doesn't arise - South is not going to get the lead.

Nonetheless it is a good idea to hold up - but only once.

North then plays the ♣ Q which you win as South 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 North must take the trick. And he does. North 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 South 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 North did not discard a ♣, you would have to guess as to which finesse to try. With the cards as shown neither would have worked.