

Deal 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 3 2
♥ A 8 7 3
♦ 9 7 4
♣ J 10 2

17
5 9
9

West

Pass

Pass

Pass

3 NT by North

Lead: ♦ K

♠ K Q J 5
♥ K 10
♦ A 8 3
♣ A 9 6 4



♠ A 7 6
♥ Q J 9 4
♦ 6 2
♣ Q 7 5 3

North

1 NT

2 ♠

3 NT

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

2 ♣

2 NT

Pass

♠ 10 8 4
♥ 6 5 2
♦ K Q J 10 5
♣ K 8

North is to play 3 NT. East leads the ♦ K.

Winners: ♠=4 ♥=0 ♦=1 ♣=1 Total = 6

You need 3 more winners, and they must come from the ♥ suit. The danger is that when you knock out the ♥ A, East may take too many ♦s. To exhaust West of ♦s you hold-up your ♦ A until the third round.

Next you start on ♥s by playing ♥ K, then overtaking the ♥ T. Assume that West wins the second ♥.

You were fortunate it was West who took the ♥ A, and that he has no ♦ to return. If he plays a ♥ or a ♠ you will win in dummy. If he plays a ♣ you will jump up with the ♣ A and take your winners, 9 in all.

But if you had not held-up your ♦ A even good luck wouldn't have helped you.

Deal 2

West Deals
None Vul

♠ A 7 6
♥ A 8 6 5 3
♦ K 5
♣ A K 5

8
18 6
8

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

♠ 9 4 3
♥ Q 9 7 2
♦ A 8 4
♣ Q 10 2



♠ 8 2
♥ K 4
♦ Q J 10 7 3
♣ 9 8 4 3

♠ K Q J 10 5
♥ J 10
♦ 9 6 2
♣ J 7 6

East is to play 3 NT. South leads the ♠ K.

Winners: ♠=1 ♥=2 ♦=0 ♣=2 Total = 5

Even if ♥s split 3-3 you could only get 2 extra winners there, so it should be clear that you must establish the ♦s. You will have to drive out the ♦ A and hope they don't win too many ♠s at that time. You can help your chances by a hold-up of the ♠ A until the third round.

Having just taken the third ♠ trick you now work on ♦s by first playing the ♦ K, then continuing the suit. North wins the third one with his ♦ A. And now the good news - he has no ♠ left to reach his partner's good tricks. So North plays the ♥ Q.

At this point in the play you have three tricks in the bank; ♠ A, ♦ K, ♦ Q. You take your ♥ K, cash the two good ♦s, then lead to dummy for the ♣ A K and ♥ A. Voila!

But what if North actually held 4 ♠s? No problem, in that case the ♠s would have split 4-4 so the defenders could only win 3 ♠ tricks and the ♦ A.

The hold-up lets you make the contract whenever North holds the ♦ A. And if South happened to hold the ♦ A??? You go down.

Deal 3

North Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 7 3 2
♥ 10 7
♦ 6 5
♣ J 10 8 2

11
4 10
15

West

Pass
Pass
Pass

3 NT by South
Lead: ♠ 3

♠ 10 5
♥ K 8 5 4
♦ A 10 9 3
♣ A 6 5



♠ K 9 4
♥ A 6 3
♦ Q J 8 2
♣ K Q 4

North

Pass
2 ♣
3 NT

East

Pass
Pass
Pass

South

1 NT
2 ♦
Pass

♠ A 8 6
♥ Q J 9 2
♦ K 7 4
♣ 9 7 3

South is to play 3 NT. West leads the ♠ 3. East wins the first trick with the ♠ A and returns the ♠ 8.

Winners: ♠=1 ♥=2 ♦=1 ♣=3 Total = 7

You can win 3 more ♦ tricks if the finesse works, but even if it doesn't work you can still get the 2 that you need. Of course if East does win the ♦ K it would sure be great if he had no ♠ to lead. So you duck the second ♠ and take your ♠ K when they play a third round.

After winning the ♠ K you are conveniently in your hand, so you play the ♦ Q and let it ride when West plays a low card. Alas, East takes the trick with his ♦ K.

It's too bad the finesse didn't work, but it's not too too bad! Because East is out of

♠s and must lead one of the other suits. You don't care which he leads because you can now win 8 more tricks and make your contract.

And as long as you had held up on the ♠ K until the third round you could ensure that East was out of ♠s if he had started with only 3.

Deal 4

West Deals
None Vul

♠ A K 7 5
♥ K J 7
♦ A 8 3
♣ 9 8 2

6
15 10
9

West
1 NT
Pass
3 NT by West
Lead: ♦ K

♠ 10 8 4
♥ 6 5 4 2
♦ K Q J 4
♣ 7 5



♠ J 9 3 2
♥ Q 8 3
♦ 10 9 6
♣ A Q 3

North
Pass
Pass

♠ Q 6
♥ A 10 9
♦ 7 5 2
♣ K J 10 6 4

East
3 NT

South
Pass

West is to play 3 NT. North leads the ♦ K.

Winners: ♠=3 ♥=2 ♦=1 ♣=0 Total = 6

You will need some ♣ tricks to make the contract. If North has 5 ♦s and also the ♣ A then you will go down. It doesn't matter if he has the ♣ Q because you can finesse him out of that.

But in the case where South has both the ♣ A Q you need to make sure he has no ♦ when he takes his first trick. So hold up the ♦ A until the third round, everybody following.

Now start on the ♣s. Play your ♣ 9 and let it ride. South wins the ♣ Q and returns a ♠. Good, he didn't have the fourth ♦.

Win with dummy's ♠ Q and force out the ♣ A.

The rest of the tricks are yours, nine in all.

But with this layout you needed to hold up twice.

Deal 5

North Deals
None Vul

♠ K 7 5 3
♥ J 9
♦ J 8 5 2
♣ Q 10 4

16
7 5
12

West

Pass

3 NT by North

Lead: ♥ 6

♠ J 10 9 4
♥ K Q 2
♦ A K 9
♣ K 7 6



♠ A Q 8 2
♥ 7 5 3
♦ Q 6 4
♣ A 9 5

North

1 NT

Pass

East

Pass

Pass

South

3 NT

With his 4-3-3-3 distribution South chooses not to bother with Stayman. North is to play 3 NT. East leads the ♥ 6. West plays the ♥ J.

Winners: ♠=1 ♥=1 ♦=3 ♣=2 Total = 7

You need to get two more winners. The ♥ suit might provide one of them, but you will still have to establish ♠s. The burning question is whether to win the first ♥ or to hold up. If you take this trick you will have a second stopper if East takes the lead, but you will be in extreme danger if West takes the lead. Since the ♠ finesse has to go into West you should hold up.

West returns the ♥ 9, East takes the ♥ A and clears the suit.

You have lost two tricks so far. Lead the ♠ J and let it ride. West wins their third trick with the ♠ K but has no ♥ to return so he plays a ♦ which you win with your ♦ A.

Play off your 7 winners and give up a ♣ at the end.

So you decide whether to hold up or not based on how you expect to play the hand.

Deal 6

East Deals
None Vul

♠ J 10 9 4
♥ 7 5 3
♦ A K 9
♣ A 9 5

4
12 16
8

West	North	East	South
		1 NT	Pass
3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
3 NT by East			
Lead: ♥ 6			

♠ 7 6 5

♥ J 9

♦ J 8 5 2

♣ Q 10 4 2



♠ K 3

♥ A 10 8 6 4

♦ 10 7 3

♣ J 8 3

♠ A Q 8 2

♥ K Q 2

♦ Q 6 4

♣ K 7 6

With his 4-3-3-3 distribution West chooses not to bother with Stayman. East is to play 3 NT. South leads the ♥ 6. North plays the ♥ J.

Winners: ♠=1 ♥=1 ♦=3 ♣=2 Total = 7

You need to get two more winners. The ♥ suit might provide one of them, but you will still have to establish ♠s. The burning question is whether to win the first ♥ or to hold up. If you take this trick you will have a second stopper if South takes the lead, but you will be in extreme danger if North takes the lead. Since the ♠ finesse has to go into South you should not hold up.

You win with your ♥ K, (keeping South in the dark about who holds the ♥ Q), enter

dummy with the ♦ A and play the ♠ J, letting it ride to South's ♠ K.

South cannot play ♥s without setting up your ♥ Q so he will probably exit with a ♣ which you take with the ♣ K.

Play off your 6 winners and concede the last three tricks.

But it sure makes a big difference in how you play the hand.

This might have turned out even better. If South had decided to play his partner for the ♥ Q, (who would have played ♥ J from a holding of ♥ Q J x), you would have made an overtrick!