

Board 1

South Deals

None Vul

♠ 7 3
 ♥ T 9 7 4
 ♦ K 7 6 5 4 2
 ♣ T

♠ J 9 8 6 2

♥ Q 2

♦ A Q

♣ 8 7 4 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ T 5

♥ A K 6 5

♦ J T 3

♣ Q J 9 5

♠ A K Q 4

♥ J 8 3

♦ 9 8

♣ A K 6 2

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

4 ♠ by North

Baker 100NT 46

Partner expects you to bid 2 ♠.

But your hand has suddenly increased in value - with the known ♠ fit you add another point for your doubleton and you have 18 points. So you jump to 3 ♠; this is called a Super-Accept. But so what. Partner just bids the game anyway.

East plays the ♥ K, then ♥ A, then ♥ 5.

You need to eliminate two losers. If West has the ♦ K a finesse will save one loser. If ♣s split 3-2 that will eliminate one loser. And of course your ♥ J is ready to provide an immediate discard.

So what are you going to discard right now on that ♥ J? It looks obvious to discard the ♦ Q; then if the ♣s do split 3-2 (68% chance) you will be home free, losing only two ♥s and one ♣.

Throwing the ♦ Q is a bad idea. And basically unnecessary. If the ♣s are splitting 3-2 you don't need to keep a fourth ♣ in both hands. So discard a small ♣ from dummy and keep the ♦ Q just in case the ♣s turn out 4-1 and you have to fall back on the ♦ finesse.

to see why.

After you pull trumps you play the top two ♣s and discover (too late) that you cannot set up a ♣ winner.

But what if the ♦ K was actually with East, and the ♣s were splitting 3-2 all the time?

for an alternate possibility.

You pull trumps first, then play two top ♣s. When both defenders follow you give up a ♣. West wins and plays a ♦, but you go up with dummy's ♦ A, enter your hand with a trump and NOW discard that ♦ Q on your good ♣.

Board 2

East Deals

None Vul

♠ 8 7 5 3

♥ 9 6

♦ Q J 8 5

♣ A 7 5

♠ K J 4

♥ 7 5

♦ A 7 4 2

♣ Q T 6 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 6 2

♥ Q J T 8 4 3

♦ 9 3

♣ 8 4

♠ Q T 9

♥ A K 2

♦ K T 6

♣ K J 9 3

West

North

East

South

Pass

3NT

2♥

2NT

All Pass

3 NT by North

a weak 2-bid. So West must have at least one of the black Aces.

If you could guess which Ace East holds you could work on that suit first. He would win it, then get his ♥s established, but wouldn't be able to get back in to cash them.

But better than guessing, you should just holdup on the first ♥ trick and win the next one. Then it won't matter which Ace you knock out first because West will not have a ♥ to play in either case.

to see.

If you win the first trick and then play ♣s, you will be unlucky. West will take his ♣A and play his last ♥. Then when East takes the ♠A he will set you with ♥ tricks.

If you hold up on first trick luck won't come into it. It will no longer matter which black suit you establish first.

Baker 100NT 47

You should be sure you and partner are on the same page with this bid. A 2NT overcall over a Weak-2 opener shows the same hand as a 1NT overcall over a 1 of a suit opener. In other words, 15-18 points, and at least 1 (preferably 2), stoppers in their suit.

Partner, who is on the same page, bids 3NT.

As expected, West leads his partner's ♥ suit.

You need 5 more winners. This is important to keep in mind.

You can establish at most 1 winner in ♦s, 2 in ♠s, and 3 in ♣s. Since you must work on both ♠s and ♣s, you don't need to try for anything extra in ♦s.

If East has both black Aces you will go down, but you know that he cannot have two outside Aces with a 6-card ♥ suit headed by the Q J and still open with

Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K 8 2
 ♥ Q J T 9 6
 ♦ K 9 5 2
 ♣ A

♠ A 7 4

♥ A K 5

♦ A 6 3

♣ J 8 5 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J T 9 5

♥ 7 3

♦ J T 7 4

♣ 7 4 3

♠ Q 6 3

♥ 8 4 2

♦ Q 8

♣ K Q T 9 6

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

3 NT by South

need to hold up. And, in fact, there is a good reason why you shouldn't.

Win the first trick with your ♥K and immediately play a ♣, taken by East's ♣A. He plays the ♥J which you win with your ♥A. West followed suit to the second ♥!

East has 3 ♥ winners in his hand. There is a good chance that he has the ♠K and ♦K as well. So if you play either of those suits, leading toward the Queen, East will jump up with his King and put you down 1. So instead, play a ♣ winner, and when East shows out, play your last ♥! East will smile as he takes his three ♥ winners but then he will frown when he realizes he must lead away from one of his Kings! You, of course, will jump up with dummy's Queen of that suit for your ninth trick.

Always keep in the back of your mind the possibility of an elimination play. In this Deal that meant you needed to refuse the hold-up because you would need the third ♥ to throw East in with.

Baker 100NT 48

After the overcall of your partner's opening 1NT you must make a quick decision with this type of hand: Force to game or settle for partscore. Using lebensohl, a suit bid at the 3-level shows a 5-card or longer suit and is game forcing. You go for it by bidding 3♣ (not Stayman) and partner says 3NT.

The contract would be 3NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 3NT. East leads the ♥Q. You must make an immediate decision whether to hold up or not.

Of course the ♣ suit will produce 4 winners so you need just one more in ♠s or ♦s.

First the question of holding up or not. The reason for a hold-up play is to be sure that when West gains the lead he has no ♥s remaining. But in this Deal you can place most of the strength with East so you don't

Board 4

South Deals

None Vul

♠ T
♥ K Q T 9
♦ Q J 5 3
♣ 9 5 4 2

♠ A K 7 6 3 2

♥ 6 5 3

♦ 7

♣ T 8 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q J 9 5

♥ J 4

♦ K T 8 2

♣ J 7 3

♠ 8 4

♥ A 8 7 2

♦ A 9 6 4

♣ A K Q

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

4♠ by South

Maybe, just maybe, there is a way out. Check your winners: You have won 3 tricks - ♥A and ♠A K. You have 4 more top winners - ♦A and ♣A K Q. If you can somehow add 3 more small trumps that will be the T you need.

Play dummy's ♦7 to your ♦A, then ruff a ♦. Play a ♣ to your hand and ruff another ♦. Play another ♣ to your hand and ruff your last ♦. While you are ruffing these three ♦s East is helplessly following suit.

Now play to your good ♣ while East again has to follow suit.

You have taken the first T tricks. Poor East is going to end up ruffing his partner's ♦ winner with one of his master trumps.

When they split badly, sometimes you can recover by ruffing with small trumps while the trump-heavy defender has to follow suit.

This is called "trump elopement".

Baker 100NT 49

Partner's 2♥ bid is a transfer; you respond 2♠.

Partner now bids 3♠. What do you bid?

Partner's 2♥ bid is a transfer; you respond 2♠.

Partner now bids 3♠. What do you bid?

You wouldn't have chosen ♠s for a trump suit.

But you aren't doing the choosing, partner is. He has set the trump suit as ♠s and asks that you bid game if you have a maximum 1NT opening. So you bid 4♠, as instructed.

West leads ♥K, East plays ♥J. You have no reason to hold up so you win the ♥A.

Things look simple. You can afford one ♠ loser so as long as they split 3-2 you will succeed. So you play ♠A, ♠K; West follows to the first and discards a ♦ on the second.

OK, East has two trump tricks, but don't give up.

Board 5
South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ Q 5 3
♥ K 9 6
♦ T 9 8 3
♣ 7 6 2

♠ A K J
♥ A 7 2
♦ K Q 7 6
♣ A 9 4

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 8 7 6
♥ Q 8 5
♦ A J 2
♣ K Q J 3

♠ T 9 4 2
♥ J T 4 3
♦ 5 4
♣ T 8 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	6NT	All Pass	2NT

6NT by North

Baker 100NT 50
Sometimes bidding is easy. Partner has 20 or 21 points, balanced. You have 13 points, balanced. Total = 33 or 34 points, balanced. So you close your eyes and bid 6NT.

The contract would be 6NT played by South.

To make North the declarer ROTATE.

North plays 6NT. East leads the ♦ T. Too bad East didn't lead a ♠. Oh, well.

There is no way to get more than 4 winners in each minor suit, so you need to win either the ♠ J or ♥ Q.

Which one should you try?

Why not try both? If you make sure you try them in the right order you can have both chances.

Suppose you lead a small ♠ from dummy and play your ♠ J, and it loses to East's ♠ Q. If you then try leading a small ♥ toward dummy's ♥ Q, obviously the defender with the ♥ K will grab it to set the contract.

Instead, try the effect of leading toward the ♥ Q first. If East has the ♥ K then you will succeed in creating the extra winner you need. But what if you play the ♥ Q and West takes it with his ♥ K? Too bad, but at least you are not dead yet. You still have a chance to finesse West for the ♠ Q.

There are two critical cards, the ♠ Q and the ♥ K. However they are not the same degree of criticality.

If the ♠ Q is in a favorable position, (with West), you are always going to make your contract no matter which you try first.

But if only the ♥ K is in a favorable position, (with East), you can make the contract only if you try ♥'s first.