

Deal 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 10 5 4
♥ J 5
♦ 9 6
♣ K 9 7 5 2

13
8 9
10

West

Pass

Pass

4 ♥ by North

Lead: ♣ 4

♠ Q 7 3
♥ A Q 6 4 3
♦ 8 5 2
♣ A J



♠ 8 6 2
♥ K 9 8 7
♦ A Q J 10
♣ 8 3

North

1 ♥

4 ♥

East

Pass

Pass

South

3 ♥

Pass

♠ K J 9
♥ 10 2
♦ K 7 4 3
♣ Q 10 6 4

You are North and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

You open 1 ♥, partner responds 3 ♥.

What is your next bid?

Partner's 3 ♥ response shows 11-12 points with good trumps.

With your 14 points you decide to bid the game.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♣ 4, West plays the ♣ K.

Losers: ♠ 3 : ♥ 0 : ♦ 2 : ♣ 1 : Total = 6

There is no hope of extra winners except the ♦ suit. You are wide open in ♠s, so you have to hope that East holds the ♦ K. But that won't be enough by itself, in case he has ♦ K x x x you also have to have three entries to your hand. Two of them will be the ♥ A and ♥ Q and the third entry must be the ♣ A.

So you win the first trick with the ♣ A and immediately take your first ♦ finesse. It wins, so you return to your hand with a ♥ to the ♥ Q and take another ♦ finesse. Back to your hand with the ♥ A (pulling the last trumps) and take a third ♦ finesse. Finally on the ♦ A you can discard either your ♣ loser or a ♠. You will have to give up three tricks at the end.

Any other plan that was based on East holding the ♦ K would work ALMOST 50% of the time but would fail when East had three protectors for the ♦ K.

Deal 2

South Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 10 8
♥ 9 4
♦ A 6 3 2
♣ 10 9 6

15
7 7
11

West

Pass
Pass

4 ♥ by South
Lead: ♠ Q

♠ A 4 2
♥ Q J 10 5 3
♦ K J 7
♣ A 3



♠ K 7 3
♥ A 8 6 2
♦ Q 4
♣ Q 7 5 4

North

3 ♥
Pass

East

Pass
Pass

South

1 ♥
4 ♥

You are North and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

You have 11 (perhaps 12) points and four trumps. Just right for a limit raise.

So you bid 3 ♥ and partner goes to game.

South would play 4 ♥.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♠ Q.

Losers: ♠ 1 : ♥ 1 : ♦ 1 : ♣ 1 : Total = 4

You know you can't get rid of the ♦ loser, and it's hard to imagine a way that would let you get rid of the ♣ loser. The ♥ loser depends on the finesse. So you should try to find somewhere to put the ♠ loser.

First you win the ♠ A. You know that you will eventually take the ♥ finesse, so should you take it now? Visualize the likely defense actions if you do. Say West wins the ♥ K. He will surely play another ♠, knocking out dummy's ♠ K. Whenever

you try to set up ♦s the defense will take their ♠ trick and you will eventually go down.

What happened is that you gave the defense a tempo and let them control the timing of the play. You should not have rushed into the ♥ finesse. Instead suppose that you win the first trick with dummy's ♠ K and immediately play the ♦ Q. The defense can take their ♦ A when they want to and push another ♠, but now the timing is on your side. You can discard a ♠ from dummy on your good ♦ in time.

Set up the ♦ winner before you take the ♥ finesse and you will always be able to dump the ♠ loser no matter who has the ♥ K.

Deal 3

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 6 5
♥ 9 7 3
♦ Q 10 6 3
♣ A 9 2

15
6 7
12

West

Pass

Pass

3 NT by North

Lead: ♦ 2

♠ A J 9 3
♥ K 8 2
♦ A 8
♣ Q J 5 3



♠ Q 10 4
♥ A Q J 6
♦ 7 5 4
♣ K 10 8

North

1 NT

2 ♠

Pass

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

2 ♣

3 NT

♠ K 7 2
♥ 10 5 4
♦ K J 9 2
♣ 7 6 4

You are North and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

With 15 points and a balanced hand of course you open 1 NT.

Partner's response is 2 ♣. What do you bid?

Partner's 2 ♣ bid is Stayman asking you to name a 4-card Major.

You bid 2 ♠, but that must not have been the Major he wanted so he bids 3 NT.

North plays 3 NT. East leads the ♦ 2. West plays ♦ Q. You hold up on this trick and West returns the ♦ 3.

You hold up on this trick and West returns the ♦ 3.

Winners: ♠ 1 : ♥ 4 : ♦ 1 : ♣ 0 : Total = 6

You need to get three more winners and you have two very clear possibilities.

If West holds the ♠ K you can finesse him out of it and win an additional 3 tricks in the suit. The problem with this approach is that half the time East will hold the ♠ K and you will go down.

Or you can drive out the ♣ A and definitely set up an additional 3 tricks in that suit. The problem with this approach is that if the defender's ♦s split 5-3 they will be able to win 4 ♦s and the ♣ A.

If you pay attention to the opening lead this becomes a simple decision. East led the ♦ 2. Assuming that was fourth down then he must have led from a 4-card suit. So it looks like the ♦s must be splitting 4-4 and it is safe for you to establish ♣s. So you drive out the ♣ A. The defenders take their other 2 ♦s but you make the game losing only 3 ♦s and the ♣ A.

East's lead of the ♦ 2 should have made you pretty sure that he had led from a 4-card suit. If the ♦ 2 is fourth down, there cannot be a fifth down. Additionally, West's return of the ♦ 3 confirmed that conclusion. If West had started with only 3 ♦s, (say ♦ Q 6 3) his correct return at trick 2 would have been his next highest, the ♦ 6. With 4 cards in the suit his correct return is his original fourth down.

Deal 4

South Deals

None Vul

♠ J 5 2
♥ 10 9 3
♦ J 10 9 4
♣ J 8 2

6
3 12
19

West

Pass

Pass

4 ♠ by South

Lead: ♦ J

♠ 8 6 3

♥ Q 7 4

♦ A 8 6 2

♣ 9 5 4



♠ A K Q 10 9 7

♥ A 5

♦ 7 3

♣ A Q 6

North

2 ♠

Pass

East

Dbl

Pass

South

1 ♠

4 ♠

You are South and it is your bid. Decide what you would say, then on BID.

You have a good hand, a very good hand. But not good enough to open 2 ♣.

Instead you open 1 ♠, partner raises to 2 ♠ and East doubles.

Some would think it clever to now redouble - to put the pressure on East maybe.

But why bother? East would just bid 3 ♥ or 3 ♦ and then you would bid 4 ♠. So save all the in-between and just bid it now.

South plays 4 ♠. West leads the ♦ J.

Losers: ♠ 0 : ♥ 1 : ♦ 1 : ♣ 2 : Total = 4

One loser to get rid of. Perhaps you could lead toward the ♥ Q? Nope, that wouldn't work because East surely has the ♥ K for his Takeout Double.

Play East for the ♣ K and finesse him out of it? That probably would work since he likely has that card for his Takeout Double.

So you take the ♦ A, pull trumps and then . . . and then you apologize to your partner. You had to be in dummy to finesse the ♣ and you were only going to be there once. You must finesse the ♣ immediately, then pull trumps.

If you decided to play for trumps to split 2-2 so you could use the ♠ 8 as an entry back to dummy for the ♣ finesse then you need to start thinking more clearly!