***Deal 1***
North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 7 5
♡ A J 3
♢ A 8 6
♣ 10 9 6 3

♠ 10 9 6 2
♡ 8 7 6
♢ 7 3
♣ A K 8 2


♠ K J 8 4
♡ 10 9 4 2
♢ Q J 10 5
♣ 5

13
7 7
13

♠ Q 3
♡ K Q 5
♢ K 9 4 2
♣ Q J 7 4

| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 ♣ | Pass | 2 NT |
| Pass | 3 NT | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

3 NT by South
Lead: ♣ A

South is to play 3 NT. West leads the ♣ A, then ♣ K, ♣ 2. East follows once, then discards a ♠ and a ♡.

East follows once, then discards a ♠ and a ♡.

Winners: ♠=1 ♡=3 ♢=2 ♣=2 Total = 8

There are two possibilities for getting an extra winner. If the ♢s are splitting 3-3 you could play ♢ A, ♢ K and another ♢ and establish the thirteenth ♢ as a winner. Or you could play East for the ♠ K and lead toward your ♠ Q.

The chance of East holding the ♠ K is a little greater than 50%. (it is higher than the usual 50% because we know he started with only one ♣, giving him more spaces for other cards).

The chance of ♢s splitting 3-3 is about 40%.

So you should enter dummy with a ♡ and play a small ♠ toward your ♠ Q.

Did it work? to see.

The problem is that you might run into this very distribution. You would establish a ♢ for East and when you played a ♠ from dummy East would jump up with the ♠ K and cash his winning ♢ for down 1.

***Deal 2***
West Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 4 2
♡ A 8 5
♢ 7 6 3
♣ A K 6 5

♠ K J 3
♡ Q 7 3
♢ K Q J 9 5
♣ 8 4


♠ 10 8 7 6
♡ 10 6 4 2
♢ 8 2
♣ 10 7 3

11
12 0
17

♠ A Q 5
♡ K J 9
♢ A 10 4
♣ Q J 9 2

| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 ♢ | Pass | Pass | 1 NT |
| Pass | 3 NT | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

3 NT by South
Lead: ♢ K

South is to play 3 NT. West leads the ♢ K.

Winners: ♠=1 ♡=2 ♢=1 ♣=4 Total = 8

You only need one more winner. If East has the ♠ K or the ♡ Q a simple finesse will give you the trick.

There are two problems though. The first one is that if West gets in he may take too many ♢ tricks. But the bigger problem is that East cannot possibly have either of those two high cards. You and dummy together hold 28 HCP and West must surely hold the other 12 since he opened the bidding. Neither simple finesse will work so you must try what is called a Backward Finesse.

Hold up the ♢ A until the third round to confirm that East has only 2. He does. Then play four rounds of ♣s ending in your hand.

Now play the ♡ J. If West doesn't cover, you will let it ride for your ninth trick. But West does cover so you must take dummy's ♡ A. Next play a small ♡ from dummy and finesse the ♡ 9, hoping East has the ♡T. This is the Backward Finesse.

for the complete Deal to see if it worked.

Like this time.

By the way. Those of you with great short-term memories might think they have seen this hand before. Well, you ALMOST have. Deal 8 has an almost identical layout but a much simpler theme. Check it out.

***Deal 3***
East Deals
None Vul

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | ♠ 10 4 2<br>♡ A 8 3<br>♢ A 10 7 2<br>♣ K 6 4 | |
| ♠ K J 9 5 3<br>♡ 10 6<br>♢ Q 8 4<br>♣ 10 8 5 | N<br>W E<br>S | ♠ Q 8<br>♡ Q J 9 4 2<br>♢ 9 5<br>♣ J 9 7 2 |
| 11<br>6 6<br>17 | ♠ A 7 6<br>♡ K 7 5<br>♢ K J 6 3<br>♣ A Q 3 | |

| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Pass | 1 NT |
| Pass | 3 NT | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

3 NT by South
Lead: ♠ 5

South is to play 3 NT. West leads the ♠ 5, East plays the ♠ Q.

Winners: ♠=1 ♡=2 ♢=2 ♣=3 Total = 8

Before worrying about where that one winner is going to come from you need to decide what to do with the opening lead. A good guideline is to hold up unless you fear a switch. Here, with all other suits well protected you would welcome a switch, so you let East win the ♠ Q. East then plays the ♠ 8. Do you hold up again?

It probably doesn't matter, but since you cannot possibly win more than T tricks you might just as well hold up again. West wins the ♠ J then plays the ♠ 3. East discards a ♡ on the third ♠.

OK, now it is time to figure out where that extra trick is coming from. Not much figuring is needed, it must come from the ♢ suit. Since you are missing 5 cards including the Queen, the odds favor a finesse over playing for the drop. And, since you have the option of finessing either defender are you going to finesse into the one who can set you or into the safe one?

Silly question. Of course you play the ♢ K from your hand, then a small ♢ finessing dummy's ♢T, which wins the trick - and the game - and the overtrick.

But in a situation like this you don't play odds. By finessing West you guaranteed making the contract even if the finesse lost because East had no more ♠s. Even a losing ♢ finesse would have established the one trick you needed.

***Deal 4***
North Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q J 9
♡ 6 5
♢ A K Q
♣ A Q J 5

♠ 6
♡ Q J 10 3
♢ 9 7 4 2
♣ K 8 7 2


♠ 10 8 4 2
♡ K 9 7 4 2
♢ 8 5 3
♣ 6

**23**
**6 3**
**8**

♠ K 7 5 3
♡ A 8
♢ J 10 6
♣ 10 9 4 3

| *West* | *North* | *East* | *South* |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2 ♣ | Pass | 2 NT |
| Pass | 3 ♣ | Pass | 3 ♠ |
| Pass | 4 NT | Pass | 5 ♢ |
| Pass | 6 ♠ | Pass | Pass |
| Pass | | | |

6 ♠ by South
Lead: ♡ Q

South is to play 6 ♠ after North's Stayman bid. West leads the ♡ Q.

Losers: ♠=0 ♡=1 ♢=0 ♣=1 Total = 2

This looks like a very simple plan. Since the hands have mirrored distribution there will be no discards anywhere. That means the ♣ K MUST be in West's hand or you will go down. But is that all there is to it?

If West has ♣ K x or ♣ K x x then yes, that's all there is to it. But if he has ♣ K x x x then you won't have enough entries to your hand unless you take the first ♣ finesse BEFORE you start on trumps.

So win the ♡ A and immediately play a ♣ to dummy's ♣ J, which holds the trick. Then pull trumps, (it takes 4 rounds), ending in your hand.

Next play your ♣T, putting on the ♣ 5 from dummy when West plays low again. This lets you stay in your hand to play another ♣ to the ♣ Q, picking up all four ♣ tricks and the slam.

But also you had to play to one of dummy's honors first so you could retain that ♣ 5 for letting you stay in your hand to make the third finesse. Bridge is great.