

Deal 1

West Deals
None Vul

♠ K Q 4 3
♥ 6
♦ A J 10 7
♣ K 10 6 4

14
13 7
6

West

1 ♦

2 ♠

Pass

4 ♥ by North

Lead: ♠ A

♠ J

♥ K Q J 10 8 5

♦ 8 3

♣ A Q J 2



♠ 7 6 5

♥ A 7 3 2

♦ Q 6 4

♣ 9 5 3

North

1 ♥

4 ♥

East

1 ♠

Pass

South

2 ♥

Pass

♠ A 10 9 8 2

♥ 9 4

♦ K 9 5 2

♣ 8 7

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

You surely want to compete and must choose between a Takeout Double and an overcall.

To make a Takeout Double followed by a bid of your own suit you should have 17 points or more. Since you don't quite measure up you overcall 1 ♥. The opponents find a ♠ fit and partner raises your ♥s.

If you bid 3 ♥ now partner would not take it as invitational, he would just assume you were competing for the partscore.

The truth is that you don't know if you can make game or not. If you are feeling very conservative then perhaps a 3 ♥ bid is ok. But the bold will bid 4 ♥.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♠ A then the ♠ 8.

Losers: ♠ 1 : ♥ 0 : ♦ 2 : ♣ 2 : Total = 5

You cannot avoid losing the two ♦s and since you have already lost a ♠ you must not lose any ♣s. So you have to find West with the ♣ K. But that isn't all - you also need to get to dummy twice to make two finesses. The ♥ A is one entry and the other one will have to be the ♥ 7.

Be very careful. Ruff the second ♠ with the ♥ 8 saving your ♥ 5. Pull one round of trumps with ♥ K, then lead ♥ T to dummy (still saving the ♥ 5). Play a ♣ and finesse the ♣ J. Lead your ♥ 5 to dummy's ♥ 7, then another ♣, finessing the ♣ Q. Now play ♣ A and ruff your last ♣ with dummy's last ♥.

If you hadn't been able to find that extra entry you would have had no choice but to play West for the doubleton ♣ K x.

Deal 2

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 10 4
♥ A K 8 3
♦ Q J 8 6
♣ 10 6 4

7
10 4
19

West

Pass

Pass

4 ♠ by South

Lead: ♥ A

♠ K Q 3 2

♥ Q 6 4

♦ 9 7 4 2

♣ 8 2



♠ A J 9 7 5

♥ J 2

♦ A K 5 3

♣ A Q

North

2 ♠

Pass

East

Pass

Pass

South

1 ♠

4 ♠

♠ 8 6

♥ 10 9 7 5

♦ 10

♣ K J 9 7 5 3

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

Make a choice. With 20 points you are strong enough to open 2 NT. But, with two doubletons you can't really call this a balanced hand. So you should open 1 ♠.

Partner responds 2 ♠. What do you bid?

There should be no doubt about this bid. Partner has at least 6 points so you know there is enough for game. You bid 4 ♠.

South plays 4 ♠. West leads ♥ A, ♥ K, ♥ 3 and East follows to all three.

Losers: ♠ 0 : ♥ 2 : ♦ 2 : ♣ 1 : Total = 5

The 5 loser count isn't actually right because at this point you can dump one of those losers on dummy's ♥ Q. The question is: Which one?

You have two chances to set up an extra winner - if the ♦s split 3-2 or if the ♣ K is with East. If you

discard the ♣ Q right now you will be pinning all your hopes on the ♦ split. By discarding a ♦ instead you keep both possibilities alive.

So discard the ♦. Pull trumps with ♠ A J (it takes two rounds) then play ♦ A and ♦ K. Bad news, East shows out. So now you take your second chance. Enter dummy with a trump and play a ♣, finessing East for the ♣ K. Good news, this works. Two chances are better than one.

The percentages are right but the logic is wrong. If you are going to benefit from a 3-2 ♦ split it is only necessary for you to keep 4 ♦s in one of the hands, not both. So the fourth ♦ in your hand was unimportant while the ♣ Q gave you an extra shot.

Deal 3

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A K 7 2
♥ 3
♦ 10 8 6 5 2
♣ J 10 8

13
8 6
13

West

Pass

Pass

4 ♥ by North

Lead: ♠ Q

♠ 6 5
♥ A K Q 7 4
♦ A 9 4
♣ 7 6 3



♠ 9 8 3
♥ 8 6 5
♦ K Q J 3
♣ A K 4

North

1 ♥

2 ♥

Pass

East

Pass

Pass

Pass

South

2 ♦

4 ♥

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

You have an easy 1 ♥ opening bid.

Partner responds 2 ♦. What is your next bid?

No matter how much you learn about bidding you will always come across hands which defy you to find anything reasonable to say. This is one of them.

You can't pass. Partner's 2-level response forces you to bid again. You can't raise his bid to 3 ♦ with only 3-card support. You shouldn't rebid your ♥ suit without 6 of them. And you hate to bid 2 NT with your black suit holding. Whenever you get into a situation like this you should admit to yourself that whatever you say is going to be a lie, then try to find the bid that is likely to get you into the least amount of trouble.

In this case that bid is 2 ♥. Although you only have 5 of them, at least you have the top 3.

After all that worrying partner bids 4 ♥ and you pass.

North plays 4 ♥. East leads the ♠ Q and the defense plays three high ♠s.

Losers: ♠ 2 : ♥ 0/1 : ♦ 0 : ♣ 1 : Total = 3/4

If the trumps split 3-2 you are going to make 11 easy tricks.

So you ruff the third ♠ and play ♥ A, ♥ K. West shows out.

Decide whether to revise the Plan, then

Don't change plans, the old one was doing fine. Pull one more trump with the ♥ Q. That leaves East with ♥ J and you with ♥ 7. Don't panic, just don't lead any more ♥s. Start playing ♦ winners, then ♣ winners. Let East ruff with his ♥ J any time he wants to, your ♥ 7 will then be able to take care of a ♠ return and let you get back to minor suit winners.

This deal is a good example of that principle.

Deal 4

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 10 8 3
♥ K Q 10 4
♦ J 8
♣ 9 7 6 4

15
6 10
9

West

Pass
Pass
Pass

4 ♠ by South

Lead: ♥ K

♠ A K J 9 6 2

♥ 9 6 5

♦ A 6

♣ K 3



♠ Q 7

♥ A 8 2

♦ 10 9 7 5 2

♣ Q J 8

North

1 NT
4 ♠

East

Pass
Pass

South

1 ♠
3 ♠
Pass

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

With 10 points you aren't strong enough to respond at the 2-level, particularly with that weak ♦ suit.

So you bid 1 NT. Partner jumps to 3 ♠.

What do you bid?

Your 10 points are looking better now that you know partner has at least 16. That puts you at game-going strength.

And your ♠ Q 7 looks better too, knowing that partner has 6 ♠s.

So you bid 4 ♠.

South would play 4 ♠.

North plays 4 ♠. East leads the ♥ K.

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

You have one loser to get rid of. Your best approach is to establish a ♣ in dummy to take care of your ♦ loser. You can't pull trumps yet because you need the ♠ Q as an entry.

Win the ♥ A. Play a ♣ to the ♣ K, then another ♣. A defender will probably win this one and they will take two ♥s. But then they must give you the lead. You enter dummy with the ♠ Q and dump your ♦ 6 on the good ♣. Then you pull trumps and claim.

If the opening lead had been a ♦ you would first take the ♦ A, then pull trumps, then establish a ♣ to discard a ♥ loser, using the ♥ A as an entry.

If the opening lead had been a ♠ you would pull trumps, then establish a ♣ to discard a red loser on, using the ♥ A as an entry.

The same general plan, but with slightly different details, applies with all opening leads.

Deal 5

South Deals

None Vul

♠ K 7 3

♥ Q 10

♦ J 10 9 5 2

♣ K 6 5

9
9 7
15

West

Pass

Pass

3 NT by North

Lead: ♠ J

♠ 6 2

♥ 5 3 2

♦ A K Q 7 6 4

♣ 4 2



♠ A Q 4

♥ A 9 6

♦ 8 3

♣ A J 10 7 3

North

2 NT

Pass

East

Pass

Pass

South

2 ♦

3 NT

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

With 11 points and a beautiful 6-card suit this is the perfect hand for a Weak-2 opener. So you open 2 ♦. Partner responds 2 NT.

Partner's 2 NT bid is a standard response to a Weak 2-bid. You are expected to rebid your suit if you have a minimum (6-8 point) hand. Otherwise you are to bid an outside suit in which you hold a high card - this is called "showing a feature". And the final possibility is this one, where you have a solid suit, either A K Q x x x or A K J T x x. In this case you bid 3 NT.

North would play 3 NT.

South plays 3 NT. West leads ♠ J. East plays ♠ K.

Winner count: ♠ 2 : ♥ 1 : ♦ 3 : ♣ 1 : Total = 7

The ♠ lead assures you of two tricks in the suit. So you only need to create two more. If the ♦s split 3-2 (likely) you could get 3 extra tricks there. But

there's a danger - if they split 4-1 you wouldn't have an entry to them. Well, you wouldn't have an entry unless you DUCKED the first ♦. Then a 4-1 split wouldn't prevent you from making 5 ♦ winners.

So you win the ♠ A and lead the ♦ 3, planning to duck.

West shows out.

Make PLAN B, then

West shows out.

That's tough. No matter how you play them you can only get 3 ♦ winners. So you must turn elsewhere - elsewhere being the ♣ suit.

Win the ♦ Q but don't play another ♦ yet, you need an entry back to dummy later. Instead, lead the ♣ 2 and finesse your ♣ T. West will win with one of the high ♣s and probably return a ♠. You may as well take the ♠ Q now. Play your ♦ 8 to dummy's ♦ K, cash the ♦ A, then play the ♣ 4, finessing your ♣ J. Fortunately this wins and when you cash your ♣ A both defenders follow. The rest of your clubs are good and you make an overtrick.

When the ♦s turned out to be 5-0 you had to get lucky. Your back-up Plan wasn't likely to work - it required the missing ♣ honors to be split, but also required a 3-3 ♣ split, not a likely outcome.

But there was no other choice so you have to try it.