

Hello,

Thank you for participating in COBA's Bridge Plus Brunch session. We see many familiar faces and we hope that continue to enjoy this event. We need your feedback and support to sustain and grow this event. Please inform your friends and fellow club members about our expanded format – separate event and discussion for 199er and 0-1000 groups. Please visit <http://central-ohio-bridge-association.com> for future events and additional information. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Thank you

Joyce Penn

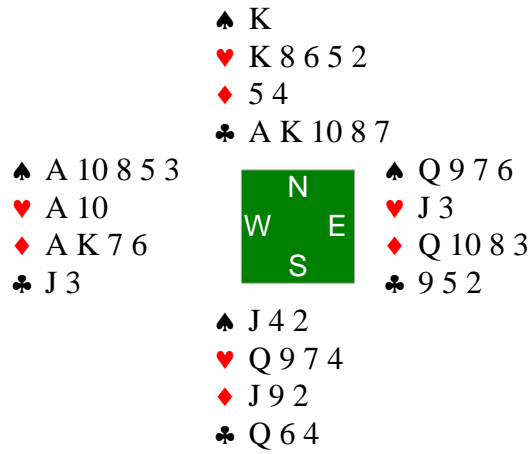
Mike Roberts

Siraj Haji

**Board 1**

East Deals

None Vul



EW 3♠; NS 3♥; EW 3♦; NS 3♣; EW 1N; Par -100; NS 4♣×-1; NS 4♥×-1

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1 ♠	2 ♠ <sup>1</sup>	3 ♠	All pass

1. Michaels cue-bid

**Bidding:** West could open 1 NT but (5422) is a suit-oriented shape (especially with a 5-card major) and there is an easy rebid sequence available after opening 1 ♠. We would prefer better hearts but North has a normal Michaels Cuebid bid. East's raise is pushy but we would rather bid 3 ♠ now instead of guessing at the four level if South jumps to 4 ♥. Bidding at the four level is a lot riskier than a competitive raise now. West has a sharp hand but many losers. West also knows that partner, with a fit, could have cue bid 3 ♥ to show a good passed hand raise. West should trust partner's raise as competitive and Pass. North-South have a good save in 4 ♥ or 4 ♣ due to good splits. However; South with 4333 shape is unlikely to step in after 3 ♠.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ A

**Defense:** Should South encourage or discourage clubs? Encouraging will avoid partner trying to cash the ♥ A, thereby setting up declarer's ♥ K, if those honors were reversed. To discourage (partner will still cash a second club to be sure) will encourage partner to shift to a heart from their presumed ♥ K, which is needed before diamonds set up for a heart discard (perhaps opener is 6232 and partner is 0535). We lean towards encouraging the club suit to conserve energy and time. It may also be tough on the partnership if partner starts to question my ability to encourage holding the queen.

**Play:** Declarer knows that South chose not to raise with good heart support and ♣ Qxx. There is also a shortage of dummy entries for repeated spade finesses. Should declarer lay down the ♠ A? Non-vulnerable with a singleton spade including ♠ K South may have competed to 4 ♥. Therefore, declarer expects North to hold the ♠ K and it is superior to play a low spade from hand because it also caters to playing KJxx with South for one loser. Playing the ♠ A to drop the singleton ♠ K with North does not eliminate your spade loser. After tackling trumps, declarer has to determine how to play the diamond suit. South could have ♦ J9xx. However; that would make North 1615 with a pretty good hand that might have competed more or shifted to a singleton diamond. We would play a diamond to the Queen and advance the Ten to tempt South to cover but intending to overtake if she does not. Had North played the ♦ 9 on the first round of diamonds, we would play their partner for Jxxx and finesse against their presumed ♦ J.

**Board 2**  
 East Deals  
 N-S Vul

♠ 8 4	♠ A 6 2	♠ 5
♥ J 7 4 3	♥ 10 6 5	♥ A K Q 9 2
♦ K Q J	♦ A 4	♦ 9 7 6 5 2
♣ Q J 8 3	♣ A 10 7 6 2	♣ 9 5

♠ K Q J 10 9 7 3	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 5
N					
W E					
S					
♥ 8		♥ A K Q 9 2			
♦ 10 8 3		♦ 9 7 6 5 2			
♣ K 4		♣ 9 5			

NS 5♠; EW 3♥; NS 2N; EW 1♦; NS 1♣; Par +500; EW 6♥×-3

West	North	East	South
4♥	4♠	2♥	2♠
All pass		5♥	5♠

**Bidding:** Five-card Weak-two bids are fairly common these days and you can hardly ask for a better suit. For detractors, this hand is a lot closer to a bid (including 1♥) than a Pass. 2♥ is a good value bid with this hand, and alerts partner to the correct lead. One cannot preempt a preempt. Jumps over opponent's preempts show very good hands with good suits. South simply bids 2♠, though some play special 4-level jumps to distinguish good and bad 4♠ bids. Responder and Advancer will raise their partner's suits. We generally avoid bidding to the 5 level, over the 4 level. Holding just five hearts, East expects at least one and possibly two hearts to cash on defense. However, 5-5 shape and *favorable vulnerability* inclines us to take out insurance against 4♠ and compete to 5♥. South has no intention of defending and will take the push to 5♠.

If East originally passes, some in the South seat may open 1♠ considering the hand too strong for a preemptive bid. Some may open 3♠ because at unfavorable vulnerability in the second seat one should have a good trump suit and this hand qualifies. It is a matter of partnership style.

**Opening Lead:** ♥3 or ♥4 depending upon your spot lead agreement of fourth best versus third best. Not expecting many hearts to cash and fear of declarer establishing clubs for diamond discards may induce some in the West seat to lead the ♦K. We do not recommend this because both minors are well stopped and you could lose tempo if North has long diamonds.

**Defense:** Nothing works on this hand. However; East has an opportunity for some analytical thinking for future use. Partner should have four hearts for their leap to game with a weak hand. This is reaffirmed by south taking the five over five push. The second heart is not cashing and there is a long suit (clubs) looming in the dummy that could possibly provide some diamond discards. We cannot stop a diamond ruff or two. Furthermore; declarer should not need many diamond ruffs; given East's spots, the diamonds will just set up. However; what if declarer is weak in diamonds and needs to set up the clubs? What if partner has ♦KJ behind declarer's honors? A diamond shift at trick two is a standout.

**Play:** Declarer hopes for a 3-3 club split (or Q-J doubleton) to provide two diamond discards. This requires a late dummy entry which is no longer available in diamonds after the thoughtful shift at trick two. This entry now will be in spades. Declarer cashes a high spade in hand and after they split, it is safe to cash a second one leaving ♠A as entry or (♠6-♠3 combination to show off). and then play clubs. Clubs do not split and declarer has to settle for no overtricks by simply giving up one diamond and ruffing one.

**Board 3**  
 South Deals  
 E-W Vul

<p>♠ J 9 7 3          ♥ K 3          ♦ K 10 7          ♣ Q 7 3 2</p>		<p>♠ Q 8 5          ♥ J          ♦ A J 5 3 2          ♣ K 6 5 4</p>	<p>♠ A K 6 4          ♥ A 10 9 7 6 5 4          ♦ 9 6          ♣ —</p>
<p>♠ 10 2          ♥ Q 8 2          ♦ Q 8 4          ♣ A J 10 9 8</p>			

W 5♠; E 4♠; EW 4♥; W 1N; N 2♦; NS 2♣; S 1♦; Par -650

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♦	1♥	1NT
Dbl <sup>1</sup>	2♣	4♣	5♣
Dbl	All pass		

1. Takeout

**Bidding:** It is no longer a topic of conversation whether or not to open the North hand in third seat. At favorable vulnerability, you have to make some noise and this hand is closer to a bid than a Pass. "I have never created a problem for my opponents by passing" - David Berkowitz.

East envisions a heart or possibly a spade game and conserves space with a simple 1♥ overcall. South's 1NT is more flexible than 2♣ and caters to more competitive situations. West cannot possibly have a penalty double with three seats bidding. Thanks to partner's voluntary 1NT bid, North musters up the courage to introduce their other minor. East could simply cue bid 3♣ to search for the best strain (hearts or spades). 4♣ is a splinter in support of spades. South will take the five over four push at favorable vulnerability. The spotlight is now on West. West has a useful Kx in partner's first suit. It goes downhill from there. West has honors and length in opponent's suits. He is missing the top three spade honors and the trump suit does not appear to break well with North bidding both minors. Please remember that West cannot see the actual hand. Lacking extra shape, it is best to apply the brakes and Double. East may have other ideas with a 7-4 hand and may decide to bid 5♠. It is best to refrain from that for fear of a bad split in the heart suit. If East pulls partner's Double, it better be right!

**Opening Lead:** ♠ A

**Defense:** West should discourage the spade continuation for several reasons. It is better to lead Q from a suit headed by AKQ. Therefore, partner has four spades headed by AK and a spade continuation will setup declarer's ♠ Q. An astute East will have a fairly good idea of the distribution. Partner probably does not have three hearts. Declarer's shape is almost certainly 3-1-5-4. A low heart at trick two happens to be the best defense because it allows partner to lead the second heart. Yes. At times, it is necessary to underlead an Ace to partner's presumed King in the mid-game to avoid setting up declarer's secondary honor (Qxx). However; it could be be embarrassing to allow declarer to score a singleton King. Admittedly, it is simplest for East to cash three top tricks and wait on partner to cash their defensive tricks that they promised with the double. After taking ♠ A, ♠ K and ♥ A, East leads another heart at trick four, setting up the ♥ Q in dummy.

**Play:** Clubs are not breaking but the spots are good enough to pick up the Queen. On this defense, thankfully, the ♠ Q can be used to pitch one diamond loser, and the ♥ Q is good, but declarer is stuck in hand. Simplest is to take advantage of the ♦ K onside when it is and give up to the club break, so a low club to the Ace (oh well), then the ♣ J, and if not covered, finesse diamonds, later giving up a club, down 2 for a good board since most North-Souths will be conceding to a major game making 5♠ by East. That requires bringing in the trump suit for no loser. On this layout, declarer has to cash one high spade in hand and then lead to ♥ K followed by ♠ J to smother the Ten. This works when North has Qxx and South Tx. We would have played for the doubleton queen to drop and gone down one.

**Board 4**

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ K Q J 9 7 3	♠ 8 6	♠ A 10 5									
♥ 9	♥ A K J 8 7 5 3	♥ 10 4 2									
♦ 7	♦ A K	♦ J 9 8									
♣ A Q J 6 2	♣ 9 8	♣ K 7 5 4									
<table style="border: 2px solid green; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 4 2										
	♥ Q 6										
	♦ Q 10 6 5 4 3 2										
	♣ 10 3										

EW 5♠; EW 5♣; NS 3♥; NS 3♦; Par -650

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♠	Dbl	2 ♠	2 NT <sup>1</sup>
3 ♣	3 ♥	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	5 ♥	Pass	Pass
5 ♠	All pass		

1. Lebensohl like

**Bidding:** No one plays natural 2 NT anymore :) This is an extension of Lebensohl or Good/Bad 2 NT principle. Advancer with values can respond directly with a suit bid and go through the 2 NT relay with a weaker hand. Unlike Lebensohl, you cannot be totally broke because you have the option to pass here. A Responsive Double would have shown equal length in both minors. South is stretching but wants to compete safely in her 7-card suit without overstating her values. Opener plans to bid game in spades. 3 ♣ would normally be a Help Suit Game Try. However; in this case it is simply an attempt to help partner make an intelligent 5-over-5 decision. Simply bidding 4 ♠ may work against some opponents. However; 6511 shape is certain to elicit five-level competition. East assumes that 3 ♣ was a Game Try and leaps to game with a moderate hand with a double-fit and a couple of good working honors. Pass would have been forcing because we cannot stop short of 3 ♠ after the 3 ♣ bid. Emboldened by South's stretch, North competes to 5 ♥ and thanks to partner's jump to game, West has an easy 5-over-5 decision.

You may want to discuss 'Forcing Pass' concept with your partner. Be aware that the old rules are not applicable anymore because everyone bids and 'Shape is King'.

**Opening Lead:** ♦ K. Leading K from AK implies a doubleton and intent to ruff the third round. It appears futile looking at all hands but remember that partner did make some noise and could have an entry to give you a ruff.

**Defense:** South would like partner to shift to a heart if holding the K but not the A. In order to avoid a potential disaster, we would simply encourage diamonds. Club suit cannot provide enough heart discards for the declarer.

**Play:** Not much to do - 'Draw Trumps and Claim' before anything bad happens.

**Board 5**  
 North Deals  
 N-S Vul

♠ Q J 9 8 2 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A ♣ A K J 5 2	♠ 10 7 ♥ Q 10 5 ♦ J 10 9 8 5 2 ♣ 8 7	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; background-color: #008000; color: white; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <span>N</span> <span>W</span> <span>E</span> <span>S</span> </div>	♠ A 6 5 ♥ A 8 7 3 ♦ 7 3 ♣ Q 10 6 4
♠ K 4 3 ♥ K J 6 2 ♦ K Q 6 4 ♣ 9 3			

EW 5♠; EW 5♣; EW 2N; NS 2♦; EW 1♥; Par -450

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	3♦	3♥ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
4♠	All pass		

1. Good raise, artificial

**Bidding:** You are aware of 'Fit-showing jumps' by passed hands. This is where a passed partner comes to life usually at the three level after you bid. This is an extension of the same concept. Partner cannot pass originally and then suggest another suit at the three-level after you open. We utilize available bidding space wisely by simply bidding 3♠ with a normal raise and the only other available call as a good raise. This keeps us from doing anything foolish at the four-level and punishing partner for a light overcall. Double would have been Responsive.

**Opening Lead:** ♦ J

**Defense:** Defense should try to cash a second diamond when in with the trump because it is more likely than hearts to go away on clubs. It does not matter on this hand.

**Play:** Defense has 15 HCP and South opened the bidding. We would simply lead low to ♠ A followed by a low spade towards our hand.

**Board 6**  
East Deals  
E-W Vul

	♠ J	
	♥ J 8	
	♦ J 6 5 4 3 2	
	♣ 10 7 3 2	
♠ Q 9 8 ♥ 6 4 3 ♦ K Q ♣ A K 9 6 5	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;">             N W     E S           </div>	♠ K 10 7 5 4 ♥ A K Q 10 5 ♦ A 10 9 ♣ —
	♠ A 6 3 2	
	♥ 9 7 2	
	♦ 8 7	
	♣ Q J 8 4	

EW 6N; EW 6♠; EW 5♥; EW 3♣; EW 1♦; Par -1440

West	North	East	South
		1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	4 ♣ <sup>2</sup>	Pass
4 ♦ <sup>3</sup>	Pass	5 ♣ <sup>4</sup>	Pass
5 ♦ <sup>5</sup>	Pass	5 ♥ <sup>6</sup>	Pass
6 ♣ <sup>7</sup>	Pass	6 ♠ <sup>8</sup>	All pass

1. Game forcing, 3+ clubs
2. Splinter for spades
3. Cue-bid
4. Exclusion Blackwood (0314)
5. 0 or 3 Keycards, excluding ♣ A
6. Asks for the trump Queen
7. Trump Queen and 1 King excluding ♣ K
8. I hope that partner has the ♠ J

**Bidding:** This is a difficult hand to bid. Auction proceeds slow and steady until a fit is discovered. Opener could simply jump to 5 ♠ asking for good trumps but that would make it impossible to find a potential Grand Slam. Opener uses the Exclusion Blackwood gadget where a jump to five-level in a suit is still Blackwood but with a void in the suit bid. Partner responds to this inquiry just like she would to normal RKC Blackwood but does not include AK of partner's void suit in her response. We have agreed on spades. 4 ♣ is an unmistakable splinter bid. 4 ♦ is a cooperative cue bid. 5 ♣ is Exclusion Blackwood. 5 ♦ (first step shows 0 or 3 keycards). Next step asks for the queen of trumps. First step would deny the queen, second step would show the queen and no kings (excluding ♣ K). Third step shows the trump queen and one king (excluding ♣ K). Some may argue West should apply the brakes after the club splinter. We believe that this is still a solid game force with useful cards. Qxx of trumps and diamond honors are all good cards. Even club AK will prove useful in the play. We would definitely make a courtesy 4 ♦ cue bid instead of a unilateral 4 ♠ signoff. All our subsequent bids were forced responses to partner's inquiries.

**Opening Lead:** ♦ 8

**Defense:** North was silent over repeated artificial diamonds bids and an artificial club bid, but that is to be expected when opponents are in a slam and we hold 7 HCP. Nothing else is appealing. We hope that our four trumps will be an unpleasant surprise for the declarer. Therefore, we chose the only suit they have not bid naturally.

**Play:** Trump suit is the only problem suit. The declaring side has eight top tricks in the side suits. We need four trump tricks. Our plan is to lead low towards the ♠ Q and finesse on the way back. We dodged a bullet here.

**Board 7**  
 South Deals  
 Both Vul

♠ Q 9 6 ♥ Q 8 5 3 2 ♦ 6 3 2 ♣ J 7		♠ K 8 4 3 ♥ 10 9 ♦ K J 5 ♣ Q 10 6 4	♠ 10 7 2 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ 8 7 ♣ A 9 8 3
♠ A J 5 ♥ K J ♦ A Q 10 9 4 ♣ K 5 2			

NS 4♠; NS 4♦; NS 2N; NS 3♣; EW 1♥; Par +620

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♦
Pass	3 NT	All pass	2 NT

**Bidding:** Normal. Some may upgrade the South hand to 2 NT. Final contract will be the same.

**Opening Lead:** ♥ 3

**Defense:** After East plays the ♥ A and returns a low heart at trick two, West plays the ♥ 2. The heart situation should be crystal clear for the defense. West started with five hearts and declarer cannot be falsecarding from KQJ. This should keep East from letting declarer sneak by a club for their ninth trick. East would simply win ♣ A and lead a heart.

Most declarers will run diamonds hoping for some help from the defense or for something good to happen in the spade suit. On the third diamond East should signal club strength/honor. This is very timely for West who can now discard two clubs instead of hoping that partner has the ♠ J. Since West has discarded both clubs, East must now retain two hearts - one as an entry to cash ♣ A and one to get back to partner's long hearts.

**Play:** Declarer would indeed try to steal a club trick were that the only option. Just running the diamonds might work, but the defenders know the heart situation and so will arrange to have the correct defender guard the clubs. If the person with long hearts has the ♣ A and ♠ Q, they will be squeezed. If nothing else materializes, declarer falls back on the spade finesse. Unfortunately that does not work either and leads to down two against good defense.



**Board 8**

West Deals

None Vul

♠ J 3	♠ K Q 8 7 5	♠ A 6
♥ 10 5 2	♥ 9 6	♥ A K Q 8 7 4 3
♦ K 8 4	♦ 9 5 2	♦ 10 7 6 3
♣ K 10 9 7 6	♣ Q J 3	♣ —

♠ 10 9 4 2	<table border="1" style="border: 2px solid green; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A 6
N					
W E					
S					
♥ J		♥ A K Q 8 7 4 3			
♦ A Q J		♦ 10 7 6 3			
♣ A 8 5 4 2		♣ —			

EW 4♥; EW 2N; NS 2♠; EW 3♦; NS 1♣; Par -300; NS 4♠×-2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	4♥ <sup>1</sup>	All pass

1. Value bid opposite a passed partner

**Bidding:** Opposite a passed partner, we would gamble 4♥, planning to double later to show a sound hand with long hearts. This should buy you the hand against most opponents. If you open 1♥, chances are that you will take the push to the 5-level after partner supports your hearts and opponents compete to 4♠.

Some brave Souths may double 4♥ if it is for Takeout. They will find a lucky save in 4♠ or push your side to the 5-level going plus with reasonable defense.

**Opening Lead:** ♠ 10

**Defense:** Nothing much to do. Simply follow suit. Do not revoke :)

**Play:** Declarer wins the ♠ A and cashes the ♥ A. The ♥ J dropping now creates two entries to the dummy (in hearts). Declarer's best shot for an overtrick is to lead a club away from the dummy and hoping that North has the ♣ A and rises with it, but that isn't the case. He should trump with the ♥ 8, preserving the low hearts for transportation. Declarer plays the ♥ 7 to the ♥ 10 retaining a possible entry with the ♥ 5. Reasonable defense leads to two diamonds and one spade for the defense.

4♠ by North-South will most likely be just down one because it will be very difficult to engineer a club ruff.

### Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

♠ 8 2		♠ K J 9
♥ K 10 9		♥ 7
♦ 3 2		♦ K 8 6 5 4
♣ A K 9 4 3 2		♣ Q J 8 5
♠ A Q 10 6 5 4	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: green; padding: 5px; margin: 0 5px;">           N W     E S         </div>	♠ 7 3
♥ A 4 3		♥ Q J 8 6 5 2
♦ A 10 9		♦ Q J 7
♣ 10		♣ 7 6

EW 5♠; EW 3N; EW 5♦; NS 1♥; EW 1♣; Par -650

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♣	1 ♦	2 ♥ <sup>1</sup>
Dbl <sup>2</sup>	3 ♥	3 ♠ <sup>3</sup>	Pass
4 ♣ <sup>4</sup>	Dbl	4 ♠ <sup>5</sup>	All pass

1. Weak jump shift in competition
2. Snapdragon: 5+ spades, 2+ diamonds
3. Spade fit but not interested in game
4. Cue bid - Slam aspirations
5. I am sorry that I overcalled

**Bidding:** North opens with two and a half Quick tricks, a decent six card suit and seven losing tricks. We would pass with the East hand if we held four spades intending to later show both pointed suits with a double over South's presumed 1♥ response followed by a raise or 1NT or 2♣ rebid by North. East should not be proud of this hand and be well aware of a potential disaster in waiting. Once again, this is a now or never situation. If you plan to do anything silly, do it early. It gives partner enough room to rescue you when appropriate and it is not always convenient for opponents to arrange to penalize you at low levels. At higher levels, opponents simply double and take their plus and a possible top. We chose to overcall 1♦.

There is a new but necessary gadget you can learn, illustrated with the West hand. It is always challenging to hold a good hand opposite your partner's overcall. There are not many forcing bids available. A cue bid tends to imply a fit for partner's suit. Instead, consider an expert treatment to play a jump in a new suit as a very good hand (still not forcing). That allows you to bid 3♠ over South's 2♥. Because of East's overcall, however, the Snapdragon Double is available to West, on this hand.

**Snapdragon Double:** After first three players bid three different suits, Double shows 5+ cards in the fourth suit and tolerance for partner's suit. This is a very flexible bid and a useful tool for competitive auctions. Length requirements and tolerance thresholds vary depending upon the level of bidding and partnership agreements.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ 7. If North preferred a heart lead, they may not have doubled clubs.

**Defense:** Nothing interesting to do.

**Play:** Declarer can get some shape information by safely ruffing hearts and clubs. South is revealed to be 2632 so there is no automatic squeeze on North in the minors. North can always hold onto the club guard and two diamonds in a 3-card ending. After drawing trumps, declarer's choices are to either play North for doubleton ♦ QJ or catch South napping with ♦ QJx by sneaking playing a low diamond to the Ten.

At favorable vulnerability, some North-South pairs may find themselves saving in 5♥. East-West must now engineer a club ruff to collect 800 against their vulnerable game. It should be easy for West to lead a singleton club holding a trump control.

**Board 10**  
 East Deals  
 Both Vul

♠ A 8 6 2	♠ K 9 5 3	♠ 10
♥ K	♥ A J 8	♥ Q 7 6 5 4 2
♦ A 8 4	♦ Q J 7	♦ 9 3 2
♣ K J 9 8 5	♣ A Q 10	♣ 4 3 2

♠ Q J 7 4	<table style="border: 2px solid green; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto; text-align: center; color: white; font-weight: bold; font-size: 10px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 10 9 3		♥ Q 7 6 5 4 2									
♦ K 10 6 5		♦ 9 3 2									
♣ 7 6		♣ 4 3 2									

NS 4N; NS 4♠; NS 1♥; NS 1♦; Par +630

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	1 NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	Pass
1. 15-18 HCP			

**Bidding:** Some Wests may open 1 NT with their singleton ♥ K (perfectly legal in ACBL-world with the new rules). We like the new rule because it helps bid certain hands. This is not one of those hands. West has a convenient spade rebid if partner bids 1 ♥. This hand is suit oriented and your long suit (clubs) is not ready to run quickly at No Trump. You also do not have many tenaces to protect. Our partners usually have an uncanny ability to transfer us into our singleton suit. Being vulnerable, there is a good chance of going -200 opposite a passed partner. -200 in part-score hands is described as 'Kiss of Death' at matchpoints.

If you open 1 NT, you will succeed in keeping them out of the auction (unless they play Penalty Doubles over 1 NT) but partner will transfer you in to hearts and you will be -200 for a bad score.

Don't expect us to suggest an auction to arrive at 3 NT or 4 ♠. Aggressive actions are good, but they also need to be sensible. Bidding 23 HCP games with two balanced hands is a losing proposition in the long run. We can take ten tricks here because of excellent spots and reasonable breaks in all suits. Even though the 1 NT overcaller can have 18 HCP, inviting game with the South hand will get you to 2 NT down one more often than not.

**Opening Lead:** ♥ 5

**Defense:** West can hope that East has the ♣ Q, therefore, she should win the first side Ace and shift to the ♣ 9 (in case partner's Queen is a doubleton).

**Play:** There is a very small possibility that East has an Ace on this auction. West could have opened an 11 HCP hand. In that case declarer would like to knock out that Ace first to kill the entry to a possible Queen-fifth of hearts. However; it makes sense to play diamonds first and use spades as an entry to the fourth diamond.

You have ten tricks after the deep club finesse wins. You may sneak the ♥ 8 by East for an 11th trick.

Unfortunately, +170 and +180 may not fare well against +200 on defense.

**Board 11**  
 South Deals  
 None Vul

♠ J 7 6 5	♠ A Q 9 3 2	♠ —
♥ 5	♥ 10 4 2	♥ A Q J 7
♦ A 7 6 2	♦ J	♦ K Q 10 9 5 3
♣ K J 6 3	♣ A Q 8 2	♣ 7 5 4

♠ K 10 8 4
♥ K 9 8 6 3
♦ 8 4
♣ 10 9

NS 3♠; EW 4♦; NS 2♥; W 1♣; Par -100: NS 4♠×-1

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	2 ♦	Pass
4 ♦	All pass		3 ♠

**Bidding:** New concept alert - *Equal Level Conversion*. *If a Takeout Double is followed by a new suit at the same level as partner's bid, it does not promise extra values. It promises extra length in the suit bid and four cards in the unbid suit (almost always a major).* This helps you find 4-4 fits that may be difficult to uncover after partner's overcall. We have previously mentioned that Advancer (Overcaller's partner) does not have many forward going exploratory bids available.

Playing *Equal Level Conversion*, East can Double and correct partner's club bid to diamonds showing length in that suit and four hearts but not promising extra values traditionally promised by a double followed by a suit bid (usually 16+ HCP). We are introducing you to the concept. Once again, this is not an appropriate hand for that experiment. Void in opener's suit may escalate the auction out of control. Be content with overcalling your long suit and then competing again sensibly.

South is not good enough for a Limit Raise (3 ♦ cue bid). 2 ♠ does not create a problem for the opponents. 3 ♠ is a good value bid with the South hand.

5 ♦ with either East-West hand is reasonable. However, it does not work on this hand due to the location of club honors.

**Opening Lead:** ♠ 4. Low after raising promises an honor. ♠ 8 if playing third best lead.

**Defense:** The club lead would have ended things quickly, but now there is scope for declarer to go wrong.

**Play:** ♣T lead would have settled things in a hurry. Thanks to friendly breaks in diamonds and hearts, ten tricks are always available on a cross-ruff (♥ A, six trumps in hand and three ruffs in dummy). Declarer may try a heart finesse through the opener before drawing two rounds of trumps and limit themselves to nine tricks.

With so many apparent defensive tricks and almost half the deck between them, it will be difficult to find the 4 ♠ save against a part-score.

**Board 12**

West Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 5 3	♠ J 9	♠ A K 8 7 2
♥ 3	♥ J 10 8 6	♥ K 9 7 5
♦ A 10 9 5	♦ K Q 8 7 6 3	♦ 4
♣ Q J 10 9 5 2	♣ 7	♣ 8 6 4

N	
W	E
S	

♠ Q 10 6 4
♥ A Q 4 2
♦ J 2
♣ A K 3

NS 3♥; NS 2N; NS 3♦; EW 2♣; NS 1♠; Par +140

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
3♣ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4♣ <sup>2</sup>	Dbl <sup>3</sup>
Pass	4♥ <sup>4</sup>	Dbl <sup>5</sup>	Pass <sup>6</sup>
Pass	Pass <sup>7</sup>		

1. 6-card suit - We cannot open a weak 2♣. Bidding is better than passing
2. Muddying the waters for them
3. Risky but we cannot let them steal
4. Tough choice to bypass a six card minor
5. Four trumps and AK - Odds are with us
6. Sorry partner
7. Perhaps, I should have bid 4♦ but it is too late now

**Bidding:** With ten non-major cards and a decent club suit it is correct to preempt 3♣, every time. North does not have the strength to bid over the preempt. 3♠ by East is a possibility but most partnerships do not have clear agreements after a 3-level opening preempt. 4♣ is the best option because you will happily defend four of a major contract. South has a tough decision but senses that the opponents may be trying to steal at favorable vulnerability. North has an even tougher decision and we would not disagree with a 4♦ response. We subscribe to the MeckWell concept of *MaFiA - Majors First Always*. East should double. East is on opening lead with ♠AK and has four trumps headed by the king.

**Opening Lead:** ♠A

**Defense:** West should encourage partner to continue spades in an effort to cut down potential discards on ♠QT. Declarer cannot discard enough diamonds on the ♣AK. Declarer has to have a few diamonds.

**Play:** Down to just three trumps after overruffing a spade at trick 3, declarer tries the ♥J confirming the anticipated bad news. East does not cover presenting another challenge for the declarer. If declarer tries to force out the ♦A now, East will score a ruff and declarer does not have an entry back to hand, to pick up the ♥K, resulting in -500. Declarer can avoid this fate by playing one high club and ruffing one - losing two spades, one diamond and one trump trick.

**Board 13**

North Deals

Both Vul

<p>♠ J 10 ♥ Q 3 ♦ A 8 7 ♣ A J 6 5 4 3</p>	<p>♠ A K 8 4 2 ♥ 9 6 5 ♦ K 3 ♣ Q 8 7</p>	<p>♠ Q 7 3 ♥ A J 8 ♦ 10 6 5 4 2 ♣ K 10</p>	
<p>♠ 9 6 5 ♥ K 10 7 4 2 ♦ Q J 9 ♣ 9 2</p>			

EW 2N; EW 2♦; EW 2♣; NS 1♠; NS 1♥; Par -120

West	North	East	South
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♠ <sup>1</sup>
3 ♣ <sup>2</sup>	All pass		

1. Those playing Constructive Raises may bid Forcing 1 NT
2. Now or never

**Bidding:** A Forcing NT intending to show a weak spade raise will make it very easy for East-West to find their optimum spot of 2 NT. West will simply overcall 2 ♣ and East will invite with 2 NT ending the auction. 2 ♠ bid presents a challenge for the West. We try to pick a style and stick with it. We have been aggressive so far and therefore West bids 3 ♣. East is tempted to try 3 NT opposite their partner's 3-level vulnerable overcall but chooses to not punish partner for their 'Direct Seat Balance'. East-West side rates to have up to 22 HCP and that is exactly the case. Game is unlikely.

**Opening Lead:** ♠ A. This happens to work out poorly but we can hardly fault North for this lead. We are also unlikely to find the damage control shift to the ♦ K at trick two. Incidentally, it takes the ♦ K opening lead to hold declarer to eight tricks. We would be suspicious of anyone finding that lead.

**Defense:** Staring at ♠ Q in dummy, we could get into an esoteric discussion about South's signal. Attitude is clear; Count is immaterial. Perhaps this should be a Suit-Preference signal. However; we do not always have a clear preference. In this case, we would love a heart shift if partner has the ♥ Q. We would rather have a diamond shift if partner has the ♦ K. But in all honesty, these are tough signals for casual players in the heat of the battle. It is different for the pros. North may simply play three rounds of spades in order to avoid further damage. Declarer can take their discard but she now has to get to hand twice - once to finesse the ♣ Q and then to draw the last trump.

**Play:** This is probably the most interesting play/defense hand in this set. We will run out of space if we get into all the nuances and iterations. We will touch upon some interesting aspects regarding the play.

Declarer knows that North has ♠ AK and probably does not have ♦ KQ for not shifting to diamonds. North should have either the ♥ K or ♣ Q for their opening bid. We would have preferred a heart shift at trick two to facilitate the discovery play. After finding South with the ♥ K it is right to play North for ♣ Q. The third round of spades wasn't bad after all because now declarer is forced to discard a diamond on ♠ Q, play a diamond to Ace and a heart to the jack. When that loses, depending upon the defense, we will eventually come to hand with the ♥ Q and finesse the ♣T followed by the ♣ K. Ruff a good ♥ A to get to hand to draw the last trump. This line presents North with another chance to be brilliant by unblocking their ♦ K under the Ace and scoring an uppercut with ♣ Q when partner cooperates by playing three rounds of diamonds when in with the ♥ K.

**Board 14**

East Deals  
None Vul

♠ K 8 5 4		♠ A Q 10 9 3
♥ A K 6		♥ 9 7 5 4 2
♦ K 7 4 3		♦ Q J
♣ 10 3		♣ A
♠ J 7	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">             N W     E S           </div>	♠ 6 2
♥ J 10		♥ Q 8 3
♦ 9 8 5 2		♦ A 10 6
♣ Q J 9 8 7		♣ K 6 5 4 2

NS 1N; EW 1♠; N 1♥; NS 1♦; NS 1♣; Par +90

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 NT <sup>1</sup>	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♠	Dbl <sup>4</sup>	2 ♥ <sup>2</sup>	Dbl <sup>3</sup>
		All pass	

1. Balancing NT - 11-16 HCP
2. 5-4(5) not vulnerable
3. Penalty oriented - We have barely over half the deck
4. Penalty - speculative but we have to protect our plus

**Bidding:** Balancing 1 NT over one of a minor opening shows about 11-14 HCP because with stronger hands, you can double and bid 1 NT over partner's 1-level response. We have to widen our range at the top end over one of a major opening. After a 1 ♠ opening and our balancing double, partner is forced to bid at the two level. Are we comfortable bidding 2 NT with a balanced 16 HCP hand? Obviously not. This is a good topic to discuss with your partner. East can simply defend 1 NT but that is no fun. South's double may be too aggressive, but it is reasonable. North's double is cooperative and necessary to protect their plus score. When opponents are not vulnerable, +50 is not a good score for us if we can make 1 NT or another part-score.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ 4 (low club based on your spot lead agreement).


**Alternate Lead:** ♠ 6. They chose one suit over the other and some may say that this is an automatic trump lead in order to cut down on ruffs.

**Defense:** We chose to attack with clubs hoping to play a forcing game. Dummy's clubs have thwarted that plan. Declarer will try to ruff hearts and North-South simply need to switch to trumps to take their three heart tricks to go along with one spade and two diamonds for a one trick set.

When declarer leads a heart at trick two, south has to decide whether to play the ♥ Q or not. We usually play second hand low. However; a desperate declarer with no dummy entries may lead a low heart away from the king when partner holds the ace and not going up with ♥ Q will cost you a defensive trick. Rising with the ♥ Q may be wrong if partner has the ♥ K because now it is finessable. In this case, there is no entry to the dummy to finesse. It is unlikely that partner has a doubleton ♥ K. There it is correct to play the ♥ Q. Fortunately, it will not matter on this hand.

**Play:** Not much to do. You can try playing the ♣ J at trick one to induce North to cover but you do not have an entry even if the ploy works. We would simply play a low club from dummy, and keep leading hearts hoping to eventually trump one heart in the dummy.

**Board 15**  
 South Deals  
 N-S Vul

<p>♠ J 10 9          ♥ K 9 5          ♦ J 10 6 4          ♣ 9 5 3</p>	<p>♠ A K 8 6 5 2          ♥ Q 6 4 2          ♦ A          ♣ J 7</p>	<p>♠ Q          ♥ A J 10 8          ♦ Q 7 5 3          ♣ K Q 4 2</p>
		
<p>♠ 7 4 3          ♥ 7 3          ♦ K 9 8 2          ♣ A 10 8 6</p>		

NS 3♠; NS 1N; EW 1♥; EW 1♦; Par +140

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1 ♠	Dbl	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♥ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	3 ♠
All pass			

1. Help Suit Game try in Hearts tend to be real suit  
 Lead: ♣ K

**Bidding:** Some play transfers / Bromad over the takeout double to differentiate between a weak raise versus a normal raise or a normal raise versus a good raise. We may not have discussed that gadget. Therefore, North caters to the wide range 2 ♠ raise by inviting with 3 ♥ and south declines. Incidentally, Help Suit Game tries in hearts tend to be more natural (4 cards) if we have the room to bypass both minors.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ K

**Defense:** West will discourage clubs at trick one. Defense will have some time to cash their second club. If they do not, it will go away on ♦ K. One heart discard on ♦ K is not much help for the declarer.

**Play:** Lacking a quick entry to ♦ K to pitch a club, we may consider ducking the ♣ K while unblocking ♣ J. You will break even if East continues clubs. However; if they switch to diamonds, you would draw two rounds of trumps and finesse ♣T. You may now discard two hearts on ♦ K and ♣ A. Unfortunately nothing good happens on this hand. On a good day, East could have started with ♣ KQ9 and trumps would have split 2-2. This line would have given you 11 tricks.

If you win the ♣ A at trick one, you must play hearts immediately intending to trump at least one in dummy. Once again on this hand nothing matters. You lose one spade, two hearts and one club to score your 140.



**Board 16**

West Deals

E-W Vul

♠ 4	♠ K Q 10 7 3	♠ A 9 6 5 2
♥ J 8 7 3	♥ 4 2	♥ A K Q 10
♦ K Q 5 3	♦ 6 4 2	♦ 10
♣ J 8 5 3	♣ 6 4 2	♣ K 10 9
	♠ J 8	
	♥ 9 6 5	
	♦ A J 9 8 7	
	♣ A Q 7	

EW 4♥; EW 3♣; EW 1N; E 1♠; EW 1♦; Par -620

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♦
Dbl	Pass	3 ♥	All pass

**Bidding:** West and North should be reluctant to press the auction with length and defense in the opponent's suit. West is under the most pressure, needing to advise the partnership whether to defend 2 ♦ or compete for a partial in one of the rounded suits. East invites a heart game but West applies the brakes. Singleton in partner's first suit and only four trumps are a concern. It should be noted that on some hands, East may have to ruff diamonds with heart honors leading to trump promotion.

**Opening Lead:** ♥ 5. You do not have a sequence to lead from. Partner did not bid and this auction calls from a trump lead.

**Defense:** This looks like a good lead. The problem will be the diamond by declarer towards dummy. North should try to help here by playing the ♥ 4 (highest card in the suit) on the first trump, the beginning of a subtle suit preference (away from clubs). If South ducks the diamond, declarer has ten tricks on a cross-ruff. If South hops with the Ace, it could get worse by cashing the ♣ A, playing declarer for having all the strength in the majors, and that is two extra tricks (a diamond, a club) to add to the cross-ruff for eleven tricks.

**Play:** Win the opening lead in hand lead the ♦ 10. Our plan is to embark on a cross-ruff rather than working on clubs and risking a ruff even if ♣ Q is onside.

**Board 17**  
 North Deals  
 None Vul

♠ K 9 7 4	♠ 10 8 2	♠ A J 6 5 3
♥ A 7 6 2	♥ K Q 10 4	♥ 9 5 3
♦ 10 9 5	♦ 7 2	♦ J 8
♣ 7 3	♣ K J 9 8	♣ A Q 5

♠ Q	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A J 6 5 3
N					
W E					
S					
♥ J 8		♥ 9 5 3			
♦ A K Q 6 4 3		♦ J 8			
♣ 10 6 4 2		♣ A Q 5			

EW 3♠; NS 3♣; EW 1N; NS 2♦; EW 1♥; Par -100: NS 4♣×-1

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 ♠	3 ♦
3 ♠	All pass		

**Bidding:** Preempts opposite a passed hand can be wide ranging and tactical. 2 ♦ does not cause a problem for the opponents and who cares about finding a 4-4 club fit. While South would not open a preempt with this hand even vulnerable, 3 ♦ seems just right opposite a passed partner. West's 3 ♠ raise concludes the auction.

**Opening Lead:** ♦ Q. Q from AKQ to show the strength.

**Defense:** North can encourage, though South might not play a third diamond lest North ruffs with Jxx and loses a possible 2-way guess (Restricted Choice) for the spades.

**Play:** Declarer might discard a heart on the third diamond keeping South on lead and hoping for a club shift. Declarer's plan is to lead a spade to the king and finesse the jack on the way back. Fortunately, queen shows up and everything works. It is extremely unlikely to go wrong on this hand like getting caught in hand and not be able to take the club finesse or not leaving a trump in the dummy to ruff the third club.

**Board 18**

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ J 6 3	♠ K 5 2	♠ A Q 8 4
♥ K 10 2	♥ Q 9 5 4 3	♥ 8 6
♦ Q 5	♦ 8 6	♦ 10 9 4 3 2
♣ J 10 8 5 4	♣ A 7 6	♣ 3 2

♠ 10 9 7	♠ 10 9 7
♥ A J 7	♥ A J 7
♦ A K J 7	♦ A K J 7
♣ K Q 9	♣ K Q 9

NS 4♥; NS 3N; NS 2♠; NS 2♦; NS 2♣; Par +620

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♦
Pass	3 ♣ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2 NT
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	3 ♥

1. New Minor Forcing

**Bidding:** With one exception, it is best to play all continuations by responder after a 2 NT rebid as natural and game forcing. Three of the other minor should be artificial Checkback to find the best strain. We do not recommend signoffs at the three level. 3 ♣ asks for three-card heart support or four spades. It is perfectly normal to bypass a four card spade suit to rebid 2 NT with a balanced hand worth 18-19 HCP. Bypassing a four card spade suit to bid 1 NT is a totally different subject.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ 3. Nothing stands out on this auction. Diamond lead may give away the position of any honor(s) that partner may have. Dummy has three trumps and therefore unlikely to score ruffs. There is no need to lead trumps and a trump lead may pickle any honor in partner's hand. ♠ A is too passive. It appears that doubleton club is a reasonable compromise.

**Defense:** West has a decision at trick three. Do we attack spades or give partner a ruff if the opening lead is a singleton? Trump echo comes in handy in these situations. Count in trump suit can only help the declarer. Therefore, when following to the trump suit, an echo (high-low) traditionally indicates the intent to ruff. There are no guarantees. Our opponents are not kind enough to leave us lot of trumps to choose from. Partner's ♣ 6 will be difficult to read. Declarer cannot discard dummy's spades. They may be able to discard one from hand on the ♦ J. It is not appealing to break the spade suit holding ♠ J and looking ♠T9 in the dummy, It also appears that our spade tricks are unlikely to go away. However; if partner has a club ruff coming, this is our only chance. We do not want an unhappy partner and try to give them their ruff.

**Play:** Win the ♣ A and take the heart finesse. Win the club continuation, draw another round of trumps with ♥ Q. Our plan is to cash two high diamonds and ruff one hoping to find Qxx while retaining entries to lead towards ♠ K or attempt to throw in East with a diamond after eliminating other suits. Fortunately, we do not have to work too hard. The ♦ Q drops doubleton and we have ten tricks via four hearts, three diamonds and three clubs.

**Board 19**  
 South Deals  
 E-W Vul

♠ A 10 9 5 4	♠ 8 7	♠ 6 2
♥ K 10 8	♥ 6 5 4 2	♥ Q 3
♦ 10 9 7	♦ A K	♦ Q 8 5 4 3 2
♣ 7 2	♣ J 10 8 6 5	♣ A K Q

N
W E
S

♠ K Q J 3
♥ A J 9 7
♦ J 6
♣ 9 4 3

EW 2N; EW 2♠; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; NS 1♣; Par -120

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♣
Pass	1 ♥	2 ♦	2 ♥
Dbl <sup>1</sup>	Pass	3 ♦ <sup>2</sup>	All pass

1. Snapdragon, 5+ spades and 2+ diamonds
2. No spade support

**Bidding:** We introduced you to Snapdragon earlier. Sometime we learn a convention and then wait months for it to come up. It has come up twice in this set. North could get frisky with the double-fit and try 3♥. It would be difficult for East-West to double that contract at IMPs. However; Matchpoints is a different animal and you have to protect your plus. 3♥ doubled will not be a pretty picture. Stopping on the dime in 2NT (par contract) is never easy and not the best long term strategy. East-West are not sure of their double heart stoppers. 3♦ is the sensible contract.

**Opening Lead:** ♠ K

**Defense:** You have one spade, one heart and one diamond. You should be glad that you did not compete to 3♥.

**Play:** Play trumps. Avoid practice heart finesse. You have four losers. Claim early, claim often and save your energy for the next board.

**Board 20**

West Deals

Both Vul

♠ K 4	♠ A 9 6 2	♠ 10 8 5 3
♥ A J	♥ 10 8 7 5	♥ 3 2
♦ 10 7 2	♦ K 9 8	♦ Q 6 3
♣ Q J 7 6 3 2	♣ K 10	♣ A 9 8 4

♠ Q J 7
♥ K Q 9 6 4
♦ A J 5 4
♣ 5

NS 4♥; NS 3♠; NS 4♦; EW 1N; EW 1♣; Par +620

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♥
Pass <sup>1</sup>	2 ♠ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	3 ♦ <sup>3</sup>
Pass	4 ♥ <sup>4</sup>	All pass	

1. Denies 3 spades
2. Strong heart support
3. Just because there is space to show sign of life
4. All Prime with four trumps.

**Bidding:** A lot depends on how South treats her hand after partner's cue bid. You are close to minimum for a vulnerable 2-level overcall. Opponents have opened and responded usually indicating about 18 HCP between them giving our side about 22 HCP. We would certainly understand a 3♥ signoff. However; simple Law of Total Tricks calculation (without minor honor adjustments) makes this a 6-loser hand. Partner's limit raise usually amounts to an 8-loser hand. Game is certainly possible and we have an easy 3♦ bid available to test the waters. North has 10 HCP with flat distribution. However; 10 HCP in Aces and Kings are more valuable than other ten points. You also have four trumps.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ Q

**Defense:** This is a nightmare for the defense. Opponents are in game with their 23 HCP. They have only one way to play the diamond suit and trumps break 2-2. Onside ♠ K is ok because they still have a spade loser.

**Play:** Opening lead is disappointing because North certainly expected ♣ K to be well placed. Everything comes down to how you play the heart suit. If you play for the break you will bring this home. If you decide to play East for Jxx, you will go set. Can we find any clues? West cannot have more than two spades (did not make Support Double). Opponents holding ten clubs between them have bid the suit just once. You cannot do anything about AJx with West. However; holding a singleton ♥ A, they may have bid over 2♥. This makes us lean towards playing for the trumps to behave.

**Board 21**  
 North Deals  
 N-S Vul

♠ —	♠ A J 6 5	♠ K 10 4 2
♥ 9 6 4	♥ 10 5	♥ Q 8 7 3 2
♦ 10 7 6 5 3	♦ K J 8 2	♦ A
♣ Q J 10 7 3	♣ A 6 5	♣ K 8 2

♠ Q 9 8 7 3
♥ A K J
♦ Q 9 4
♣ 9 4

NS 3N; NS 3♠; NS 2♦; E 1♥; Par +500; E 4♥×-3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♦	Dbl	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
All pass			

**Bidding:** With a stronger heart suit, we would have overcalled 1♥ and then doubled later to show shape/strength. Holding a weak 5-card suit, four cards in the other major and tolerance for the unbid minor, it is correct to make a Takeout Double with this hand.

You may have been told that you must Redouble with 10+ HCP. We disagree. While 1NT, 2♣ and 2♦ bids by South would have been limited here, it is best to play one of a major to promise 6+ HCP including invitational and game forcing hands. This treatment avoids awkward guesses at higher levels when opponents find their fit.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ Q

**Defense:** Not much here. North-South bid to a normal major suit game with a 9-card fit and they rate to make it with reasonable play. It takes an unlikely diamond opening lead followed by a club shift to set this contract.

**Play:** In order to have any chance of making this contract, declarer must let ♣ Q hold the first trick. Holding Axx opposite xx(x) in a side suit, it is usually correct to duck the first trick (unless you fear a ruff coming). This helps sever their communication. On this hand, it will keep them from arranging a diamond ruff.

The auction is revealing. You are missing 15 HCP and West just located three of them for you before you played to the first trick. Counting is an excellent habit and this hand requires very little effort. Your side has 25 HCP, West has 3, leaving East with almost or all the missing 12 HCP. This is consistent with their Takeout Double. The ♠ K is definitely offside and the ♥ Q is very likely onside. West does not have lots of clubs or she may have bid them in response to the Takeout Double. If East has a few clubs, she must be short in diamonds. All this information will draw a clear road map for declarer. You have to force out the ♦ A and also the ♠ K to draw the remaining trumps. A bad trump break and the club lead do present some challenges. We are lucky that we are forced (tapped) just once in the club suit. If you bid it you will make it.

Getting to 3NT with a 9 card major suit fit is possible but more Double Dummy than real life. Playing 3NT, a 4-4 club break could easily cost you three clubs, one spade and one diamond for a one trick set.