

**Board 1**

North Deals  
None Vul

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

EW 4♥; W 3N; EW 3♠; E 2N; EW 2♣; NS 1♦; Par -420

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

1. Intending to jump to 3♥ at next turn - Delayed Limit Raise.
2. Usually jump shifts imply 19+ HCP. 6-5 Come Alive.
3. Partner had a ton or room available between 3♥ and 4♥. Trusting partner's signoff.

Bidding: West is a too strong for a simple raise. Plan is to show 4+spades followed by a jump to 3♥ – Delayed Limit Raise. East could rebid 4♥, but that would be giving up entirely on a club slam. Jump to 3♥ is a tad timid too. East takes matter into her hands to ensure that a game is reached in either rounded suit. Unless partner gets excited about clubs, the plan is to bid 4♥ at next turn. West’s preference may be made on two or three trumps. Having made a Game Forcing Jump Shift on a distributional hand, East applies the brakes and bids 4♥. West should respect the fact that opener took up all available bidding space. A singleton in partner’s primary or secondary suit is never an asset. We would not be surprised if this auction is not repeated at any table.

Lead: Holding length in declarer’s second suit, it is tempting to lead a trump, but singleton trump is hardly a desirable lead. Keep in mind that partner may be able to overruff clubs as is the case here. Dummy’s spades may provide discards. We go with the unbid suit – diamonds.

Play: We have a sure club loser and one or two spade losers. We have arrived at a 24 HCP game without a side source of tricks. We must bring it home. After a diamond lead, one may rush to discard a spade. This will keep your spade losers to one but your fifth club is not necessarily a winner. Discarding a club lets you enjoy a spade winner as long as North does not have both missing honors. Fastest route to ten tricks is via one spade, one diamond, one club and seven hearts (six in hand and one club ruff). Cashing a club before ruffing one will lead to down two.

It is said that one should count their winners in No Trump and losers in a suit contract. This hand is a good illustration of why you should count your winners in a suit contract too.

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

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

♠ Q 9 5 3	♠ K Q 10 5 4 3
♥ —	♦ 8 6 3

EW 3♦; NS 1N; NS 1♠; NS 1♥; EW 1♣; Par -110

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

1. Too many flaws for a second seat vulnerable weak two bid.

Bidding: Many in South seat will open 2♥. We would not do that for the following reasons:

- 1-Second seat preemptive openings should be as disciplined as possible. One of the opponents has already passed and partner has not.
- 2-You lack suit quality for a Red versus White preempt.
- 3-Side four-card major headed by an honor could easily cause us to miss a game in that suit.
- 4-Diamond void could be a big asset if partner has a decent hand with spades or even clubs.

Any one of these negatives may not talk us out of preempting but this is too long a list.

West opens a light third seat 1♣. North would prefer better texture but has enough for a one-level overcall. East bids 1NT. Counting on partner for some values for her overcall, South now introduces her six-card heart suit at the two-level. This should end the auction. It is impossible for East-West to find their optimal 3♦ contract after North's overcall.

2♥ will likely be the final contract even if West passes in third seat.

Lead: ♣ K.

Play: Draw trumps as soon as you get in planning to lose three clubs and two spades. After defense cashes three club tricks, a discard on the ♦ A does not help.

Defense: It takes very little partnership effort to take six defensive tricks. East encourages the club opening lead. West plays a low club to cater to doubleton A. East plays ♠ A and another after partner encourages. West gives partner a spade ruff and plays a fourth spade after regaining lead with ♣ Q. Declarer must be careful to ruff it with the Ace or end up -200 for a very poor score.



**Board 4**

West Deals

Both Vul

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

N  
W E  
S

NS 3♦; EW 3♣; EW 1N; NS 1♠; NS 1♥; Par +110

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

1. 4+ hearts. You do not require five cards to bid 1♥ after a 1♦ overcall. Double would show 4-4 in the majors.
2. Now or never for spades. Have a landing spot in diamonds.
3. No spade fit but counting on partner's landing spot.
4. Competing.
5. Part score battle continues.

**Bidding:** After two initial passes, everyone takes two bids. This is a typical partscore battle when both sides have fits. Lack of trumps makes it difficult for defense to double in order to protect their own plus score. Taking advantage of the known 10-card fit, some Wests may take the push to 4♣ and get away with -100 for a good score. Experienced duplicate players may decide that -130 will be a poor matchpoint score and gamble a double. They will be rewarded handsomely with the magic matchpoint score of +200.

**Lead:** ♣ 3.


**Play:** Normal. You have one club, one spade and two heart losers.

**Defense:** Normal. East may try to play ♥ A at trick two, followed by a low heart hoping to get a ruff. Nothing matters on this hand.

**Board 5**

North Deals

N-S Vul

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

NS 4♥; NS 3♠; NS 2N; NS 2♣; Par +620

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	2 ♥	All pass	

Bidding: It is very reasonable to open this hand 1 NT because 1 ♥ opening creates a rebid problem if partner responds 1 ♠. We would always open 1 NT in first or second seat. However; facing a passed partner, we are more concerned about not missing our eight-card heart fit if one exists.

Unlike Board #1, North should prefer 2 ♥ to 1 ♠ for the following reasons:

1-You have limited values.

2-1 ♠ is not forcing. You are a passed hand.

3-You may not be able to convince partner later that you have three trumps and a ruffing value.

4-With limited values, take up as much bidding space away from opponents as safely possible.

5-1 ♠ may allow East to overcall in either minor or possibly double to show both minors. You have spades and therefore, they will have a more difficult time making a takeout double of 2 ♥.

If you open 1 NT, partner will transfer to spades and pass. Unfortunately, only nine tricks are available in that contract. Tenth trick in hearts comes from the diamond ruff in the hand with short trumps.

Lead: ♦ 2 or ♠ 5. Nothing stands out. ♥ 2 is a possibility as well.

Play: On a non-heart lead there is no rush to ruff the third round of diamonds. South has time to try to establish dummy's spades by taking two finesses. In some situations, West could complicate matters by inserting the ♠ Q. However; nothing matters on this hand. Cards are too friendly for the declarer. They could simply lead clubs twice from the dummy losing, one spade, one heart and one club. If opening lead is a low heart, take your diamond ruff immediately because defense can void the dummy of trumps if you allow them back in.

Defense: Normal. If West is sure that the ♠ 9 is not singleton, they should play the ♠ Q on the first spade lead. It does not matter on this hand but could sever communications in other cases.

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

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

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

EW 4♥; EW 2N; EW 3♣; NS 1♠; EW 1♦; Par -500; NS 4♠×-3

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

1. Typically 18-19 HCP balanced hand with four trumps.

**Bidding:** Raising a one-level response to game typically shows a 18-19 HCP balanced hand with four trumps. You have other bids like splinter available with unbalanced hands. South hand is a little flat to get active, but 4♠ is not out of the realm. Our only advice is that if you plan to make that bid, you should make it now to exert maximum pressure. You may even push your opponents to the five-level.

**Hamman's Rule** – 'When in doubt bid 4♠ over 4♥' works once again as North-South have a profitable white versus red save - Down three for -500.

**Lead:** ♠ 3.

**Play:** After a spade lead, declarer inserts the Q, draws trumps in two rounds and discards a club on ♠ A. Next comes a diamond to the Jack. The fate of this contract depends on a successful guess in clubs. North's overall gives you a clue but no guarantees.

**Defense:** This hand would be a lot easier to defend at IMPs. Even at matchpoints, North may employ a little trickery when in with the ♦ J by underleading the ♣ A. You can count three tricks via two diamonds and one club. Only possibility of setting this contract is if partner holds the ♣ Q and you can induce a miss-guess by declarer. This could be costly at matchpoints if declarer is 5-5 in the red suits and guesses correctly. You will lose your ♣ A. Underleading an Ace during mid-game, while defending, often merits a trick in partner's hand when she holds a stray Queen. Remember, however, not to underlead an Ace on opening lead in a suit contract.

**Board 7**

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 6♣; NS 3N; EW 2♦; EW 1♥; Par +1100; EW 6♦×-4

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♣
Pass	1 ♥	Dbl	2 ♣
2 ♠	3 ♠ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4 ♣
Pass	4 NT <sup>2</sup>	Pass	5 ♠ <sup>3</sup>
Pass	6 ♣	All pass	

1. Game forcing, club support.

2. RKC 0314.

3. 2 keycards and trump Queen (don't show void in partner's suit).

Bidding: South should not consider anything other than 1 ♣ opening. Seven-card suit headed by AJ, a side four-card suit headed by Ace and a void make this a sound opener. East's takeout double shows at least 4-4 in the unbid suits. South simply rebids her seven-card suit. West makes some noise by bidding 2 ♠. North has game forcing values and a big fit for partner's 6+ card suit. She does have a diamond stopper but then again, partner must have values somewhere. 4 ♦ Splinter conveys the strength and the big fit but takes us past 3 NT. 3 ♠ cue bid appears to be more flexible. Partner will bid 3 NT with ♠ Q or ♠ J. Unfortunately, that does get us past 3 NT. The question now is if North jumps to 5 ♣ or bids an aggressive 4 NT. By the way, using 4 NT as RKC minors can be very problematic. Note that South shows two key cards plus the Queen of trumps. This is a common practice with extra length in trump suit.

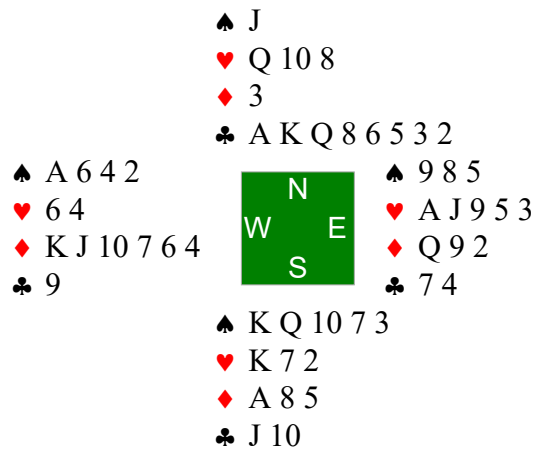
Lead: ♦ Q

Play: Win ♦ A, ruff a diamond, cash ♥ A pitching a spade. Ruff a heart. Our plan is to ruff three diamonds in dummy before drawing trumps. You only need two high trumps to draw opponent's trumps. It would be careless to ruff the second heart with ♣ 5 even though you will survive this time. Note that second, third and fourth diamond ruffs are with high trumps and cannot be overruffed even if East has trump(s).

Defense: Vulnerable 6 ♦ save may work on this hand but it is a long-term losing proposition. Note that East-West cannot make even 1 ♠ after a diamond lead.

**Board 8**

West Deals  
None Vul



NS 3N; NS 5♣; NS 3♠; NS 2♥; EW 1♦; Par +400  
*West*      *North*      *East*      *South*  
2♦          5♣          All pass

Alternate auction:

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

Bidding: Some may not open 2♦ for fear of missing a spade contract. We would not either in second seat for the same reason, almost anything goes in third seat. Not vulnerable, first seat preempts have a two-for-one advantage. Yes, we may be preempting partner, but we are preempting both opponents. After a 2♦ opening, North does not have many choices. 3♣ may be correct, but it does not convey eight tricks in hand. Double may cause 'Major' confusion and gives opponents room to explore for their best spot, possibly a major suit game. 3NT with two singletons and no stopper is a little rich. 5♣ is the most practical option.

Lead: ♦ 2.

Play: You may try to sneak a spade trick at trick two. There is a small possibility of opening yourself to a heart ruff. You could take the middle road by cashing one club before trying spades. You cannot afford to draw two rounds of trumps because you need the second club to get back to spades in order to discard hearts.

Defense: Key for defense is for West to shift to a heart after winning the ♠ A. Partner's ♦ 2 at trick one marks her with remaining diamonds and declarer with zero at this point. Could the diamonds be other way around? It is certainly possible. However; in these cases, it is usually the declarer who is short in side suits.



**Board 9**

North Deals

E-W Vul

♠ K J 5 4 2	♠ 10 7 6	♠ Q 9 8
♥ 7 6	♥ A K Q J 9	♥ —
♦ 7 6 2	♦ A 9	♦ K J 8 5 4 3
♣ J 10 2	♣ K 8 4	♣ Q 9 6 3
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: green; padding: 5px; margin: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>N</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>W</span> <span>E</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; width: 100%;"> <span>S</span> </div> </div>	
	♠ A 3	
	♥ 10 8 5 4 3 2	
	♦ Q 10	
	♣ A 7 5	

NS 4N; NS 4♥; EW 2♠; EW 2♦; NS 1♣; Par +430

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

All pass

1. Jacoby 2 NT.
2. No singleton or void. Extra values.
3. Cue-bid.
4. No spade control.
5. Ace (first-round control, cannot be a void).
6. Cue-bid.
7. No diamond cue-bid from partner.

Bidding: Many players will use an artificial Limit Raise (Bergen 3 ♣ or 3 ♦ depending upon their preference) and then force to game. We agree with the drive to game. However; six card trump support, two aces and an honor in the remaining suit, makes this 10 HCP hand a little too potent for the limit raise followed game force route. Opener has different priorities when responding to a Limit Raise versus a Game Forcing Raise. When responding to a Limit Raise, opener's focus is on whether game is possible or not. When responding to a Game Forcing raise, opener's focus is whether slam is possible or not. For example, in this case, if responder bids 3 ♣, 3 ♦ may be a counter game try. In response to Jacoby 2 NT, 3 ♦ would show shortness. We suggest Jacoby 2 NT to convey big fit and controls right away. You will be delighted to hear partner show shortness in any suit or show a side 5 card or longer trick source in any suit. Partner's jump to 4 ♥ will not disappoint you either.

Lead: ♠ 8.

Play: You have three unavoidable losers. If West does not shift to a diamond when in with a spade, declarer should ruff a spade and run all but one trump before playing three rounds of clubs. It may be possible to catch defense napping. If East wins the third club, they will be end-played into leading away from their ♦ K or giving declarer a ruff and a sluff.

Defense: No nap☺

**Board 10**  
 East Deals  
 Both Vul

♠ 2 ♥ J 9 8 3 2 ♦ J 8 5 4 ♣ 10 9 5	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="width: 100%; height: 100%; background-color: #008000; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>N</span> <span>E</span> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> <span>W</span> <span>S</span> </div> </div> </div>	♠ A 10 ♥ A K 7 6 ♦ A 9 7 ♣ A Q 8 6	♠ K Q 9 6 4 ♥ Q 5 4 ♦ 10 6 3 2 ♣ 2
	♠ J 8 7 5 3 ♥ 10 ♦ K Q ♣ K J 7 4 3		

NS 6♣; NS 5N; N 4♠; S 3♠; NS 3♥; NS 2♦; Par +1370

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
Pass	2 ♣ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	2 ♦ <sup>2</sup>
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♥ <sup>3</sup>
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣ <sup>4</sup>
Pass	4 ♦ <sup>5</sup>	Pass	4 ♥ <sup>6</sup>
Pass	4 ♠ <sup>7</sup>	Pass	4 NT <sup>8</sup>
Pass	5 ♦ <sup>9</sup>	Pass	5 ♥ <sup>10</sup>
Pass	6 ♣ <sup>11</sup>	Pass	Pass <sup>12</sup>
Pass			

1. Upgrade 1 HCP, all four Aces, no flaws.
2. Waiting.
3. Transfer.
4. Second suit.
5. Q bid for clubs. Would have bid 4 ♠ to set spades as trumps.
6. Q bid.
7. Q bid.
8. RKC for Clubs - 0314.
9. 4 Key cards.
10. Inquiring about ♣ Q.
11. ♣ Q and 1 King
12. Cannot count 13 tricks. Cannot be sure if partner has ♠ K. ♥ K may not help.

Bidding: Lengthy auction explained in steps. 4 NT RKC Blackwood works fine for spades but has limitations for lower ranking suits, especially clubs. Established partnerships may consider looking up Kickback RKC Blackwood with great caution.

Lead: Not clear. ♦ 2. Singleton trump lead can be dangerous. Expecting five spades in dummy.

Play: You cannot make the spade loser disappear. Draw three rounds of trumps, concede one spade and then ruff one. You come to twelve tricks by taking one spade, two hearts, three diamonds, five top clubs and one spade ruff in the dummy.

Defense: Next hand.

**Board 11**  
 South Deals  
 None Vul

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

♠ K
♥ K J 10 9 3
♦ J 7 4 2
♣ A K 3

NS 4♥; NS 2N; NS 1♠; EW 1♦; NS 1♣; Par +420

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

1. Conveys most salient feature - 4 trumps, minimal raise.
2. Very risky opposite a passed partner and two bidding opponents.
3. Surprise.
4. No reason to overrule partner.

**Bidding:** One may disagree with a preemptive 3♥ with North hand. However, it conveys the most important feature of this hand – 4 trumps and minimal values. It also makes life difficult for the opponents. It is very risky for East to enter the auction but passing would be too timid. Some North may be content defending 3♠. Opponents are not vulnerable and setting 3♠ two tricks un-doubled does not protect against our potential +140. North should double. Although baffled by this development, South should trust their partner and pass with fair defensive values. Some Wests may compound the problem by running to 4♣ and that will draw 4♦ from East. Souths who run to 4♥ will face an unhappy partner especially after they fail to bring it home (non-double dummy).

**Lead:** ♣ A. Trick 2 is the challenge.

**Play:** This hopeless contract is likely to fail by three tricks. On the flip side, this is not an easy hand to defend. For example, South may lead a high club and then shift to a heart into declarer's AQ.

**Defense:** Hats off to those who cash one high club and do not shift to a heart. We are not likely to find that defense. +300 should be a good score for North-South because it is very difficult for North-South to bid and make 4♥.

**Board 12**

West Deals

N-S Vul

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

EW 4N; EW 4♠; EW 5♦; EW 2♣; Par -430

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

1. Game forcing, natural or balanced. 2 ♦ would have implied a 5-card suit.
2. Descriptive.
3. Not crazy about this development. Mirror distribution in minors. Half of our assets are facing a singleton. Will make one move with five controls.
4. 2/3 Top Spade honors.
5. All negatives mentioned in #3 plus three small trumps.

Bidding: A faster route may be East to respond 3 NT showing a balanced (3334) game forcing hand with three trumps and 13-15 HCP. West will then sign off in 4 ♠. We chose the other route because of our five controls and AQJ combination. That turned out to be a waste. We would seriously consider jumping to 4 ♠ after partner's 3 ♣ for reasons mentioned in the auction footnotes. Only way to play in 3 NT is to conceal the spade fit and bid 2 NT instead of 2 ♠.

Lead: ♥ 4. ♣ J works best but we tend to avoid leading from suits with jacks.

Play: This hand requires very careful declarer play. One must take a ruffing finesse in hearts to discard one club. Avoiding a diamond loser is not as big of a challenge because the straightforward way to handle this combination missing 5 cards including the Queen is to play a diamond to the ace and then finesse the ♦ J.

Defense: ♣ J gives defense the best option to set this contract. However; declarer can still make the heart play to discard one club. North could duck the first spade in tempo, tricking declarer into using ♦ A entry to try to repeat the trump finesse. Declarer now will not have an entry to take the diamond finesse.

**Board 13**  
North Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

EW 2♥; NS 3♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; Par +110

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

1. Majors
2. Redouble to show values may be too risky if that becomes the final contract.
3. Partner must have mild support because of their original 1 NT instead of 2 ♣ rebid.

Bidding: North hand meets the Rule of 20 but not the Rule of 22. Almost 70% of your 11 HCP consist of queens and jacks and you are vulnerable. You have just one quick trick. We do not recommend opening this hand. If North does open 1 ♦, one could hardly blame South for driving this to game with their sound 12 HCP hand containing a six card suit to go with their two and a half quick tricks. 3 NT will result in -300.

Some East-West pairs may buy the hand in 3 ♥ for a good score. It is difficult for opponents to double and collect 200.

Lead: ♥ 2

Play: Declarer must lead spades twice from the dummy. This will result in one spade, one heart, one club, five top diamonds and one heart ruff in the dummy.

Defense: Defense is at a major disadvantage because West cannot lead a heart without costing a trick. There is not much else to do.

**Board 14**

East Deals  
None Vul

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

♠ 9 7 6 4
♥ K Q 8 6
♦ 8 7 2
♣ A J

EW 4♦; EW 2N; EW 2♠; EW 3♣; EW 1♥; Par -130

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

Alternate auction:

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

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1D	Pass
1H	Pass	2NT	All Pass

All roads lead to 2 NT.

Bidding: What is different about this 11 opposite 12 HCP hand compared to the previous hand? We would open this 11 HCP hand because we are not vulnerable, and we hold one and a half quick tricks. We do not drive to game with West's 12 HCP hand because it is balanced with soft values - five HCPs in two unsupported queens and a jack - neither four-card suit has any texture.

Lead: Various. ♥ K or ♥ 6 depending upon your agreements. ♠ 7 (second high from a weak four-card suit) is a possibility.


Play: It is correct to play ♦ Q from dummy intending to run it, but if North covers, you will have to finesse against their ♦ T later. You must win any initial spade lead in the dummy to leads ♦ Q and also to preserve an entry to your hand with the ♠ Q.

Defense: You have four hearts and one club trick. You can recover after the ♥ K lead by playing a low heart next.

**Board 15**

South Deals

N-S Vul

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

EW 2♠; NS 2♥; EW 1N; EW 2♦; NS 1♣; Par -110

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

1. Rule of 15 permits opening this 12 HCP in 4th seat

Rule of 15: Player in fourth seat should open borderline hands if the number of high card points added to the number of Spades equals fifteen or more.

Bidding: West has a 4333 nine-loser hand. Any move beyond 2♠ is unlikely to produce a good result. South may balance with a Takeout double but unfavorable vulnerability should dissuade her from doing so. Those who take the risk will get a good score for -100 because it is difficult for East-West to double 3♥ for a matchpoint top. It may even push some to 3♠.

Lead: ♥ K.

Play: You have five unavoidable losers – two hearts, two diamonds and one club. You have eight tricks via two clubs, one diamond, four spades plus one heart ruff in the dummy for eight tricks.

Defense: Normal.

**Board 16**  
 West Deals  
 E-W Vul

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

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

EW 3N; EW 3♥; EW 4♣; EW 1♠; EW 1♦; Par -600

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

1. Tad too aggressive. Taking advantage of favorable vulnerability.

Bidding: North's frisky 2 ♦ bid may have helped East-West find their 3 NT game. Had they passed, partner may have overcalled 1 ♠ over 1 ♥ by East and that could have possibly caused more disruption for opponent's auction.

Lead: ♠ Q. Nothing stands out.

Play: Declarer has two stoppers in each side suit and no communication problems with clubs behaving.

Defense: ♦ Q or a low diamond will be a disaster for the defense. South should lead spade when in with ♣ A or heart honors.



**Board 17**  
 North Deals  
 None Vul

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

♠ K Q 9 5 4
♥ 6 5 2
♦ 5
♣ A K 5 3

N 7♠; N 6N; S 6♠; N 6♦; S 5N; NS 5♥; S 5♦; NS 4♣; Par +1510

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

1. 5+ cards, forcing one round
2. Forcing. Partner has promised another bid.
3. Too strong to bid 3 NT. 3 NT is not forcing.
4. Honor doubleton in spades.
5. Punting. Not RKC for spades. Would have bid 3 ♠ to set spades.
6. I have everything I have promised and then some.
7. Partner knows about my spades and failure to support diamonds.

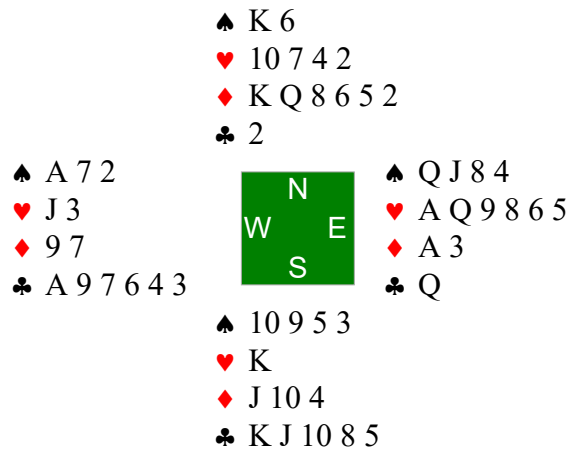
Bidding: 2 ♥ is a reverse showing 17+ HCP, four hearts and longer diamonds. Reverses are the most problematic part of Standard American and 2/1 Game Forcing systems. Opener may not be strong enough to force to game and has too much to make a minimum rebid. Most partnerships do not have good understanding of their methods after reverses. Luckily, they do not come up too often. 2 ♠ simply shows five or more spades. It does not show or deny any specific strength. North wants to make sure that a game is reached but does not have to manufacture any artificial bid. Natural 3 ♦ is just fine because 2 ♠ promises another bid. South is too strong to bid 3 NT. It is not forcing. She tries 4 ♣. North cooperates with 4 ♠. 4 NT is showing extras. North jumps to 6 ♦ with their 19 HCP. South should respect that because they have already shown five spades and lack of diamond support (multiple times).

Lead: ♣ 9 (can hardly be from shortness).

Play: Opponents have removed our entry to spades after unblocking ♠ AJ. We will need a little luck to bring this home. Start with a diamond finesse. If opponents persist in clubs, come to hand with ♠ A, draw trumps and overtake ♠ J in the dummy. Cash the other high spade discarding a heart and enjoy your good fortune. If spades do not break you would have to fall back on a heart finesse.

Defense: Be glad that they did not bid 6 NT from North.

**Board 18**  
 East Deals  
 N-S Vul



EW 4♥; EW 3♠; EW 1N; NS 2♦; EW 2♣; Par -420

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

1. Forcing
2. Doubleton heart with 8-10 HCP
3. A little soft to bid game opposite a known doubleton fit

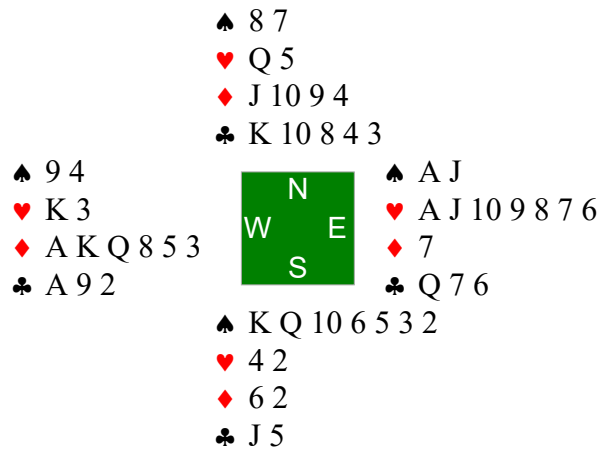
**Bidding:** West's voluntary 3♥ shows a doubleton heart with useful values. They had boxed their hand with the original 1NT response (6-12 HCP and less than three hearts). With apologies to Constructive Raise adherents, there is one only one instance where a Forcing NT response could include three card support for partner's major - Delayed Limit Raise = Limit Raise values with exactly three trumps. If responder had that hand, they would you jumped to 4♥ after partner shows extra trump length. 6-4 shape is a plus, but this 15 HCP is too soft for East to continue to game.

**Lead:** ♦ J.

**Play:** It is virtually impossible to avoid a diamond loser. You might as well duck the ♦ J opening lead. Perhaps defense will switch. After winning the second diamond, most declarers will enter the dummy and run the ♥ J. Unfortunately, after losing to singleton ♥ K, we may lose to the ♥ T as well. Running the spade Queen to finesse against the King gains only when you can drop doubleton T9. For all other combinations, it best to win the Ace and lead towards QJxx. Playing IMPs, you would have made four, thanks to the Safety Play of ♥ A. We expect anywhere from eight to ten tricks for the declarer.

**Defense:** Normal. North may be tempted to overtake the ♦ J with ♦ Q to lead their singleton club. Although, it is not consequential on this deal, it is generally not a good idea to assist declarer set up their long suit especially when staring at the ♠ A entry. Unless declarer drops the singleton King, defense will take two trump tricks, one spade and one diamond holding declarer to nine tricks.

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



EW 7♥; EW 6N; EW 5♦; EW 3♣; Par -1700: NS 7♠x-7

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

1. Good hand. Coming in at the four-level
2. Long hearts. Partner did not make a takeout double
3. Do you have first or second round spade control?
4. Yes. Actually, I have first round control of spades
5. Cannot count thirteen tricks. Slam should be good enough

Bidding: This first seat, non-vulnerable, three-level preempt in the boss suit has a devastating effect on opponents' auction. They are forced to start exploring at the four-level. All West can do is overcall 4♦. Although, not a problem on this hand, a takeout double may garner too many hearts from partner. East will naturally bid 4♥ in response to 4♦. Even 5♥ is a possibility. Most West will be satisfied with landing in a major suit game and pass.

Holding a source of tricks and Kx in partner's long suit (partner bid it voluntarily), West may consider 5♥. Freely bidding five of our major asks partner to bid slam with a control in opponent's suit. Did you notice that due to the friendly trump break, partner does not need the spade ace to make this slam? Singleton spade would have done the job. You cannot use Blackwood with two little cards in any suit unless partner has shown first or second round control in that suit.

Win the ♠ A then ♥ K, ♥ A, ♦ A, ♦ K, discarding a spade. All that is left is to ruff one diamond and reenter the dummy with ♣ A. You have fourteen winners in one spade, seven hearts, five diamonds and one club.

Lead: ♠ K. Club lead takes away a valuable entry to diamonds before they are established. Declarer has too much fire power. Either a 3-3 diamond break or a 2-2 trump break will produce thirteen tricks.

Defense: Normal.

**Board 20**

West Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4N; NS 3♥; EW 2♠; NS 3♦; NS 1♣; Par +630

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

Back to back 3♠ preempts. This one does more damage than the previous one. West needs this chunkier suit because this is a vulnerable preempt. If South balances, they will end up minus in 4♥ or higher. It is practically impossible for North-South to stop in 3NT. South is likely to err on the side of caution with his shabby suits and even fear that she may push East-West into 4 spades making. Remember you get next to nothing at matchpoints when you go minus. At IMPS, one should balance with a double in case North-South can make 4♥. We doubt that even Marshall Miles would balance with 3NT on this hand.

Lead: Many will lead a club. Believe it or not, this is one of those rare times we would lead an unsupported Ace. Due to the preempt, missing Kings are more likely to be with your partner or on your left. A club lead will allow declarer to eliminate one diamond loser.

Play: Normal. Barring a defensive slip, you have six spades and two club tricks.

Defense: Likely club lead will not be the best start. Even on a red suit ace lead, defense must be careful to not try to win three diamonds before cashing two hearts. Even though we missed game, going plus is important to salvage any matchpoints.

**Board 21**

North Deals

N-S Vul

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

EW 6♠; EW 5N; EW 5♣; EW 2♥; EW 3♦; Par -980

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

1. Splinter raise of spades.
2. Cue-bid - A, K or Q in partner's suit.
3. RKC Spades - 0314.
4. 0 Keycards.

Bidding: Despite their 20 HCP hand, West cannot open 2 NT or 2 ♣ due to their shape. 2 ♣ followed by a suit shows a good five card or longer suit. All 4441-shape containing four diamonds must start with 1 ♦. If partner passes, game is unlikely. Opponents may balance, allowing us to back into this auction if appropriate. Responder starts with 1 ♠ because they lack the strength to bid a game forcing 2 ♣. West uses a splinter bid to show game forcing strength with four trumps and club shortness. North may double. This is not automatic. Since there is only one natural trick available in the splinter suit, advanced partnerships have other agreements about doubling a splinter bid. East is not too happy that her source of tricks is facing a singleton or void. However, she has too much to sign off in 4 ♠. A singleton or void in partner's suit is never an asset. However; any Ace, King or Queen in partner's suit can be very potent. East decides to cooperate once with a 4 ♦ cue bid. West did not need much encouragement and launches Blackwood and discovers that her side is missing the ♣ A.

Lead: ♥T. This is a difficult hand to lead from. Leading a singleton does not make sense in this case because dummy can overruff us. ♦ J is a possibility. LHO opened that suit and a diamond lead may solve any possible problems for declarer in that suit. Leading away from ♠ J against a likely fit is likely to cost a trick. Imagine defense holding Jxx opposite Qx in partner's hand, or Jx opposite Qxx. We have just sacrificed our sure trump trick by leading that suit. Although, we can infer from the auction that trump Queen will be in the dummy and partner holds one key card. We favor an attacking Heart lead and chose a mildly deceptive ♥T or ♥9 hoping to find partner with the Queen or declarer to guess wrong.

Play: Declarer will make this contract on most leads, via one heart, three diamonds, three clubs, three high trumps and one ruff in each hand. On a Heart lead, it seems natural to rise with the Ace, unblock ♦ Q, draw trumps, discard ♥ Q on a top diamond and lead a club. Most Norths will go up with Ace setting up three club tricks for the declarer.

Defense: Assuming a non-Heart lead, almost all of us are likely to rise with the ♣ A. Hats off to any defender who ducks this club. Declarer will be one trick short unless they insert ♣ 9. Too rich for us mere mortals.