

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

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

Auction Commentary: East's hand is too strong to preempt that 6-card ♥ suit. And remember when you overcall 1 NT (or any number of NT if it's natural!), you promise that you're not afraid of the enemy's suit. So South's 1 NT overcall shows 15-18 points and at least 1 stopper in ♥s.

Opening Lead: 8♥ (When leading partner's suit, lead high from a doubleton or low from 3 small to show partner the count. Here, the low card shows 3 or 4 pieces in the suit. It's not a B.O.S.T.O.N. lead, because it does not promise an honor.)

Planning the Play: Declarer counts sure winners in a NT contract: 3 ♠ winners, 2 ♥s, 1 ♣ winner, and we will need to work on the ♦ suit to develop the other 3. Getting to work, declarer wins the opening ♥ lead and puts a small ♦ on the table.

Defense: Second hand does NOT play low here! While partner has the A♦, West needs to hop up with the K♦ and play another ♥! This will force out the other ♥ honor, so that when declarer tries again to set up the ♦s, it will be too late. East will win the A♦ and run 4 more ♥ tricks.

If West plays low on the first ♦ trick, East will win the A♦. But then, East will not have an entry to run the heart suit!

Takeaway:

In bridge, the only times that ALWAYS or NEVER apply are as follows:

- There is ALWAYS an exception.
- There is NEVER a time where an exception doesn't creep in. :)

Board 6

East Deals
E-W Vul

		♠ Q 9 3		
		♥ A J 10 8		
		♦ 9 6 5 4		
		♣ 9 7		
♠ A 7			♠ 10 6 4	
♥ 9 6 2			♥ K Q 7 3	
♦ A Q 10 8 3			♦ J 7	
♣ 10 8 4			♣ A K Q J	
		♠ K J 8 5 2		
		♥ 5 4		
		♦ K 2		
		♣ 6 5 3 2		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
		1 NT	Pass	
3 NT	All pass			

Auction Commentary: When you open 1 NT, you're promising 15-17 HCP, and a balanced hand. Having a stopper in every suit is NOT required, so don't be afraid to show your balanced 15-17 count without stoppers. Partner will guide you to the right contract!

Opening Lead: 5 ♠ (Remember to ask if their agreement on leads is 4th best, and then you can apply the Rule of 11, declarer. Defenders use this tool, but it can often be helpful to you, as well.)

Planning the Play: It's NT, so declarer must count sure winners: 1 ♠ winner, no sure ♥ winners (but at least one will be promoted), 1 sure ♦ winner (with others to be established), and 4 solid ♣ winners. That's 6 sure winners, with work to do in ♦s and ♥s.

Defense: When declarer ducks the first ♠, North plays the 3rd hand high Q♠, and returns the 9♠ (which is top of the present doubleton). Declarer has won the second trick, and has to decide how to proceed. If declarer travels to her hand and plays the J♦, South MUST cover this to promote a trick for their side. If you don't cover, declarer will make all the ♦ tricks. The J♦ would be the correct play, "high card from the short side," and she hopes the K♦ is "on side," or she's going to suffer a barrage of ♠s next.

Dummy unfortunately has no outside entry for those ♦'s, and declarer hopes the suit divides 3/3 so she can cash them all now. This is against the percentages, though. Remember that when you're missing an even number of cards in a suit (6), they tend to break UNEVENLY (4/2).

With savvy defenders, there is no way to make 3 NT. Don't reflexively play second hand low on those ♦s. THINK! :)

Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

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

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

Auction Commentary: Some partnerships have agreements that they will not open in NT holding a 5-card major. Make sure you and partner have an agreement about this, so you'll both be on the same page.

Opening Lead: Q♦ (the top of a series of honors)

Planning the Play: Counting losers in a suit contract, declarer sees: 1 ♠ loser, 1 ♥ loser, 1 ♦ loser and 1 ♣ loser -- 1 too many. Where to eliminate one? The ♦ is a "slow loser" -- meaning that the defenders can't take their trick in that suit right away. You have 2 honors there. Although they got off to a ♦ lead, if you promote the Q♠ to a winner before they can lead another ♦, you will be able to later discard a losing ♦ on the Q♠.

IMPORTANT -- At the beginning of the play, the only SURE transportation to the North hand is the K♦. You'll need that to cash that Q♠ later. So plan to win the opening ♦ trick in the DUMMY. SECOND HAND LOW DOES NOT APPLY TO DECLARER. It's very important to plan the transportation before you play to trick #1!

Trumps can be drawn losing 1 ♠ trick, 1 ♥ and 1 ♣.