


Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

2 NT has Many Faces!

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

Auction Commentary: Responder didn't find a major suit fit, and does the math: 15 HCP in her hand, plus 18 HCP from partner = small slam! 6 NT it is!

Opening Lead: ♦ 10 (top of a sequence)


Planning the Play: In NT, Declarer must count sure winners -- those we could cash right now if we wanted to. If there are not 12 sure winners, we'll have to figure out how to develop them! Winners are 4 ♠s, plus 4 ♦s, plus 2 ♣s. Two more needed, and clearly those will come from the ♥ suit. As soon as we knock out the ♥ A, 2 ♥ honors will get promoted and we'll make this contract.

In NT, you take your losing tricks first, while you still have stoppers in the other suits. So the plan is to win this ♦ trick, and play a ♥ honor to push out the ♥ A. Win whatever they return -- and you can claim the rest of the tricks ;))

Takeaway: When you are seeking NT tricks, look for sure ways to create them! Do not become a finesse-aholic, and risk the contract on a 50% shot, when you have a 100% way to succeed. If you take a ♣ finesse, you'll go down.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

Unusual 2 NT

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

5 ♦ by South

Auction Commentary: This is the Unusual No Trump - it's a 2-suited overcall. (This convention is no longer alertable.) The 2 NT overcall shows 1 of 2 things, by partnership agreement. It is either (1) both minors, or (2) the 2 lowest unbid suits. Responder bids to game on the "Weak Freak," according to the Law of Total Tricks. At its core is the premise that you can bid to the level of the combined pieces of trumps. East knows there are 10 pieces of ♠s combined, so they're going to try for 10 tricks. Without defense against a minor-suit contract, East is trying to talk the opponents out of it. ;)

Advancer competes to the 5- level knowing that (1) the K♠ is a working card, and (2) because of the Unusual 2 NT agreement, they have a wonderful fit in ♦s.

Opening Lead: ♥ A (This promises the ♥ K. Always lead your AK suit first, so you can see what's in the Dummy. It will help you decide what your lead to the second trick should be!)


Planning the Play: Which is the master hand? Dummy is! That ♣ suit is the other source of tricks, so we need to set that one up. Forget about ruffing for nothing! When West sees the singleton ♥ in Dummy, they'll shift to the ♠ Q, won by East. From that point on, you're in charge. Pull trumps and play ♣s. (And don't finesse for the ♦ K when you have 10 pieces -- play for it to drop.)

To Stayman or Not to Stayman ... ?

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: The 2 NT opener shows exactly 20 or 21 HCP, with a balanced hand. (And while 1 NT openings are allowed to have a singleton A-K-or Q, this does NOT apply to 2 NT openings.) Responder COULD use Stayman over 2 NT, but what's the point in trying to find a ♥ fit? You're balanced, partner is balanced, and being in a trump suit doesn't do you much good unless you have unbalanced hands! So West opts to just raise to 3 NT, as their 7 HCP is enough to be in game.

Opening Lead: ♠ 6 (Since there was no Stayman used, South leads their longest major.)

Planning the Play: There are 8 sure tricks "off the top:" on this lead we will win 3 ♠s, and also 1 ♥, 2 ♦s and 2 ♣s. Declarer needs to find just one more trick. While your eyes have spied the possibility of a ♥ finesse, don't rely on a 50% chance, when you have a 100% chance to promote a trick in that same suit. See the ♥ 10 and ♥ 9? Those are KEY to your success. Play the ♥ A, then put the ♥ Q on the table (which you know will lose to the ♥ K). Win whatever they return, and get to dummy. Purposely give up the ♥ 10 to their ♥ J, and the second ♣ honor is the entry for the 9th trick -- the ♥ 9. :)

Takeaway: When they don't use Stayman, it's likely that a major suit is the best lead. If you have a long major, you should lead it -- but ONLY if you have an entry back to your hand! What's the point in setting up a couple of tricks if there's not going to be a way to get to them? (Some players in this situation will lead their SHORTEST major -- in hopes to hit partner's suit, and set up tricks in that hand instead!)

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

What to rebid?

<p>♠ J 10 5 ♥ 9 5 ♦ K 10 8 6 2 ♣ Q 10 9</p>	<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="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</div> <div>S</div> </div>	<p>♠ 3 ♥ K 7 6 3 ♦ Q J 9 ♣ A K 8 6 5</p>	<p>♠ K 8 6 4 2 ♥ A 10 8 ♦ 7 4 ♣ J 3 2</p>
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<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 ♦
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			
4 ♥ by North			

Auction Commentary: Responder changes suits, so it's forcing. South thinks: I can't rebid a 4-card suit unless I have the strength and shape of a "reverse." (*You need more cards in your first suit than the second, and at least 16/17 points.*) So, this 2NT rebid shows a minimum, balanced hand. Responders that have enough points to make a rebid should bid their longer suit first, then plan to follow with the shorter one. When opener bids 2NT, Responder knows there's still a possibility of a major over there. The ♥s are found, the math is done, and game is achieved!

Opening Lead: ♠ 4

Planning the Play: The master hand here isn't determined by the one with the most trumps. Master hands are ones you want to set up - which is this Dummy, because of its long ♣s. Win trick #1, play ♣AK, ruff a ♣, and **then** draw trumps. Keep ♥K as the entry to Dummy, so you can get to the ♣ tricks later. The missing 6 ♣s were 3-3! Go get the other 2 tricks. Losing only the ♦K and the ♥A.

Takeaway: 2NT has many faces! Its meaning depends where it falls in the auction.

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| <p>1 • <u>E</u> <u>W</u>
 1 ♥ 1 ♠
 2NT ----- balanced 18-19 HCP</p> | <p>5 • <u>E</u> <u>W</u>
 1 ♥ 2 ♥
 2NT----- willingness to play in NT</p> |
| <p>2 • <u>E</u> <u>W</u>
 1 ♠ 2 ♦
 2NT ----- balanced minimum</p> | <p>6 • And 2NT <u>openers</u> show
 20-21 HCP, balanced.</p> |
| <p>3 • <u>E</u> <u>W</u>
 1x 2NT Unusual 2NT, 5/5 minors or two lowest unbid suits (<i>by agreement</i>)</p> | |
| <p>4 • <u>E</u> <u>W</u>
 1 ♥ or ♠ 2NT (Jacoby 2NT, 4+ Pcs in partner's Major, 12+ points, forces to game.)</p> | |