


Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: North's 2 ♦ bid is 4th suit forcing to game (alert). North is not promising a diamond suit, they promise only the values to want to be in game, and they want South to describe their hand. South bids 3 ♣ to show they are at least 5-5 in hearts and clubs and to deny 3-card support for North's spades (which is often what partner is curious about when they bid 4th suit forcing). Finding no fit in the majors and holding an excellent diamond stop, North bids game in no-trump.


Opening Lead: Diamonds are the unbid suit. Remember, North's 2 ♦ bid was artificial. In any event, South promised at least 5 in hearts and clubs and North implied 5 spades, so diamonds would seem to be the only real prospect of developing tricks. Lead the ♦ 4.

Play Commentary: Your teacher always tells you to plan the play before you call a card from dummy. Don't drift off, FOCUS. Where are our tricks coming from? We have 2 ♥, 3 ♦ and either 4 or 5 ♣. We've learned about finesses, and we hate to give up tricks, but look what happens if we finesse in clubs after winning the ♦ A. It wins, we play a club to our ♣ A, we go back to dummy with the ♥ A and play another club, driving out the ♣ K. Our clubs are now set up, but.....how will we get to them? They've been stranded. We are down to 7 tricks, and while we are likely to find one more in the wash, we are going down. What did we do wrong? We needed to recognize that our initial plan was going to fail due to lack of entries. At trick 2, play a club to the ace and another club. We now have set up our clubs and have the ♥ A still in dummy to get back to them. When partner asks why you didn't finesse in clubs, try not to take it personally.

Takeaway: Sometimes we have to sacrifice 1 trick to make 2 or more in return. We want to begin to visualize how the play will develop by actually trying to think about what we will do to the first several tricks and looking for pitfalls that might arise. West, what happens if you cover the ♣ Q at trick 2 if declarer unwisely intends to finesse?

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	1 NT	Pass	6 ♠
All pass			

Auction Commentary: Raise your hand if you had a different auction at your table. South has a 4-loser hand and North opened the bidding, so you are getting decent odds to gamble on a slam, as opening bids will usually cover 3 losers. I'm guessing many of you ended up in 4 ♠. Either way, the play is the thing!

Opening Lead: K♦ is the lead, even if the opponents bid the suit. If the ♠ K takes a trick, we will be ready to take as many diamonds as we can.

Play Commentary: We have either 1 or 2 ♦ losers and either 0 or 1 ♠ losers. In real life, occasionally the ♠ K is onside and the diamonds are 2-2, but never expect it. Always assume some of the cards are laying poorly, and ask yourself, is there anything I can do about it. If the ♠ K is offside, can I stop them from taking another diamond trick? I have two good hearts in the dummy opposite my void, and I have a 3rd good club in the dummy. I can take 3 discards on diamonds, and if the spade finesse loses, I'll have nothing left but trumps.

OK, and without further thought, I take the ♦ A, then the ♥ AK, pitching two diamonds, then the ♣ AK and then.....oh....fiddlesticks. My 3rd good ♣ is over there and I can't get to it. I play the ♠ A and pray (good luck with that) and I'm down one. Was there anything else?

This is an opportunity for a big UNBLOCKING play. Instead of pitching two diamonds on the ♥ AK, get rid of the "useless" ♣ AK. Now, play 3 rounds of clubs, since you are still in the dummy. Voila!

Takeaway: Again, it's all about visualizing the play to the first several tricks and looking for pit falls. I had a good idea; pitching all of my diamonds BEFORE playing trumps. I just didn't follow through with HOW to do that, and then it was too late. You need to take a few moments and see how things will develop before putting a plan into action. It takes practice; none of us could do it from birth. It's a skill that can be developed over time. Keep practicing!

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

	♠ A 7										
	♥ A K Q 10 3										
	♦ 7 3										
	♣ 8 7 3 2										
♠ K Q J 10 9 2	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="background-color: #008000;"></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 8 6 5 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J 5		♥ 8 7 4 2									
♦ A Q		♦ 8 2									
♣ A J 5		♣ Q 10 9									
	♠ 4										
	♥ 9 6										
	♦ K J 10 9 6 5 4										
	♣ K 6 4										
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>								
			3 ♦								
4 ♠	All pass										

Auction Commentary: West has a tough choice over 3♦. (This is why we preempt!) With the ♦K likely onside, West has only 5 losers, and South doesn't know with a singleton ♠ and the KQ♣ that game will be cold if we bid only 3♠, so it seems best to go for the gusto and jump to 4♠. This is not preemptive; when the opponents preempt, our jumps are strong. With the right sort of hand (say for example, North's hand), East would investigate for slam.

Opening Lead: Lead that AKQ♥. Don't break new suits for declarer with that weak dummy!

Play Commentary: Quickly ruffing the third round of ♥s, we pause to plan. But it's already too late! Here's what the player who heeds their teacher's admonitions to MAKE A PLAN does. Ted (we'll call him Ted) paused before playing from dummy, at TRICK ONE, to consider his chances. The ♦K is probably onside, so we have 1♠ loser, 2♥ losers, and maybe 1♣ loser -- unless the ♣ finesse works. How will we get to the dummy to finesse? Ted saw that, after drawing trump, he can play the ♠2 to the dummy because the opponents will not have anything higher to win that trick. Me? I won the third round of ♥s by ruffing cheaply with the ♠2, and I was never able to get to the dummy. Ted ruffed with the ♠K, continued with another high ♠ to North's ♠A, and when North continued with a 4th round of ♥s Ted ruffed HIGH again, hanging on to the ♠2 for dear life. One more high ♠, drawing the last trump, and Ted then played the precious ♠2 to get to the dummy.

Now that Ted has completed the first part of his plan, he'll need to pause again before continuing. He's made it to the dummy, but he needs to take finesses in 2 different suits. How is he going to get back a second time? The answer is in the order he takes the finesses. If he play on ♦s first, he can never get back. What if he plays on ♣s first? If he can stay in dummy (if they don't cover), and return to dummy if they do cover, he can use the ♣ suit for the opportunity to also finesse in ♦s. This is a little complicated, but it comes up fairly often. Lead the ♣Q from the dummy. If South covers, we will win the Ace and use dummy's ♣T as another entry. If South doesn't cover, West must play the ♣J! Now, when East continues with the ♣T, if South covers, the ♣9 is a reentry to the dummy. If South doesn't cover, East switches to ♦s for that finesse. Notice that if West does not play the ♣J on the first round of ♣s, he can't remain in the dummy after the second round. If East does not lead the ♣Q on the first round, he will end up in the West hand after either the first or second round of ♣s, again, unable to then switch to ♦s for that finesse.

Takeaway: Don't be like me, squandering the ♠2. Be like Ted. :)