


Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

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

Auction Commentary: Our agreements over the opponents' 1 NT opening include 2 ♦ showing both majors. East has a fine hand for this and bids 2 ♦ (which should be alerted). It is important to compete against the opening 1 NT with the right strength and/or shape. West shows the best major suit fit by bidding 2 ♥.

Opening Lead: ♥ A. When one opponent shows a 2-suited hand and you have substantial strength and length in the other suit, the one not chosen as trump, it is often right to lead trumps in order to cut down on the number of ruffs declarer can score. It helps that the ♥ K is likely on your left, meaning you will not be able to capture it anyway, but it often doesn't matter, as the trick you give up usually comes back with interest. Continue with the ♥ Q at trick 2.

Play Commentary: We want to score all of our top cards and all of our remaining trumps. We hope to score ♣ AK, ♦ A, ♠ A, two ruffs in the dummy and two ruffs in our hand, and we already have the ♥ K. Visualize the play. We can play ♦ A, ♠ A and ruff a spade, ♣ K, ♣ A, ruff a club, ruff a spade, and play dummy's last club. North is out of clubs, but they can't prevent you from scoring the ♥ T. Making 3.

Exercise left for the reader: The best way to become more proficient playing these types of hands is to go over the play, trick by trick, and see how it goes. Go over the play outlined above! Use the Widget that's been created especially for you (!), and bring up the hand:

https://cloud.bridgefinesse.com/PHPPOSTCGS.php?options=BBOHP&os=CG_2024-01-09

Click on board #1, and step through the tricks card-by-card. In the example above, see what happens if you ruff a second spade BEFORE you ruff any clubs (it will turn out you can't ruff a second club). Look at what is possible if North leads the ♠ K instead of the ♥ A (now you can ruff 3 spades in the dummy). There is no substitute for seeing with your own eyes how a hand can play out. That is the kind of experience which will help you make decisions in the future about what you should lead or how you want to play the current hand.

Board 2
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

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

♠ 9	♠ 9
♥ 10 7	♥ 10 7
♦ K J 10 8 3	♦ K J 10 8 3
♣ K J 10 9 5	♣ K J 10 9 5

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3 ♣	1 N	2 N
Pass		Pass	Pass

2 NT shows 5/5 in the minors. North chooses the best fit.

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

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

Auction: 2 ♥ shows ♥s and an unspecified minor. If East wanted to know which minor, he would have asked by bidding 2 NT.

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

	♠ A J 10 7 6										
	♥ 7 3										
	♦ K 10 9 8 7										
	♣ 5										
♠ K 9 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; 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		♠ 8 5 4 3
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A K Q 2		♥ 9 5 4									
♦ J 4 3		♦ Q 6									
♣ K 10 9		♣ A 4 3 2									
	♠ Q										
	♥ J 10 8 6										
	♦ A 5 2										
	♣ Q J 8 7 6										

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


Auction Commentary: Despite having "only" 8 HCP, North should compete, even vulnerable. 2 ♠ shows 2 suits -- spades and a minor, and this should be alerted. South knows that North has a minor, which will play better than spades! With a singleton spade and good support in the minors, South bids 2 NT, asking North to bid their minor (and North should alert this bid as well). When North bids 3 ♦, South has done all they can do.

Opening Lead: ♥ 5. East doesn't want to lead either of North's suits and doesn't want to lead an unsupported Ace, so hearts will be the suit. From 3 small, lead Middle-Up-Down (MUD). On the second round of the suit, you play the ♥ 9 (Up), so that partner knows you started with three.

Play Commentary: West will likely cash a second high heart, in case partner started with a doubleton. When partner shows they have 3 ♥s by playing Up on the second round, West has several unpalatable choices. They exit with a small ♦, and North plays low, and captures East's ♦ Q with the ♦ A on the table. Declarer needs to set up the ♠s, so they continue with the ♠ Q from the dummy. If West covers, North can ruff a low ♠ and play another ♦. If they guess to finesse on the way back, they can make 4. If West doesn't cover, North should play low. We aren't going to play East for the ♠ K. When the ♠ Q holds, South can continue with ♥ J. West has to cover, North ruffs, cashes ♠ A, ruffs a spade, noting the fall of the ♠ K, and plays the last trump from the dummy. Again, if North finesses, they will make 4.

Takeaway: There are 18 HCP between the North and South hands, but they are probably making 9 or 10 tricks in their best fit. This is why competing with shapely hands is so important, even when the player on your right has a strong no trump opening. The key here is that even with just 8 HCP, North has all of their strength in their two suits, along with both tens and the intermediate diamonds, AND two five card suits. It is important to recognize the difference between ♠ AJTxx ♦ KT987 and ♠ AJxxx ♦ Kxxx. The closer your hand is to the former, the more likely you should be bidding. If your hand looks more like the latter, you should have more strength outside to consider taking a bid.

Board 5
 North Deals
 N-S Vul

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

AUCTION: 2 ♠ overall shows ♠s and a minor, and West's 2 NT advance asks which minor.

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

	♠ 5 3		
	♥ Q J 10 9 3		
	♦ 4		
	♣ J 9 7 5 4		
♠ A K 9 8 4	N	♠ Q J 10 2	
♥ 8	W	♥ A 7 4	
♦ K Q 8 2	S	♦ 10 9 7 6	
♣ 10 6 2	E	♣ 8 3	
		♠ 7 6	
		♥ K 6 5 2	
		♦ A J 5 3	
		♣ A K Q	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
2 ♠	Pass	Pass	1 N
			Pass

AUCTION: 2 ♠ shows ♠s and an undisclosed minor. East is happy to pass and have partner play in ♠s!

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul


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



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 N	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

AUCTION: 2 ♣ shows a long suit somewhere, which forces a bid of 2 ♦ -- (because ♣s is not necessarily partner's suit). Then North's 2 ♠ shows where the long suit is.

Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

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

AUCTION: 2 ♦ shows both majors, either 5/5 or 5/4. West takes a preference for ♥s. Turns out there is a double fit, but West realized that the distribution could have been different. East's hand could have been 4 ♠s and 5 ♥s -- so bidding 2 ♠ would have landed them in a less-desirable 4/3 fit in that case.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

♠ 10 9 7	<table border="1" style="background-color: #008000; color: white; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px; 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		♠ 10 9 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ J	♥ J	♥ J									
♦ K Q 9 6 4 2	♦ K Q 9 6 4 2	♦ K Q 9 6 4 2									
♣ Q 6 4	♣ Q 6 4	♣ Q 6 4									

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 N	2 ♣
Dbl	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

AUCTION: 2 ♣ shows long suit someplace. But when West doubles 2 ♣ to show a Stayman inquiry, North is no longer required to bid. Looking at North's hand, he imagines (is pretty sure!) that ♦s are partner's suit, so North would rather defend. East answers the Stayman, and West (with 9 HCP and an outside singleton) goes to game.

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

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



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

AUCTION: South can predict what LHO's long suit is, so once East makes the required 2 ♦ bid, South jumps in with their 5-card major. If they can't steal the contract back, at least South gave partner a head start in choosing the lead!

Board 12
 West Deals
 N-S Vul

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

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

AUCTION: North is showing both majors, either 5/5 or 5/4. East does not have to bid, and passes, and South makes the choice of majors with 2 ♠. If West were to double here, it would be for takeout. But West shouldn't make a takeout double without at least 3 pieces in every other suit.