

Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

Auction Commentary: South has a six-loser hand, so they should invite a game after partner shows a fit. In fact, they have less than a six-loser hand, because the bidding tells them that partner will likely have no more than a singleton spade.

3 ♥ would be a competitive bid showing six hearts; it would not be a game invitation.

By bidding 3 ♦, a help-suit game try, South tells partner where to look when deciding on whether to accept the invitation. North, even though they have only 6 HCP, has an easy accept of the game try, because they have great help in diamonds, and that singleton spade. If North's clubs and diamonds were reversed, they would have another easy decision: decline and retreat to 3 ♥.

Opening lead: ♠ A (promising the ♠ K)

Play Commentary: Once the defense starts with a spade, declarer can ruff two spades in the dummy and pitch one on the long diamonds, losing 1 ♣ and 1 ♠ and making 5.

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: South's 2 NT bid is invitational, showing a ♥ stopper. North has no interest in no trump and does have two excellent five-card suits, so they rebid their clubs. South should now reevaluate their hand. The two aces are excellent opposite North's shortness in a suit contract, but they will not be very effective in a no trump contract as the defenders will be able to set up their major suit after the first lead. The ♣ KJ will fill in North's ♣ suit, and the ♦ T98 will ensure against multiple losers if the trump suit breaks badly. South should jump to game in ♦.

Opening Lead: ♥ K (promising the ♥ Q)

Play Commentary: North has 1 ♠ loser and 1 ♦ loser. What can go wrong? If the trumps are split 4-1, there could be a communication issue. Envision the play.

South wins the ♥ A and plays the ♦ T9, East ducking both times. If North plays the ♦ 8, East will win and continue with the ♥ Q, forcing North to ruff. North and East now have one trump each remaining. Since there are no more trumps in the dummy, North will have to win the ♣ K and overtake the ♣ J, hoping the club suit will run, either by splitting 3-3 or with the ♣ T falling doubleton. If the clubs aren't running, we are down.

What can we do differently? After the first two rounds of diamonds, clear the clubs from the dummy. Once they have been played, THEN continue the trumps. East can no longer prevent us from drawing trump and running our good clubs.

Takeaway: You were originally going to draw trump and have an easy 11 tricks, but then you saw the 4-1 split. Take a moment before continuing trump to see if there are any pitfalls that have to be avoided, like a lack of communication between the hands. If necessary, clear blocking cards in your side suit(s) before playing the last trump from the short hand.