

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

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

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


Auction Commentary: Some will argue that South should open 1 ♥ in 3rd chair; they might be right. There is a reasonable chance that West will end up playing the hand, perhaps in spades, and we will want partner to lead a heart so that we are sure to get whatever tricks are available to us in that suit. On the other hand, partner might compete too high in hearts, thinking that we have five of them. As a long-time rule breaker, I encourage you to try things like opening the South hand with 1 ♥, even though you've been told forever that you need five cards to do so. Live a little. You can always tell partner you had a diamond mixed in with your hearts if it doesn't work out.

On this particular hand, opening 1 ♥ would work out spectacularly well, because East and West will probably not be able to reach the making 3 NT and are unlikely to reach the possibly making 5 ♦ on a 4-3 fit. West will not be able to contemplate the possibility that South has only 4 cashing heart tricks. One of the reasons that rule breaking is so fun.

On the actual opening of 1 ♣, West is too strong to overcall 1 NT showing 15-18 HCP, so they start with a double, intending to rebid in NT. East is just barely strong enough to advance 1 NT, and West jumps to the 3 NT game.

Play Commentary: South will start with 4 rounds of hearts, and East should discard one spade and one club. South will likely exit with a club, and East will cross to their hand, cross their fingers, and run the ♦T. Making 3.

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

Auction Commentary: In the modern age, some would consider the South hand worth an opening bid, but it remains just below the cusp for most of us. However, once partner opens 1 ♥, we must let them know that we were at the top of our range for an opening pass. Don't make the mistake of starting slowing with 1 ♠ or 2 ♦; our bids are no longer forcing when we are a passed hand, so we need to show partner the full extent of what we have right away by jumping to 4 ♥. If partner has a strong opening hand, they can still bid again. 4 ♥ is NOT a shut-out bid, it merely shows that we have the values to be in game opposite partner's opening bid.

Opening Lead: ♠ Q, promising the ♠ J.

Play Commentary: We'll have to lose 1 spade and 2 diamonds. We need to take care of our two losing clubs by ruffing them in the dummy. Entries are an important consideration. We need to win the first trick in the dummy with the ♠ A, preserving the ♠ K in our hand for transportation. Win the ♠ A, play a club to the ♣ A and ruff a club. Play a spade to the ♠ K and ruff a club with the ♥ A. You can now play the ♥ Q back to your hand and draw the rest of the trump. 2 spades, 5 hearts in your hand, one club and two club ruffs makes 10 tricks.

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

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



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	2 ♠
2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	3 NT	All pass

Auction Commentary: Remember being told you need a six-card suit to open a weak-two bid? Players should be more flexible, especially in 3rd char, especially if they are not vulnerable against vulnerable opponents. When the first two hands pass and third hand isn't strong enough to open at the 1-level, it is likely that West will be the declarer and that partner will be on lead. South wants North to lead a spade, AND, opening 2 ♠ puts the opponents under maximum pressure; they have very little room to communicate where they should play the hand. This is a good time to break another rule, and open 2 ♠ with a five-card suit.

West has a perfectly normal 2 NT overcall; they have 15-18 HCP, a spade stopper, and they don't have a suit they can bid at the 3-level. North would be justified in raising to 3 ♠, to make it even harder on the opponents.

If North passes, East has 10 HCP and should be looking to find the best game to be in. Their 3 ♣ call is Stayman, just as if partner had opened 2 NT rather than overcalling 2 NT. When partner denies a major, East bids 3 NT.

Play Commentary: If the opponents had had an unobstructed auction to 3 NT, North would have undoubtedly led a heart. Without much to go on, West will set up the club suit, and when South wins the Ace, they will be unable to attack spades. West will eventually emerge with at least nine tricks.

Since South got the 2 ♠ opening in, North will lead the ♠ 2 (low, because they didn't raise), and the hand becomes hopeless. South will set up the spades and eventually get in to cash them.

Takeaway: The times that rule-breaking works tend to have in common that they are done with excellent suits. Consider bidding with one card less than normal when partner is a passed hand and you have strong suit with solid intermediates.