

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

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

Auction Commentary: With a stronger hand, East could have responded originally with 2 ♣, rather than 1 NT. When West shows a minimal hand with six spades, East knows that the partnership doesn't belong in game. With seven clubs and a spade void, East knows the hand will likely play better in clubs. Since 3 ♣ is not forward going, East bids it.

It will be rare that West should continue over this 3 ♣ signoff. With a singleton spade, East should let it go in preference to trying their own suit. Therefore, East is extremely likely to have no spades at all. East heard that West had at least six spades and still is preferring to clubs; West should respect that decision, even if they are short in clubs.

Opening Lead: ♥ 9

Play Commentary: We have two club losers and three possible diamond losers. We would like to ruff a diamond in the dummy. Win the heart in your hand and lead a diamond toward the dummy. If South wins the Ace, you are safe. If South thinks about it for a while, and then plays small, play them for the Ace and go up with the King. If South plays low smoothly, it is a total guess whether to play the King or the Jack. If they play smoothly, if you get it wrong, if they draw your trump and you go down 1, tell them "Nice defense!" and move on. Take comfort in the idea that 2 ♠ might have gone down two.

Takeaway: It's important to know when to get out of the auction, and when to respect that partner knows more about the distribution than we do. If we have shown a six-card suit, and partner still wants to sign off in a different suit, we should listen to them.

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

Auction Commentary: Without the overcall, South would have rebid 1 NT to show a balanced hand of 12-14 HCP. After East overcalls 2 ♦, South may be tempted to bid 2 NT, especially with two diamond stoppers. That shows a stronger hand (17-19 HCP), however, and will propel North-South to an unmakeable 3 NT contract.

It is important to maintain discipline in these situations. If we rebid 2 NT both when we have 12-14, because we can't stand to pass, and when we have 17-19, partner will be in a hopeless position trying to decide whether or not to bid again.

Remember, once your RHO overcalls, partner will get another turn, so PASS is an option. If you don't have a second suit, if you don't have extra length in your suit, if you don't have support for partner's suit, and you don't have extra strength, PASS is the perfect call! It tells partner all of those things without committing your side to compete further in the auction.

North knows their side does not have an eight-card major suit fit, since South neither rebid their hearts nor made a support double for spades. They could have, and perhaps should have, passed the hand out in 2 ♦

Opening Lead: ♦ 2. East wins the ♦ A and returns the ♦ T, a suit-preference signal for spades. If declarer takes the spade finesse, East can give West another diamond ruff.

Play Commentary: South knows that West started with a singleton diamond, so they play the ♦ J at trick 2. When a spade is lead at trick 3, we need to assess our losers. In addition to the first two tricks, we have two clubs to lose and possibly one spade for a total of 5 tricks. We can't afford to try for the overtrick; if the finesse loses, West will ruff yet another diamond, and we will lose six tricks and go down. Fly up with the ace, draw trumps, make your contract.

Takeaway: When we don't have a fit, it is usually right to defend in a competitive auction. East's 2 ♦ contract would not have been a success.

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: If there had been no overcall, South would have responded 1♥. With 18 HCP, North would jump to 3♥. South could have a hand as weak as 5 or 6 HCP, so we wouldn't want to jump directly to game without getting further input from partner.

With the overcall, South uses a negative double to show 4+ hearts. They promise a little more in values than they do with a simple 1♥ response; they wouldn't make a negative double with only 5 or 6 HCP. Since, South promises a stronger hand, North must make a stronger response, jumping to 4♥, rather than 3♥.

Opening Lead: ♠ K.

Play Commentary: We have two spade losers, one possible club loser, and (usually) at most one trump loser. The North-South hands mirror each other, so there aren't any discards possible. What is the best way to play the trumps?

If we lead the ♥ Q from North, East will cover, and the ♥ T97 will be promoted into the setting trick. Lead a low heart and finesse the ♥ J, and then cash the ♥ A. If the ♥ K falls, great, you've made your contract. If not, hopefully the ♣ K will be onside. If not, well, sometimes you go down.

Takeaway: Remember to adjust your rebids as the opening based on the minimum values that partner has shown. A hand that is worth a single-jump in some auctions may be worth a double-jump in others.