

Judgment when Opening in 3rd or 4th seat

**Board 1**  
North Deals  
None Vul

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

  

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



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	1 ♥
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
Lead: ♥ 7			

The third hand doesn't have a classic opener, but opening it anyway gets the partnership off to setting the contract. (Opening light in 3rd seat.)

1. When partner has already passed, and we don't have a strong hand, it is very likely that we will be defending. If we know what we want led, we should tell partner while we have a chance and while it is safe. Whatever the final contract turns out to be, South would like North to lead a ♥.

2. If South doesn't open, North will still be on lead against three no trump. They have no reason not to think that the ♠T is the best lead, and West will score 2 ♠, 1 ♥, 4 ♦ and 2 ♣ before the defense can get the ♥s going.

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**Board 2**

East Deals

N-S Vul

	♠ Q 10											
	♥ J 6 3											
	♦ A Q J 8											
	♣ 10 7 6 2											
♠ A 8 6 5 3	<table style="font-size: 10px; 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		♠ J 7	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ 10 5 2		♥ A K Q 9 4										
♦ K 7		♦ 10 6 3										
♣ A 8 5		♣ 9 4 3										
	♠ K 9 4 2											
	♥ 8 7											
	♦ 9 5 4 2											
	♣ K Q J											
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>									
		Pass	Pass									
1 ♠?	Pass	2 ♥	Pass									
Pass	Pass											
Lead: ♣ K												

1. Opening after partner has already passed gives you the luxury of passing what would ordinarily be a forcing bid, the 2♥ bid by East, for a good contract. When partner is a passed hand, the usual rules for which bids are forcing don't apply. Here, even though East has responded at the 2-level, the bid is not forcing. West is free to pass the 2♥ call.

2. If the defense leads trump at every opportunity they will beat this contract, but I would guess that over 100% of South players would lead the ♣ K. So would Ted.

3. In this suit contract, East needs to start by counting losers. Assuming the ♥s are splitting -- (and if they weren't, one of the defenders would likely have made a take-out double!) -- losers are 1♠, 3♦ and 2♣. We can eliminate a ♦ by ruffing.

4. It's often right to duck the first round when you have Ace-3rd opposite 3 small, but not here. You escaped a trump lead; don't give them a second chance. Rise with the ♣ A and play a ♦ from dummy!

5. I know what you're thinking -- shouldn't we lead toward our unsupported Kings? In this case, there is no way to get to East's hand other than with a trump, and we can't afford to use a trump. Imagine: North wins the ♦, plays a second trump, and then a third one, and then we have to lose all 3♦s. We must play ♦s immediately so that we can ensure that we can ruff the third one in the dummy.

6. When you can't decide whether to bid or to pass the hand out, add your high card points to the number of spades you hold. If you get to 15, go ahead and open. This is the Rule of 15, (also called Pearson Points), and only applies to your decision in 4th seat. Some use it for judgment in 3rd seat, but it's meant for 4th. :)

Judgment when Opening in 3rd or 4th seat

**Board 3**  
 South Deals  
 E-W Vul

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

1. 4th seat opening: If East decides to open this hand in 4th seat, it lets N/S in to find a good spade contract.

2. Remember Pearson Points/Rule of 15? If East had spades, rather than diamonds, it would be a fine opening bid. Here, East jumping in gives the opponents the opportunity to compete. It's likely they have a ♠ fit, when East only has two pieces. When South manages a takeout double over 1♦, East will wish they had passed it out.

3. Passing out hands is no fun, but we need to exercise discipline sometimes. Using your imagination, based on your holding, you can see why it might not be prudent to give the passing opponents a second bite at the apple!

Judgment when Opening in 3rd or 4th seat

**Board 4**

West Deals

Both Vul

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

  

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

  

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♠?	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. An example where you can open light in 4th seat, holding spades, and find a good contract.

2. Again we find the Rule of 15/Pearson Points. Earlier, we passed out a hand with 12 HCP, now we are going to open one with 10 HCP, and balanced to boot. Still, with five ♠s, we definitely want to open the bidding. When the sides are competing, spades rule.

3. With 10 HCP, a singleton, and 4-card spade support, it would be very reasonable for North to want to jump to game. South can either ruff two diamonds or possibly ruff one and pitch the other on dummy's long club. Ten HCP opposite ten HCP and game is a very good place to be, because of North's shape!