

Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul


♠ Q 8 5 ♥ K 8 3 2 ♦ 6 5 2 ♣ A 10 6	♠ A J 10 7 4 3 ♥ 6 ♦ K J 8 4 ♣ 7 2	<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: auto;"><div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;">N</div><div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;">W E</div><div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;">S</div></div>	♠ 9 ♥ A Q 10 5 ♦ A 10 7 3 ♣ K J 9 5
	♠ K 6 2 ♥ J 9 7 4 ♦ Q 9 ♣ Q 8 4 3		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass All pass	2 ♠	Dbl	Pass 3 ♠

1. After the 2♠ opener, and the double by East, South's 3♠ is furthering the preempt. This can be done with very few points, so long as South holds 3 pieces in the trump suit. It's a "blocking" bid based on the Law of Total Tricks -- you can bid up to the level of the combined holding in the trump suit. So if you and partner have 9 pieces, you can bid to the 3-level (contracting to take 9 tricks). If South passed, EW would find the ♥ fit!
2. Opening lead is the ♥ A. North counts losers in a trump contract: 1 ♥ loser, 2 ♣ losers, and in ♦s, we're going to lose to the ♦ A, and we've got our 4th ♦ to deal with. With an encouraging signal from West, East continues ♥s at trick 2 and Declarer ruffs. If we play trumps now, the defense will be able to pull dummy's last trump before we can ruff a ♦ with it.
3. North needs to lead a ♦ to the Queen at trick 3 and one back to their hand at trick 4, East winning the ♦ A. Unable to continue either red suit, East comes out with the ♣ J at trick 5, surrounding the Queen in dummy. The defense takes two ♣ tricks and North ruffs the 3rd round on trick 7. At trick 8, North leads a small ♦ and ruffs in the dummy. Now, finally, it is time to start the trumps, on trick 9! ♠ K and small ♠ at trick 10, and yes, if you play East for a singleton, you will have made your contract.
4. Remember that raising a preempt is NEVER an invitation! The "weak 2" bidder told their whole story in one bid, and won't peep again unless forced. A raise of a preempt is not forcing in standard systems. A common acronym used by players about preemptive bids:

RONF they say: a **R**aise is the **O**nly **N**on-**F**orcing bid partner can make!

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

1. When South makes the slightest sound, North's 19 HCP game and a fit jumps right to game. This is often thought of as a "drop dead"* or a "close-out"* bid. It's not -- this is just the opener describing a hand that is strong enough to bid game, opposite a 6-count from partner. If South had a stronger hand, they might want to investigate for slam when opener does this!

* **This rebid** is not to be confused with the following (very different) auction:
North - East - South

1 ♠ P 4 ♠ <-- THAT is the sign-off bid, as it shows a hand with not many points, but has 5 pieces of trumps, so the Law of Total Tricks says with 10 trumps you can bid up to the 4-level.

2. Opening lead is the ♥ Q. Counting losers, South finds 1 or 2 ♠s, and 2 ♥s. (It's definitely 2 ♥s on that opening lead!) Declarer is going to play to lead toward the ♠ K in order to limit the trumps to 1 loser. When this happens, West must duck the trick in order to set the contract! Not seeing the ♠ Q, West needs to place it in

the South hand, and West holds the ♠ AJ behind the Queen. This will cause Declarer to go down 1, losing all 4 of the tricks they first counted.

DO NOT rise up immediately with the Ace in a position in front of the King or the Queen like this. Think about where the other honor could be! If partner has it, they're going to get it AND you'll get the Ace. If Declarer has it, you need to keep your Ace over it -- even when you don't also hold the Jack!

HONORS are meant to cover honors :)

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

♠ 9 2 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ 10 9 7 6 ♣ Q J 10 5	♠ 8 7 6 4 ♥ Q 8 6 ♦ A K 8 5 4 ♣ 8	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"><tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K Q 10 ♥ 10 3 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ 7 6 4 2
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ J 5 3 ♥ A K 9 7 5 ♦ 2 ♣ A K 9 3											
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>									
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	2 ♥									
Pass	4 ♥	All pass										

1. Although North is a passed hand, once South overcalls ♥s at the 2-level, promising an opening hand, North's hand grows because of that singleton ♣ 8. If East opened 1 ♣ instead of 1 ♠, West would lead the ♣ Q. Declarer would win the first trick, ruff a ♣ in the dummy, draw trumps and discard a ♣ or a ♠ loser on dummy's extra ♦ winner and make the contract.

2. However, Ted, sitting East, was thinking about getting partner off to the right opening lead. Ted opened 1 ♠, because he knew partner was likely going to be on lead, and he definitely wanted partner to lead a ♠, rather than a ♣. The defense will take the first 3 tricks, and when East leads a 4th ♠, the contract is defeated. If South ruffs high with the ♥ A or ♥ K, West's ♥ J will set up as high for a 4th defensive trick. Only a ♠ lead defeats this 4 ♥ contract!

3. Consider opening in 3rd seat with a solid suit like this, even if it's 4 pieces. You want to get partner off on the right foot with their lead, if your LHO becomes the Declarer. Even 3rd hand light openings should be considered, for lead-directing purposes if possible!

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

1. Opener promises a 7-card suit. The double by South shows at least 15 HCP at this level, shortage in ♦s and tolerance with at least 3 pieces in every other suit. Advancer of the takeout double has stopper in the preempted suit, plus enough points to be in game. So North bids 3 NT -- as it's much easier to make 9 tricks in 3 NT than to bid game in Advancer's long suit, at 5♣ for 11 tricks!

2. Opening lead is the ♦ 7. Count sure winners - 1 ♠ winner, 1 ♥ winner, 4 ♣s, and 1 ♦ can be promoted. Is there a finesse available? If there is, and you can take it into the LHO's hand, that would protect your other ♦ honor.

3. Your finesse is in ♥s. Since East preempted, the ♥ K probably isn't in East's hand. This means the ♥ finesse will probably lose to West, who is the potential dangerous opponent. Count the ♦s: East has 7, partner has 1, you have 3 -- so West has just 2 ♦s. If you overtake West's ♦ 10 at trick one, you only have one ♦ honor left. If you next take your ♥ finesse into West's hand, West will return their other ♦. That will not end well!

4. What happens if you DUCK the first ♦, allowing RHO to win it? They'll lead the other ♦, you'll play one of the honors, LHO will win the A, but the other honor will now be protected.

When you duck the trick like this, it's our dear friend, the **Hold-Up Play** guiding us. Hold up until West is the safe opponent. You'll make 4 ♣ tricks, 3 ♥ tricks, 1 ♠ trick and 1 ♦.

What would have happened if you decided to try 5♣ instead?
 You're losing 1 ♠, and 1 ♥, and 1 ♦.
 Down 1 for -100, instead of making 3 NT for +600.

T.N.T. -- Think No Trump! (Isn't bridge fun? :)