

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

♠ 10 6 4 ♥ J 8 5 3 ♦ 9 6 5 ♣ 8 6 2	♠ A 5 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ 4 3 2 ♣ K J 10 9 3	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; background-color: #008000; color: white; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ K Q 9 3 ♥ 10 9 ♦ A 10 8 7 ♣ A 7 5
	♠ J 8 7 2 ♥ A K Q 6 ♦ K Q J ♣ Q 4		

West	North	East	South
Pass	2 NT	1 ♦	1 NT
All pass		Pass	3 NT
3 NT by South			

Auction Commentary: 1 ♦ openers promise only **3 ♦ pieces**. If you promise 4, then you also agree that you open 1 ♣ with only 2 pieces. One of these things must be true, or you'll have a terrible time finding an opening bid for 4♠-4♥-3♦-2♣ hand. *(We don't advocate the "short club" agreement. First, you'll have to alert 1 ♣ every time you open it. But the only time you will open 1 ♦ with 3 pieces is if you have exactly the 4-4-3-2 hand; and that distribution comes **only 3% of the time!** Don't tie your hands promising 4 pieces in ♦s every time you open 1 ♦. Aren't you further trying to find a MAJOR in this 4-4-3-2 hand?)*

Opening Lead: ♦ 5 (When leading partner's suit, lead low from 3, or top of 2.)

Planning the Play: Declarer needs 9 tricks. 1 ♠, 3 ♥s, 2 ♦s are sure, and ♣s round out the rest. Should be fine, setting up the ♣ suit.

Planning the Defense: The defenders can thwart Declarer's plan by removing the entry (♠ A) from the Dummy before the ♣ A is played. East needs to win trick #1 and lead the ♠ K to force the ♠ A. East needs to plan to HOLD UP the ♣ A, and the contract will fail. When Declarer plays the ♣ Q from her hand, West wakes up - if South had the ♣ A, they'd have played that first. So, West needs to play low → high. This is the defensive signaling showing an odd number of pieces in the West hand. East adds ♣s: his 3, Dummy's 5, and West's 3 - and will know they can take the ♣ A on trick 2! Holding up till trick 3 gives them an undeserved trick!

Takeaways: (1) A 1 NT overcall after an opponent opens a suit absolutely promises a stopper in their suit. (2) The technique of removing that Dummy entry and holding up on the ♣ A is actually called Killing the Dummy! (3) Giving count requires that your partner is WATCHING! :)

Board 6

East Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ 10 8 6 5					
	♥ K 10 4 3					
	♦ A 4 2					
	♣ Q 10					
♠ A	♠ K Q 7	<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td></tr> </table>		N	W E	S
N						
W E						
S						
♥ 8 7 6 5	♥ A J 2					
♦ K Q 10 9 7	♦ J 6 5					
♣ 9 7 5	♣ A K 8 4					
	♠ J 9 4 3 2					
	♥ Q 9					
	♦ 8 3					
	♣ J 6 3 2					
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>			
		1 ♣	Pass			
1 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass			
3 NT	All pass					
3 NT by East						

Auction Commentary: East's jump rebid of 2 NT shows a balanced 18-19, so it's easy for West to bid game.

Opening Lead: ♠ 3 (4th best of the unbid suit)

Planning the Play: Declarer counts 3 ♠ tricks, 1 ♥ and 2 ♣s. Setting up ♦s will bring the contract home.

Planning the Defense: The defenders can defeat this contract by holding up the ♦ A till the third round of ♦s. With no outside entry to the long ♦ suit, East hopes the defense didn't take this class :) East starts with the ♦ J.

North/South need to pay attention, and start their plan. South, if East had the ♦ A, they'd have played it first (as high card from the short side). This must mean that partner has it, so you need to TELL partner when it's safe to play it. When you give a count signal, you play low → high with an odd number of cards, and high → low with an even number. Play the ♦ 8 to the first ♦ trick, and partner will start to do the math. Your ♦ 8 either means you have a doubleton, or you have a singleton ♦ 8, in which case it won't matter ;) North will let the ♦ J win, and wait to see your second card. When you follow with the ♦ 3, North does the math: his 3, Dummy's 5, your 2... means East started with 3 ♦s in their hand. North must hold up the ♦ A till the third round, to cut communication between the Declarer and the Dummy. Declarer can't now enjoy the rest of the ♦s and won't make the contract.

Takeaway: When there is a long suit in the Dummy, both defenders have to sit up and pay attention to how Declarer plays it. If it's evident Declarer doesn't have the Ace in that suit, the Defender without the Ace gives count, and the one with the Ace is WATCHING CAREFULLY for partner's count signal!

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: This limit raise in ♣s promises 5 pieces, since North's 1 ♣ opener could be just 3 pieces. With a stopper everywhere, and a long ♣ suit to run, North bids 3 NT.

Opening Lead: ♥ 7 (4th best - the opponents did not bid any majors. This means that North has at most 4 pieces in either major, and South has fewer than 3 in both. East's counting on the ♠ K as an entry, and hopes to make enough ♥ tricks to defeat the contract.)

Planning the Play: Counting winners in NT: 1 ♠, 1 ♥, 3 ♦s and 4 ♣s. Lovely ♣s suit, but missing the ♣ Q. We will play them carefully.

Identifying the dangerous opponent is key here. The dangerous opponent is the one you do NOT want to gain the lead. We note that if West gets in and lays a ♥ on the table, you're toast. So the plan is to keep West from leading.

Go to the Dummy with the ♣ A, (in case that ♣ Q is singleton somewhere). Then play the ♣ J back toward your hand. You'll get the bad news of the 3/1 break now, but it's okay! You're finessing into the hand that can't hurt you with the ♥s. We saw West play the ♥ Q on trick one. So, now if East plays the ♥ suit, you'll always make your ♥ J. **Isn't bridge terrific!**

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

	♠ 9 6 5										
	♥ J 9 8 5 4										
	♦ A 5										
	♣ Q 10 3										
♠ K 10 4	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto; text-align: center; 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		♠ 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A Q 3		♥ K 7 6 2									
♦ Q J 10		♦ K 9 8 7 6 3									
♣ A 7 6 4		♣ K 2									
	♠ A Q J 7 3 2										
	♥ 10										
	♦ 4 2										
	♣ J 9 8 5										

West	North	East	South
			2 ♠
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
3 NT by West			

Auction Commentary: South's hand is perfect - 2 of the top 3, or 3 of the top 5 honors. The overcall by West promises a 1 NT opener that's not afraid of ♠s. With that long ♦ suit, East adds value to the 9 HCP and bids game.

Opening Lead: ♠ 5 (leading low in partner's suit from 3 pieces, NOT promising an honor)

Planning the Play: West counts winners: 5 ♦s once the ♦ A is played, 2 ♣s, 3 ♥s and a ♠. An embarrassment of riches! This should be a piece of cake.

Planning the Defense: The low ♠ 5 lead tells South that North either has a stiff ♠, or they're leading low from 3 pieces. **South has to think very hard here.** If West has 3 ♠s to the King, and partner can follow to 3 ♠ tricks, then if we play the ♠ A now, and exit a ♠, a Declarer who's also paying attention will wait for the third round to cut the communication between the defenders. South has to FORCE West to take the K♠ on trick 2, so that in case North gets back in, they still have a ♠ left to come back to the long ♠ hand. How can we force the ♠ K?

Trick #1 - ♠ 5, to Dummy's ♠ 8, South ♠ J, West ducks.

Trick #2 - South ♠ Q -- if West doesn't take his ♠ K now, he will never get a ♠ trick!
 So South ♠ Q, West ♠ K, North ♠ 6 and Dummy discards.

Trick #3 - Declarer plays the ♦ Q, high card from short side:

West ♦ Q, North POUNCES ♦ A, Dummy ♦ 3, South ♦ 4

Trick #4 - North exits their last ♠, and Declarer is toast!

NS will score 5 ♠s and that ♦ A before Declarer knows what hit him.

Takeaway: Hold-Up plays work just as well for defenders as for the Declarer. But BOTH defenders need to be cooperating, planning, COUNTING, and watching!