

Board 1
 North Deals
 None Vul

Crawling Stayman!

<p>♠ 8 7 2 ♥ A J 8 ♦ 8 7 5 3 2 ♣ A K</p>	<p>♠ A Q J ♥ Q 4 ♦ K Q J 9 ♣ Q 10 9 8</p>	<p>♠ K 9 5 ♥ K 9 6 3 ♦ A 10 6 4 ♣ J 3</p>				
<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">S</td> </tr> </table>			N	E	W	S
N	E					
W	S					
<p>♠ 10 6 4 3 ♥ 10 7 5 2 ♦ — ♣ 7 6 5 4 2</p>						

Auction Commentary: When North opens 1 NT, South knows his job is to find the best contract, and that's certainly not NT. Even if partner opened with 17 HCP, that means that the other 23 are in the opponents' hands. Chances are good that Partner can't even GET to your hand in NT. Using Crawling Stayman, though, South can bid 2♥ after the 2♦ Stayman denial, which shows a very weak hand with both majors. North is expected to pick a major -- pass 2♥ or correct to 2♠, knowing there is going to be a 4-3 fit, but partner is IN CHARGE! North chooses ♠s because of his doubleton ♥.

Lead Commentary: East knows from the auction that North has probably fewer than 3 pieces in ♥s, so the lead is a small ♥.

Planning the Play: North counts losers. You've already lost 2♥s on that lead, and they will probably return that 3rd ♥ and there goes your ♠ J. Crossing your fingers for a favorable ♠ break, you have 1 ♠ loser, 2 ♥ losers, 2 ♣ losers (that's all we can lose!), and no ♦ losers. What about a ruffing finesse in ♦s? Play the ♦ K and dare East to cover it. If they do, there will be a ruff in dummy, and the other 2 are set up for pitches. If they don't cover it, pitch a ♥ from dummy. (It won't help to pitch ♣s, because we will still have to lose 2 top tricks there. So be sure to pitch ♥s!)

We'd better hope for a decent break in these suits to make this contract. But 2♠ is a far cry better than trying to make 1 NT, even if 2♠ goes down 1 or 2 tricks!

Takeaway: If partner opens 1 NT, and your hand has distribution... the weaker your hand, the more you should bid. If 1 NT scares you, run from it! BEST CONTRACT.

Board 8
 West Deals
 None Vul

Quantitative NT

♠ 9 8 7 6

♥ 5 4

♦ 5 3 2

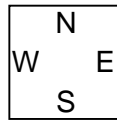
♣ A Q 6 4

♠ A J 10 2

♥ K 9 3

♦ A J

♣ K J 8 2



♠ K Q 3

♥ A Q J 10 2

♦ K 10 4

♣ 10 9

♠ 5 4

♥ 8 7 6

♦ Q 9 8 7 6

♣ 7 5 3

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	2 ♦	Pass
2 ♥	Pass	4 NT	Pass
6 ♥	All pass		

Auction Commentary: East's jump to 4 NT after the transfer bid is not Ace-asking. When we transfer to show shape, and then make a rebid in some amount of NT, the rebid is quantitative -- it shows responder's point range.**

This is the conversation from East's side of the auction:

(1st bid) 2 ♦ - partner, I have at least 5 ♥s.

(2nd bid) 4 NT - partner, I actually have ONLY 5 ♥s, but I have a strong hand. If you have the top of your 15-17 bid, then we belong in a small slam. Please bid that small slam in either 6 NT or 6 ♥ depending on your hand - (with 3 pieces in ♥s with me, bid 6 ♥). But if you aren't at the top of your 1 NT bid, then please either pass this 4 NT invitation, or convert it to 5 ♥ if we have a fit.

** After the 2 ♦ transfer, the "quantitative" aspect of the system is as follows.

Responder has 5 ♥s, plus:

- if I rebid 2 NT, I also have 8-9 points.
- if I rebid 3 NT, I also have 10-15 points.
- if I rebid 4 NT, I also have 16-17 points.

Lead Commentary: 9♠ -- or really anything but a ♣ :)

Planning the Play: From the master hand, (East) losers are 2 ♣ losers if the finesse is off. Good thing the opening lead was from North. Then there's the matter of the third ♦. Looks like before we draw the trumps, we should play the ♦ A, then back to the ♦ K, and ruff the third ♦. The ♠ suit also provides us with one pitch. So the plan is to win this opening lead, draw 2 rounds of trumps, ruff that ♦, and then play the ♠ KQ followed by the ♠ 3 to West's hand. On the fourth high ♠, West will pitch a ♣ from dummy.

BEST CONTRACT. AGAIN. BAM!

Transfer to minor with a bad hand

Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

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

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

Auction Commentary: South should not be tempted to overcall that crummy suit. Only overcall good suits, not moth-eaten ones! When West bids 2♠, East must alert the relay. (If they ask, tell them everything you know about the bid.) East must bid 3♣, and West will correct to 3♦. Because this is a bid that East must now pass, West takes care only to do this transfer to ♦s bid with a poor hand!

The "relay" is not a transfer -- it shows "a long minor," and doesn't show which one. So Opener is forced to bid 3♣, which responder will pass if their hand is long ♣s, and will correct to 3♦ if that's the long suit. (And yes, the hand is wrong-sided. Some partnerships choose 2♠ to transfer to 3♣, and 3♣ to transfer to 3♦. This way the strong hand will always be hidden. It's all about your agreement.)

Lead Commentary: J♣ if West is playing the hand, or perhaps the 2♠ if EW have a way to do make East the Declarer.

Planning the Play: West counts losers: maybe a ♦ loser... we'll try "8 ever 9 never" and see if the Q♦ falls. If the ♠s behave, just one ♠ loser with a double finesse; one ♥ loser, and maybe 2 ♣ losers. Let's hope for the Q♦ to be sitting either singleton or doubleton.

Takeaway: If you need to place the trumps in your long minor, especially with a bad hand, it's the BEST CONTRACT. If you have a good responder hand with a long minor, then keep the contract in some amount of NT. Remember T.N.T. -- Think No Trump! Your choices with a weak hand and long minor:

- Use a relay to get to the minor, or
- use 2 ♠ to bid the ♣ suit and 3 ♣ to bid the ♦ suit, or
- if you're adventurous, go check out "4-Way Transfers." :)

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

Responding with Both Majors

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

Auction Commentary: With this 5/5 hand, North first transfers into the higher ranking suit, then rebids the lower-ranking. (There are two seemingly ♥ bids on the table, but we know that first one actually shows 5+ ♠s.) This auction shows a two-suited North hand, and asks South to choose one. South shows a fit in the ♠s, and North bids game.

Lead Commentary: Sitting behind the NT declarer, West has a difficult task choosing the opening lead. She doesn't want to lead away from that ♦ K, and needs to keep that ♣ A, which is likely sitting behind the ♣ K. West knows that the North hand is going to be looking to ruff minors, so she could choose the ♠ 6 as a lead to cut down the ruffing; or maybe choose to lead the other major because South didn't like it. Let's say West leads the ♥ 3 (showing 3 pieces, not promising an honor).

Planning the Play: The master hand is going to be the North hand, doing a "Dummy Reversal," so let's count losers from the position of the North hand. With an expected 3/2 trump break, there will be no trump losers. There is just 1 ♥ loser (and then those will set up), 1 possible ♦ loser if the ♦ K is with West, and 1 ♣. Your plan is to set up the ♥s. (With another layout, you'd want to UNBLOCK the ♥ suit, by playing the ♥ K under RHO's ♥ A. But you have plenty of entries to dummy in trumps, so that won't matter this time.) Since they just set up your ♥ suit with the opening lead, don't take the ♦ finesse. East will probably exit a ♦, but you can draw trumps from here and pitch all the ♦s but the ♦ A. Don't take the bait!

N-S found the BEST CONTRACT. Again!