

Board 1
 North Deals
 None Vul

♠ K Q 10 4	♠ 8 7 6	♠ A J 3 2
♥ J 6 4	♥ K	♥ 5 3 2
♦ 4 3 2	♦ A Q J 9 7	♦ K 10 5
♣ 8 5 3	♣ A K Q 4	♣ J 9 2
	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ 9 5	
	♥ A Q 10 9 8 7	
	♦ 8 6	
	♣ 10 7 6	

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	3 ♠!	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			
4 ♥ by South			

Auction Commentary: When opener jump-shifts into a new suit, it's game-forcing, showing 19-21 HCP. When responder repeats their suit like this, it's at least 5 pieces, and often 6+. North uses the 4th suit asking if South has a ♠ stopper, and having a stopper South is expected to bid NT next. Without it, South rebids the long suit.

Opening Lead: ♠ K

Planning the Play: Counting losers in a suit contract, South finds 2 ♠ losers, 1 ♦ loser, no ♣s (since if they don't break, South will trump the 4th one), and hopefully no trump losers. The contract should make. As the cards lie, if they continue with a 3rd ♠, Declarer can ruff, pull trumps, and play on ♣s, pitching a losing ♦ and making an overtrick.

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ 8 4 2											
	♥ 3 2											
	♦ K Q J 3											
	♣ 10 6 3 2											
♠ A 5 ♥ K J 8 7 5 ♦ 7 6 5 ♣ A J 4	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <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> </div>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q 9 7 ♥ A 9 6 ♦ 8 ♣ K Q 9 7 5	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	♠ J 10 6 3											
	♥ Q 10 4											
	♦ A 10 9 4 2											
	♣ 8											
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>									
		1 ♣	Pass									
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass									
2 ♦!	Pass	3 ♥	Pass									
4 ♥	All pass											
4 ♥ by West												

Auction Commentary: When responder uses the 4SF here by making the (alertable!) 2♦ call, it's game-forcing, and trying to find out more about opener's hand. With a ♦ stopper, opener would rebid 2NT here instead of 3♥, to show the stopper. But without a ♦ stopper, East is tasked with telling partner something else they didn't know about the shape of the hand. Bidding 3♥ here shows only 3 pieces, since East didn't support responder's first suit, and the jump to that 3♥ call showed more than a minimum by East. Good enough to show a ♥ fit, and set the strain.

Opening Lead: ♦K North should lead a ♦ here, because the auction told the defenders that there was no ♦ stopper to be found in the EW hands. North chooses the ♦K from the top of the sequence... but if North's holding were ♦K975, they should lead small, and STILL lead a ♦ :)

Planning the Play: Declarer counts losers from the position of her hand. She finds a ♦ loser and a possible trump loser. The defense should win with the ♦A. Declarer can take the ♥ finesse, trump a ♦, pull trumps, and the 3rd ♦ can go away on a high ♠. Making 6!

Takeaway: 4th Suit Forcing -- (4SF) -- by agreement is either forcing for one round, or forcing to game. Playing it forcing to game leaves room in your auction to exchange more information so that you can get to the right contract.

4SF does NOT happen at the 1-level:

1♣ P 1♦ P

1♥ P 1♠ ← this is not 4SF. It's trying to find the fit :)

This bid is alertable, because the fourth suit bid is not natural. Even if North had a few ♠s themselves, the 4SF bid does not promise them. It's an artificial suit. :)

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

Auction Commentary: Even though South has ♣s in hand when the 2 ♣ call was made, it was 4SF, and did NOT promise any ♣s. That 2 ♣ call was game-forcing, and it allowed North to tell South something else about North's hand - (which was "I have a real ♦ suit!"). It wasn't till the 3 ♣ rebid that South showed actual ♣s, and allowed North to feel free to bid NT.

Opening Lead: ♠ 2 (Although ♦ J in East is the top of a sequence of J-T-8, since North showed a real ♦ suit, East does not want to give North an undeserved trick in ♦s!)

Planning the Play: Counting winners in NT, North finds 2 ♠s, 1 ♥, 2 ♦s and what will probably be 4 ♣s once the ♣A is forced out. A finesse might give us an overtrick, but there are communication between the hands, so best not risking the finesse. Win the ♠ lead in your hand, Declarer -- (and note that the ♠ 10 - or ♠ 8 - is likely to become a second ♠ stopper). Play the ♣ Q (high card from the short side) to force out the ♣A. Setting up this long source of tricks will bring the contract home.

Takeaway: You have seven cards in each minor. The chance of a favorable 3/3 break is the same for both ♣s and ♦s. The difference is that the clubs offer an extra chance, because the ♣ 10 might be doubleton if the clubs are 4-2. There are also fewer entries to the North hand, and you want to setup the long suit that you have entries to!

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

♠ A J 10
♥ K J 8
♦ 10 9 6 5
♣ 9 4 3

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

Auction Commentary: There is no 4th suit when we're at the 1-level, so in order for West to find out if partner has a ♠ stopper is to jump the rebid to 2♠. Opener shows the ♠ stopper by bidding NT, and West takes it to game. (If East had jumped to 3NT here, it would show the stopper and an unbalanced 15-17.) NOTE that when East bids the NT, it is "right-siding" the contract. When you are the one with the King in a suit, you want the lead in that suit to come to you, so you make the King no matter what!

Opening Lead: ♦ 9

Planning the Play: Counting winners - 5 ♦s, 3 ♣s and a ♥... we don't have to do anything but play these cards to make the contract. And an overtrick can come from losing the finesse, ducking the 2nd ♥ trick and dropping the last of the 3/3 ♥s under your ♥ A. Then your 4th ♥ will be a trick!

Takeaways: Larry Cohen says this about 4SF: *"Fourth Suit Forcing should be part of any player's arsenal. I wouldn't even think of it as a convention. It is really a necessity."*

Note that 4SF is not used after a reverse, or after a 2♣ opener. Those auctions are already forcing, so you don't need to make the artificial bid.

You can read more about the 4SF convention from this article that appeared in the ACBL's Bridge Bulletin:
https://web2.acbl.org/documentLibrary/play/Commonly_Used_Conventions/4thsuit_forcing.pdf