


Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: Responder bid 3 NT, denying a 4-card major, showing 13-15 HCP, a 4-card ♣ suit, and stoppers in all the other suits.

Opening Lead: ♥ 3 (Since they didn't try to find a major, 4th best from that ♥ suit feels right.)

Planning the Play: Declarer has 2 sure ♠ winners, plus 2 ♥s (on that lead), and 3 ♦s for 7 tricks. The ♣s will provide 2 tricks via promotion. It is necessary to duck the first tricks, as the ♥ AQ will always be 2 tricks. This is a safety play in case the leader has a 5-card ♥ suit, so that partner will have no more hearts.

Takeaway: The hold-up at trick #1 is to sever communication between the defenders' hands. If the missing ♥s are 4/3 then we need to clear the ♥s from West so that if they have a high ♣, they can't get back to the East's ♥s. And if they break 5/2, we don't have to worry about it, but we can't be sure so we should decided at TRICK ONE to hold-up on the ♥s!

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

Auction Commentary: West's hand is almost too strong to open as a preempt! Lovely long suit, 6-10 HCP. East has 3 pieces in ♥s, so they move another step on the bidding ladder. This is in hopes of preventing the opponents from finding a game. But South won't hear of it, with that monster hand for ♠s.

Opening Lead: ♥ K

Planning the Play: Declarer has 3 losers in ♣s, and can't afford any more. The hand will still make (with those ♦s that have the holes in them!) if the East hand holds both the ♦ KJ, and he can finesse East. Finessing first to the ♦ 10, and next to the ♦ Q... which is just a 25% chance to succeed. South needs 2 entries to that dummy to accomplish this -- and needs to make this decision at TRICK ONE. Why?

The ♥ K lead is going to be ruffed by Declarer. But he needs to ruff HIGH! Why? The ♠ 5 and the ♠ 2 are the entries that South needs to the dummy to take those finesses! The ♠ 98 in dummy are high, since South has ♠ AKQJT in hand. So at TRICK ONE, Declarer must ruff high, then use a small trump to get to the dummy. Take the first ♦ finesse to the ♦ 10. When it holds, use another small trump to get to the dummy again, and finesse to the ♦ Q. PLAN at TRICK ONE, and look at those small spot cards!

Takeaway: Miracles do happen, and you've just experienced one. But if you didn't plan at TRICK ONE, you gave yourself no shot at making this contract. You just scored +420. Good job!

Board 6
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

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

Auction Commentary: Opener is a little shy of a forcing 2♣ opener. The Basic Convention Chart says that 2♣ is a "Very Strong" hand... and "very strong" is defined as a hand that contains (1) at least 20 HCP, or (2) at least 14 HCP and is within one trick of game (assuming suits break evenly), or (3) at least 5 Control Points and within one trick of game (assuming suits break evenly).

Opening Lead: ♠ K

Planning the Play: There are 9 sure tricks. Counting losers to be sure, 1 ♠ loser, 2 ♦s and 1 ♣ -- that's 9 winners. Is there a way not to rely on a 50% finesse?

Look at the opening lead. It's showing the ♠ KQ, is it not? DUCK the ♠ K, and UNBLOCK the ♠ J! Now you can finesse to the ♠ 10 and pitch a losing ♦ on the ♠ A without relying on the ♦ finesse for the 10th trick!

Takeaway: Planning at TRICK ONE is the key to the success of EVERY bridge hand. Planning is not sexy, but it's necessary, and the old adage rings true:

If you fail to plan, then you plan to fail :)

Board 12
 West Deals
 N-S Vul

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

Auction Commentary: Opener has a "self-sufficient" suit, and bids game. How do we define a "self-sufficient" suit? Add the length of the suit plus the number of high honors in the suit. If you get to 10, you're self-sufficient and should consider bidding game!

Opening Lead: ♥ K (top of a sequence of ♥ K-Q-10-9)

Planning the Play: Counting losers from the master hand, (West), Declarer finds 2 ♥ losers, perhaps a ♠, and 1 ♦. Too many. TRICK ONE reasoning thinks "what if we DUCK this first trick, what will LHO do next?"

- Well, if North exits a trump, they won't make their ♠ Q, and **that helps**.
- If they exit a small ♦, **they help** as we didn't have to lose the ♦ K then.
- If they play a ♥ to ♥ A, **that helps**, as we can get out our hand and ruff the third ♥.
- If they exit a ♣, we take it, play the ♥ A, back to hand with a ♣, ruff the 3rd ♥. **That helps, too.**

So the plan is to DUCK the ♥ K at TRICK ONE, sit back and wait for which magic North is going to contribute next, (clearly something **that helps!**), and we'll make this hand.

Takeaway: Yes, bridge is a timed event. But also yes, some hands require more thinking than others. TAKE the time you need to make your plan at TRICK ONE. High respect from partner, as well as high scores, are in your future! **That helps!**