

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

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

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	1 ♠
All pass		Pass	4 ♠
4 ♠ by South			

Auction Commentary: Even holding that strong a hand, South cannot open 2♣, as that requires no more than 4 losers, plus 5 defensive tricks. Responder must bid with 6+ points, and must show support immediately if it's there.

Opening Lead: ♣ J (top of sequence)

Planning the Play: Losers are 2 ♥s and 2 ♣s. Declarer must hope that the defenders will play the ♥ A on "air." Honors were meant to capture other honors, and Aces were meant to capture faces! :)

After Declarer draws trumps, they play the ♦ AK, in hopes that the ♦ Q falls doubleton. When that doesn't work, Declarer must play a ♥ toward dummy's ♥ K. Second hand, West, must PLAY LOW. If not, Declarer will make 2 ♥ tricks and will make the contract. Let them win the ♥ K. And next, when declarer plays back toward the ♥ Q, the ♥ A-J are like a catcher's mitt behind it, and West will win both of them no matter what card South plays on that trick.

Takeaway: Think about it this way, Defenders -- if Declarer holds both the King and the Queen in a suit, aren't they always entitled to one of those tricks? But you need to give them ONLY one! If you hop up early with your ♥ A, you'll let them score BOTH the ♥ K and the ♥ Q later.

Overtricks are only sweet when you're the Declarer :)

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

Auction Commentary: Opener describes the strength of the hand with that big jump to game. It's NOT a "sign-off" (or "close-out") bid, though. If Responder held enough points to investigate for slam, (say, the equivalent of an opening hand), then they should do that!

Opening Lead: ♥ Q (top of a sequence)

Planning the Play: If declarer plays a low trump towards the Dummy, East must play "2nd hand low" so as to defeat the contract, making the ♠ A and ♠ J sitting behind the ♠ Q. Declarer will lose 4 tricks: the two ♠s and 2 ♥s. Honors are meant to take honors. Do not let the Declarer score the trump King and Queen separately!

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

♠ 9	♠ A 8 7	♠ K Q J 10 2						
♥ A K J 10 7 4	♥ 8 3	♥ Q 9 6						
♦ 6 4	♦ J 10 9 3	♦ K 7 5						
♣ Q J 8 7	♣ A 10 6 4	♣ K 5						
<table style="border: 2px solid green; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"><tr><td style="padding: 5px;">W</td><td style="padding: 5px;">N</td><td style="padding: 5px;">E</td></tr><tr><td style="padding: 5px;"></td><td style="padding: 5px;">S</td><td style="padding: 5px;"></td></tr></table>			W	N	E		S	
W	N	E						
	S							
	♠ 6 5 4 3							
	♥ 5 2							
	♦ A Q 8 2							
	♣ 9 3 2							
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>					
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠	Pass					
2 ♣	Pass	4 ♥	All pass					
4 ♥ by West								

Auction Commentary: Declarer shows at least 9 cards in two suits: at least 5 ♥s and at least 4 ♣s. Responder can't jump to 4 ♥ immediately, knowing that there's a game and there's a ♥ fit, because that bid is reserved for a responding hand that has 5+ trumps and is a weak hand! When you are responding with an opener, go slowly so you and partner can exchange information. Remember to always make forcing bids, though. When either of us repeats a suit that either of us has bid before, it's never forcing unless we've created a force in the auction another way!


Opening Lead: ♦ J (top of a sequence)

Planning the Play: That lead of the ♦ J denies holding the ♦ A, so West knows that the ♦ K is in jeopardy. Only cover that honor with an honor if it's good for your side to do so. In this hand, playing the ♦ K over that ♦ J will promote NOTHING for Declarer, so he'll lose 2 ♦s and ruff the 3rd one in his hand. *(And if you're going to lose it anyway, might you be playing against someone who leads away from Aces? Or thought they were leading to a NT contract? Then insert the King. Why not? :)*

Declarer plays the singleton ♠ from his hand right away, hoping to steal a trick before the opponents can count out the hand. Alas, North grabs the ♠ A, already has 2 ♦ tricks and wins the ♣ A to defeat the contract.

Second hand low does NOT apply in this North's hand, when you can see your way to 4 tricks and glory for the defense!

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

Auction Commentary: Responder transferred to ♠s, and then rebid 3 NT. This West conversation said: "(1) I have exactly 5 ♠s in my hand, and (2) I also have enough values that we should be in game. Please choose which game, partner." With only 2 pieces in ♠s, East passed to prefer 3 NT.

Opening Lead: ♣ 3 (4th best)

Planning the Play: In NT, Declarer starts the plan by counting winners. There are 2 ♣s, 1 ♦, 2 ♥s and 1 ♠ so far - and we need 3 more tricks to make the hand. Your plan is to set up the ♠s for at least 4 tricks. (*Declarer should duck the first ♣ trick - - we give ourselves every chance by cutting communication between the defenders this way.*) Win the second ♣, and start with the "high card from the short side" of the ♠ suit, playing the ♠ J. You are going to lead the ♠ J toward the dummy. If RHO wins it, you still have a ♠ left to get to the dummy, and if the ♠s are no worse than 4-2, you will have those 4 ♠ tricks you need. What if LHO covers with the ♠ K? Remember, once you've played the second round of ♠s, you have no more entries to the dummy. Are the ♠s more likely to be 4-2 or 3-3? We know that "*Even suits tend to break oddly and odds suits tend to break evenly!*" So, if one defender has 4 pieces in ♠s to the ♠ 9, you will only get 3 ♠ tricks -- **IF** you WIN this trick. What if you lose it? Crazy, right? Ha, crazy like a fox! You give up this trick, but you get it back, plus one more, when the ♠s are 4-2. ;)

Planning the Defense: LHO MUST cover that ♠ J honor with the ♠ K. When you don't see the ♠ 9 in the Dummy, then in your mind put that card in partner's hand. Your ♠ K is toast anyway, so sacrifice it to gain something later! If Declarer covers your ♠ K, only 3 tricks come from the ♠ suit. You know because the missing ♠s didn't divide 3/3, and you'll have thrown a wrench into Declarer's plan. (Second Hand Low is a guideline, like all the other "rules," it has exceptions!)