

**Board 4**

West Deals

Both Vul

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



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass
3 NT by West			

**Auction Commentary:** 5-3-3-2 is balanced, so 1 NT it is. Responder ignores the pretty, long minor, (remembering to T.N.T - "Think No Trump"), and bids game.

**Opening Lead:** ♥ 4 (When they don't use Stayman, responder doesn't have a 4-card major. 4th best from your longest major is a good choice. Leading a minor, (like that ♦ suit topped by the King), often gives them a trick in an auction like this. You can lead a minor if you have 5+ cards in the suit. Otherwise, choose your longest major.

**Planning the Play:** Declarer counts winners in NT - and when Declarer sees the ♥ 3 2 in the Dummy, this means that the lead of the ♥ 4 says North has exactly 4 pieces. This also means South has exactly 4 ♥s, as well, since Declarer owns just 5 of them. Thus, the ♦ finesse isn't looking so good. Declarer's best choice is to force out the ♠ A for 9 tricks.

**Planning the Defense:** South, keep that ♥ K over that ♥ J. Partner's lead was a small card, so play partner for the ♥ Q. Contributing the lowest of the touching equals, the ♥ 8, shows partner that Declarer does not hold the K-10-9, or one of those would have won trick #1. Declarer will make this contract if they play ♠s and don't finesse in ♦s. But they're only making 9 tricks. If South contributed the ♥ K to trick #1, Declarer will make overtricks. The ♥ J will set up!

**Board 7**  
 South Deals  
 Both Vul

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

**Auction Commentary:** 20-21 balanced is a 2 NT opener. North's balanced 7-count is enough for game.

**Opening Lead:** ♥ J (A major is the obvious lead when they don't use Stayman to find one. West has 2 majors -- which one? With only 4-card suits, passive leads are called for. Save aggressive leads for when you have a chance to beat the contract without tricks in other suits, e.g., when you have 5 or more of them.

**Planning the Play:** Counting winners, Declarer finds 3 ♥s and 4 ♦s, and a slew of ♣s once the ♣ A is forced out. Declarer plans to win the first trick and play a ♣... and pray that the ♣ A is with the non-dangerous opponent. Who is that?

Think -- which opponent can kill your ♠ K? Where do you want the lead of a ♠ to come from, if they shift to one? ANSWER: You want the lead of a ♠ to protect your ♠ K from your LHO. If RHO gets in and puts a ♠ on the table, it's curtains. So LHO is the SAFE opponent. We hope that the ♣ A is with West.

**Planning the Defense:** East looks at the ♥ J and considers partner's holding. It could be the top of the suit, and it's probably from ♥ J-10 fourth. It COULD be from ♥ K-J-10, but on trick one, Declarer popped up immediately with the ♥ A, showing confidence in the suit, so they probably have the ♥ K. Since this is the only time that East will be on lead for the rest of the hand, East needs to consider their exit card carefully. There's weakness in the Dummy in ♠s, so that suit looks attractive. Choose the ♠ card -- East must put the ♠ Q on the table to defeat the contract! There is no honor in the Dummy, and East hopes partner will get something in hand promoted. As it stands, the defense will win 4 ♠ tricks and the ♣ A.

**Takeaway:** When you're never getting on lead again, attack the suit with your highest card. (If East leads a low ♠, Declarer can duck and the contract makes!)

**Board 10**  
 East Deals  
 Both Vul

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

  

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

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

**Auction Commentary:** East's 1 NT rebid shows a 12-14 count, balanced. West thinks about the math, and if that's 14 rather than 12, game might be possible. So the 2 NT is invitational, asks partner if 14 or 12... and East bids game.

**Opening Lead:** ♣ 8 (If partner had the chance to overcall a major and did not, it feels like ♣s is a better choice. Leading the ♣ 8 shows nothing higher in the suit -- "top of nothing" -- a passive lead.

**Planning the Play:** East counts winners -- 3 ♠s (and 4 if they break 3/3), 1 ♥, and 1 ♣... this will take some work! When you see A-Q-10, it presents the opportunity for a double finesse. Let's try it, so plan your entries! Let's hope the ♥ KJ are on-side, and the ♠s behave.

**Planning the Defense:** On this lead, North is in a terrific position. When Dummy plays low, North plays only as high as necessary, the ♣ 10, to force out the ♣ A. That will mean 3 tricks in the bag for the defense, plus the ♦ A, and plus the ♥ K behind the tenace in Dummy. NICE LEAD, PARTNER :)

**Takeaway:** A "tenace" in bridge -- (pronounced "ten-ace," with the emphasis on the first syllable; although I've heard it mentioned as in "tennis," as well) -- is a holding of honors but missing the middle one. K-J is a tenace. A-Q is a tenace. You see them all the time, but probably didn't know they had a name :)

**Board 12**  
 West Deals  
 N-S Vul

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

**Auction Commentary:** North's overcall shows a hand with 15 to up to 18 HCP, and it is not afraid of a ♦ lead. (Whenever one of us bids NT after the enemy has bid a suit, we promise at least one stopper in enemy's suit!) South likes his ♣ suit and upgrades to 3 NT... and everyone at the table knows that this auction means that East is "broke!"

**Opening Lead:** ♦ 6 (Don't just use guidelines to play - you need to inject common sense. If East leads a ♥, what's the point? They'll never get back in to cash ♥ tricks. So let's lead partner's suit. Not that it makes a lot of difference which ♦ here, but at least partner will know in a minute that you started with a doubleton!)

**Planning the Play:** Declarer counts tricks - 2 ♠ tricks, 2 ♥ tricks, 2 ♦ tricks and hopefully the ♣s will provide the rest. So trick #1 won in hand, Declarer leads toward the ♣ suit. West wins and returns a ♦. Here comes another ♣ by North, and then the defense takes 2 ♣ tricks and 3 ♦ tricks to defeat the contract.

**Planning the Defense:** West must take care when playing to trick #1 - partner got off to a great lead, but remember that third hand high only means as high as necessary! Don't play the ♦ Q or ♦ J -- you see the ♦ 10 in dummy, so the ♦ 9 is high enough to force an honor! Since you have to be the one to lead these ♦s in a minute, if you play the ♦ J at trick #1, forcing the ♦ K, then you win the ♣ and play ... which one? If you play the ♦ Q next to force the ♦ A, you just set up their ♦ 10! Be careful to watch every card in this game!

**Takeaway:** Look at what happens when East leads anything else: NS will win the suit establishment race, and will make 3 NT easily. The opening lead was KEY, and the play of the hand by West sealed the deal. Good defense!