

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ A Q 3 2
♥ K 10 7
♦ K J 4
♣ K 3 2

♠ K 10 7 5
♥ 6 4 2
♦ A Q 10 9
♣ Q 5



♠ J 6 4
♥ A Q J 5 3
♦ 8 7 5
♣ 9 4

♠ 9 8
♥ 9 8
♦ 6 3 2
♣ A J 10 8 7 6

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

Auction Commentary: You are North, opening 1 NT. East should pass. South has a weak hand with 6 ♣s, so they bid 2 ♠ to transfer you to "both minors." You dutifully bid 3 ♣, not knowing which minor partner wants. South will pass the 3 ♣ bid (if their long minor is ♣s), or they'll correct to 3 ♦, and you are expected to pass. South passes. You will Declarer in 3 ♣.

Opening Lead: 4 ♠ -- No lead looks particularly attractive for East. A ♥ lead will certainly give a trick away, which is why you generally should not underlead your Aces against a suit contract. East leads the 4 ♠ from his 3 pieces in the suit.

Planning the Play: In a suit contract, Declarer counts the losers. 2 ♥s (unless the A♥ is on our left), 3 ♦s (unless a couple of ♦ honors are on our left), so let's hope somethings works! You have no ♣ losers, and on this lead, also no ♠ losers. When they lead into your "tenace" like this, you're going to win both the Ace and Queen.

If West plays 3rd hand high K♠, you win the A♠ and start to plan. There are 9 trumps, missing the Q♣: "8 Ever, 9 Never." *When you own 8 pieces in your suit, missing the Queen, you should finesse for her. But if you have both the Ace and the King, and 9 pieces, the likelihood is that the missing Queen will "drop."* Play AK♣ and watch the Q♣ fall. As the cards lie, you will lose the 2 ♥s, and just 1 ♦ -- (assuming you take 2 ♦ finesses). Making 4.

Takeaways:

(1) If you have a "tenace," it means that you have at least two high honor cards of the same suit, but you are missing the one in between: A-Q or K-J or Q-T.

(2) "8 Ever, 9 Never" relies on the numbers to work in your favor. When you are missing the Queen of a long suit, but you hold both the Ace and the King, you should not try to finesse to find your missing Queen. Instead, please the Ace and King and hope the Queen falls. *This does not apply when you only hold 8 pieces. Finessing for the Queen is typical with just 8.*

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

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

Auction Commentary: East opens the balanced 17-count 1 NT, South passes. West has 6 ♣s, and they're nice ones. The hand is too strong to use the transfer. Do that with a weak hand that has no other value outside the long minor. This hand has a great shot at making 3 NT, since you know partner's 1 NT balanced opener holds at least 2 ♣s. Partner's 15-17 HCP are guaranteed to be mostly outside the ♣ suit. Bid 3 NT and watch partner brilliantly Declare. ;)

Opening Lead: 3 ♠ -- (small from 3+ pieces, and probably no series of honors anywhere)

Planning the Play: In a NT contract we should count our winners. Hoping the ♣s behave, we will definitely win 6 ♣s, 2 ♠s, and 2 red Aces for 10 tricks. The contract will make, but can we do any better? What about that ♠ lead?

Famous teacher and author, Barbara Seagram, gave us this for examining leads:
B.O.S.T.O.N. -- it means **B**ottom **O**f **S**omething, **T**op **O**f **N**othing.

The 3 ♠ is likely the Bottom Of Something. So you should expect South to have "something" -- at least one of the 2 missing ♠ honors. If this is a **BOSTON** lead, and the missing honors (QJ♠) are split between the defenders, you can capture them both. You have A♠ on one side and K♠ on the other. If North has one of them, on trick #1 they will play third hand high, and insert their honor. You win the A♠, and later try the finesse through South for the other honor.

After you win trick #1 in your hand, start the ♣ suit with the Q♣, (high card from the short side). Next the 8♣ to the dummy, to run the suit (so long as it breaks). You will try a ♥ finesse, which fails, but that's okay. You're in 3 NT, making two overtricks. Well done.

Takeaway:

When choosing a lead, if you lead a **BOTTOM** card partner will think you have **SOMETHING** high. So if you have **NOTHING**, then choose to lead the **TOP** of it instead. **B.O.S.T.O.N.** :)

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|--|------------------|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---------|
| ♠ A 9 3 | <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 | | ♠ 8 6 4 |
| | N | | | | | | | | | | |
| W | | E | | | | | | | | | |
| | S | | | | | | | | | | |
| ♥ 10 3 | | ♥ A 5 4 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♦ A 9 4 | | ♦ J 10 7 6 5 3 2 | | | | | | | | | |
| ♣ Q 9 8 6 2 | | ♣ — | | | | | | | | | |

EW 4♦; EW 1N; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; EW 1♥; Par -130: EW 3♦+1

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

Auction Commentary: You are East, and you pass. That ♦ suit is not suitable to preempt, especially vulnerable! Partner opens 1 NT, P to you. You see that you have exactly 1 trick to contribute in a NT contract - (A♥). But what if ♦s are trump? Suddenly your hand could take some tricks. So, you decide to bid 2 ♠, transferring to both minors. Pass, then when Partner rebids 3 ♣, you correct to 3 ♦. West knows they must pass, as East is in charge!

Opening Lead: South leads the 10♥ - (hoping to get a ruff with her 3 trumps).

Planning the Play: In a suit contract, count the losers. 1 ♠ loser, 2 ♥s, no ♣s, but there could be a couple of ♦ losers. You will need to plan the trump suit strategically, leading toward the K♦ later, hoping for the A♦ in the South. *And if the AQ♦ are both behind the K♦, nobody's making this contract!*

Cover the 10♥ with the J♥, North plays the Q♥, and you win the A♥. If you play a ♠, and you reach the dummy, you can pitch losing ♥s on the high ♣s. South remembers that East transferred to a minor, and has a distributional hand. What if this is a singleton ♠? South takes the A♠, and now goes after that ♥ ruff. 3 ♥ then 6 ♥, and North stops to think. Partner's opening lead was the 10♥, and high-low like this -- (echo) -- looks like South has a doubleton ♥. North wins the K♥, continues with the high 9♥. (You have so far lost A♠, K♥, 9♥.) Here comes a fourth ♥, and you have to decide how high to ruff it. LHO is now void, and if you trump low, South will have the opportunity to overruff. You decide to trump with the J♦. LHO plays low, so you figure they don't hold the Q♦ (or they would have covered the J♦). So, when you play the K♦ from the dummy, the Q♦ falls from RHO. They get A♦, you make your contract.

Takeaway: The term "echo" in card play means you first played a high card, and next you played a lower card in the same suit. It shows an even number of cards - often a doubleton.