

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

Opening Leads

♠ A K J 6
♥ J 9 6
♦ K Q J 8 7
♣ J

♠ 10 2
♥ K Q 5 2
♦ 6 2
♣ A 9 8 3 2

♠ 5 4
♥ A 10 7
♦ 10 9 5 3
♣ Q 10 7 4

♠ Q 9 8 7 3
♥ 8 4 3
♦ A 4
♣ K 6 5

West	North	East	South
	1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♠ ¹	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

1. Jumping a level, to show above-minimum strength, with four-card support

A traditional "4th highest of the longest and strongest suit" ♣ 3 is most unwise here for West. Declarer can win all 13 tricks.

Instead the "Top of a Sequence" ♥ K gives the defense a chance to get them down -1

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 5 3
♥ Q 10 6 3
♦ Q 9 7 4
♣ 5 3 2

♠ 10 8 7
♥ A 9 5 2
♦ K J 3 2
♣ 6 4

♠ A K Q
♥ K 7 4
♦ A 5
♣ J 10 9 8 7

♠ J 9 6 4 2
♥ J 8
♦ 10 8 6
♣ A K Q

West	North	East	South
		1 ♣	Pass ¹
1 ♦ ²	Pass	2 NT ³	Pass
3 NT ⁴	All pass		

1. Tempting to overcall 1 ♠, but the suit is so rropy.
2. Responding the cheaper of four-card suits ensures that no fit goes a-begging. If opener has hearts, he can now rebid 1 ♥
3. Jumping to show 17-19 balanced
4. Enough points (25) for game - just

Against a trump contract, South would have no hesitation in leading out a top club.

Defending 3 NT however it would be the difference between defeating the contract or them making it.

Length is key, so a spade lead (any one) is the correct lead to defeat the contract..

Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

West	North	East	South
			2 NT
Pass	3 ♣ ¹	Pass	3 ♦ ²
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. Stayman - a request for four card majors
2. No major

4th highest longest and strongest West lead ♦ 2 won by East.

East may automatically just return the diamond, but on reflection worked out his partner only held 4 (Rule of 11 plus it was the 2) so declarer had 5 diamonds (given dummy).

So what suit to lead back ? Dummy's weakest suit was spades. ♠ 3 was bound to work well playing through declarer to establish partners spades.

As it turned out, the right move, with contract going 2 down. It would have made with the diamond return.

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

West	North	East	South
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

North leads the ♠ 7, and dummy plays low.

Using Rule of 11, there are four higher cards than the lead in the other 3 hands. You can see three in your hand and one in dummy, so declarer has none higher.

You must play the ♠ 6 (key play) leaving partner on lead, so that he can lead a second spade through dummy's king.

Four spade tricks plus the Ace of hearts means down one.

Board 5

South Deals

N-S Vul

♠ 4

♥ 9 7 6 4 3

♦ 6 5 4

♣ J 10 9 4

♠ K Q 3 2

♥ K 5

♦ J 9 3 2

♣ K 7 2

♠ J 10 9 6 5

♥ A 10 2

♦ A K

♣ 6 5 3

♠ A 8 7

♥ Q J 8

♦ Q 10 8 7

♣ A Q 8

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass¹

3 NT

All pass

1. Too flat for a two-level overcall

East carefully lead the ♠ J (top of a sequence)
rather than the ♠ 6 (4th highest)

It was the difference to get them down.

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A 9 8

♥ K 4

♦ J 9 7 5 4

♣ A Q 8

♠ 10 6 5 3

♥ 7 3 2

♦ A 2

♣ 9 4 3 2

♠ K J 2

♥ A 10 8

♦ Q 10 8 6

♣ K J 7

♠ Q 7 4

♥ Q J 9 6 5

♦ K 3

♣ 10 6 5

West

North

East

South

1 NT

3 NT

All pass

South correctly let the ♥ Q. 4th highest ♥ 6
would not work.

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

♠ 8 2

♥ J 5 2

♦ A K J 10 3

♣ K Q 9

♠ K Q 10 7 4

♥ K 4

♦ 8 5 2

♣ 7 4 2



♠ 9 5 3

♥ A 9 7 3

♦ Q 7 6

♣ 8 5 3

♠ A J 6

♥ Q 10 8 6

♦ 9 4

♣ A J 10 6

West

North

East

South

1 NT

Pass

3 NT

All pass

Again 4th highest ♠ 7 not the best defense, as declarer would make the contract.

♠ K gives much more options.

If they win the Ace, East can win diamond and play spades back through South to defeat the contract.

If they duck the Ace, (known as Bath coup when holding AJx and K is lead), defense has to switch (as East discouraged by playing ♠ 3) but which suit? As your only entry to make the spade tricks is ♥ K lead the ♥ 4 hoping partner has the Ace.

1 down

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

♠ A J 10 7 5

♥ 6 5 2

♦ K 5

♣ Q 9 8

♠ K Q 4

♥ Q J 7 4

♦ A Q 9 4

♣ K J



♠ 9 3

♥ A K 3

♦ J 10 8 7 6

♣ 10 7 6

♠ 8 6 2

♥ 10 9 8

♦ 3 2

♣ A 5 4 3 2

West

North

East

South

1 ♥

1 ♠

2 ♥

2 ♠

2 NT

Pass

3 NT

All pass

Again 4th highest would be fatal.

♠ J (top of interior sequence is the best lead)

♠ J passed to the ♠ K (declarer trying to "hide" the ♠ Q, but Souths ♠ 2 ("low means no") signal showed he had it.

Spades should be led by South through West to score max spade tricks (when he gets the lead)

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

♠ A K 6 5 2

♥ J 6 4

♦ Q J 10

♣ K J

♠ 10 4

♥ 8 2

♦ 8 6 4 3

♣ A 10 9 4 2



♠ Q 9 8 3

♥ A K 5 3

♦ 5 2

♣ Q 7 3

♠ J 7

♥ Q 10 9 7

♦ A K 9 7

♣ 8 6 5

West

North

East

South

1 ♠

Pass

2 ♦¹

Pass

2 NT²

Pass

3 NT

All pass

1. Cheaper of four-card suits. Note that responding 2 ♦ is FAR superior to the dreaded 2 NT, which always makes opener's life awkward (and would make him dummy on an opening club lead from West - ouch).
2. 15-16 balanced

East wisely lead the ♥ A and a look at dummy (and his partners discouraging ♥ 2 discard) told him to switch suits.

Remembering declarer opened 1 ♠, and looking at dummy's strong diamonds, it was clear to switch to clubs. ♣ 3 (key play) won by West with the ♣ A, declarer following with the ♣ J, and helpfully returned the ♣ 10.

Placing, as it did, the ♣ 9 also with West, East knew to unblock his ♣ Q under declarer's ♣ K.

Declarer forlornly led a second heart. East rose with the king, and lead his third club. West could win with the ♣ 9 and table his two long clubs. Down two.

4th highest lead again allows them to make 3 NT.

Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

♠ A 3

♥ A Q 10 8

♦ 5 3 2

♣ J 9 6 3

♠ J 10 8

♥ J 9 7

♦ 10 9 7

♣ A 10 4 2



♠ K Q 5

♥ K 6 5

♦ A Q J 4

♣ K Q 8

♠ 9 7 6 4 2

♥ 4 3 2

♦ K 8 6

♣ 7 5

West

North

East

South

3 NT

All pass

2 NT

Pass

South led the ♠ 7 (interior sequence).

North won the ace, and declarer dropped an unblocking queen, to facilitate reaching dummy in order to take the diamond finesse.

It was clear to North that the 7 couldn't be "fourth highest" (there were just two higher cards unaccounted for: king-nine). So with no future in spades, he started studying the heart position. The trouble with leading a low heart is that declarer can let the lead run to dummy, and still hold the guarded king as a second stopper.

North must make a "surrounding play", beating dummy's highest card. At trick two North found the only card in his hand to defeat the game: ♥ Q

Declarer covered with the ♥ K, and needing to take the diamond finesse crossed to the ♠ J and ran the ♦ 10. South won the ♦ K, and led a second heart. North beat dummy's ♥ 9 with the ♥ 10, cashed the ♥ A, felling dummy's ♥ J, and followed with the ♥ 8. Down one.

Board 11

South Deals
None Vul

♠ A K 7 5
♥ K Q
♦ 10 9 6
♣ Q 10 9 5

♠ J 9 8 4 2
♥ 10 8 5
♦ 7 2
♣ A 6 4

W N
S E

♠ 3
♥ 9 7 4 3 2
♦ K Q 8 4 3
♣ K 3

♠ Q 10 6
♥ A J 6
♦ A J 5
♣ J 8 7 2

West	North	East	South
			1 NT
Pass	2 ♣ ¹	2 ♦ ²	Pass ³
Pass	3 NT ⁴	All pass	

1. Stayman - "any four-card majors?"
2. A frisky overcall, with one thing in mind: helping partner with his lead.
3. No major - equivalent to a 2 ♦ reply
4. Rather wishing he had simply jumped to 3 NT last time - robbing East of his lead-directing overcall.

If not for the lead directing overcall, West would have led 4th highest ♠ and the contract makes. West leads ♦ 7, declarer played ♦ 9, and East realised if he played the autopilot ♦ Q, declarer would prevail by ducking. He would win a 2nd (low) ♦ with the ♦ J, and, when he knocked out the 2 top ♣s, West would have no ♦s to lead. ♣s would be set up before ♦s, and declarer would make his game.

Realising this, East withheld his ♦ honours at Trick 1, instead playing an encouraging eight (key play). And he did not cover the ♣ Q at trick 2 either, letting his partner win his hoped-for ace, whilst he still had a ♦ remaining.

West's second ♦ went to East's ♦ Q & declarer was sunk. He won the ♦ A, tested ♠s, to see if there were 4 tricks, but when East discarded on 2nd round, tried a 2nd ♣. No good. East won his ♣ K and cashed the ♦ Q43. Down 1

Board 12

West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A Q 9 5
♥ K 9 8
♦ K 4
♣ A J 9 5

♠ 4
♥ A Q 10 5 2
♦ J 10 3
♣ K Q 10 4

W N
S E

♠ J 10 8 7 6 2
♥ 7 3
♦ Q 7
♣ 7 5 3

♠ K 3
♥ J 6 4
♦ A 9 8 6 5 2
♣ 8 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	1 NT ¹	Pass	3 NT ²
All pass			

1. 15-19 balanced with a heart "stopper"
2. A good gamble, hoping diamonds can be set up.

East realised that trying to set up his spades was likely to be futile, for the lack of re-entries to his hand. He led the ♥ 7, partner's suit (admittedly an opener).

West beat dummy's ♥ 4 with ♥ 10, and declarer ducked his ♥ K (best - to sever defensive communications). At trick 2 West cashed the ♥ A, and he then led a 3rd ♥, declarer winning the ♥ K and East discarding a ♠.

Needing to set up dummy's ♦s, declarer cashed the ♦ K and East realised he needed to unblock so played the ♦ Q.

Provided East drops his ♦ Q on the ♦ K (indeed he could have discarded the blacking card on the thirs ♥), then declarer must lose the 3rd ♦ to West, who has two length winners in ♥ to cash. Down one.

Board 13

North Deals
Both Vul

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

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	Pass ¹	1 ♦
1 ♠	Pass	3 NT ²	All pass

1. Unsuitable for a take-out double (not enough spades) or a 1 NT overcall (not enough points).
2. Catching up. Arguably worth just 2 NT facing an overcall, but East stretches for the vulnerable game bonus.

South had to decide whether to lead from his ♦s (a "medium" holding); or partner's ♣s (a "good" holding). If both were "medium" it would normally be judicious to prefer partner's; with partners being "good", it was clear to lead the ♣ Q.

The ♣ Q was allowed to hold, but North carefully overtook the ♣ J with the ♣ K, so that (when declarer again withheld his ace, he could continue with the ten.

Declarer took his ace this time, ran five rounds of spades (the jack falling), but needed to promote (at least) the ♥ K. North jumped in with the ♥ A, and cashed his ♣ 9 then ♣ 2. Down one

On an opening ♦ lead, contract would have made.

Board 14

East Deals
None Vul

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

West	North	East	South
		1 ♣	Pass
1 ♥	1 ♠	2 NT ¹	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

1. (17-18)

South correctly led the ♠ 2 (partners suit), because he held a significant honour (ie. jack or above). Declarer did as well as he could, beating North's king with the ace, and leading a ♣ to the queen. However North won the ace, and led back a second spade.

Reading South for the ♠ Qs - North would have followed with the queen (cheaper) of his king-queen - declarer played low from hand. This was best - but no good.

South won the ♠ 9, cashed the ♠ Q (felling declarer's ♠ J, and switched to a heart. As hoped, North won the ace and could cash his two long spades. Down two.

Had South led the ♠ Q, declarer has a second stopper (♠ J) and romps home in his game (via 2 x ♠s, 3 x ♦s, and 4 x ♣s)

Board 15

South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K Q 7 6
♥ A Q 5
♦ 10 9 7
♣ J 5 3

♠ J 10 9 8 2
♥ 8 4 3
♦ K Q 3
♣ 9 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 4 3
♥ 10 9 6 2
♦ A 2
♣ Q 10 7 4 2

♠ A 5
♥ K J 7
♦ J 8 6 5 4
♣ A K 8

West	North	East	South
			1 ♦
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 NT ¹
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. (15-16)

Declarer won West's ♠ J with his ♠ A and, needing to force out the three top ♦s, led a ♦. West correctly played low; and East won the ♦ A to lead his second ♠. Dummy's ♠ Q beat West's ♠ 8 and a second ♦ was led. West won his ♦ Q and led the ♠ 10 to drive out dummy's last spade stopper.

Declarer's heart was sinking, but, hoping that it was East who held the remaining honour, led a third ♦. No good - West won the ♦ K, cashed the ♠ 9 felling dummy's ♠ 7, then beat the game by cashing the lowly ♠ 2.

Down one.

Could declarer have done better? Hard as it is to believe, he can make his game if he ducks the opening ♠ K lead! Yes - in spite of holding 3 stoppers in the suit, this hold-up play ensured that East has no spade to lead when he wins his ♦ A. All declarer loses is that ♠ plus the three top ♦s.

Board 16

West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ K J 7 4
♥ 8 3 2
♦ 10 9 8 2
♣ K 5

♠ A Q 10 3
♥ K
♦ A 6 3
♣ J 10 7 6 2

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 5 2
♥ A Q J 9 5
♦ K J 7
♣ 9 8

♠ 8 6
♥ 10 7 6 4
♦ Q 5 4
♣ A Q 4 3

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

South did not need to delve quite so deep to find the best lead. He merely considered that the opponents would have declared game in ♠s rather than notrumps if they had an eight-card fit. Therefore his partner held four ♠s, nicely located over dummy's length. Given the unattractiveness of leading the unbid suit (♦s) from Q54 he fished out the ♠ 8 - and found that it was the only lead to defeat the game.

Declarer played low from dummy and saw North win the ♠ J. North returned the ♦ 10, to the JQA. Declarer cashed the ♥ K, crossed out the ♦ K, ran his four remaining ♥s, then needed a successful finesse against the ♠ K. When a spade to the Q lost to North's ♠ K, the defense could cash one ♦ and 3 ♣s - down two.

An opening ♦ lead gives declarer an immediate 9th trick via the ♦ J. And a neutral ♥ gives him time to set up the clubs.

