

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

♠ 10 9 7 6 4
♥ —
♦ 7 6 5 3 2
♣ A 9 3

♠ Q J 8
♥ A K J 10 7
♦ Q 8
♣ Q 6 2

♠ A K 5 2
♥ 6 5 3 2
♦ 4
♣ K J 7 4



♠ 3
♥ Q 9 8 4
♦ A K J 10 9
♣ 10 8 5

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 4 ♥¹

All pass

1. Upgrading the hand in light of the singleton spade. Losing Trick Count fans (as long as four-card support and is unbalanced) will note that the hand contains just 7 Losing Tricks. Facing opener's presumed seven, that means a 4 ♥ bid is indicated (adding the Losing Tricks, and subtracting the total from 18).

This deal illustrates why the ace from ace-king is even better than the singleton (when you are lucky enough to have both). Had East led his singleton ♦, declarer could win, draw the trumps (in 4 rounds - thanks to the bad split), then run ♦s. Five trumps and 5 ♦s make 10 tricks. Game made

However East's wiser choice of lead - the ace of spades - left him on lead after dummy was tabled. It was now clear NOT to switch to his singleton ♦ (looking at those strong ♦s in dummy). Nor was continuing spades sensible - dummy being void.

At Trick 2 East switched to the indicated ♣ 4 hoping his partner held the ♣ Q or better.

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 3 2
♥ K Q 7 4 2
♦ Q J 6 3
♣ 7 4

♠ J 10 9 7 5
♥ A 10
♦ 7 4
♣ Q 8 6 5

♠ A Q 8 4
♥ J 8
♦ A 10
♣ A J 10 9 3



♠ K 6
♥ 9 6 5 3
♦ K 9 8 5 2
♣ K 2

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

1. Enthused by the double fit (ie. clubs as well as spades)

This deal sees the sequence lead (and indeed later switch) promote high cards into subsequent tricks. North lead the ♥ K (the honour lead - showing the queen and denying the ace), and declarer won the ace and ran the jack of trumps. This finesse lost because it was South who held the ♠ K. South returned a second heart to his partner's known queen.

North then switched to the ♦ Q, showing the jack and denying the king. Dummy's ace took the trick, the ♠ A was cashed, a trump led to declarers nine, and the ♣ Q ran.

Another finesse failed, South winning the ♣ K. He promptly cashed the promoted ♦ K - down one. Unlucky for declarer - but well defended.

Notice how poorly a doubleton (club) opening lead would have fared.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A K 7 5 4
♥ 9 8 7
♦ K 6 2
♣ Q 4

♠ J 9 3
♥ J 4
♦ Q J 3
♣ 10 8 6 5 3

♠ Q 10 6 2
♥ 10 5 3
♦ A 10 9 5
♣ J 9



♠ 8
♥ A K Q 6 2
♦ 8 7 4
♣ A K 7 2

West	North	East	South
			1 ♥
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣ ¹
Pass	3 ♥ ²	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

1. Showing his five-four shape
2. Showing 10-12 points, and a delayed support for what is now known to be a five-card heart suit. On this occasion, a rebid of 2 NT (in spite of the known eight-card heart fit) would have led to a making 3 NT contract. But North can't be faulted.

West led the ♦ Q and, placing the ace with East, declarer ducked dummy's king. With East signalling encouragement with the ten ("throw high means aye"), West continued with the jack (top of two remaining). This time declarer tried dummy's king, but East won the ace, cashed the nine, and seeing little future in any other defence, led his "lucky thirteenth" diamond (key play).

If declarer ruffed high, he could cash the other two top trumps, but East's ten would be promoted. In practice he discarded (hoping East held both the jack and the ten of trumps). No - West trumped with the jack. Down one.

A perfectly executed Trump promotion.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ A J 10 7 5 3 2
♥ Q 6 4
♦ A 3
♣ 5

♠ Q
♥ A J 10 5
♦ J 7 5 2
♣ A J 7 3

♠ 8 6
♥ K 8 2
♦ 10 9 8 4
♣ 10 9 8 4



♠ K 9 4
♥ 9 7 3
♦ K Q 6
♣ K Q 6 2

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	1 ♠ ¹	Pass	2 ♥ ²
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	

1. Too strong to preempt
2. The Unassuming Cue Bid - one of THE most useful conventions. If you have a good hand (10+ points), with support (three+cards), for partner's overcall, bid opener's suit at the lowest level.

If East leads the ♥ K, declarer's ♥ Q is promoted into a third-round winner, and 4 ♠ makes. The ♥ 2 (low from three to an honour) set up four defensive tricks.

West won his ♥ A, and returned the ♥ J. Realising East held the ♥ K, declarer craftily played low. Had West unthinkingly led a third heart to East's king, East would have a dilemma as to which minor to play. Choose wrongly (a diamond), and declarer can throw his singleton club on dummy's third diamond.

Foreseeing this, West considerably cashed the ♣ A at Trick three (key play), before next leading over to his partner's ♥ K. Down one.

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A K 8 7 4 2

♥ J 8

♦ K 4

♣ K 10 3

♠ J 6

♥ A Q 10 5 3

♦ 10 9 5 2

♣ 5 2



♠ 9 5

♥ 9 7 4 2

♦ A Q 8 6 3

♣ 6 4

♠ Q 10 3

♥ K 6

♦ J 7

♣ A Q J 9 8 7

West	North	East	South
	1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

See how disastrous the ♦ A underlead is ? Declarer scores his ♦ K (or dummy's ♦ J), then draws trumps and runs clubs. 13 tricks made.

On the recommended ♥ lead (the other unbid suit) dummy plays low and West wins the ♥ Q. He cashes the ♥ A, and then switches to a ♦ (crucially, through the ♦ K). Declarer has a no-win guess. Say he plays low, hoping West has lead away from the ♦ Q. No good - East wins the ♦ Q and cashes the ♦ A. Down one - a four trick difference.

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

♠ Q 9 7

♥ 10 5

♦ A 10 8 6 5

♣ K Q J

♠ K 10 4 2

♥ A Q J 7

♦ Q 3

♣ 8 6 3



♠ A J 6 5 3

♥ K 8 6

♦ K 9

♣ A 5 2

♠ 8

♥ 9 4 3 2

♦ J 7 4 2

♣ 10 9 7 4

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

Let us say that South had found the unwise choice of his singleton trump against this 4 ♠ contract. This finesses North out of his ♠ Q. Dummy plays low, and North may well play his ♠ 9. A grateful declarer wins his ♠ J, then cashes the ♠ AK, felling the ♠ Q. He follows with the four top ♥s, discarding a ♣ loser from hand, and knocks out the ♦ A. All he loses is that ♦ A, plus the second round of clubs. A very relaxed game made plus one.

It is an entirely different story, when the top-of-the-albeit-lowest sequence. Declarer may duck South's ♣ 10, but it makes no difference. He wins the 2nd ♣ with the ♣ A, and, playing the trumps in the percentage fashion (especially because he has chances of disposing a club on a long heart, before losing a trump), cashes the ♠ K and crosses to the ♠ A.

Disappointed to see South discard on the second trump, declarer then sets to work on the hearts. He will still survive if North has (at least) three hearts, because he can throw his club loser on the fourth heart.

However North trumps the third heart. Bad news for declarer. North cashes a top club, leads over to his partner's ♦ A, and that means down one.

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

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

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

1. 15-16 balanced
2. Knowing the partnership have the values for game; plus an eight-card heart fit.

East did not have a particularly appealing lead. Put off ♠s (don't underlead an ace), ♥s (trumps), and ♦ (South opened the suit), only ♣ remained. Leading from a Doubleton, East correctly selected the top of the two cards.

Dummy played low on East's ♣ 9 lead and West won the ♣ Q. At trick two, West cashed the ♣ A, noting East followed low. This "high-low" suggested that East held no more clubs, so at Trick three West led a third club.

Bingo ! East trumped the club, and now just one more trick was needed to beat the game. East plonked the ♠ A on the table. Down 1

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

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

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

There is no denying that the ♥ A lead might work well - swap the queen and king of hearts for example. But opening lead strategy is not about one success; it's about coming out on top in the long run. Talking of the long run, a deal is 13 tricks long - and it is often better to play more of a waiting game at the defense.

On ♥ A and a second ♥ lead - to the jack, queen and king - declarer draws trumps, and loses at most two clubs. Game made.

On any other lead, say a low club, declarer is in deep trouble. He wins the ♣ K with the ace, draws trumps and knowing he almost certainly has two hearts to lose, tries a diamond to the queen (in the hope of throwing a club on the ♦ A should the finesse succeed).

No good. South beats the ♦ Q with the ♦ K, returns the ♣ 9 through the ♣ J, enabling North to score the ♣ Q10, and then a passive diamond exit leaves declarer having to broach hearts himself. He runs the ♥ J to North's ♥ A, but a heart return ensure a third round trick for South. Down two.

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A J 7 5
♥ A K 7 5
♦ Q 10 5
♣ 5 3

♠ 6 4
♥ 10 9 6
♦ A 9 4
♣ J 10 8 6 4



♠ K 8 2
♥ J 4 3 2
♦ 7 6
♣ A 9 7 2

♠ Q 10 9 3
♥ Q 8
♦ K J 8 3 2
♣ K Q

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

1. Stayman- a request for four-card majors
2. Four Hearts, and possibly also four spades
3. Must include four spades (otherwise why bid Stayman ?)
4. Reverts to the known eight-card-major fit - as South has effectively asked him to do

East leads the 7 ♦ - top-from-two - partly because he has no better alternative; but partly because the appeal of the doubleton lead grows when holding a high trump. He expects to win the 1st or 2nd round of trumps with this card, and hopes to be in a position to manoeuvre a 3rd-round ♦ ruff. Declarer plays low from dummy, and the spotlight turns to West. If East has led a singleton ♦, then West must win the Ace and immediately return a second ♦ for his partner to ruff. However, if East has led top-from-2, then West must withhold his Ace; when East wins his hoped-for trump, he can then lead his second ♦; now West can win his Ace and lead a third ♦ for East to ruff. Can West work out whether East has led from a singleton or a doubleton? Yes. Think about declarer's shape. He advertised 4-4 in the majors during the auction. If East holds a singleton ♦, then declarer has 4. This is not possible, for it would leave him with just 1 ♣ (not a 1 NT opener). Therefore East must have two (or three) ♦s. West withholds his ♦ A at Trick 1 (key play), so declarer wins, crosses to the ♥ Q, and runs the ♠ Q, hoping West holds the ♠ K. No good - East wins the ♠ K and leads 2nd ♦ (High-low), so West wins ♦ A and leads another ♦ for West to ruff. Wins ♣ A - down one.

Board 10

East Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 10 6
♥ A Q 9 3 2
♦ 3 2
♣ 9 7 6

♠ A Q 7 3
♥ J 6 5
♦ A Q 10 7 6
♣ 10



♠ K 9 5 4
♥ 10 8 7
♦ J
♣ A K Q J 8

♠ 8 2
♥ K 4
♦ K 9 8 5 4
♣ 5 4 3 2

West	North	East	South
		1 ♣	Pass
1 ♦	1 ♥ ¹	1 ♠	Pass
4 ♠	All pass		

1. Not a great hand, but the bid is not made in the hope of declaring a contract, rather of attracting a lead.

South leads the ♥ K (partners suit and top-from-2) and follows with a second ♥. North wins with the ♥ Q and knowing the ♥ A is cashing (South would lead low from Kxx) confidently tables it. South discards a low (discouraging) ♣, and North must decide how to win the one more trick to beat the game.

There is clearly no trick to be had from ♦s; nor clubs (partner discouraged). The only hope lies in Trumps. If there is a natural trump trick, then anything will do. But what about South holding the not-so-meagre ♠ 9? A fourth ♥ will see him ruff with that card, force out a top card from dummy, and so promote North's holding into a trick.

North led a 4th ♥ (key play). In fact South did not hold the ♠ 9; rather the ♠ 8; but it was unnatural for declarer to ruff with the ♠ 9 (the only winning play - but needing North to have both the ♠ J and ♠ 10 to be successful). Instead he discarded. South ruffed with the ♠ 8, and, after dummy overruffed with the ♠ Q, North had to score a third-round trump trick. Down one.

Board 11

South Deals
None Vul

♠ 6 4 3

♥ A K 7 5 3 2

♦ 8 6

♣ J 5

♠ A J 5 2

♥ 8 4

♦ 10 4

♣ 9 8 7 4 2



♠ Q 10 9

♥ Q 6

♦ Q 9 5 3 2

♣ K 6 3

♠ K 8 7

♥ J 10 9

♦ A K J 7

♣ A Q 10

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

1. 17-18 balanced
2. Knowing of the eight-card ♥ fit (South must have two+ cards for his balanced bid) and the values for game (25+ points)

East held no attractive lead - no singleton, no top-of-a-sequence, no partners bid suit. He tried the dangerous, but potentially lucrative, top-of-an interior sequence lead. His ♠ 10 won the trick as dummy (placing the ace with West) played low, as did West (even if declarer held the queen, West was keen to retain his ace-jack over dummy's king).

East followed with the ♠ Q (top of 2 remaining) - he would follow low next with Q109x), also winning! then over to dummy's ♠ K and West's ♠ A. Now came the Coup de Grace;

Seeing no trick outside Trumps, West led the "lucky thirteenth" spade. If declarer trumped high, East would discard, and score his queen of trumps later. In practice declarer discarded, and East trumped with the queen. A perfect Trump promotion - down one.,

Board 12

West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K 9

♥ A 10 9

♦ 8 7 6 3

♣ A 9 3 2

♠ A Q 10 6 4

♥ K

♦ 9 4 2

♣ K 10 8 4



♠ J 8 5 3 2

♥ Q J 6 4

♦ K 10 5

♣ Q

♠ 7

♥ 8 7 5 3 2

♦ A Q J

♣ J 7 6 5

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♠	All pass

North immediately eliminated three suits for his lead to 3 ♠.; ♥s and ♣s because he held the ace; and trumps. Trump leads can be wise - on passive grounds - but not when away from, say Kx or Qxx. A lead from such a holding is likely to sacrifice the honour.

By a process of elimination, ♦s was the only plausible lead. High for Hate - North leads ♦ 7. Dummy plays low, and South wins the trick as cheaply as possible, ie. with the ♦ J. This is so that North can infer that South also holds the ♦ Q and ♦ A. South wisely refrains from cashing the ♦ A (and promoting dummy's ♦ K); instead he switches to the ♥ 7 (lead "high for hate").

North beats declarer's ♥ K with the ♥ A, cashes the ♣ A, then follows with a second ♦. South beats dummy's ♦ 10 with the ♦ Q, cashes the ♦ A, and North still has the guarded king of Trumps. Down two.

An ace underlead by North at Trick 1 would have been disastrous.