

100914 OpeningOneOfASuit Workshop

Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

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

NS 3♠; NS 2N; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; NS 2♣; Par +140

West	North	East	South
	1♦ ¹	Pass	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣ ²
Pass	2N	All pass	

1. Opens the non-touching three-suiter in the suit immediately below the singleton.
2. Fourth suit forcing. As the bid has been made at the two level it's only forcing for one round.
3. Clubs stopped and a minimum hand. With similar shape and some extras North would jump to 3N.

When North rebids 1♠ it shows either 5+diamonds and 4+spades or, as here, a three-suited hand with a singleton heart. South's hand is of invitational strength so he respects North showing a limited hand and doesn't press on to game.

East's choice of lead will probably be between a heart and a club, the former giving declarer an immediate decision of some discomfort. Rising with ♥ K works well and declarer can count seven tricks now (four spades, a heart and two top clubs). The best chance of fulfilling the contract is to take the club finesse. This loses but the defence has to be sharp to prevail. One way is for East to lead another heart. West wins, unblocks the second heart trick and switches to a diamond. East wins and cashes the ace of hearts and reverts to diamonds. Now the defence has three hearts, two diamonds and a club for one off. If the defence fails to unblock the hearts or plays a black card at any point declarer will come through.

Back to trick one : on a club lead from East (not always a bad idea to lead the fourth suit but here a potential disaster) declarer can call for ♣ 10, which holds. With ♣ Q dropping in three rounds there are eight tricks for North/South and the possibility of at least nine tricks.

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Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

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

EW 6♠; EW 6♦; EW 6♣; EW 1N; EW 1♥; Par -980

West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
2♣ ¹	Pass	3♣ ²	Pass
4♦ ³	Pass	4♠ ⁴	Pass
4N ⁵	Pass	5♠ ⁶	Pass
6♦	All pass		

1. Temporising bid (see text).
2. 4card support.
3. Slam try.
4. Ace-showing cue bid.
5. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
6. Two of the five "aces" plus the queen of trumps.

East has the non-touching three suiter this time and again opens in the suit immediately below the singleton. West has a difficult bid on the first round and marks time with a 2♣ call. This bid is 100% forcing and West knows that he will support partner's diamonds strongly on the next round of bidding. Any confusion this bid sends to partner is only temporary (and, as a general point, it's better to lie about minors than majors).

Once East shows the ace of spades, a suit where West has neither first nor second round control, West can launch into RKCB. With diamonds agreed this bid is perfectly safe as a response showing only one ace cannot take the bidding past the game level.

There is nothing to the play. Generally it is right to lead aggressively against 6of-a-suit contracts so here a heart lead would be in order. Further, with East not cue bidding hearts, there is a small inference that hearts offers the defence its best chance. North wins ♥ A and that's the lot. Twelve tricks made. Any other lead will allow East to discard the heart loser on a long spade or club winner.

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Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

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

NS 6♠; NS 6♦; NS 6♣; NS 2N; NS 1♥; Par +980

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♣ ¹	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	2 ♥ ²	Pass	3 ♣ ³
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣ ⁴
Pass	4 ♦ ⁴	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	4 N ⁵	Pass	5 ♦ ⁶
Pass	6 ♠	All pass	

1. Bids the lower of two four card suits (the rule applies to responder too).
2. Fourth suit forcing. Game invitational or better.
3. Continues to bid out the shape (see text).
4. Ace-showing cue bid.
5. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
6. 0 or 3 "aces", clearly 3 as South has already promised at least one when cue bidding in clubs.

Generally when the bidding starts at the one level and the opener rebids a second suit, the first suit is at least five cards long. The only exceptions are when the openings are 1♥ or 1♦ in the auctions 1♥ - 2♣; 2♦ and 1♦ - 1♠; 2♣ where the opener can be 4441♣ and 1♠444 respectively. When South later bids 3♣ his shape is known to be a probable 5143 (just possibly 6043 or 5053). North bids 3♠ which is forcing to game because fourth suit forcing has been used earlier. If North wanted to invite game he could have bid 2♠ (mild invite) or jumped to 3♠ (strong invite) on the second round of bidding. When North doesn't "hear" South bidding 4♥ he knows that the partnership has a heart loser so will not take the partnership past the six level at the very most. The 4♠ bid has, by a negative implication, been very revealing. Although North has no control in hearts he can use RKC because South's bidding has shown the heart control. There cannot be two heart losers.

Again there is nothing to the play. If the defence does not lead the indicated heart thirteen tricks will be taken.

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Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

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

EW 5♠; EW 5♥; EW 4N; EW 3♣; EW 1♦; Par -650

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

1. Opens the lower of two four card suits.
2. Limit raise showing 10-12 with at least four trumps.

The fit is very quickly established and West has something in reserve so confidently bids game.

Let's count the potential losers from West's hands - none in spades, perhaps one or two in hearts, two in diamonds and one club. That's five possible losers. We can ruff one diamond in dummy and shall have to hope that there is only one trump loser at most. Of course we might not lose a heart and the best chance of that happening is to cash the ace and king hoping the queen drops doubleton. We try that but there's no joy (*yes, on the lie of the cards, cashing ♥ A and running ♥ J would have worked, ♥ 10 being pinned*). We abandon trumps and play four rounds of spades throwing a diamond from dummy. If South mistakenly ruffs the fourth spade we'll still have two trumps in dummy to deal with *both* diamond losers. South refuses to ruff. We ruff a diamond but cannot easily return to hand. We play a low club ... but South is awake and rises with ♣ Q (how naughty to disobey the "second hand low" rule!) and draws a third round of trumps. We are held to ten tricks but make our game.

Back to the bidding : Let's say West's bidding is a bit loose but that East's approach is technically sound. Now the auction could be 1 ♠ - 2 ♣; 2N (15-17, West gets that bit right) - 3N (East "knows" West doesn't have four hearts - failure to open 1 ♥ or rebid 2 ♥). This contract makes but the contract is inferior and the heart fit is lost.

Another unsound auction : 1 ♠ - 2 ♣; 2 ♥ ("I'm just bidding my suits") - 3 ♥; 4 ♥. East plays West for 5spades and 4hearts but decides on playing the 4-4 fit because the presumed 5-3 fit in spades may provide useful discards. The right spot but West is riding his luck.

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Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

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

NS 5♥; NS 3N; NS 3♠; NS 4♦; NS 2♣; Par +650

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

A good natural auction with the higher suit being opened with 5/5shape. At the second turn North shows 5+spades and 4+hearts. South has game invitational values, doesn't yet know of an eight card fit in hearts and has good cover in clubs so bids 2N, not forcing. North rebids the second suit to show an extra card there and South can now raise North to the 5-3 fit heart game. *[Some partnerships might play 3♥ as non-forcing in which case North, whose cards are all beneficially in the long suits, might jump to 4♥ instead].*

Knowing North has at most three cards in the minors East might try to "cash out" some minor suit winners. East leads ♦ A on which West plays ♦ 4 (if low is discouraging) or ♦ 10 (if high is discouraging). Yes, West has ♦ K but doesn't want to set up ♦ Q prematurely. East switches to a club but declarer rises with the ace and takes stock. There are two unavoidable diamond losers but eleven tricks are possible. There are hopefully no heart losers and it might be possible to ruff two spades in dummy. If the spades are 4-3 ♠ 7 will become a winner. So cash ♥ K, spade to ♠ A, spade ruff, club ruff, spade ruff, club ruff. All going well so far. Two rounds of trumps and we're relieved they break 3-2. Three spade winners, two spade ruffs, five trumps and a club. Eleven tricks. 4♥ made with an overtrick.

That's a matchpoint line - playing for the maximum in a standard contract. If the trumps break 4-1 the roof will fall in. Playing teams or rubber bridge we're more likely to ruff just one spade, draw trumps and hope spades are 4-3. Then we'll make the contract.

Back to the bidding with an unsound North. After 1♥ - 2♦; 2♠ ("I'm just bidding my suits"), North shows a good (16)17+ (reversing, going above the 2♥ barrier) and South may search for a no-play slam. Here North's bidding suggest the values he's got plus, say, ♦ K.

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Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

EW 2♥; EW 3♣; NS 1N; NS 1♠; EW 1♦; Par -110

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

A simple auction. East holds a touching three-suiter and opens the middle suit, here diamonds. West bids his major and East shows his second suit. This usually shows 5+diamonds and 4+clubs but can be, as above, 1♠444. East may have a better hand than the one held but West cannot believe game possible so sensible passes 2♣, happy to have found a fit.

Declarer should make eight or nine tricks (losing one spade, one/two hearts, a diamond and a club). East's task is made much easier if South leads ♥ 8 (top of a sequence/rubbish) or ♥ 7 (second from rubbish/MiddleUpDown). South will view such a lead as passive but it's anything but that for North as it prevents ♥ J from becoming a potential winner.

Back to the bidding : what about opening 1♣ with East's hand? After all surely if we start at the lowest level we'll never miss a fit. Well to some extent that statement is true but after 1♣ - 1♠ what can East rebid? Bidding 1N shows 15-16, 2♦/2♥ promises (16)17+ with 5+clubs and 4+second suit. Although a despairing 2♣ bid, promising at least five clubs, will work here, it's hideous.

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Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 5♥; NS 3N; NS 3♠; NS 2♣; Par +650

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

1. Unattractive to rebid such a poor suit but South has no other option. 2♠ would be a reverse, a bid above the barrier of 2♥ promising (16)17+ points.

2♥ doesn't promise more than five hearts (even if playing five card majors) but North now knows of the eight card fit and jumps to game. As 2♥ denies extra values North has no thoughts of slam.

West will lead ♣ K, top of a sequence. Declarer makes a plan. There are no losers in the black suits but there are could be two losers in each of the red suits : ♥ K and ♥ 10; plus ♦ A and ♦ J. One diamond loser can be ruffed in dummy and if the trumps break 3-2 there only be one loser there too. We might make eleven tricks then. We win the club lead and play ♦ K. East wins and switches to the singleton spade. We win in hand and take a heart finesse. It loses and another trump comes back. We win in dummy, noting the 3-2 break. ruff a club, ruff a diamond, ruff another club, draw the trump and claim a good +650.

Back to the bidding with, this time, an unsound South who decides that strength is more important than length. He'll open the bidding in spades and rebid the hearts ("all natural bidding", he'll say). So now we have 1♠ - 2♣; 2♥ - 4♠. North is sensible and "knows" South has at least five spades from the bidding and leaps to the eight-card-fit game. The spade game has no chance of making, partly because of the bad break in trumps. The fault though lies in playing in a 4-3 fit rather than the 5-3 fit that's available. This South will never know why North didn't bid 4♥.

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Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

EW 6♣; EW 5N; EW 5♠; EW 5♥; EW 4♦; Par -920

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
2 N ¹	Pass	4 ♣ ²	Pass
4 ♦ ³	Pass	4 ♥ ³	Pass
4 N ⁴	Pass	5 ♥ ⁵	Pass
6 ♣	All pass		

1. 17-18, balanced. Denies 4hearts but doesn't deny 4spades.
2. Club support, slam try.
3. Ace-showing cue bid.
4. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
5. 2 of the 5 "aces" without the queen of trumps.

North, say, leads ♦ 10 (top of a sequence) and declarer goes through the usual process of counting potential losers. Here, it's easier to see things from the perspective of the East hand. There are no spade nor diamond losers. In fact each suit provides three winners when only two are needed. That means that these two surplus winners can be used to discard hearts from the East hand. The heart suit had three possible losers but we've now dealt with two of them and the third one can be ruffed in dummy. So, outside the trump suit we have no losers. In the club suit we could lose to ♣ K and ♣ J. The best way to play the suit is to take two finesses : run ♣ 9. That loses but when we later try to run ♣ Q the king pops up. More or less, provided the club honours are split (i.e. one in each of the defenders' hands) or both are with North, we'll make the contract. An excellent +920.

If the contract is played in the inferior 6N the club suit should be played in the same way to hope to take three winners there. With the black suits producing six winners, three winners are needed from the heart suit. The best chance is to hope North has ♥ Q so run ♥ J (or play a heart to ♥ 10). The luck is out and the slam fails.

We generally bid four card suits up the line so that we never miss a fit. Here if West were to begin with 1 ♠ the auction might be a little murky. e.g 1 ♠ - 2 ♥; 3N (18 count) - 4 ♣ where the last bid "ought" to be natural but could be a cue bid agreeing spades. If responder has, say, a thirteen count with 5hearts and 4spades plus ♣ A then 4 ♣ as such a cue would be the desired bid.