

# Play & Learn Nov 2025

## Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

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

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 ♥	Pass
3 ♦	Pass	4 ♦	Pass
4 NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	5 ♦ <sup>2</sup>	Pass
6 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Blackwood

2. One Ace

## Bidding

West is too good for a limit raise. Either 2 ♦ or jump shift to 3 ♦ showing 16+ - a slam try and forcing to Game at least.

## Lead

♠ 7 (♣ 10 equally good) - avoid leading a singleton trump. On this deal a trump lead would be disaster!

## Play

Making 12 tricks depends on the play of the ♥ suit. Lead the ♥ J and tempt North to cover. North needs to play low smoothly. If they do then West's percentage play (only just!) is to play for the drop (8 ever - 9 never). So Play the ♥ A and ♥ K and sorry, one off!

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## Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

		♠ J 7 6	
		♥ K J	
		♦ J 6 3	
		♣ K J 10 9 4	
♠ K 9			♠ A Q 5
♥ 5 2			♥ A 9 8 7 6
♦ K 9 8 7 2			♦ A Q 10 4
♣ A 7 6 2			♣ 8
		♠ 10 8 4 3 2	
		♥ Q 10 4 3	
		♦ 5	
		♣ Q 5 3	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♥	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	4 ♦	Pass
5 ♣ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	6 ♦	All pass
1. Cue bid			

## Bidding

In this sequence the raise to 4 ♦ - because it's a minor suit - is better used as a forcing bid, not a limit bid. Because you have gone past 3 NT then, by inference, you want to explore a slam. West only has 10 points but feels the seven loser hand is worth a push so cue bids 5 ♣. A cue bid of 4 ♠ is also a possibility if you are reluctant to go past 4 NT (i.e. allow partner to ask for Aces).

## Lead

♠ 6 - generally speaking, an attacking lead is advised against a suit slam. However, North has 10 points and is worried that partner will have very little in high cards - so leads a passive ♠

## Play

I like to count winners first when declaring a contract. Then I look at losers....

3 spades + 1 heart + 5 diamonds + 1 club = 10 tricks. So I can see that ruffing away two club losers will bring the total to twelve. So, win the spade lead in dummy (you might need the ♠ K as an entry in a few tricks time!). As you just need two ruffs then you can afford to play 2 top ♦s. So play ♦ A and ♦ Q (because you don't want to ruff with those high cards!). Then ♣ A, ♣ ruff ♠ back to the ♠ K and ♣ ruff again. Now, how to get back to hand to draw the last ♦? Play the last ♠ and discard a ♥. Then ♥ A and ♥ ruff and ♦ K to draw the remaining trump.

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## **Board 3**

South Deals

E-W Vul

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

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

## **Bidding**

North makes a limit raise on the second round. The jump to 3 ♠ shows 10-12 points, three card support (with four card support North would have raised immediately). It also denies four card ♥ support because with four ♥s South would prefer to play in a 4-4 fit rather than 5-3.

When this hand came up at the Kyle club my partner opted to pass 3 ♠. There were only 9 tricks there so I'm not going to argue!

## **Lead**

♦ 7 - fourth highest of the unbid suit.

## **Play**

My partner won the ♦ A then cashed the ♠ A. When the ♠ 10 appeared on his left he made a smart play of ducking a ♠. If the suit had broken 4-1 and he'd played the top two ♠s then he would immediately leave himself open to the the opponents drawing two rounds of ♠s and forcing him to ruff a ♦ with his last trump and therefore lose trump control. So leaving one spade in dummy at that stage guards against that.



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**Board 5**

North Deals

N-S Vul

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



<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 NT	Pass
2 ♣ <sup>1</sup>	Dbl <sup>2</sup>	2 ♦	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

1. Stayman

2. Lead directing double.

**Bidding**

North doubles the conventional Stayman 2 ♣ to ask partner (if she ends up on lead) to lead a ♣. East could pass the double or say 2 ♦ to deny a four card major. *Perhaps a partnership could have the agreement that in this sequence 2 ♦ shows diamonds and denies a major; redouble shows a good stop in clubs and pass denies a four card major?* East carries on to Game being maximum for his 1 NT opener.

**Lead** ♣ 10 - top of a sequence and no good reason to disregard partner's request for a ♣ lead.

**Play**

Declarer ducks ♣s twice in the hope that North has no outside entry to cash her winning ♣s. No luck!

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## **Board 6**

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 ♥ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
2 ♠	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 NT	All pass		
	1. Transfer to Spades		

## **Bidding**

Here I suggest that South does not make a lead directing double. The reason is that you have good cards in the minors so you want partner to make her natural lead.

## **Lead**

♣ 5 - East has fives ♠s so you're not leading that suit! If you had ♣ QJ10x then the ♣ Q would be the correct lead, but without the ♣ 10 lead fourth best against a NT contract.

## **Play**

At NT when you only have one stopper in the suit led you can apply the 'rule' of 7. That says: Deduct the number of cards you and dummy have from seven, and duck that number of times. So here, with six ♣s, the rule says duck once. But bridge is a game that doesn't always obey rules we apply! Here, it's best to duck twice as the cards lie. In general - if you can afford to duck twice then do so.

So after ducking twice you need to keep North off lead as she has a winning ♣ to cash. So you decide to play ♠ A and then finesse the ♠ 10. Success so far! Now play one more top ♠ discarding a ♥. Now leave ♠s alone for now or you'll squeeze yourself! Now you hope that it's South with the ♦ A and play small to the ♦ K. This wins and you now finesse the ♦ 9. Unlucky this time as ♦ J wins. However your luck is restored as all South can do is cash his ♦ A and exit with a ♥.

Easy when I can see all four hands !

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**Board 7**  
South Deals  
Both Vul

			♠ Q 10 7 6 2	
			♥ A 9 8	
			♦ —	
			♣ A Q 7 6 2	
♠ K 8 3				♠ —
♥ K 5				♥ J 10 6 4 3
♦ J 8 7 6 4 3				♦ A K 9 5 2
♣ 10 3				♣ 9 8 5
			♠ A J 9 5 4	
			♥ Q 7 2	
			♦ Q 10	
			♣ K J 4	
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
			1 ♠	
Pass	2 ♣	2 ♦	2 ♠	
Pass	6 ♠	All pass		

## Bidding

This is how the bidding went at the Afton club a couple of weeks ago. North, as responder, can say 2 ♣ to find out more about partner's hand (or splinter with 4 ♦ - this shows a void or singleton, agrees trumps, and shows slam interest). North - with excellent trump support and first round controls in the other three suits is 'the captain' in this auction. So the simple 2 ♠ rebid by South showing a minimum opener means a grand slam looks less likely. So North decides not to beat about the bush any further and goes straight to slam.

## Lead

♦ 6 – a trump lead looks a possibility but for partnership harmony lead their suit!

## Play

Declarer ruffs in dummy and runs the ♠ Q (this is ok because between the two hands there's ♠ J and ♠ 10 behind the Queen).

The ♠ K is the only loser - Declarer can discard two ♥s on the ♣s and can ruff the ♦ losers.

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## Board 8

West Deals

		♠ Q		
		♥ A Q 10 9 8		
		♦ K Q 5 2		
		♣ A 8 7		
♠ A 7 6 5 3				♠ J 10 8
♥ 5				♥ 6 3 2
♦ A 9 8				♦ J
♣ J 10 6 2				♣ K Q 9 5 4 3
		♠ K 9 4 2		
		♥ K J 7 4		
		♦ 10 7 6 4 3		
		♣ —		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	
Pass	4 ♥	All pass		

## Bidding

The void improves the strength of the hand. Add an extra 3 points if you like for the void (when a fit has been found) to assess the strength of your hand. So South has a hand worth 10 points so chooses a limit raise to the three level to show that plus the four card support.

It would also be reasonable to raise straight to 4 ♥ - this direct raise is best used for distributional hands with few points. This hand qualifies but the void arguably makes it too good!

## Lead

♦ J

## Play

West (third hand plays high - in general that is!) wins with the ♦ A and returns the ♦ 9. West, at this stage, is unsure if the lead is a singleton or doubleton (can't be more than a doubleton because West can see the ♦ 10 in dummy). But the ♦ 9 is a McKenney suit preference signal - highest card for highest suit - other than trumps - in this case ♠s. East ruffs and dutifully sends a ♠ back and gets another ruff. One down.