

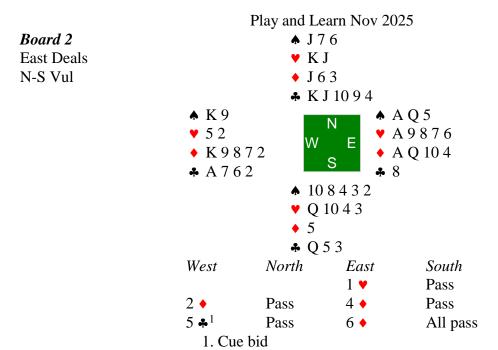
West is too good for a limit raise. Either 2 ◆ or jump shift to 3 ◆ showing 16+ - a slam try and forcing to Game at least.

### 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!



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).

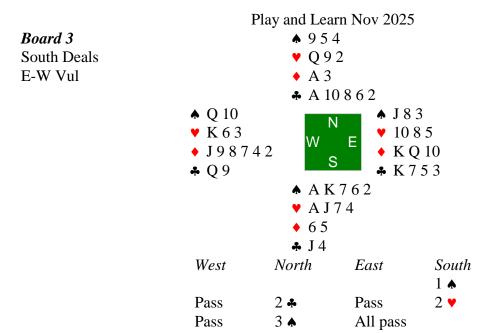
### Lead

♠ 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  $\bigstar$  K as an entry in a few tricks time!). As you you just need two ruffs then you can afford to play 2 top  $\bigstar$ s. So play  $\bigstar$  A and  $\bigstar$  Q (because you don't want to ruff with those high cards!). Then  $\bigstar$  A,  $\bigstar$  ruff  $\bigstar$  back to the  $\bigstar$  K and  $\bigstar$  ruff again. Now, how to get back to hand to draw the last  $\bigstar$ ? Play the last  $\bigstar$  and discard a  $\blacktriangledown$ . Then  $\blacktriangledown$  A and  $\blacktriangledown$  ruff and  $\bigstar$  K to draw the remaining trump.



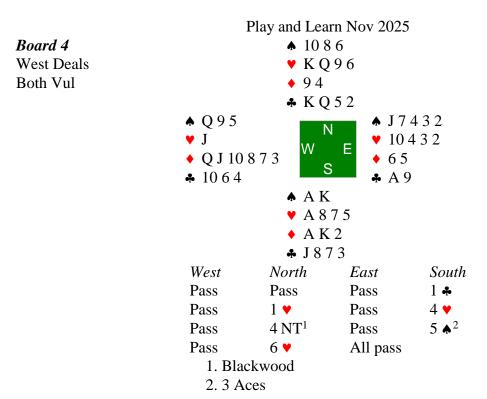
North makes a limit raise on the second round. The jump to 3 ♠ shows 10-12 points, three card support (with four card support North would have raised immediately). It also denies four card v support because with four vs South would prefer to play in a 4-4 fit rather than 5-3. When this hand came up at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



In the above auction North does not raise ♣s immediately. They show their ♥ suit first. South with 19 points raises to game.

North - with a double fit in ♣s and ♥ may be tempted to push on to slam.

South could also open  $1 \checkmark$  (depending on your system). Then North would raise the major immediately to  $3 \checkmark$  showing 10-12 points. I think in this instance South - without knowledge of the double fit - may choose to sign off in  $4 \checkmark$ .

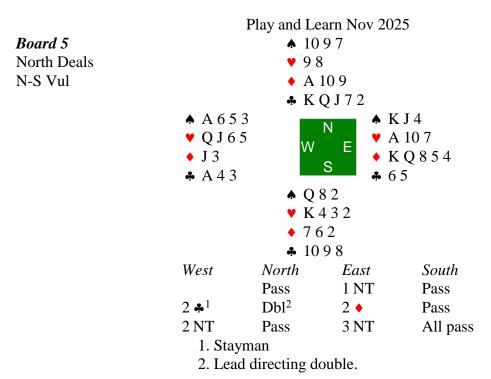
The auction could go much differently if West opens a weak  $2 \bullet$ . But that would be quite racy when vulnerable!

#### Lead

♠ 3 - as a general principle, but certainly not always (because this is bridge!) - when you hold length in the trump suit then lead a long suit if you have one.

## Play

The bad split makes the play VERY difficult to make 12 tricks, because you also need to ruff a diamond (or alternatively a spade) for the twelfth trick. If you made 11 tricks then you played it well.

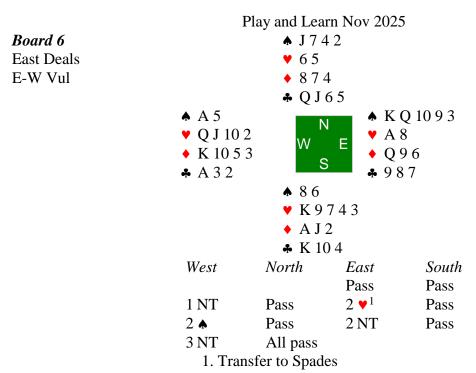


North doubles the conventional Stayman 2 ♣ to ask partner (if she ends up on lead) to lead a ♣. East could pass the double or say 2 ◆ to deny a four card major. Perhaps a partnership could have the agreement that in this sequence 2 ◆ shows diamonds and denies a major; redouble shows a good stop in clubs 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 stwice in the hope that North has no outside entry to cash her winning s. No luck!



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

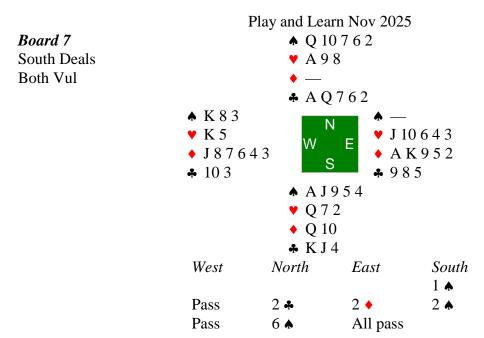
♣ 5 - East has fives ♠s so you're not leading that suit! If you had ♣ QJ10x then the ♣ Q would be the correct lead, but without the ♣ 10 lead fourth best against a NT contract.

### **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!



This is how the bidding went at the Afton club a couple of weeks ago. North, as responder, can say  $2 \clubsuit$  to find out more about partner's hand (or splinter with  $4 \spadesuit$  - 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  $2 \spadesuit$  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.

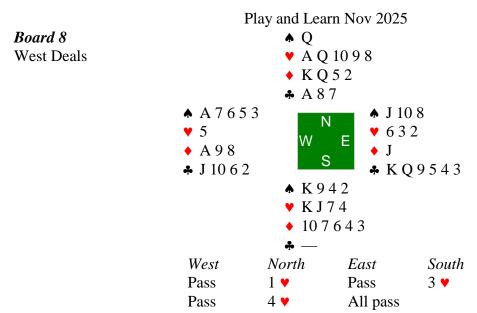
#### Lead

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

### Play

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

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



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 prefernce 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.