

North holds a balanced hand with 21 HCPs.

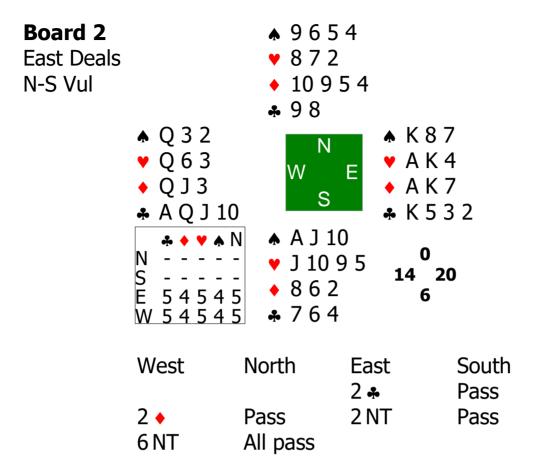
Playing Benji, most partnerships will agree that an opening 2 NT shows a balanced hand with 21-22 points. In a "Three Weak Two's" system, 2 NT opening generally shows 20-22 HCPs.

With 6 HCPs, South puts the partnership's joint HCP count at 27-28, enough to raise to game.

With a balanced hand without a 4-card major, South raises to 3 NT.

East leads  $\blacktriangle$  Q. Declarer takes  $\blacktriangle$  A and tackles clubs, starting with  $\clubsuit$  K.

- ♠ K is an entry in dummy to return to run the clubs if West decides to let ♣ K hold the trick.
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Playing Benji, most partnerships agree opening 2 NT shows balanced 21-22 HCPs. Opening 2 ♣ and following a "Relay" 2 ♦ shows balanced 19-20 HCPs. In a "Three Weak Two's" system, 2 NT opening shows 20-22 HCPs. 2 NT via 2 ♣ shows 23-24 HCPs.

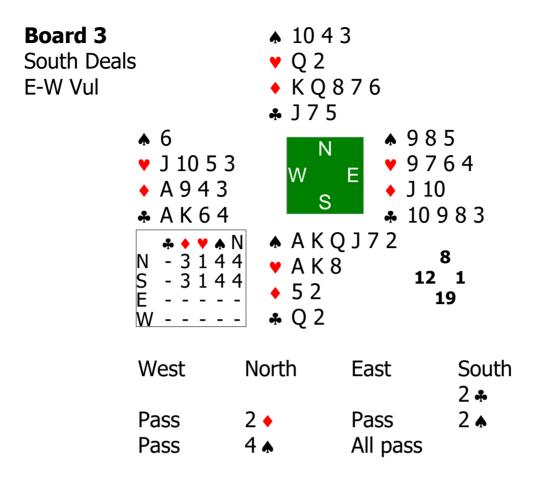
Either way East ends up bidding 2 NT. With a balanced 14 HCPs the partnership has at least 33 points and West bids slam.

Declarer is unlucky: it is going to be hard to avoid two spade losers. There are various tests for South.

If declarer leads \$\lambda\$ 7 from his hand South must play low (Second hand plays low). If declarer leads \$\lambda\$ K from his hand, South must play \$\lambda\$ A (Cover an honour with an honour). If South plays correctly his side will come to two spade tricks.

If South cashes  $\blacktriangle$  A at trick 1 that is the last trick for the defence. South's  $\blacktriangle$  A has a role: to kill East's  $\blacktriangle$  Q.

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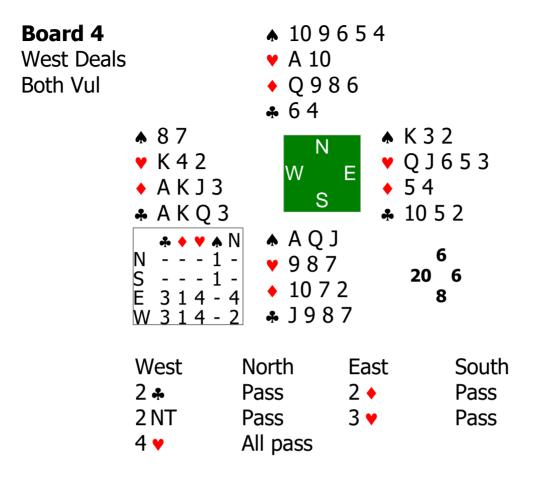
Benji 2 - 2 - 2 + 3 shows a hand with lots of shape and high cards able to win 8 tricks in spades. It is not quite strong enough to open with a game-forcing 2 + 3. It is too good to open 1 + 3, even though there's only 19 HCPs.

In a "Three Weak Two's" system, there are fewer options. 1 \( \) opening should find the game, will a 2 \( \) opening end up going too far?

North's hand has a sure trick in diamonds and good support for partner's spades. 4 ★ shows a few values and some support but no aces or voids and no interest in a slam.

There are ten easy tricks but if West had unwisely gone beyond 4 \( \bigsim \) in the quest for a slam he would have failed.

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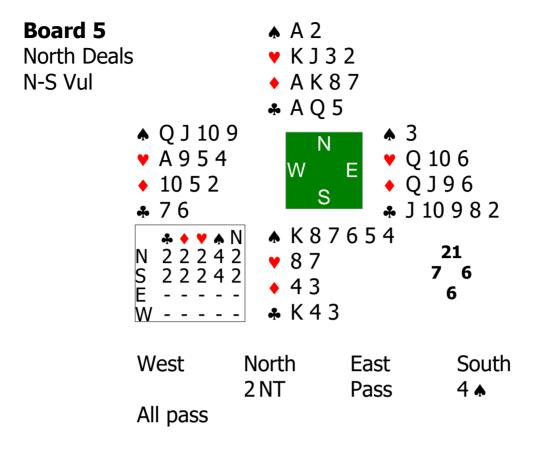
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In a "Three Weak Two's" system, 2 NT opening shows 20-22 HCPs. 2 NT via 2 ♣ shows 23-24 HCPs.

Either way East ends up bidding 2 NT.

With five hearts and 6 HCPs, East bids to game. 3 ♥ forces a choice of 3 NT or 4 ♥. If the pair have agreed to use transfers, 3 ♦ transfers to hearts, over partner's 3 ♥, 3 NT shows the 5-3-3-2 shape, partner chooses the contract and then plays it.

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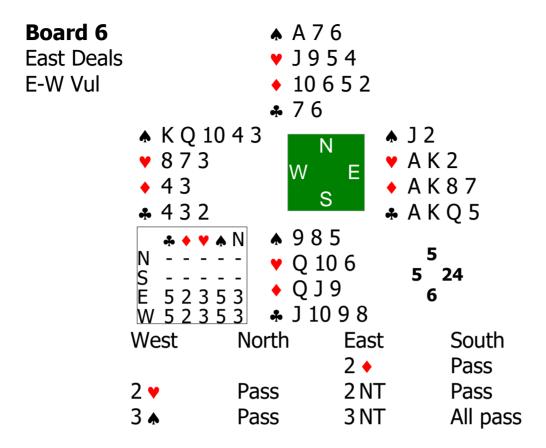
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With 6 HCPs and six spades, the contract is  $4 \clubsuit$ . Even if the pair play transfers, South might choose to bid the  $4 \spadesuit$  directly to protect his two kings from a lead from the right.

It's a nasty trump split, but declarer must clear them to make sure of the club tricks.



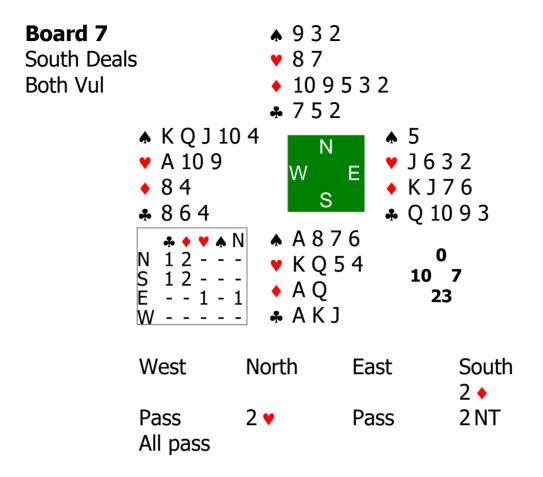
East holds a balanced hand with 24 HCPs.

Playing Benji, most partnerships will agree that an opening 2 ♣-2 NT shows a balanced hand with 23-24 HCPs.

In a "Three Weak Two's" system, 2 & opening generally shows a strong hand. A rebid of 3 NT will show the strength and balance.

The defence can defeat 3 NT by holding up the  $A \clubsuit$ . Declarer is then stuck leading out high cards.

4 ♠ is actually a better contract, but it would be eccentric to bid it!

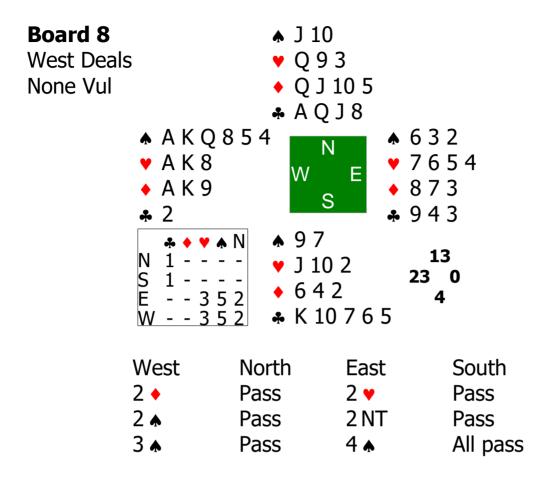


Benji 2 
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2 ♥ is a negative response, showing 0-7 points (or maybe up to nine points in queens and jacks). 2 NT shows 23-24 points.

This is a rare non game forcing sequence. With zero, North passes.

West leads • K. Declarer faces a nightmare because he cannot reach dummy to take finesses. The hand is almost unplayable and declarer is likely to go two or three off.



- 2  $\bullet$  is artificial and 100% forcing, (indeed it is game forcing unless the auction starts 2  $\bullet$  -2  $\vee$  -2 NT).
- 2 ♥ is a negative response, showing 0-7 points (or maybe up to nine points in queens and jacks). 2 ♠ is game forcing. 2 NT is a second negative showing 0-2 HCPs.

North leads ◆ Q. Declarer wins ◆ A and draws trumps in two rounds. He then cashes ♥ A K and concedes a heart.

Defenders may persist in diamonds but declarer wins  $\bullet$  K and overtakes  $\blacktriangle$  4 with  $\blacktriangle$  6 so he can discard a loser on  $\blacktriangledown$  7, which is now a winner. Eleven tricks.