

Probable opening lead by East is top of a sequence A Q.

There are 7 top tricks: ♠ AK, ♥ AKQJ, and ◆ A.

Note that \blacktriangle A is the only entry to dummy to be able to win heart tricks so it is important to win trick one with \blacktriangle K in hand.

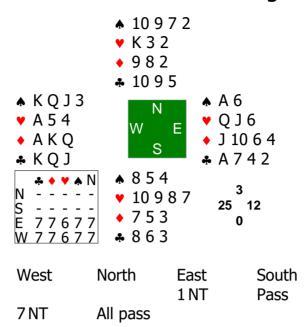
All pass

1 NT

In the heart suit remember to "play high cards from the short side first". Start by cashing ♥ AQ from hand and then cross to dummy with ♠ A and cash ♥ KJ.

Finally, win ◆ A for the seventh trick.





After East's 1 NT opening bid showing a balanced 12-14 HCPs, West knows the partnership has a combined 37-39 HCPs in two balanced hands, hence 7 NT.

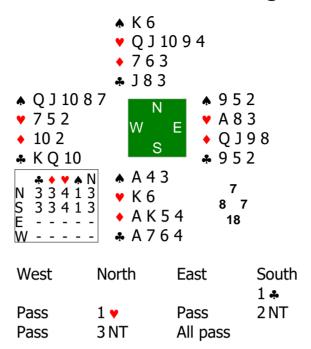
There are 13 top tricks: 4 in spades, 1 in hearts, 4 in diamonds, and 4 in clubs.

South's most likely lead is top of a sequence ♥ 10. There is no need to try the heart finesse because there are already 13 tricks without it.

Win ♥ A, cash ♦ AKQ and ♣ KQJ to unblock those suits. Enter dummy with ♠ A to unblock spades and cash ♦ J and ♣ A, discarding the two small hearts from hand.

Finally, cross to ♠ KQJ in hand to win the remaining tricks.





Probable opening lead by West is top of a sequence A Q.

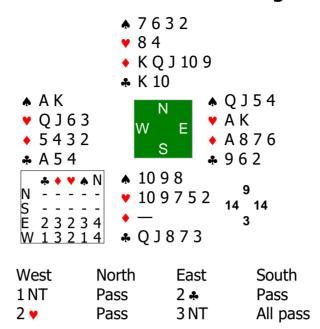
There are only five top tricks: ♠ AK, ♠ AK and ♣ A. The hearts are the best source of additional tricks.

We should start by noticing that \blacktriangle K is the only entry to the hearts in dummy so we must win trick 1 in hand with \blacktriangle A.

The only missing high card in hearts is \checkmark A, so we must drive it out by playing \checkmark K from hand first and continue playing hearts until \checkmark A appears. Later we can use \spadesuit K to return to dummy to cash the remaining heart winners.

♠ AK, ♠ AK, ♣ A and four hearts for a total of nine tricks.





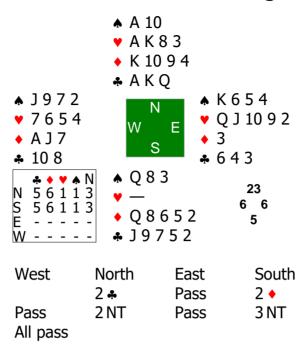
Probable opening lead by North is top of a sequence ◆ K.

On this hand we have ten top tricks: four in each major and both minor suit aces. Can we overcome the blockages in the majors to cash all our tricks?

After winning the first trick in dummy, suppose that we start by cashing dummy's \checkmark AK. This enables us to enter hand with \spadesuit A to cash \checkmark QJ, but now there is no way back to dummy's \spadesuit QJ. With diamonds breaking badly, we would go one down.

The best plan is to win with ◆ A and unblock spades by winning our ♠ AK in hand. We now play a heart to dummy's ♥ A and cash ♠ QJ, followed by ♥ K. We then re-enter hand with ♣ A to cash our remaining heart winners. Making 10 tricks.





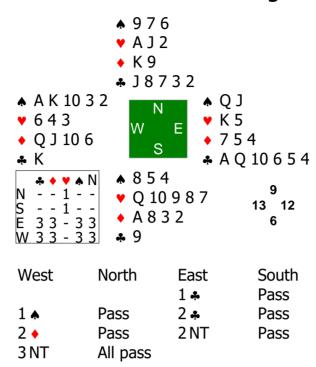
Probable opening lead by East is top of a sequence ♥ Q.

There are 6 top tricks: ♠ A, ♥ AK, and ♣ AKQ. Two tricks from diamonds and ♣ J from dummy might make nine.

Take the first trick with ♥ A and cash ♣ AKQ to unblock the club suit. There is no obvious entry to dummy, so lead ♦ K to try to force out ♦ A. West will probably let ♦ K win the trick, so try ♦ 10. Bad news, West has ♦ A and ♦ J so just play low from dummy. West wins ♦ J and returns hearts to partner.

Duck hearts for two rounds discarding a spade and a club from dummy, then win the next trick discarding another spade from dummy. A diamond lead will now force out \bullet A, then win the last three tricks with \blacktriangle A in hand and \bullet Q and \clubsuit J in dummy.

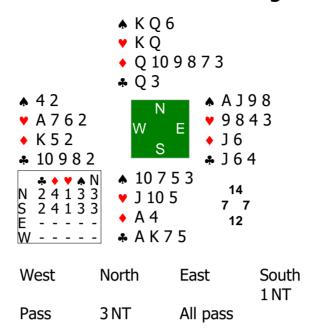




After the ♥ 10 opening lead, it can be seen that ♥ K will be a winner, either at trick one if North plays low, or later if North plays ♥ A. There are a further eight tricks with ♠ AKQJT and ♣ AKQ, but entries could be a problem.

After winning ♥ K, cash ♣ K to unblock the clubs and cross to hand with ♠ Q. Play ♣ AQ from hand, discarding low red cards from dummy, but note that ♣ J has not appeared. There is no outside entry to dummy, so overtake ♠ J with dummy's ♠ K. Both defenders follow to this trick, so cash dummy's remaining spades to make the contract.

Board 7South Deals
Both Vul



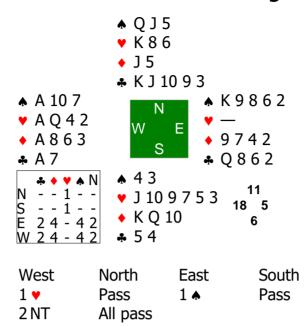
West has two options for a lead: either fourth highest ♥ 2 taken by ♥ K in dummy, or top of a sequence ♣ 10 taken by ♣ Q in dummy to unblock the clubs.

On this hand there are only four top tricks: ♣ AKQ and ◆ A. To this total add one from ♠ KQ and two from ♥ KQJ, so two more tricks will be needed from the diamonds.

The diamond suit looks awkward to handle but it is the only suit which can produce the tricks to make the contract. The best option is to take \bullet A in hand and then lead back towards \bullet Q in dummy. If West plays low then \bullet Q will win the trick and \bullet K can be forced out on the next round, otherwise West takes \bullet K immediately leaving the four diamonds in dummy as winners.

It is possible to make ten tricks on an opening lead of a heart but only nine tricks if the opening lead is a club.

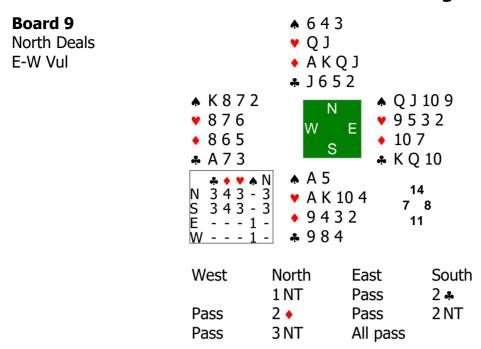




On this hand there are five top tricks: \blacktriangle AK, \blacktriangledown A, \blacktriangle A, and \clubsuit A. The only suit capable of providing three more tricks is spades but dummy does not have an outside entry, so the best play is to win \blacktriangle A in hand on the first round of spades and then give away a trick on the second round.

The opening lead will probably be \clubsuit J, in which case leave \clubsuit Q as a guard in dummy and win \clubsuit A in hand. Now play \spadesuit A followed by \spadesuit 10 and allow the defenders to win the trick.

Now the three remaining spades in dummy are all winners so eight tricks are made.



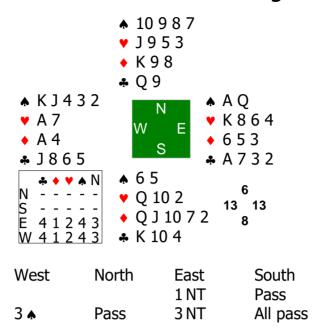
Probable opening lead by East is top of a sequence ♠ Q.

There are 9 top tricks: ♠ A, ♥ AKQJ, and ♦ AKQJ. What could go wrong?

After winning ♠ A at trick 1 note that the only other entry to dummy is a heart. The way to play hearts is to first win ♥ Q in hand (high card from short side first to unblock), then play ♥ J and overtake it with dummy's ♥ K. Now the remaining two hearts in dummy are both winners to be cashed.

Finally, we cash the four winning diamonds for a total of nine tricks.





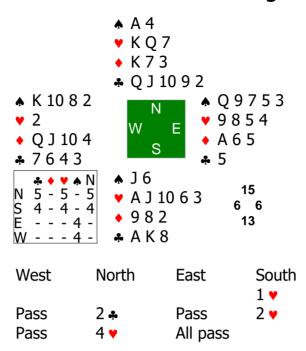
Probable lead by South is top of a sequence • Q.

There are eight top tricks: \blacktriangle AKQJ, \blacktriangledown AK, \blacklozenge A, and \clubsuit A. If the spades break no worse than 4-2, the ninth trick will be the \blacktriangle 2 in dummy. However, take care to play the spades in the right order to avoid blocking the suit.

After winning trick one with ◆ A in dummy, continue by winning ♠ AQ in hand. Now cross to ▼ A in dummy and cash the remaining three spades.

Finally, cash the two remaining winners ♥ K and ♣ A for a total of nine tricks.

Board 11South Deals
None Vul



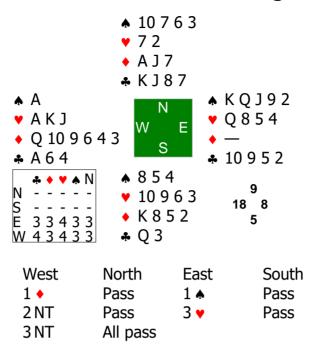
Probable lead by West is top of a sequence ◆ Q.

There are 11 winners: five in hearts, five in clubs, and ♠ A. However, West's ♠ Q lead almost certainly means that East must have ♠ A, so there are three losers in diamonds and one in spades.

Play low on \bullet Q on trick one in case North's \bullet A is a singleton or doubleton, otherwise the first three tricks must be lost. The losing spade in hand can be discarded on dummy's winning clubs.

When drawing trumps, play ▼ KQ from dummy first so that all defender's trumps can be removed if they break 4-1. When playing clubs, play ♣ AK from hand first before crossing to dummy's winners. Ten tricks made.





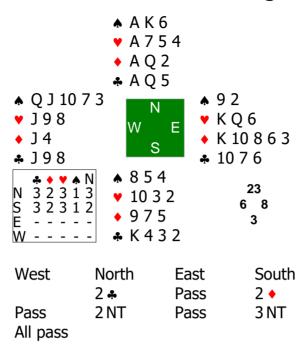
Probable opening lead by North is fourth highest * 7.

There are nine top tricks on this hand: \blacktriangle AKQJ, \blacktriangledown AKQJ and \clubsuit A. However, if we examine the entry situation, we'll see that the only entry to dummy is \blacktriangledown Q, and that reduces the number of top tricks to eight.

The best chance for a ninth trick is to hope either that spades split 4-3, or that \blacktriangle 10 is a doubleton. Therefore, win the first trick with \clubsuit A, cash \spadesuit A to unblock spades, and also cash \blacktriangledown AK.

Next, lead ♥ J from hand and overtake with dummy's ♥ Q. This leaves South's ♥ 10 as a winner, but fortunately the spades do break 4-3 leaving dummy's ♠ 2 as the ninth trick.

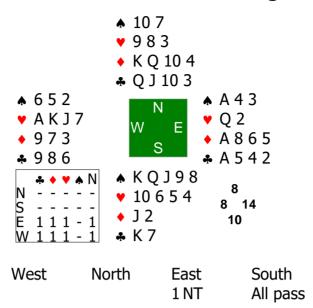
Board 13North Deals
Both Vul



After East's ◆ 6 opening lead, we can count two top tricks in diamonds. To these two tricks may be added ♠ AK, ♥ A and ♣ AKQ, making a total of eight.

Our best chance to make a ninth trick is to find clubs splitting 3-3, but we still need to be careful of entries. After winning the first trick with \bullet Q, cash \clubsuit AQ and then play a third round to dummy's \clubsuit K. Seeing the 3-3 break, we can cash dummy's \clubsuit 4 for our ninth trick.

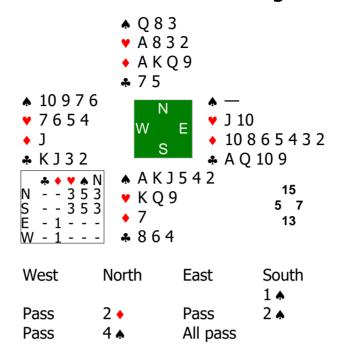




There are 7 top winners in this hand: ♠ A, ♥ AKQJ, ♠ A, and ♣ A.

To avoid blocking the heart suit remember "high cards from the short side first". Play ♥ Q from hand and then ♥ 2 to cash dummy's winners.





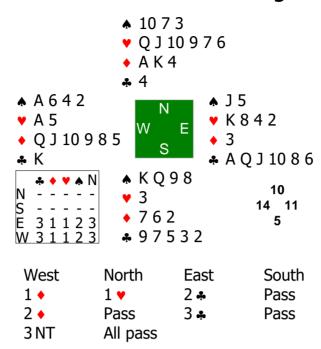
Probable opening lead by West is the singleton ◆ J.

A very fortunate lead for declarer! There now are 12 top tricks in the hand: ▼ AKQ, ◆ AKQ and six trumps. These tricks can be made regardless of the lie of the cards, but only if trumps are drawn first.

Win trick one in dummy and cash dummy's \blacktriangle Q. It doesn't matter that East holds four trumps out because they can be removed with \blacktriangle AKJ in hand, discarding a club from dummy.

Finally cash ♥ KQ and play ♥ 9 to dummy's ♥ A. West plays ♥ JT, so dummy's ♥ 8 and ♦ AKQ are all winners on which the remaining club losers can in hand be discarded to make thirteen tricks!!





Probable lead by North is top of a sequence ♥ Q.

It looks like there are nine top tricks: ♠ A, ♥ AK, and a very probable six clubs.

However, it is important to be careful with entries, noting that ♥ K is the only entry to dummy's winning clubs. Therefore, trick one must be won with ♥ A in hand.

Next, play K to unblock the clubs. When both defenders follow suit, the nine tricks become a certainty. Now cross to K in dummy and play out the clubs from the top to bring the total tricks won to eight.

Finally, cash ♠ A for the ninth trick.