

§2. The Opening Bid of 1NT (and Balanced Responses).

By the end of this chapter you should understand the following terms:

The point count: A method of hand evaluation (A = 4 points, K = 3, Q = 2, J = 1)

Balanced hand: A hand with a suit pattern of 4-3-3-3, 4-4-3-2 or 5-3-3-2

Unbalanced hand: Logically enough, a hand that is not balanced.

Singleton / Void: A holding of only one card in a suit / Holding no cards in a suit.

Rule of 25 points: A partnership holding a combined 25 points should be bidding a game.

An opening bid is the first bid made in an auction other than a Pass. Most opening bids are made at the one-level. In this lesson we look at one of the commonest opening bids in bridge, 1NT.

We use the (Milton Work) point-count which gives us a *rough and ready* guide to hand assessment.

The basic scheme is to assign *high card points* to all the *honour cards* (that is: Aces, Kings, Queens and Jacks) in your hand and to find the total. Then you can say whether you have a hand that is below average, above average or simply average. The scheme is simplicity itself:

Each Ace	4 points
Each King	3 points
Each Queen	2 points
Each Jack	1 point

Simple arithmetic shows that there are *40 points in the pack* and an average hand is worth 10 points.

A rule of thumb says that you should have an above average hand to open the bidding. 12 points is the usually quoted minimum although this is something of a grey area. Apart from the overall high-card strength a factor that may influence the decision to open the bidding is hand "shape", discussed next.

There are two basic hand types in Bridge: *balanced* and *unbalanced*. A balanced hand is one with no *voids*, no *singletons* and with a hand pattern of **4-3-3-3** or **4-4-3-2** (and, usually, we include **5-3-3-2**). A hand of shape other than these is referred to as unbalanced but there are too many to list here. As a general rule balanced hands are ideal to play in No-trumps (since there isn't a desirable trump suit). Certainly a balanced hand facing another balanced hand as a partnership is almost always played in No-trumps. Here are some examples of hand patterns:

These hands are <i>balanced</i> .			These hands are <i>unbalanced</i> .		
Ex 1. ♠ A J 9 3 ♥ K 10 6 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ A J 9 4-3-3-3 shape 13 points	Ex 2. ♠ 8 7 5 2 ♥ Q J 9 3 ♦ 10 8 ♣ K 3 2 4-4-3-2 shape 6 points	Ex 3. ♠ K Q 10 6 4 ♥ A 8 7 ♦ 9 4 ♣ 10 6 4 5-3-3-2 shape 9 points	Ex 4. ♠ None ♥ 5 4 2 ♦ A K Q J 5 3 ♣ Q 8 7 5 6-4-3-0 shape 12 points	Ex 5. ♠ 2 ♥ K Q J 9 3 ♦ 10 9 7 5 3 ♣ Q 9 5-5-2-1 shape 8 points	Ex 6. ♠ 9 8 7 5 ♥ 10 8 4 3 ♦ J ♣ Q 9 3 2 4-4-4-1 shape 3 points

In the system of bidding which we will follow (the **ACOL** system, also known as **Standard English**, very popular in Britain although not abroad) an opening bid of 1NT has a very precise meaning:

Opening 1NT shows 12 to 14 points and a balanced hand.

Of the example hands above, only Example 1 would be suitable for an opening bid of 1NT; Examples 2, 3, 5 and 6 would *Pass* and Example 4 would open 1♦.

Brief Quiz. Which of the hands below is (or are) suitable to open the bidding with 1NT?

Q1. ♠ A J ♥ K 10 9 7 ♦ Q 10 8 4 ♣ K 8 2	Q2. ♠ A Q 9 5 ♥ K J 9 ♦ Q 10 7 ♣ A 8 3	Q3. ♠ K J 7 6 ♥ A Q 10 9 5 ♦ 5 ♣ K 9 3	Q4. ♠ A Q 10 ♥ 9 7 6 3 ♦ 10 9 8 ♣ A J 8	Q5. ♠ 7 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ K J 9 6 4 ♣ A K Q 9	Q6. ♠ A 10 4 ♥ K J 7 ♦ J 10 7 2 ♣ K 9 6
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The answers are at the bottom of the next page.

Responding to an Opening Bid of 1NT.

In practice it is the *partner* of a 1NT bidder (the *responder*) who has to select the final contract. This principle (of adding up the points you can see in front of your face with those announced by partner to determine the worth of the combined hands) is very important and forms the bedrock of bidding.

Now, when you add up the combined values as responder you have to know the **rule of 25**. Experience of the game (since it was invented in the 1920s) shows that a combined partnership holding of 25 points (out of a total of 40, remember) is usually sufficient for a game contract of 3NT. Remember this – it is vital and will be a recurrent theme:

With two balanced hands and 25 or more points between them the right contract is usually 3NT

If, therefore, the responder knows of a minimum of 25 points and two balanced hands he can proceed immediately to 3NT. If responder knows that the combined total is less than 25 then it is usually right to play in a part-score. With a balanced hand this can be achieved by simply Passing (and allowing the hand to be played in 1NT). The only time responder is in a pickle, so to speak, is when he cannot judge the combined worth of the two hands. He may hold 11 or 12 points making the partnership total 23-25 points. There might be enough for game, there might not. In these cases it may be wise to pass the buck with 2NT, allowing opener to make the final decision.

Some examples may make this clear. In each case you are **South**, the *responder* when the *opener* (North) opens 1NT. What do you say?

<p>Ex 7.</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;">West</td><td style="width: 25%;">North</td><td style="width: 25%;">East</td><td style="width: 25%;">South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td><td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td><td style="text-align: center;">?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ A 9 3 ♥ K 10 5 ♦ J 9 8 4 ♣ A J 6</p> <p>Count the points. You have 13 and your partner (North) has 12-14. Hence, between the partnership there are 25-27 points, so you want to be in a <i>game</i>. Since both the North-South hands are <i>balanced</i> the best spot is No-trumps. Bid 3NT; there is no need to hang around to pick the daisies.</p>	N	W E	S	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?	<p>Ex 8.</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;">West</td><td style="width: 25%;">North</td><td style="width: 25%;">East</td><td style="width: 25%;">South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td><td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td><td style="text-align: center;">?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ Q 8 5 4 ♥ Q 8 2 ♦ Q 6 ♣ 10 7 4 3</p> <p>You have a poor hand here, just 6 points. Between you and your partner there are only 18-20 points; your side is likely to be outgunned in the points department. You should Pass 1NT and, should that win the auction, you should not be surprised to find partner failing to make the contract. <i>C'est la vie</i>.</p>	N	W E	S	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?
N																							
W E																							
S																							
West	North	East	South																				
	1NT	Pass	?																				
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	1NT	Pass	?																				
<p>Ex 9.</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;">West</td><td style="width: 25%;">North</td><td style="width: 25%;">East</td><td style="width: 25%;">South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td><td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td><td style="text-align: center;">?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ J 7 6 2 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ Q 5</p> <p>Adding your 10 points to North's 12-14 gives you a combined point count of 22-24. This is close to the 25 points needed to justify bidding a <i>game</i> but not close enough. Since your hand is <i>balanced</i>, and hence suitable for No-trumps, you should Pass, expecting 1NT to make. Unnecessary to bid 2NT.</p>	N	W E	S	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?	<p>Ex 10.</p> <table style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <table style="margin-left: 20px; border: 1px solid black; width: 100%;"> <tr><td style="width: 25%;">West</td><td style="width: 25%;">North</td><td style="width: 25%;">East</td><td style="width: 25%;">South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">1NT</td><td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td><td style="text-align: center;">?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ K 10 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ A 10 7 5 ♣ K 9 8 2</p> <p>Adding up your 11 points to partner's 12-14 gives 23-25. So, you <i>might</i> have enough to make game in 3NT and, then again, you might not. To enlist partner's help you can pass the buck with 2NT, asking North to make the decision. With 14 points he should advance to 3NT, otherwise he'll Pass.</p>	N	W E	S	West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?
N																							
W E																							
S																							
West	North	East	South																				
	1NT	Pass	?																				
N																							
W E																							
S																							
West	North	East	South																				
	1NT	Pass	?																				

The scheme for bidding over your partner's opening bid of 1NT is as follows. With a *balanced* hand of:

10 points or under: **Pass** 11 or 12 points: **2NT** 13 points or more: **3NT**

Notice that (with the exception of when responder raises *invitationally* to 2NT) opener does not bid again. This is because he has described his hand exactly and leaves the decision to his partner, the **boss of the auction**.

The idea of limiting your hand and trusting partner to gauge the contract is crucial to the ACOL system.

Answers to the Quiz on the previous page.					
A1 Yes, suitable. Open 1NT	A2 No, <i>too strong</i> . Open 1♠	A3 No, <i>unbalanced</i> . Open 1♥	A4 No, <i>too weak</i> . Pass.	A5 No, <i>unbalanced</i> . Open 1♦	A6 Yes, suitable. Open 1NT

§2. Quiz on The Opening Bid of 1NT (and Balanced Responses)

In each case you are **South**

1. Calculate how many points there are between you and your partner after he opens 1NT (12-14).
2. Decide whether your combined hands are worth a game or a part-score.
3. What do you respond, assuming that there is no score below the line?

1.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ A Q 10
♥ K J 6
♦ Q 10 5
♣ K 9 7 3

2.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ A 8
♥ 7 5 4
♦ K 10 8 6 4
♣ A K 8

3.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ 10 8 7
♥ 7 5 3
♦ 9 8 3
♣ J 6 5 2

4.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ K J 9 7
♥ A 5 2
♦ 8 3 2
♣ Q 8 6

5.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ K 8 7
♥ K 6 5 3
♦ K 5 2
♣ K 9 4

6.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ 10 8 7
♥ K 9 6
♦ Q 8
♣ A Q 8 6 5

7.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ A Q
♥ A Q 9
♦ A J 9 7 4
♣ 5 3 2

8.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ 3 2
♥ 4 3 2
♦ A 8 7 5
♣ A K Q 2

9.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ 9 5
♥ J 4 2
♦ 10 5 3
♣ A K Q J 10

10.*

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	?	

♠ 9 5
♥ J 4 2
♦ Q 3
♣ A K Q J 10 4

§2. Quiz on The Opening Bid of 1NT (and Balanced Responses)

Answers

1.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A Q 10
♥ K J 6
♦ Q 10 5
♣ K 9 7 3

3NT. The combined point count totals 27-29 points, which is easily enough for a game contract. Both the North and South hands are balanced, which suggests No-trumps. Hence, proceed directly to game. Do not pass Go, do not collect £200. Just do it.

2.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A 8
♥ 7 5 4
♦ K 10 8 6 4
♣ A K 8

3NT. The combined point count is 26-28, which is enough to make game in No-trumps. Your hand is balanced (5-3-3-2), as is North's, so take the bull by the horns and bid 3NT. Bidding Diamonds is simply a waste of time as 5♦ is likely to prove too challenging.

3.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ 10 8 7
♥ 7 5 3
♦ 9 8 3
♣ J 6 5 2

Pass. The combined point count is only 13-15 so this hand belongs to the opponents. Still, they are in the dark and don't know that. You are the only person at the table who knows the true state of affairs. Just look inscrutable and Pass, hoping no-one Doubles.

4.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ K J 9 7
♥ A 5 2
♦ 8 3 2
♣ Q 8 6

Pass. The combined point count is 22-24, not enough for game. There is no point in bidding 2NT (see examples 5 and 6 below). Just look inscrutable and Pass. The opponents won't know you have this hand rather than the wretched Question 3 to the left.

5.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ K 8 7
♥ K 6 5 3
♦ K 5 2
♣ K 9 4

2NT. A combined point count of 24-26, so you might make 3NT. You have to enlist partner's help in making this decision. 2NT is an invitational raise, giving partner another chance. North will duly proceed to 3NT with a maximum and Pass 2NT with a minimum.

6.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ 10 8 7
♥ K 9 6
♦ Q 8
♣ A Q 8 6 5

2NT. A combined point count of 23-25. Therefore (as in Question 5) you might make 3NT. It depends on whether North is maximum or minimum for his 1NT bid. 2NT allows North to make the decision whether to bid game (3NT) or to stay in 2NT. Pass the buck.

7.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A Q
♥ A Q 9
♦ A J 9 7 4
♣ 5 3 2

3NT. You have 17 points here, giving your side 29-31, a healthy slice of the cake. That means game is all but certain but it doesn't mean you have any need to do anything foolish, such as bid a pointless and wholly unnecessary 4NT. Expect some overtricks in 3NT.

8.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ 3 2
♥ 4 3 2
♦ A 8 7 5
♣ A K Q 2

3NT. You may be worried by your feeble Spades (or even the useless Hearts) but you have to trust partner for some cover over there. You can't worry about everything and the point-count (13 facing 12-14) says "bid game". You are balanced (4-4-3-2), so 3NT it is.

9.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ 9 5
♥ J 4 2
♦ 10 5 3
♣ A K Q J 10

2NT. You want to bid Clubs? Frankly, what's the point? Your hand is essentially balanced (5-3-3-2) and minor suits (Clubs and Diamonds) are for the birds. With 11 points you should try for game in No-trumps, passing the buck to your partner with an invitational raise.

10.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ 9 5
♥ J 4 2
♦ Q 3
♣ A K Q J 10 4

3NT. Yes, we know: 6-3-2-2 isn't a balanced hand. However, game in No-trumps may well prove easier than game in Clubs and you simply have to play in game with 13 points facing 12-14. 5♣ is a long way off and *nine tricks are usually easier than eleven.*

§2. Example hands 1 to 4.

Hand 1 Dealer North

♠ 6 4 3
♥ 6 5 3
♦ A K J
♣ 8 7 4 2

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

♠ 9 8 7 2
♥ Q J 10 7 4 2
♦ Q 5
♣ 10

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
3NT by East		Opening lead: ♥Q	

After North Passes as dealer East has an ideal hand to open 1NT. He is balanced (actually 4-4-3-2) with the requisite point-count, 13 in this case. South has nothing to contribute, despite his useful six-card suit, and it is up to West to place the final contract. Holding 14 points and a balanced hand West can deduce that East-West have a combined point-count of 26-28 with two balanced hands. This is sufficient information to bid 3NT, a bid that rapidly ends the auction. South is on lead and selects the ♥Q, leading from his longest suit and selecting the top of a three-card sequence. The play on this one is trivial – East has nine “on top” consisting of three Spades, two Hearts and four Clubs. An easy one to start with.

Hand 2 Dealer East

♠ A Q J 4
♥ 10 8 7
♦ K Q 8
♣ J 9 7

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

♠ K 7 3
♥ A 9
♦ A J 6 4
♣ Q 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
3NT by South		Opening lead: ♥2	

After East Passes as dealer South opens 1NT with his *balanced hand* of 14 points. 4-4-3-2 shapes are certainly balanced and are eminently suitable for No-trumps. North (with 13 points and a completely balanced hand) can deduce that the combined North-South cards add up to 25-27 points so he bids 3NT without stopping to pick the daisies. West has the opening lead and, not having a sequence to lead from selects *the fourth-highest-of-his-longest-and-strongest*; the ♥2. Declarer can count four Spades, four Diamonds and the ♥A “on top”. The only problem is in taking them in the right order by playing the *high cards from the short suit first* and by not “butterflying” from suit to suit.

Hand 3 Dealer South

♠ 10 8 5 3
♥ Q 5 4 2
♦ K Q 5 2
♣ 2

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

♠ Q J 6
♥ 10 9 8 3
♦ A 9 7
♣ 9 8 4

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
3NT by West		Opening lead: ♦2	

After South Passes as dealer West has a minimum opening bid of 1NT with a 4-3-3-3 hand containing 12 points. North has nothing to say and the onus is on East to pick the final contract. With 14 points and a balanced hand (a 5-3-3-2 pattern counts as being balanced) East has a straightforward raise to game. North leads *the fourth-highest-of-his-longest-and-strongest* (the ♦2) and West can count his contract in top tricks. He can see two Spades, two Hearts and five Clubs. However, as ever at this game, he must dance to his opponents’ tune as they play their Diamond winners first. Luckily, there are only four, so declarer makes his game. Note that West mustn’t discard a Club from dummy on the last Diamond.

Hand 4 Dealer West

♠ A 9 7
♥ K J 6
♦ J 4 3
♣ K Q 7 3

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

♠ 10 4 2
♥ 7 5
♦ 10 8 6
♣ A J 10 6 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			
1NT by North		Opening lead: ♥4	

West Passes as dealer (he only has 11 points) and it is North who has an opening bid of 1NT, this time with a maximum for the bid (14 points) and a totally balanced hand (4-3-3-3). East has nothing to say and it’s up to South to place the final contract. Well, with 5 miserable points South knows that his side is outgunned (at best North-South have 19 points, at worst just 17) but East-West don’t know that. South Passes 1NT and hopes for the best. The best duly happens when East leads an approved Heart (*the fourth-highest-of-his-longest-and-strongest*), allowing North to grab the first trick cheaply. Five rapid rounds of Clubs and the ♠A follow, allowing North to score the first seven tricks for his contract.

§2. Example hands 5 to 8.

Hand 5 Dealer North

♠ A K 3
♥ 9 6 4 2
♦ Q J 10 4
♣ A 10

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

♠ Q J 7 4
♥ Q J 7
♦ A K 8
♣ 9 5 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3NT by North		Opening lead: ♣4	

North has a classic 1NT opening bid (a 4-4-3-2 pattern with 14 points) and South an easy raise to game with a balanced 13 points. East leads the ♣4 and an initial *count of tricks* comes to nine as North can see four Spades, four Diamonds and one Club “on top”. So, that’s sufficient tricks for the contract. Problems? Well, only that declarer must take care in cashing his tricks in the correct manner. Both Diamonds and Spades are asymmetric (in that they are split 4-3 between dummy and the closed hand). When playing off these suits it is essential to play the **high cards from the short suit first**. Also, as ever, it is important not to “butterfly” from one suit to another. Best play is to choose a suit and stick to it.

Hand 6 Dealer East

♠ 7 4 2
♥ A 6 5 2
♦ Q 8 3
♣ A K 9

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

♠ A 9
♥ K Q J
♦ 10 6 4 2
♣ Q J 7 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	All Pass	
3NT by South		Opening lead: ♠6	

The bidding should be routine by now – South has a 4-4-3-2 13 count (so opens 1NT) and North has a straightforward raise to game. After the ♠6 lead declarer’s *count of tricks* comes to nine with one Spade, four Hearts and four Clubs. Problems? Yes, in Hearts. When declarer plays off the ♥K Q J he’ll be in the wrong hand to cash the ♥A. These tangled-up suits are a real nuisance and need to be played first, to unravel them. So South takes the ♠A at trick one and cashes the ♥K Q J. Now a Club to the ♣K to reach the table and – while over there – he cashes the remaining ♥A. Having done that declarer takes the ♣A (*play the high cards from the short suit first*) and finally returns to the remaining ♣Q J.

Hand 7 Dealer South

♠ 10 8 5
♥ Q 10 5 4 2
♦ K Q 5
♣ 5 2

♠ A 9 7	N	♠ K 4 2
♥ K J 6	W	♥ A 8 7
♦ J 4 3	E	♦ 10 8 6
♣ K Q 7 3	S	♣ A J 10 6

♠ Q J 6 3
♥ 9 3
♦ A 9 7 2
♣ 9 8 4

West	North	East	South
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass
3NT by West		Opening lead: ♥4	

West opens 1NT and East has a small problem. With 12 points he isn’t quite strong enough to bid 3NT, so passes the buck with 2NT. Holding a maximum 14 points West is happy to accept the invitation and bid game. North leads the ♥4, the *fourth-highest-of-his-longest-and-strongest*. “On top” are two Spades and four Clubs – but what about Hearts? Well, West should see that the lead **guarantees** him three Heart tricks. Declarer can ensure these three tricks by playing low from dummy, allowing the lead to come round to his ♥K J x. After the ♥J scores trick one it’s just a mopping-up operation. West takes four Clubs, two Spades and two more Hearts for nine in all.

Hand 8 Dealer West

♠ A 9 7
♥ 10 8 5 3
♦ J 10 8 7
♣ 5 3

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

♠ K 10 8 6 4
♥ A K
♦ 6 5 3
♣ 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
3NT by East		Opening lead: ♠6	

West Passes as dealer (only 11 points) and it’s East who opens 1NT in third seat. 1NT is vastly superior to a 1♣ opening bid, with a 5-3-3-2 hand containing 14 points. West has enough for a gentle raise to 2NT (after all East-West *may* have 25 points between them) and East is happy to bid the game. South leads a Spade and East has nine tricks with due care and attention. First he must play low from dummy (**not** the Queen) and generate a slow Spade trick for himself. Next he has to untangle three Diamond tricks. So he must cash the ♦A K, cross to a Club on table and take the master ♦Q. Now, having taken his Diamond masters, he runs the rest of his Clubs.