

## §6. Responding to 1NT with Strong Hands.

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

**A Forcing Bid:** A bid that compels your partner to bid again.

**A Game-forcing Bid:** A bid that compels your partnership to keep bidding until game is reached.

**A Major-suit Fit:** An eight-card or nine-card combined holding in Spades or Hearts.

In §2 we looked at *balanced responses* to an opening bid of 1NT. In §4 we looked at *weakness take-outs* of 1NT – ways of responder escaping from 1NT into something better at a low level. In this section we are looking at good responding hands that may be unsuitable for No-trumps.

Note here that the focus is on locating a **major-suit fit**; minor-suit contracts are eschewed by most bridge players. 5♣ and 5♦ are difficult contracts in the main, whereas it's easier to make ten tricks in 4♥ or 4♠ with a decent fit there. So minor-orientated hands are often played in No-trumps but major-orientated ones in 4♥ or 4♠. Note that you should only be interested in locating eight-card fits (or better) in the majors. If you have eight trumps between you then the enemy would have only five and you comfortably outnumber them. However, if your side only has seven trumps the opposition would have six – and that's too close for comfort.

How might you locate a precious eight-card (or better) major-suit fit? Let's do this by example. Note that **jump** bids in response (such as 1NT – 3♠) are **forcing**; in fact, they are **game-forcing**. Opener may not Pass until the partnership has settled in the best game contract. In practice that is going to be either 3NT or four of a major.

Some examples may make this clearer. In each case you are South. What do you respond to 1NT?

<p><b>Ex 1.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; width: 100%;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ A J 7 6 4 ♥ K 9 ♦ Q 9 ♣ K J 8 3</p> <p>You have 14 points, so you must play in a game contract. With five Spades your side <i>may</i> have eight or nine Spades between you and 4♠ may be easier than 3NT. To find out you must bid 3♠, <i>forcing</i> partner to bid again. His choice is simple. With three or more Spades he bids 4♠, otherwise 3NT.</p>	N				W		E			S			West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?	<p><b>Ex 2.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; width: 100%;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 5 2 ♥ A Q 10 8 3 ♦ J 10 8 ♣ A Q 10</p> <p>With 13 points you must play in a game opposite 12-14. True, you are 5-3-3-2 (which argues for a No-trump contract) but still 4♥ may be better; indeed, much better. A jump to 3♥ is the best bid, allowing partner to raise Hearts with three- or four-card support and to retreat to 3NT with only two.</p>	N				W		E			S			West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?
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<p><b>Ex 3.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; width: 100%;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ K Q 10 9 3 ♥ J 4 2 ♦ A K 7 4 ♣ 7</p> <p>With 13 points you must insist on game. With a 5-4-3-1 pattern you are nervous of No-trumps with the singleton Club. Jump to 3♠ to see if you can elicit some support there. If partner bids 3NT (having only a doubleton Spade) then you'll Pass, hoping that North can cover the Club suit.</p>	N				W		E			S			West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?	<p><b>Ex 4.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; width: 100%;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 5 2 ♥ A Q 10 ♦ J 10 8 ♣ A Q 10 8 3</p> <p>This hand, you may note, is Example 2 with the suits transposed. However, we treat minors and majors very differently. 3♣ would be a total waste of time; would you really want partner to raise to 4♣? On this hand type you should just raise to 3NT and keep the opponents in the dark about their lead.</p>	N				W		E			S			West	North	East	South		1NT	Pass	?
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	1NT	Pass	?																																						

Note that a jump to three in a major over 1NT shows precisely a five-card suit and is an attempt to involve partner in the discussion. Opener has just two options – to bid 3NT with a doubleton in the major or to raise to game with three- or four-card support.

Note the contempt with which the minors are treated. No true bridge player is interested very much in whether there is a Club fit or a Diamond fit as such deals are usually played in 3NT. Simply put, the *Equal Opportunities Act* does not apply in this game! Clubs and Diamonds are definitely second-class citizens. As such, bidding sequences such as 1NT – 3♣ and 1NT – 3♦ are exceedingly rare. Once again, it is usually much easier to make nine tricks (in 3NT) than eleven (in five of a minor).

The previous four examples were concerned with bidding hands with *five-card* majors in response to 1NT. What should you do with a *six-card* suit? Well, the first thing you know is that you have at least an eight-card trump fit as a 1NT opener must have at least a doubleton in your suit.

As such, you are much less interested in asking opener's opinion. In fact, with sufficient points for game, you simply bid it, as in these four examples below.

In each case you are South. What do you respond to 1NT?

<p><b>Ex 5.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 9 6 ♥ A K 7 5 3 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ Q 4 2</p> <p>You have 13 points and must play in game opposite 12-14. You have no need to ask partner's opinion on this one as you know of an eight-card (or better) Heart fit. Your best effort is to bid 4♥ immediately, without stopping to pick any daisies on the way. This is not consultative – partner will Pass. Quickly.</p>	N				W		E		S				West	North	East	South	1NT	Pass	?		<p><b>Ex 6.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 8 ♥ Q J 10 9 6 4 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ A K 10</p> <p>As in example 5. You have values for game and a robust six-card trump suit. You also have a 6-3-3-1 pattern, which argues against No-trumps. You should just bid game in Hearts immediately (4♥) and end the auction rapidly. North won't bid again; his opinion on the matter is not being counselled.</p>	N				W		E		S				West	North	East	South	1NT	Pass	?	
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<p><b>Ex 7.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ A K Q 10 7 4 ♥ 8 ♦ K 7 5 3 2 ♣ J</p> <p>A 6-5-1-1 pattern is unusual facing a 1NT opening bid but such things do happen. You must play this on in Spades (ignore those feeble Diamonds) and you must play in game when you have a combined 25+ points. The upshot of these musings is that you should bid a confident 4♠ and await the dummy.</p>	N				W		E		S				West	North	East	South	1NT	Pass	?		<p><b>Ex 8.</b></p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 100px; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td>1NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 9 6 ♥ A 8 ♦ A K 7 5 3 2 ♣ Q 4 2</p> <p>This is Example 5 with the red suits transposed. Should you bid 3♦? Nope – it's a waste of time. You are likely to have too many losers in 5♦ to make that a worthwhile shot but the long Diamonds may well provide a rich <i>source of tricks</i> in No-trumps. Take a pot at 3NT and hope the sun shines.</p>	N				W		E		S				West	North	East	South	1NT	Pass	?	
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1NT	Pass	?																																							

Let's summarise this:

- With sufficient points for game and a **five-card** major you should jump to the three-level in that major. Bids of 3♥ and 3♠ over 1NT are **game-forcing** – partner cannot Pass (not if he wants to remain as your partner!)
- After 1NT – 3♥/3♠ opener only has two options. He may either retreat to 3NT (when holding precisely two cards in partner's major) or he supports to game in 4♥/4♠ (when holding three- or four-card support).
- With sufficient points for game and a **six-card** major (or even a **seven-card** major) you should bid game immediately by jumping to the four-level in your long suit. Bids of 4♥ and 4♠ over 1NT are (effectively) **sign-offs** – opener must Pass as he has already made a *limit bid* and has described his hand.
- With a long minor-suit you should often take a mild gamble by raising 1NT to 3NT rather than waste everybody's time by jumping to 3♣ or 3♦. Since you don't want partner to show support by leaving you dangling in a four-level part-score (4♣ or 4♦) you should act as *boss of the auction* and take a pot at 3NT. For sure, such contracts don't always succeed. However, it is rare for 3NT to fail when 5♣ or 5♦ would have made.

## §6. Quiz on Responding to 1NT with Strong Hands.

In each case you are **South**

What is your best bid after the given auction?

1.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A Q 9 8 6  
♥ 8 5  
♦ A K 6 5  
♣ 4 3

2.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A Q 9 8 6 3  
♥ 8 5  
♦ A K 6 5  
♣ 4

3.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

4.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

5.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

6.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

7.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	?
			1NT

♠ 10 8  
♥ K J 10 5  
♦ A Q 9 5  
♣ Q 10 7

8.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	?
			1NT

♠ 10 8 7  
♥ K J 10 5  
♦ A Q 9 5  
♣ Q 10

9.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	?
			1NT

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

10.

N
W     E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♠	Pass	?
			1NT

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

## §6. Quiz on Responding to 1NT with Strong Hands. Answers

1.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A Q 9 8 6  
♥ 8 5  
♦ A K 6 5  
♣ 4 3

**3♠.** With 13 points you have to play this hand in game and it is possible (even probable) that 4♠ will prove superior to 3NT. 3♠ gives partner the choice of playing in either 3NT or 4♠. If he holds only two Spades and bids 3NT, you will Pass, hoping the sun shines.

2.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

♠ A Q 9 8 6 3  
♥ 8 5  
♦ A K 6 5  
♣ 4

**4♣.** Now (cf Q1), with a fine six-card major suit, you have no need to consult partner on the matter. You know your side has at least eight Spades and you know of game values between the North-South hands. You are *boss of the auction* – exert your authority.

3.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

**3♥.** As above, in Q1, you should enlist partner's help in deciding the best game. True, you are 5-3-3-2, which is a balanced hand. Nonetheless, 4♥ may well prove to be a superior spot to 3NT depending on partner's hand. Best is to consult North on the matter.

4.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

**3NT.** Yes, this is a clone of Q3 with the red suits transposed. However, bidding 3♦ is a waste of time and effort. You can't want to play this one in 5♦, so bidding that suit helps no one but the enemy. Bid 3NT promptly and give nothing away to the player on lead.

5.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

**4♥.** A similar hand to Q4 but one with a six-card major suit. No problem, then. You don't need to find out if partner has some form of Heart support, any doubleton will do. You have the right number of trumps (at least eight between you) and sufficient points (25+).

6.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	?

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

**3NT.** Your Clubs will provide a rich *source of tricks* in No-trumps and 3NT may well make with three tricks from partner's hand. Meanwhile, 5♣ may well have three top losers. Sure, on a bad day East-West may take five quick Spade tricks against 3NT. *C'est la vie.*

7.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1NT
			?

♠ 10 8  
♥ K J 10 5  
♦ A Q 9 5  
♣ Q 10 7

**3NT.** Your partner is asking you a simple question: "Do you have three-card Spade support for me?" Since you don't, you must retreat to 3NT. A feeble Pass of 3♠ would be a double-cross, and is not on the menu. A jump to three-of-a-major, remember, is **game-forcing**.

8.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1NT
			?

♠ 10 8 7  
♥ K J 10 5  
♦ A Q 9 5  
♣ Q 10

**4♣.** Again, your partner is asking, "Do you have three-card Spade support for me?" Since you do, you must support him by raising to 4♣. You should not be deterred by the poor quality of your Spades, that is not the point – it's *trump length* that matters in this game.

9.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1NT
			?

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

**3NT.** Once more, North is asking you, "Do you have three-card Spade support for me?" Since you don't, you must retreat to the haven of 3NT. Don't be seduced by the fact that you have the ♠A K, that is not the point – it's *trump length* that matters in this game.

10.

N		E
W		S

West	North	East	South
Pass	4♠	Pass	1NT
			?

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

**Pass. Or No Bid (!)** Once you have opened 1NT and partner has bid four-of-a-major your task is simply to arrange the dummy as neatly as you can. Sure, it is surprising to have the ♠A K Q, but there will be holes elsewhere. Partner is not seeking your opinion.

## §6. Example hands 1 to 4.

**Hand 1** Dealer North

♠ 7 6 4 ♥ 10 9 8 ♦ J 7 5 3 ♣ A 6 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ J 9 5 ♥ J 7 4 ♦ A K 9 ♣ K J 8 3
N		E						
W		S						
♠ A K Q 10 3 ♥ 5 2 ♦ Q 4 ♣ Q 10 7 4		♠ 8 2 ♥ A K Q 6 3 ♦ 10 8 6 2 ♣ 9 5						

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1NT	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass
4♠ by West		Opening lead: ♥10	

East has a normal 1NT opening bid (4-3-3-3 with 13 points). West has to decide how to respond with enough points for game (13) but an awkward hand pattern (5-2-2-4). The solution is to *jump* to 3♠, forcing opener to choose between 4♠ and 3NT. Passing 3♠, note, is definitely **not** on the menu. East, holding three-card Spade support, should raise to 4♠ rather than bid a selfish 3NT. West has five Spades so the partnership has an eight-card fit. Note that 3NT would have failed as South would have reeled off five Hearts. Against 4♠ North leads the ♥10 from his sequence and declarer ruffs the third round. West **draws trumps** (counting them carefully) and then knocks out the ♣A, setting up three tricks there.

**Hand 2** Dealer East

♠ 9 ♥ K J 10 8 5 ♦ A J 5 3 ♣ A 7 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ 5 3 2 ♥ A 7 4 2 ♦ K Q 9 6 ♣ 6 5
N		E						
W		S						
♠ Q J 10 8 6 ♥ 6 3 ♦ 7 2 ♣ Q 10 9 2		♠ A K 7 4 ♥ Q 9 ♦ 10 8 4 ♣ K J 8 3						

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

South opens 1NT with 13 points and a 4-4-3-2 shape, giving his partner a small responding problem. Well, with 13 points and a five-card Heart suit the solution is to jump to 3♥, hoping South can support the suit. Nope – with only a doubleton Heart South has to retreat to 3NT. North may be nervous of No-trumps with his singleton Spade but he just has to hope that South can cover the suit. West leads the ♠Q (*top-of-a-sequence* – note the disastrous effect of the fourth-highest Spade for the defence!) and South has to **Count and Plan**. He has two Spades, one Diamond and two Clubs on top, so needs four Heart tricks to swell the balance to nine. No problem – he takes the ♠K and plays the ♥Q to set up dummy's Hearts.

**Hand 3** Dealer South

♠ A K J 10 9 7 ♥ J 3 ♦ Q 10 2 ♣ Q 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ 5 4 2 ♥ Q 10 9 6 ♦ A 7 5 4 ♣ 10 9
N		E						
W		S						
♠ 8 3 ♥ 8 5 2 ♦ 9 6 ♣ A K J 7 5 2		♠ Q 6 ♥ A K 7 4 ♦ K J 8 3 ♣ 8 6 4						

West	North	East	South
	4♠	All Pass	1NT
Pass	4♠	All Pass	
4♠ by North		Opening lead: ♣10	

South opens 1NT but his time he catches his partner with a very different hand. North has a robust six-card Spade suit and 13 points. He doesn't need to know whether his partner has Spade support; North knows of an eight-card Spade fit (at minimum). So he just blasts 4♠ at once. South has nothing to say – it's not his show. Note, by the way, how 3NT would have fared had West started with the ♣A... Against 4♠ East leads the ♣10 (*shortage leads* can be a good idea against suit contracts). West plays three rounds and North really ought to ruff the third one "high" (**don't send a boy on a man's errand**). However, **this time** it doesn't matter. Now North **draws trumps** (counting them carefully) and knocks out the ♦A.

**Hand 4** Dealer West

♠ 10 8 6 ♥ 9 7 4 ♦ A 7 ♣ J 9 8 4 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N		E	W		S	♠ 4 ♥ A K Q 8 6 3 ♦ Q 10 6 3 ♣ Q 6
N		E						
W		S						
♠ A 9 7 3 ♥ J 2 ♦ K J 8 ♣ A 7 5 2		♠ K Q J 5 2 ♥ 10 5 ♦ 9 5 4 2 ♣ K 10						

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

A deal in similar vein to Hand 3. West opens 1NT on a 4-4-3-2 hand with 13 points and East has to decide what to respond. Well, with an excellent six-card Heart suit and 13 points there is no point in hanging around to pick the daisies. East should proceed immediately to game by bidding 4♥, West, of course, Passing rapidly. 3NT would have failed on a Club lead, you may note, but 4♥ is safe. South leads the ♠K (*top-of-a-sequence*) and declarer applies a **Count and Plan**. He can see one Spade, six Hearts and a Club and can set up three Diamonds. The first order of the day (having bagged the ♠A) is to **draw trumps** (counting them carefully). Next comes a Diamond to knock out the ♦A and set up three winners there.

## §6. Example hands 5 to 8.

**Hand 5 Dealer North**

♠ J 2  
♥ A 9 7 3  
♦ K J 8  
♣ A 7 5 2

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

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT	All Pass	
3NT by North		Opening lead: ♥5	

North opens 1NT with 13 points and a 4-4-3-2 pattern, giving South a small responding problem. Well, with a five-card Spade suit and 13 points the solution is to respond 3♠, trying to locate a 5-3 or 5-4 fit there. Not this time – North has only ♠J x, so is obliged to return to 3NT. South may not like that with a 5-1-4-3 pattern but there's no better hole to lie in, so 3NT it is. East leads his fourth-highest Heart and North must **Count** and **Plan**. He has five *top tricks* (two Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club) so needs four extras. Spades can easily be set up for four winners by knocking out the ♠A, so declarer takes the ♥K, perforce, and plays a Spade to the ♠J. Then he follows with more Spades until West takes his ♠A.

**Hand 6 Dealer East**

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

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

♠ A K 8 5 3  
♥ 10 4  
♦ 6 4  
♣ 8 6 4 2

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

East opens 1NT as dealer on a 4-4-3-2 hand with 12 points and West has to find a response. With a robust six-card Heart suit and 13 points there is no point in hanging around to admire the view. West simply jumps to 4♥, buying the auction. 3NT would have failed on a Spade lead, you may note, but 4♥ is secure. North leads the ♠Q (top-of-a-sequence) and declarer applies a **Count** and **Plan**. He can see six Hearts and three Diamonds and can set up three Clubs. The first order of the day (having ruffed the third Spade) is to **draw trumps** (taking care to count them). Next comes a Club to knock out the ♣A and set up winners there. West may seem to have more than ten winners but he has to lose three tricks first.

**Hand 7 Dealer South**

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

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

♠ 8 7 2  
♥ J 10 9 7  
♦ A 9  
♣ 10 7 6 2

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

West opens 1NT with 12 points and a 5-3-3-2 shape, a superior opening bid to 1♦. East, holding a five-card Spade suit and 14 points, responds 3♠, trying to locate an eight-card Spade fit; with a 5-4-3-1 hand East is reluctant to play in No-trumps. This time he is successful – West raises to 4♠ as he has three trumps. Not good ones, for sure, but the *number of trumps* is important. 3NT would have failed on a low Heart lead from North – 4♠ by contrast is not a difficult contract. South leads the top-of-a-sequence ♥J, won by dummy's Ace. Declarer **draws trumps** and knocks out the ♦A, making five Spades, a Heart, four Diamonds and the ♣A. That's an overtrick.

**Hand 8 Dealer West**

♠ A 9 5  
♥ A 2  
♦ Q 10 5 2  
♣ Q J 9 5

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

♠ 2  
♥ K Q J 9 6 3  
♦ K J 8  
♣ K 6 4

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

North opens 1NT catching his partner with a 1-6-3-3 hand including a strong six-card Heart suit and 13 points. South doesn't care whether his partner has Heart support; he knows of at least an eight-card Heart fit, so bids 4♥ at once. No daisy-picking here. Note, by the way, how 3NT would have fared had East led a Spade. Against 4♥ West leads the top-of-a-sequence ♠K and declarer applies a **Count** and **Plan**. There are six Heart winners and the ♠A and slow tricks to be set up in the minors. Having taken the ♠A declarer plays **four** rounds of trumps (watch this point!) and then plays a Diamond (or a Club). When he regains the lead declarer forces out the other minor-suit Ace. Now he has enough winners.