

§10. Direct Raises of Opening Bids.

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

- Trump fit:** When a partnership both have length in the same suit, they are said to have a *fit*.
- Trump support:** When you hold length partner's suit and you intend to make that suit trumps.
- Raising partner:** Bidding the same suit partner has bid at a higher level. For example, responding 2♥ to partner's opening bid of 1♥.
- Jump raise:** Raising partner's suit by more than the minimum level. For example, responding 3♥ to partner's opening bid of 1♥.

Much bidding is directed towards finding a *trump fit*; that is finding a suit where you have a definite numerical superiority over the opposition. It is rarely right to declare a trump contract where the enemy have more trumps than you do!

Usually you should seek out *eight-card* (or better) fits – in other words you'd be happy to play in a trump suit where declarer and dummy have eight or more trumps between you, leaving the opponents with at most five. Since an opening bid promises a minimum of four cards in a suit it follows that a raise of that suit (such as 1♥ – 2♥) shows *four-card support*.

There are exceptions to this “rule”, as we shall see.

There is an important point to be made here about the relative importance of *major-suits* and *minor-suits* in bidding (simply because of the scoring where game in a minor needs eleven tricks and game in a major needs only ten). The basic strategy is this: if you can support partner's major suit do so at once. If the opening bid is in a minor then it may well pay to see if there is a *major-suit fit* before supporting partner.

The only question is *how high* to bid. The following scheme offers a rough and ready *limit bid* guide:

Single raise	(eg 1♠ – 2♠)	shows about 6-9 points
Jump raise	(eg 1♣ – 3♣)	shows about 10-12 points.

Note that a *game raise* in a major (such as 1♥ – 4♥) is a different animal. It tends to show a distributional hand with a lot of trumps. For the time being we intend to focus on the *single raise* and the *jump raise* as above.

One other issue has to be discussed here and that is the importance of *distribution*. The point count is a fairly reliable guide when bidding No-trumps. However, it is much less reliable when suit bidding is concerned; *voids* and *singletons* can have a profound effect on the play of a hand. If your hand contains good trump support and a *side-suit shortage* then you should think of upgrading it. Some authorities offer the following scheme for upgrading your hand **when you know of a good trump fit**.

Add 1 point for a doubleton .	Add 2 points for a singleton .	Add 3 points for a void .
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This is why we say in the box above a single raise shows, for example, “**about** 6-9 points”. The owner of the particular hand may have upgraded an attractive 5-point collection or even downgraded a particularly tatty 10-pointer.

Let's first look at some examples of a single raise:

With Examples 1-6 you would respond 2♥ to an opening bid of 1♥.

Ex 1.	Ex 2.	Ex 3.	Ex 4.	Ex 5.	Ex 6.
♠ A J 3	♠ 10 5	♠ 9 7 6 2	♠ A K J 4	♠ 9	♠ 10 8 3
♥ K 9 8 6	♥ Q 7 5 4	♥ J 10 3 2	♥ 9 7 6 2	♥ Q J 3	♥ K 8 4
♦ 6 3	♦ A 7 5 2	♦ 9	♦ 7 4 2	♦ 10 8 6 5 3	♦ 9
♣ 9 7 4 3	♣ J 10 5	♣ A 8 6 2	♣ 10 2	♣ K 8 6 4	♣ Q J 9 7 5 3

Note Example 3 with “only” 5 points. However, a side-suit singleton together with four-card trump support makes the hand worth more than its nominal point-count. It is a clear 2♥ raise.

Note also Examples 5 and 6 with only three trumps. These examples fall into the “What else?” category. You lack the necessary 10 points to bid your long suit at the two-level and, with 6 points, you have to respond *something*. When in doubt, support your partner!

In practice, a single raise hints at having four-card support but (especially in a major-suit) may only have three-card support. By contrast, a jump raise always promises four-card support; you should never make such a bid on a three-card holding.

A jump raise strongly suggests partner bids again although it does not compel him to do so. A jump raise is akin to the sequence 1NT – 2NT where the latter bid is an *invitational raise*.

Here are some examples of a jump raise (or an *invitational raise*) in opener's suit:

With Examples 7-9 you would respond 3♥ to an opening bid of 1♥. With Examples 10 and 11 you would respond 3♦ to an opening bid of 1♦. With Example 12 you do best to respond 1♥ to an opening bid of 1♦ (despite the obvious Diamond fit) as it is important to seek out major-suit fits if they exist.

Ex 7.	Ex 8.	Ex 9.	Ex 10.	Ex 11.	Ex 12.
♠ Q 9 8 ♥ A J 8 3 ♦ Q 4 2 ♣ K 7 4	♠ K 10 7 ♥ K 9 6 5 ♦ A 8 7 3 ♣ 6 3	♠ A J 5 3 ♥ Q 10 4 2 ♦ 10 ♣ Q 10 9 8	♠ J ♥ Q 9 3 ♦ Q 10 8 7 ♣ A J 9 5 2	♠ 5 3 ♥ 8 2 ♦ A J 6 5 3 ♣ K Q 10 3	♠ A 10 8 ♥ K J 7 5 ♦ K 9 4 2 ♣ 8 7

Now we need to look at opener's reaction to a raise in his suit. In each example below you have opened the bidding and been raised. What is your next move?

<p>Ex 13.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 10 7 ♥ A Q 8 6 3 ♦ J 9 6 2 ♣ A Q</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Pass. With a bit of luck you might make 2♥. You certainly cannot expect to make more than eight tricks. The point-count may help here – you have 13 points and partner has 6-9. You have no compensating features (singletons, voids), so you should let the bidding die (quickly!) in a part-score.</p>	N			E	W			S	West	North	East	South	Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥	<p>Ex 14.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ A Q J 8 6 ♥ K 5 ♦ Q 4 ♣ 10 9 7 2</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Pass. Rapidly. This is a minimum opener which may struggle to make even nine tricks. No chance of making 4♣. Again, the point-count may help here. You have 12 points and partner has something around 10-12. There are no extra values in terms of shortages, so a part-score is the best spot.</p>	N			E	W			S	West	North	East	South	Pass	3♣	Pass	1♠
N			E																														
W			S																														
West	North	East	South																														
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥																														
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<p>Ex 15.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ K 9 ♥ J 9 7 4 2 ♦ A K 10 ♣ K J 8</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♥</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>4♥. Don't be put off by the poor quality of the trump suit; you have enough values in the outside suits to take a shot at game. You have 15 points and partner has said that he has about 10-12, so you have at least 25 points between you. That's enough for 4♥, especially when you know of a nine-card fit.</p>	N			E	W			S	West	North	East	South	Pass	3♥	Pass	1♥	<p>Ex 16.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ A Q J 10 8 5 ♥ K J 10 2 ♦ None ♣ A Q 7</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>4♠. You have 17 points and a side-suit void. 6-4-3-0 hands play well when there is a good trump fit and here you know of a nine- or ten-card Spade fit. It would be craven to bid anything less than game on this lovely hand. There <i>are</i> North hands that may prove unsuitable, but you have to take some risks.</p>	N			E	W			S	West	North	East	South	Pass	2♠	Pass	1♠
N			E																														
W			S																														
West	North	East	South																														
Pass	3♥	Pass	1♥																														
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<p>Ex 17.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 2 ♥ Q 8 7 4 ♦ A K 9 8 6 ♣ K 4 2</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♦</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Pass. You have a minimum hand in terms of the point-count and have nowhere to go. Sure, 5-4-3-1 hands play better than less shapely ones but 5♦ is still miles away, even facing a maximum 3♦ raise opposite. You expect to make nine or ten tricks in Diamonds but recording 5♦ would be unexpected.</p>	N			E	W			S	West	North	East	South	Pass	3♦	Pass	1♦	<p>Ex 18.</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table> <p>♠ K 3 ♥ A 9 5 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ A Q J 8 6</p> <table border="1" style="margin-left: 20px;"> <thead> <tr><th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♣</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>3NT. It's the old story. When your side has a minor-suit fit it usually pays to look at No-trumps before playing in a minor. Here, with 17 points and an essentially balanced hand, you should take a pot at the most likely game contract (3NT). With a 5-3-3-2 hand there are likely to be three losers in 5♣.</p>	N			E	W			S	West	North	East	South	Pass	3♣	Pass	1♣
N			E																														
W			S																														
West	North	East	South																														
Pass	3♦	Pass	1♦																														
N			E																														
W			S																														
West	North	East	South																														
Pass	3♣	Pass	1♣																														

§10. Quiz on Direct Raises of Opening Bids.

In each case you are **South**

What is your best bid after the given auction?

1.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

♠ Q 4 2
♥ A K 5 3
♦ Q 7 6 4
♣ 8 6

2.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	?

♠ 10 7 5 3
♥ J 6 5 2
♦ A 6
♣ J 10 8

3.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

♠ A K Q J
♥ 9 8 7 3
♦ 8 6 3
♣ 9 2

4.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

♠ A Q 9 8 2
♥ K 10 8 4
♦ 10 9 8
♣ 5

5.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	?

♠ 5
♥ A Q 9 8 2
♦ K 10 8 4
♣ 10 9 8

6.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠
			?

♠ A K Q J 7
♥ 8 6 3
♦ J 9 6
♣ Q 6

7.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥
			?

♠ 8 6 3
♥ A K Q J 7
♦ Q 10 9
♣ A K

8.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠
			?

♠ K 9 7 6 5 2
♥ 4
♦ J 10
♣ A K J 5

9.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥
			?

♠ Q 9
♥ A Q 7 6 4
♦ K J 10 4
♣ K 9

10.*

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Pass	1♠
			?

♠ A K 6 5 4
♥ K 10 4
♦ A Q J
♣ 8 5

§10. Quiz on Direct Raises of Opening Bids. Answers

1.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ Q 4 2
♥ A K 5 3
♦ Q 7 6 4
♣ 8 6

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

3♥. Just about dead centre for the bid. Partner can please himself whether he advances to 4♥ or whether he lets the bidding die in 3♥. If partner has a minimum opener then he will Pass 3♥; with anything more than a minimum he will go on to game. The ball is in his court.

2.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ 10 7 5 3
♥ J 6 5 2
♦ A 6
♣ J 10 8

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	?

2♠. With six points you must keep the bidding open and you do have four-card Spade support. It is possible that North holds a very strong hand in context and may have enough to try for game. If he has only a minimum opening bid he will (or should!) Pass 2♠.

3.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ A K Q J
♥ 9 8 7 3
♦ 8 6 3
♣ 9 2

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

3♥. The four-card trump support is very important and should be shown in preference to your Spades. The hand, with 10 points, is too strong to bid a mere 2♥. The decision of whether to advance to game or not lies now with your partner as you have made a *limit bid*.

4.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ A Q 9 8 2
♥ K 10 8 4
♦ 10 9 8
♣ 5

West	North	East	South
	1♥	Pass	?

3♥. This isn't difficult but there are many players who would (wrongly!) choose to respond 1♠. With 9 points and a singleton the hand is too good for 2♥. Again, it is now partner's decision of how high to bid. With a minimum opening bid North may choose to Pass 3♥.

5.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ 5
♥ A Q 9 8 2
♦ K 10 8 4
♣ 10 9 8

West	North	East	South
	1♦	Pass	?

1♥. Yes, this is Q4 again with the suits transposed. However, it would be wrong to raise Diamonds (a minor-suit) immediately when holding a good five-card major. You do best to respond 1♥ to try and locate a possible Heart fit. If not, you can return to Diamonds later.

6.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ A K Q J 7
♥ 8 6 3
♦ J 9 6
♣ Q 6

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠

Pass. This is a near-minimum opening bid (13 points) with a highly unattractive 5-3-3-2 shape. Sure, your trumps are magnificent but the rest of your hand is lousy and is likely to contain too many losers. It's prudent to rest content in a modest part-score.

7.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ 8 6 3
♥ A K Q J 7
♦ Q 10 9
♣ A K

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥

4♥. You have 19 points facing 6-9 so have a minimum of 25 points between you together with a good Heart fit. The stubby 5-3-3-2 pattern may give you cause for concern but you really have to have a go at game on hands like these. If 4♥ fails, well – *c'est la vie*.

8.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ K 9 7 6 5 2
♥ 4
♦ J 10
♣ A K J 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	1♠

4♠. True, you only have 12 points but you have a lot of compensation in the fact that you have a 6-4-2-1 shape, a hand pattern with far fewer losers than, say, a 5-3-3-2 shape. Also, your tatty trumps are now known to be bolstered by four-card support. 4♠ is clear-cut.

9.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ Q 9
♥ A Q 7 6 4
♦ K J 10 4
♣ K 9

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♥	Pass	1♥

Pass. You do have 15 points but that's not really enough to advance opposite 6-9 points with little in the way of compensating values (no singletons or voids). You should take the money in 2♥, expecting to make eight tricks and maybe an overtrick on a good day.

10.

N			
W	E		
S			

♠ A K 6 5 4
♥ K 10 4
♦ A Q J
♣ 8 5

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Pass	1♠

3♠. On this hand you are betwixt and between. With 17 points facing 6-9 you are too good to Pass and not good enough to insist on game. Best is to pass the buck and see if partner can make the decision. With a maximum 2♠ raise (8-9 points) he will surely bid 4♠.

§10. Example hands 1 to 4.

Hand 1 Dealer North

♠ A K 6 4 2
♥ 4 2
♦ J 9 4
♣ A 10 8

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

♠ J 7 5 3
♥ A 6 5
♦ K Q
♣ 9 7 5 4

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

After North opens 1♠ (some may prefer 1NT, but the hand lacks “stuffing” and he has a decent major suit) South has enough to make an *invitational raise* to 3♠. With an abject minimum opener (5-3-3-2 and 12 points) North can't Pass quick enough. East leads the ♥Q and North performs his **Count** and **Plan**. In a suit contract you should count both winners and losers – on the debit side there are two Club losers, a Heart loser and a Diamond loser. Losing a trump, therefore, would be fatal to the cause. North needs either a 2-2 Spade break, therefore, or the actual distribution that exists – a singleton ♠Q. Taking the ♥A North should draw three rounds of trumps and then knock out the ♦A. That's enough winners.

Hand 2 Dealer East

♠ A 8 6
♥ K 8 7 3
♦ 2
♣ Q 8 6 3 2

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

♠ 9
♥ Q J 10 9
♦ 10 8 7 5 4 3
♣ K J

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

The West hand may be familiar – compare with the South cards of Hand 1 and of Hand 8...(!) After East opens 1♠ West has enough to make an invitational raise to 3♠. Does East accept? Well, he has a non-minimum hand – 14 good points and a 5-4-2-2 shape (anything is better than a 5-3-3-2 pattern or an arid desert of a 4-3-3-3 hand). That makes 4♠ relatively easy to bid. South leads the ♥Q (it is unnecessary to lead from a long suit against a trump contract) and East applies a **Count** and **Plan**. He has a Spade, a Heart and a Club loser, so standing orders are to **draw trumps** by knocking out the ♠A. Failure to do so would allow North to ruff a Diamond winner and score a trick with the ♠6. Potentially embarrassing.

Hand 3 Dealer South

♠ Q J 10 5 2
♥ A 8 4 2
♦ J 10 6
♣ 2

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

♠ A K 8 4
♥ K 9 7
♦ None
♣ 10 9 8 7 5 4

West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	3♦	Pass
3♦ by West			All Pass
3♦ by West		Opening lead: ♠Q	

After South Passes as dealer West opens 1♦ (5-4-2-2 hands are not suitable for 1NT). East has five-card trump support and 10 points, so has enough to raise to 3♦. West has nothing extra, so Passes. With other hands he might bid again, often 3NT, but here he has only 12 points and nothing special in the way of distribution. North leads the ♠Q and a **Count** and **Plan** reveals just four top losers (two Spades and two Hearts). So, declarer gains the lead when he is allowed to and promptly draws trumps, taking three rounds to do so. Contract made with five Diamonds and four Clubs. *Note, in passing, that North-South could make a lot of tricks in Spades. We will discuss competitive bidding later in the course.*

Hand 4 Dealer West

♠ Q 8 5
♥ A J 5 3
♦ Q 10 8 5
♣ Q 9

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

♠ A 2
♥ K 9 7 6 4 2
♦ K J 9 3
♣ J

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

There are three Passes to South who has an obvious opening bid of 1♥. North raises to 3♥, invitational, with four-card support and 11 points and South has to decide whether to bid or Pass. Well, he only has 12 points but he has compensation in a powerful 6-4-2-1 pattern. Such hands contain far fewer losers than stubbier 5-3-3-2 hands and that tatty six-card Heart suit is well supported. So, it is clear to take a punt on game. West leads the ♠A (we *never* underlead Aces against a suit contract) and South's **Count** and **Plan** shows there to be a Spade, a Club and a Diamond to lose. So, trumps have to break 2-1 for success – well within the odds. South ruffs the second Club, draws trumps and knocks out the ♦A.

§10. Example hands 5 to 8.

Hand 5 Dealer North

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

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

East has a minimum, but respectable, opening bid of 1♠. West can support Spades but only to the two-level; 2♠ shows around about 6-9 points and trump support. Should East bid on? Not a chance! In fact, with 12 only points he may be lucky to make 2♠, let alone anything higher. South leads the ♥Q and East can see dummy's ♥K is a dead duck. A **Count** and **Plan** shows there is a Club loser, two Heart losers and a Diamond loser, so it is important *not* to lose two trump tricks. A 2-2 Spade break would be handy but the actual layout is just as good. After gaining the lead East **draws trumps** by playing off the ♠A and leading one towards the Jack. South has no winning option and can take only one Spade trick now.

Hand 6 Dealer East

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

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
4♠ by West		Opening lead: ♥Q	

The East cards here are the West cards of Hand 5. West opens 1♠ after two Passes and East raises gently to 2♠. West can jump to game now – he has 18 points facing 6-9 and knows of a good Spade fit. Further, his hand is 5-4-2-2; that Diamond suit may prove to be a useful *source of tricks*. North leads the top-of-a-sequence ♥Q and West can see only two obvious losers, both in Clubs. If trumps break 2-2 (or the Queen falls on the first round) declarer would make an overtrick. West takes the first Heart and plays off the ♠A K. Do trumps break? Nope, but no worries. Declarer can just play winners now, not caring if and when North ruffs in with the master ♠Q.

Hand 7 Dealer South

♠ Q J 9 2 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ 10 3 ♣ K 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></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		♠ A K 8 ♥ 2 ♦ 7 6 5 2 ♣ A 7 5 4 3
N		E									
W											
	S										
♠ 6 ♥ 10 6 5 3 ♦ Q J 9 4 ♣ Q J 10 8		♠ 10 7 5 4 3 ♥ A Q 9 7 ♦ A K 8 ♣ 9									

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

South opens 1♠, maybe a little worried by the poor quality of the suit. North raises invitationaly to 3♠ and South has to decide whether to stick (in 3♠) or twist (and bid game). Points-wise South has a near-minimum hand (13 points only) but there are reasons to be cheerful. 5-4-3-1 hands play well, in general, when there is a fit and that tatty Spade suit is known not to be useless with four-card support opposite. So there are good grounds for trying 4♠. West's ♣Q makes mincemeat of dummy's ♣K but there are still only three obvious losers (the ♠A K and the ♣A). South must trump the second Club and must draw trumps, driving out the ♠A K. This way he can always make ten tricks – finally ruffing a Diamond on table.

Hand 8 Dealer West

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

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

After 1♠ – 3♠ with just 12 points North might Pass. The purpose of this deal, though, is to show you that **shape** in the form of singletons and voids can have a profound effect on the play. However, you can only value these features when you know of a **decent trump fit**. Here North has strong trumps and a nice 5-4-3-1 pattern. That should cause him to uprate his hand from a minimum and should give cause to have a bash at game. Of course, 4♠ might fail! But, equally, it might make. After the ♥J lead declarer must play trumps before knocking out the ♦A. In time he can discard two Clubs from dummy on his Diamond winners and ruff a Club on table for his tenth trick. This deal is worthy of further study.