

§36. Weak Two Openers Part 2 (Ogust Responses).

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

Constructive responses A response of 2NT to a weak two-bid is **not** a natural bid. It is an *artificial*, to a weak two opener: *convention* asking opener to describe his hand. It is usually a game try.

Pre-emptive responses A direct raise of a weak two-bid to the three-level is *not constructive*. It is to a weak two opener: a raise of the pre-emptive barrage. Opener is not expected to bid again.

Recall that a weak two opener is a pre-empt, designed to make partner's life easy and the opponents' life difficult. Thus: an opening bid of 2♦, 2♥ or 2♠ shows a six-card suit and about 5 to 9 points.

In this session we are going to focus on responses to weak two openers and what they mean. Broadly speaking we shall be looking at **technical** responses and **tactical** responses. In other words, bids where we want to seek out information to help us decide on the best contract and bids where our sole aim is to make the opponents' life even more difficult.

Let's look at **technical** responses first. Consider these four hands. In each case, partner deals and opens 2♥. What would you bid as responder?

Ex 1. ♠ 3 ♥ A 10 8 3 ♦ A 9 7 4 ♣ K Q J 5	Ex 2. ♠ A K 7 5 ♥ K ♦ A K 7 3 ♣ A 7 5 2	Ex 3. ♠ A 9 7 ♥ J 5 2 ♦ A 8 3 ♣ A Q 10 6	Ex 4. ♠ K Q J 4 ♥ A 8 ♦ K Q 10 7 2 ♣ J 7
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Examples 1 and 2 are interlopers from the previous section and display immediate raises to the Heart game. Example 1 contains four-card trump support and a side-suit singleton, it also has a *source of tricks* in Clubs. That's plenty to bid 4♥. Example 2 is another clear-cut 4♥ raise. There are top tricks outside of the trump suit and it is reasonable to expect partner to make five trump tricks from his Big Suit. 3NT would be a bad mistake as there may be difficulty in accessing partner's hand.

Hands 3 and 4 create problems in response, though. Here, you are betwixt and between. With 15 points (Example 3) and 16 points (Example 4) it is not right to give up on game. Equally, bidding 4♥ directly would be something of a punt. The solution may be unexpected – and the answer is certainly **not** a raise to 3♥. The accepted method is to respond 2NT, not as an attempt to play in No-trumps but as an *artificial enquiry*, asking partner how good his weak two actually is.

What does opener do? Well, he must reply using step responses. This is the **Ogust convention**.

1. With a minimum hand (5-7 points) and a poor suit (without 2 of the top 3 honours):	3♣
2. With a minimum hand (5-7 points) and a good suit (containing 2 of the top 3 honours):	3♦
3. With a maximum hand (8-9 points) and a poor suit (without 2 of the top 3 honours):	3♥
4. With a maximum hand (8-9 points) and a good suit (containing 2 of the top 3 honours):	3♠
5. Having a suit of precisely A K Q x x x (and therefore nothing outside):	3NT

Here are four examples of weak two openers. Imagine you have opened 2♠ and partner has made the Ogust enquiry response of 2NT. What would you say next?

Ex 5. ♠ K J 10 8 6 4 ♥ 7 3 ♦ Q 9 5 ♣ 6 3	Ex 6. ♠ A K 6 5 3 2 ♥ 7 5 4 ♦ 9 3 ♣ 7 4	Ex 7. ♠ A J 10 8 6 4 ♥ 7 3 ♦ K 9 5 ♣ 6 3	Ex 8. ♠ A K J 10 3 2 ♥ 7 5 4 ♦ 9 3 ♣ 7 4
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With Example 5 the correct rebid is 3♣. The hand is a minimum weak two in Spades (6 points in this case) and has a poor suit (without two of the top three honours). **Minimum points, minimum quality.**

With Example 6 the correct rebid is 3♦. The hand is a minimum weak two in Spades (7 points in this case) but has a good suit (holding two of the top three honours). **Minimum points, maximum quality.**

With Example 7 the correct rebid is 3♥. The hand is a maximum weak two in Spades (8 points in this case) but has a poor suit (without two of the top three honours). **Maximum points, minimum quality.**

With Example 8 the correct rebid is 3♠. The hand is a maximum weak two in Spades (8 points) and has a good suit (holding two of the top three honours). **Maximum points, maximum quality.**

Tactical Bidding in Response to Weak Twos.

What would an immediate raise of a weak two to the three-level mean? So, for example, what does the bidding 2♠ – 3♠ actually mean? It's time to look at the **tactical** aspect of responding to weak twos. Since a 2NT response is the bid used for all game tries, a raise to the three-level is **not** an attempt to reach game in opener's suit. On the contrary, it is *defensive barrage*, designed to make the next hand's life miserable and force him to bid, quite probably, at the four-level.

To make such a pre-emptive "push" it is necessary to have three-card trump support, giving the partnership a nine-card trump fit. The **Law of Total Tricks** suggests that you are safe in bidding to three-level if you have nine trumps. Should you win the auction and the contract fail, then the enemy are almost certain to have been able to make a significant contract of their own. The more trumps you have the more certain it is that the enemy have a trump fit. The object of the exercise in raising the pre-empt is to *steal the deal* – making the contract is of secondary importance.

Examples 9 to 12 show raises of an opening 2♥ to 3♥. In each case, partner's opening bid of a weak two in Hearts should be raised to the three-level, making the next hand's bid that much more awkward. Will 3♥ make? Who cares? That is not the point; if 3♥ fails then surely the opponents were due to make at least a part-score.

Ex 9. ♠ 8 4 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ K Q J 7 ♣ A 10 7 6	Ex 10. ♠ K J 10 9 ♥ K 4 2 ♦ 10 4 ♣ Q 9 5 3	Ex 11. ♠ A 6 ♥ Q J 8 ♦ 9 8 6 5 3 2 ♣ J 4	Ex 12. ♠ 7 5 3 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ J 10 8 3 ♣ A 4 2
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Note that opener should Pass this 3♥ raise *no matter what his hand is*. He is not being invited to the party, so he should forget about putting on his top hat and tails.

Let's look at some more examples.

Further Examples.

What is your best bid as South after the following auctions?

Ex 13. <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> ♠ J 9 6 ♥ 10 6 ♦ K Q J 9 6 ♣ J 10 9 <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr> </table>	N			W		E	S			West	North	East	South		2♠	Pass	?	Ex 14. <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> ♠ Q 9 6 ♥ K 6 ♦ K Q J 9 6 ♣ A 10 9 <table border="1" style="display: inline-table; vertical-align: middle; margin-left: 20px;"> <tr><td>West</td><td>North</td><td>East</td><td>South</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>2♠</td><td>Pass</td><td>?</td></tr> </table>	N			W		E	S			West	North	East	South		2♠	Pass	?
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<p>3♠. With three-card trump support and little in the way of defensive values you must make things as awkward as you can for West. If he wants to dive into the auction he will have to do so either by gambling 3NT or by bidding at the four-level. Good luck with that. 3♠ won't make, but so what?</p>	<p>2NT. You have to make a try for the Spade game but are a tad too weak to have a blast at it yourself. Best is to ask partner what he has. If he shows a maximum weak two, you'd try 4♠; if he shows a minimum weak two (by bidding 3♣ or 3♦) you'd convert to 3♠ and play the hand in a part-score.</p>																																		
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<p>3♥. You have a maximum weak two, but your suit lacks two of the three top honours. A 3♥ rebid shows precisely that. If North now retreats to 3♠ you will Pass that as he is <i>boss of the auction</i>. More likely, as you have shown a maximum, is that partner will bid a game in something. 4♠? 3NT?</p>	<p>3♠. Another maximum weak two, this time with very good Diamonds. 3♠ shows precisely this and may enable partner to try 3NT with, say, ♦K x. There are many hands where a running six-card suit can provide a route to nine "toppers" in 3NT. Anyway, it's not your show – partner is <i>boss of the auction</i>.</p>																																		

§36. Quiz A on Weak Two Openers (Ogust Responses)

In each case you are **South**In Quiz A your partner has opened with a weak two bid.
What is your best response?

1.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♣	Pass	?

♠ A J 7
♥ J 5 2
♦ A Q 10 6
♣ A 8 3

2.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ K J 10 2
♥ 9 7
♦ K Q J 10
♣ A K 10

3.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

♠ A 10 8 6
♥ A 10 7 3
♦ K 8
♣ A 7 4

4.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ Q 6 2
♥ Q J 8
♦ A J 9
♣ A K 6 4

5.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ 10 3
♥ A Q 7
♦ A 9 7 6 2
♣ 8 6 3

6.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ 10 9 7
♥ 6
♦ K Q 8 7
♣ J 10 9 8 4

7.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ K Q 10
♥ Q 8 7 2
♦ 9 8 6 4
♣ Q 8

8.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

♠ K Q 9 6
♥ J 5 2
♦ K Q 10
♣ K 10 9

9.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

♠ 7 4
♥ 8 3
♦ K 8 7
♣ K Q 7 6 4 2

10.*

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

♠ J 10 9 7
♥ 6
♦ K Q 8 7
♣ 10 9 8 4

§36. Quiz A on Weak Two Openers (Ogust Responses)

Answers

1.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ A J 7
♥ J 5 2
♦ A Q 10 6
♣ A 8 3

West	North	East	South
	2♣	Pass	?

2NT. You have enough to investigate game but not enough to justify bidding 4♣. An artificial 2NT enquiry enlists partner's help; if he shows a minimum weak two by bidding 3♣ or 3♦ you'll sign off in 3♣. If he shows a maximum by bidding 3♥ or 3♠ you'll advance to 4♣.

2.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ K J 10 2
♥ 9 7
♦ K Q J 10
♣ A K 10

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

2NT. As in Q1, you have just about enough to explore game prospects. If North shows good Hearts you'll try 4♥. If he bids 3♥ to show a poor suit but a maximum hand, you ought to try 3NT. If he shows a minimum weak two you'd be best advised to sign off in 3♥

3.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ A 10 8 6
♥ A 10 7 3
♦ K 8
♣ A 7 4

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

2NT. You have enough to investigate game but here you are interested in 3NT only. You are hoping partner rebids 3♦ or 3♠ to show a good Diamond suit – should he do that you'd happily try 3NT. Were he to rebid 3♣ instead (showing a minimum) you would revert to 3♦

4.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ Q 6 2
♥ Q J 8
♦ A J 9
♣ A K 6 4

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

2NT. Once again, you have enough to investigate game. If partner shows a maximum but a poor suit with 3♥ you may well try 4♠. However, if North rebids 3♦ (or 3♣) to show good Spades you'd be well advised to try 3NT. Why? Because you can count nine on top!

5.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ 10 3
♥ A Q 7
♦ A 9 7 6 2
♣ 8 6 3

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

3♥. This is not a game try – had you wanted to investigate game you would have gone via 2NT. This deal belongs to East-West (in Spades?) A raise to the three level after a weak two is pre-emptive barrage and North should Pass, as 3♥ is non-consultative.

6.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ 10 9 7
♥ 6
♦ K Q 8 7
♣ J 10 9 8 4

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

3♠. This hand clearly belongs to East-West, so you must do your best to *steal the deal* or, at the very least, to make life difficult for them. Let West bid at the four-level if he has the courage to do so. Notice that you don't mind 3♠ failing by a trick or two.

7.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ K Q 10
♥ Q 8 7 2
♦ 9 8 6 4
♣ Q 8

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

3♠. This hand probably belongs to East-West, so let them join in the fun at the four-level if they dare. They general rule here is "be prepared to compete to the level of the number of trumps". Having nine trumps means bid to the nine-trick level (ie the three-level).

8.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ K Q 9 6
♥ J 5 2
♦ K Q 10
♣ K 10 9

West	North	East	South
	2♥	Pass	?

Pass. Yes, you have a nine-card Heart fit, so 3♥ is not ridiculous. However, you have 14 points; too many to think the hand belongs to East-West and not enough to investigate the possibilities of game. So, there's no need to pre-empt West, who may well Pass 2♥ out.

9.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ 7 4
♥ 8 3
♦ K 8 7
♣ K Q 7 6 4 2

West	North	East	South
	2♦	Pass	?

3♦. You have nine Diamonds between you and East-West are stuffed with major-suit cards. Best, by far, is to raise the pre-emptive barrage to the nine-trick level and force West to enter the fray at the three-level. You must make the opponents' life as hard as you can!

10.

N		E
W		
	S	

♠ J 10 9 7
♥ 6
♦ K Q 8 7
♣ 10 9 8 4

West	North	East	South
	2♠	Pass	?

4♣. An interloper from a previous quiz. 4♣ has no chance of making, but that's hardly the point. 4♣ raises the pre-emptive barrage; your side has ten Spades, so you should be prepared to bid to the four-level. East-West can surely make 4♥, but can hardly bid it now.

§36. Quiz B on Weak Two Openers (Ogust Responses)

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz B you have opened the bidding with a weak two bid.
What is your best bid now, after the auction has progressed?

1.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♥

♠ 7 4 2
♥ A J 10 9 8 6
♦ 8
♣ 10 9 3

2.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♠

♠ K Q 10 6 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ J 10 9
♣ 10 4

3.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♠

♠ K J 10 6 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ K J 9
♣ 10 4

4.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♥

♠ 7 4 2
♥ A Q 9 6 5 2
♦ 9 6
♣ K 9

5.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♦

♠ 5 3
♥ 7 5
♦ A K Q 9 7 4
♣ 10 8 7

6.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	2NT	Pass	2♥

♠ 3
♥ A J 10 9 8 4
♦ 8 2
♣ Q 10 9 8

7.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	Pass	2♠

♠ K J 10 6 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ Q 10 9
♣ 10 4

8.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♥	Pass	2♥

♠ 9 3
♥ K J 10 9 8 2
♦ 10 4
♣ K Q 9

9.

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♦	Pass	2♦

♠ K 5 3
♥ 7 5
♦ A Q 10 9 7 4
♣ 10 8 7

10.*

N
W E
S

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♠	4♥	2♠

♠ A K 10 8 6 4
♥ 3
♦ Q 10 8
♣ 10 9 6

§36. Quiz B on Weak Two Openers (Ogust Responses)

Answers

1.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ 7 4 2
♥ A J 10 9 8 6
♦ 8
♣ 10 9 3

West	North	East	South
			2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

3♣. Playing Ogust responses to a 2NT enquiry, the convention requires that you reply on step principles. Here, you have a minimum weak two (5 points) with a poor suit (defined as not having two of the top three honours). 3♣ shows *minimum points, minimum quality*.

2.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ K Q 10 6 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ J 10 9
♣ 10 4

West	North	East	South
			2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

3♦. Again (cf Q1), playing Ogust responses to 2NT, you should reply using step responses. Here, you have a minimum (the lower range is about 5-7 points) with a good suit (defined as having two of the top three honours). 3♦ shows *minimum points, maximum quality*.

3.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ K J 10 6 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ K J 9
♣ 10 4

West	North	East	South
			?
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

3♥. Here, with 8 points, you have a maximum weak two opener (the upper range is considered to be 8-9 points) without a good suit (that is: one without two of the top three honours). The Ogust step response in this case is 3♥, showing *maximum points, minimum quality*.

4.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ 7 4 2
♥ A Q 9 6 5 2
♦ 9 6
♣ K 9

West	North	East	South
			2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

3♠. Here, with 9 points and a good suit (you have two of the top three Heart honours), the Ogust step response is 3♠, showing *maximum points, maximum quality*. As this bid is higher than 3♥ this will commit your side to game, but that is partner's problem.

5.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ 5 3
♥ 7 5
♦ A K Q 9 7 4
♣ 10 8 7

West	North	East	South
			2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

3NT. It may be rare to have all three top honours in your suit, but there's no law against it and this reply to an Ogust 2NT shows precisely A K Q x x x in your suit. You'd be delighted if North Passed this out as your hand is going to be worth six tricks in No-trumps.

6.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ 3
♥ A J 10 9 8 4
♦ 8 2
♣ Q 10 9 8

West	North	East	South
			2♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	?

3♥. Yes, we know, only 7 points, so the "correct" reply is 3♣. Well, this hand (a good side-suit and a 6-4-2-1 shape) demands an upgrade. We suggest 3♥, showing *maximum points, minimum quality*, as this is worth at least 8 points. You need to be flexible in your thinking.

7.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ K J 10 6 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ Q 10 9
♣ 10 4

West	North	East	South
			2♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	?

Pass. Partner's raise is in no sense encouraging – it is a raise of the pre-emptive barrage in an attempt to *steal the deal*. If you are allowed to play the hand in 3♠ then don't be at all surprised or disappointed if the contract were to fail. The hand belongs to East-West.

8.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ 9 3
♥ K J 10 9 8 2
♦ 10 4
♣ K Q 9

West	North	East	South
			2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	?

Pass. Once again (cf Q7) North is not making a constructive raise. Sure, you have a maximum weak two, but that does not justify bidding on to game. If North had any interest in 4♥ he would have instigated a game investigation with 2NT. 3♥ is purely barrage.

9.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ K 5 3
♥ 7 5
♦ A Q 10 9 7 4
♣ 10 8 7

West	North	East	South
			2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	?

Pass. We are beating the drum for the third consecutive question. When a weak two is raised to the three-level you should Pass without looking at your cards again. Partner is simply trying to make East's life difficult – and here he seems to have been successful.

10.

N			
W	E		
	S		

♠ A K 10 8 6 4
♥ 3
♦ Q 10 8
♣ 10 9 6

West	North	East	South
			2♠
Pass	3♠	4♥	?

Pass. You may think it right to bid 4♠ now that East has plucked up the courage to bid 4♥. That, though, is the wrong tactics. East is guessing and it's wrong to assume that he has guessed right. 4♠ is not going to make, so you should let East see if he can make 4♥

§36. Example hands 1 to 4.

Hand 1 Love all, dealer North

♠ K J 10 6 5 2
♥ 9 3
♦ 10 4
♣ K J 9

♠ Q 8 4 3
♥ Q 10 7 6
♦ K Q 6
♣ 4 2

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ None
♥ A K 8 4
♦ J 9 7 5 2
♣ 8 7 5 3

♠ A 9 7
♥ J 5 2
♦ A 8 3
♣ A Q 10 6

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

Here, North has a classic weak two opener of 2♠. East is too weak to get involved and the problem is South's. With 15 points and three-card Spade support the hand is a wee bit too strong to Pass 2♠, but a tad too weak to venture 4♠. The solution? Bid 2NT as a *range enquiry* to discover if opener is maximum or minimum for his bid. North has to make the correct Ogust rebid here and that is 3♥ to show a maximum hand (8-9 points) but one with a suit lacking 2 of the top 3 honours. Knowing of some outside strength and a maximum weak two opposite, South has every justification now in trying for game. As the cards lie, 4♠ should get home, especially as there is a marked finesse in trumps.

Hand 2 North-South game, dealer East

♠ K 4 3
♥ 8 7 5
♦ Q 9 8 3
♣ 8 6 4

♠ 9 7
♥ Q J 10 2
♦ A K 10
♣ K Q J 10

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ A J 8 6 5 2
♥ K 9 3
♦ 7 2
♣ 9 7

♠ Q 10
♥ A 6 4
♦ J 6 5 4
♣ A 5 3 2

West	North	East	South
2NT	Pass	2♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
3NT by West		Opening lead: ♦3	

East opens a weak two – 2♠ in this case. What now for West? Best, by far, is to respond 2NT on the West cards with the aim of investigating game, depending on the response. When East responds 3♥ to show 8-9 points but a suit lacking 2 of the top 3 honours, West takes a shot at the most likely game, that of 3NT. Even after a Diamond lead from North, declarer can knock out two Aces and make nine tricks via one Spade, three Hearts, two Diamonds and three Clubs. 4♠, you may note, would have expired through natural causes as it has four losers (to wit: two trumps, the ♥A and the ♣A). It is often right to play hands with slow tricks in 3NT.

Hand 3 East-West game, dealer South

♠ K Q J 6 4
♥ K 8
♦ 10 7 2
♣ A K 7

♠ 10 8 7 2
♥ J 3
♦ K Q
♣ Q 9 8 5 3

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ A 9 5
♥ 9 5 4
♦ A J 6 5 3
♣ J 2

♠ 3
♥ A Q 10 7 6 2
♦ 9 8 4
♣ 10 6 4

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

South has a clear, if minimum, 2♥ opener on this deal and North has a balanced 17 points. That North hand, though, lacks Aces and won't make game opposite a minimum weak two. How can North find out what his partner has? By enquiring with 2NT to elicit more information. Note that a 2♠ response is unlikely to get North anywhere – what is South supposed to do over that? Anyway, South rebids 3♦ to show 5-7 points and a good suit. That's not enough for North, who converts to 3♥. This should make if declarer draws trumps pronto and then sets up a Spade trick for a Club discard. He should get away with losing just three Diamonds and a Spade.

Hand 4 Game all, dealer West

♠ A K 7 4 3
♥ 9 5
♦ J 4
♣ 10 7 6 2

♠ 6 5 2
♥ A K J 10 7 3
♦ 9 5
♣ 8 3

N		
W		E
	S	

♠ Q J 8
♥ Q 6 2
♦ A K 7 3
♣ A J 9

♠ 10 9
♥ 8 4
♦ Q 10 8 6 2
♣ K Q 5 4

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

West has a weak two opener here, 2♥ to be precise. Once again, the problem lies with his partner. East has enough to make a game-try enquiry of 2NT and West has to make the correct rebid. 3♠ shows a maximum hand (8-9 points) with a good suit (2 of the top 3 honours). Normally, East might be expected to correct that to 4♥ but here East tries 3NT. Why? Because he has a firm stopper in all the outside suits and can count nine winners (six Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club). 4♥ would be beaten if North were to lead the ♠A K and another Spade as South would ruff the third round, leaving West with a Club loser. 3NT, though, is bombproof.

§36. Example hands 5 to 8.

Hand 5 North-South game, dealer North

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

♠ 3 ♥ A 10 8 5 2 ♦ A Q 6 2 ♣ Q 5 4	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <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>	N	W E	S	♠ 8 7 4 ♥ K Q J 6 ♦ K J 9 3 ♣ 10 2
N					
W E					
S					

♠ A Q 9
 ♥ 7 4
 ♦ 8 7 5
 ♣ A 8 7 6 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3♠ by North		Opening lead: ♥K	

The North cards here are identical to the North cards on Hand 1. North opens 2♠, East Passes and South has a small problem. It is poor tactics to Pass now as East-West would surely come into the auction; on this layout West would make a take-out Double and East-West would find their Heart fit. In fact, East-West can make 4♥ with their cards, so *stealing the deal* is very important, whether or not the resultant contract makes or fails. It may be easy to bid on the West hand after 2♠ – Pass – Pass – ? but it is much harder to bid after 2♠ – Pass – 3♠ – ? A bid now would be at the four-level; a take-out Double would force East to bid at the four-level. As it happens 3♠ can make if North draws trumps and finesses Clubs.

Hand 6 East-West game, dealer East

♠ K J 9
 ♥ K
 ♦ K Q 5 3
 ♣ Q 9 7 5 2

♠ A 7 6 2 ♥ J 9 4 ♦ A 10 7 2 ♣ J 3	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <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>	N	W E	S	♠ 3 ♥ A Q 10 7 6 2 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ 10 6 4
N					
W E					
S					

♠ Q 10 8 5 4
 ♥ 8 5 3
 ♦ J 6
 ♣ A K 8

West	North	East	South
3♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
3♥ by East		Opening lead: ♠A	

The East cards here are identical to the South cards on Hand 3. A deal with a similar theme to Hand 5. After East opens 2♥ West must keep the pressure on his opponents by raising to 3♥. Not that 3♥ will necessarily make, but North-South have the balance of points and can surely make a part-score in something. North would have Doubled 2♥ (a take-out Double) and North-South would have played in Spades – maybe even bidding and making 4♠. After 3♥, though, North faces an unappetising choice. Double is dangerous with only three Spades and 11 working points, so 3♥ may well *steal the deal*. 3♥ can make on careful play (planning to ruff a Club in the *short trump hand*). A bonus, really.

Hand 7 Game all, dealer South

♠ 10 7 4 3
 ♥ Q 9 2
 ♦ A K 8 2
 ♣ 6 2

♠ A J 9 8 ♥ 4 ♦ Q J 10 4 3 ♣ J 7 5	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <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>	N	W E	S	♠ K Q ♥ 8 6 5 ♦ 7 6 ♣ A K Q 10 9 4
N					
W E					
S					

♠ 6 5 2
 ♥ A K J 10 7 3
 ♦ 9 5
 ♣ 8 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♥	All Pass?	2♥
Pass	3♥ by South?	All Pass?	
3♥ by South?		Opening lead: ♦4	

The South cards here are identical to the West cards on Hand 4. Another deal, another defensive barrage. After his partner opens 2♥ and West Passes, North should raise to 3♥ to put East under the cosh. The deal belongs to East-West in Clubs, but 4♣ is the limit of the hand. If North were to Pass 2♥ (not recommended) East would have an easy 3♣ call and East-West would play in a part-score. As it is, East-West have no clear path. If East weighs into the fray with 4♣ after 2♥ – Pass – 3♥ then it is very hard for West to Pass; most would raise to 5♣, and that has three top losers. A typically nasty deal. 3♥ is one off without the option (losing three Spades and two Clubs) for a fair result. **One off, good bridge.**

Hand 8 Love all, dealer West

♠ 9 7 4
 ♥ None
 ♦ K Q 10 5
 ♣ A 10 6 5 3 2

♠ A J 8 6 5 2 ♥ K 9 3 ♦ 7 2 ♣ 9 7	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <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>	N	W E	S	♠ K Q 10 ♥ Q 8 7 2 ♦ 9 8 6 4 ♣ Q 8
N					
W E					
S					

♠ 3
 ♥ A J 10 6 5 4
 ♦ A J 3
 ♣ K J 4

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass??
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3♠ by West?		Opening lead: ♦K	

The West cards here are identical to the East cards on Hand 2. West opens 2♠ and East must not pass up the opportunity to turn the screw with a raise to 3♠. What now, South? Well, you may feel that this joke has lasted long enough and that you are not prepared to be intimidated. If you try 4♥ as South (and I confess that I would) you will almost certainly fail with 3♠ due to fail by two tricks. What's worse is that 5♣ is an easy contract and the lucky 6♣ can make on the fortunate lie of the cards. This sort of thing happens all the time when you are made to guess at an uncomfortably high level. How can you reach a Club contract? Don't ask us (although it's not that hard if East were to Pass 2♠).