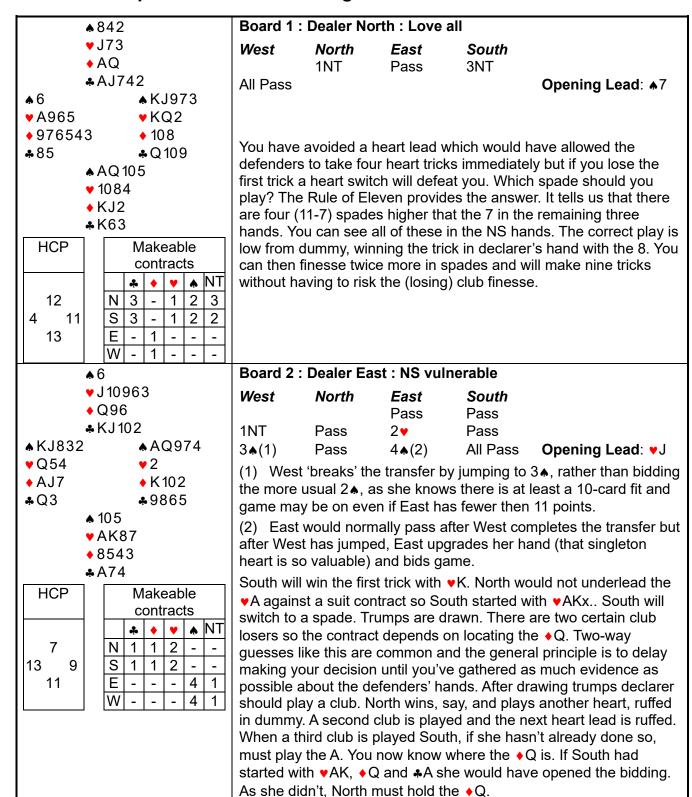
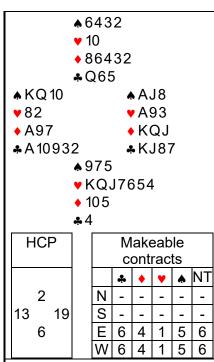
Next Steps Seminar on Counting and Card Placement - Hands





Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable

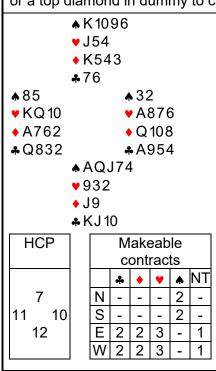
West North East South

3 ♥

Dbl Pass 6NT All Pass Opening Lead: ▼K

This might not have been your auction but the contract is a reasonable one depending only on avoiding a club loser. The key to this hand is working out the exact shape of South's hand. The first point to make is that even if the club suit produces five tricks there will still be an inevitable heart loser. It's almost certain that South has 7 hearts but it costs nothing to duck the first trick and win the continuation. North discards, confirming the expected holding. South is now known to hold six cards outside the heart suit. Declarer should now cash three spade and two diamond tricks (or vice versa). Simple arithmetic shows that if South follows suit only three times she has three clubs, four times would show two clubs and, as here, five times shows one club (or possibly a club void). Declarer now knows that North holds ACXX(X). A small club to dummy's A confirms South has a singleton club and the finesse against North's Q brings the suit in without loss.

Supplementary note: The reason for not cashing six tricks in spades and diamonds is that if South follows six times, meaning North has *Q654 you can still set up the club suit but you won't have an entry to dummy to cash the last club and will end up losing two heart tricks. Keep either a top spade or a top diamond in dummy to cater for that possibility.

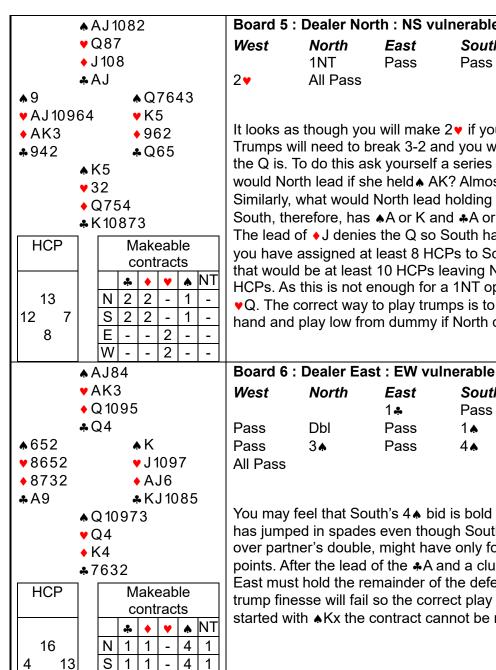


| Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable | | | | | | | |
|--|-------|----------|-------|------------------|--|--|--|
| West | North | East | South | | | | |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | 1♠ | | | | |
| Pass | 2♠ | All Pass | | Opening Lead: VK | | | |
| This hand is not easy so feel very pleased if you got it right (for the right reason) and don't worry if you got it wrong. | | | | | | | |

The defence starts with three rounds of hearts. East then switches to a low club. This is good defence as it forces you into making a guess you would rather have delayed until later in the hand. You'll notice that the defence have the majority of HCPs but haven't bid. If either defender held 12 HCPs they would have bid so the defenders' point are divided 11-10. Also note that having lost the first three tricks you can only afford to lose one trick in each of the minor suits. Looking at the club suit, if West holds *AQ... there is nothing you can do. If East holds *AQ... you can't go wrong. We're only concerned with the situation where the honours are split. Turning now to diamonds, it's clear that we can only avoid two diamond losers if West has the A so to have any chance of making our contract we have to assume that that's the case. This is an

example of card placement by assumption. Now go back to the

opening two tricks. West has shown up with ♥KQ. We've assumed that West has the ♠A. West cannot, therefore, have the ♣A since that would give her at least 13 HCPs and she would have bid. East therefore holds the ♣A and declarer should play the K. Of course, if our assumption about the ♠A was wrong we were never going to make the contract anyway.



Board 5: Dealer North: NS vulnerable West North East South 1NT Pass Pass All Pass Opening Lead: ◆J

It looks as though you will make 2♥ if you can avoid a trump loser. Trumps will need to break 3-2 and you will need to work out where the Q is. To do this ask yourself a series of questions. Firstly, what would North lead if she held AK? Almost certainly the AA. Similarly, what would North lead holding *AK? Almost certainly *A. South, therefore, has A or K and A or K. What about diamonds? The lead of • J denies the Q so South has that card as well. So far you have assigned at least 8 HCPs to South. If she also held ♥Q that would be at least 10 HCPs leaving North with, at most, 11 HCPs. As this is not enough for a 1NT opening North must have the •Q. The correct way to play trumps is to lead ●J from the West hand and play low from dummy if North does not cover.

| Board 6. Dealer East. Ew vullerable | | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|------|-------|------------------|--|--|--|
| West | North | East | South | | | | |
| | | 1 🚓 | Pass | | | | |
| Pass | Dbl | Pass | 1♠ | | | | |
| Pass | 3♠ | Pass | 4♠ | | | | |
| All Pass | | | | Opening Lead: *A | | | |

You may feel that South's 4♠ bid is bold but remember that North has jumped in spades even though South, who was obliged to bid over partner's double, might have only four spades and very few points. After the lead of the AA and a club continuation it's clear that East must hold the remainder of the defenders' high cards. The trump finesse will fail so the correct play is to cash the A. If East started with AKx the contract cannot be made anyway.

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