

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	2♥	4♠
Pass	6♣	Pass	Pass

**Hand 9**  
East-West Game, Dealer North

♠ A Q 10 8 6 3  
♥ None  
♦ A K Q J 5  
♣ J 5

♠ 7 4  
♥ K 7 5 3  
♦ 10 8 7 6 3 2  
♣ 4

	N		
		E	
W			S

♠ None  
♥ A J 10 8 6 4  
♦ 9 4  
♣ A K 9 8 2

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

North punts a slam after opening 1♠ and receiving a 4♠ raise from South. East doesn't (or, at least, shouldn't) Double as North isn't bidding to go down. Even if successful a Double would only net an extra 50; an unsuccessful Double would lose... lots. Anyway, East kicks off with the ♣K and the play goes ♣2, ♣4, and the ♣J(!) from declarer. So what card should East play at trick two? It may appear tempting to try to cash the ♥A but there's something fishy in Clubs and it doesn't add up. **Where is the ♣5?** If West had it then why did he not play the ♣5 from his ♣5 4? That is his duty and it appears that he has failed to follow a simple rule. The only explanation is that the ♣J is a "cod" card, meant to put the defence off the scent and that North has the ♣5. This means that the right card to play at trick two is the ♣A, not the ♥A. In any case, North's bidding (failure to launch Blackwood) is indicative of a void somewhere...

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♣	1♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass

**Hand 10**  
Game All, Dealer East

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

♠ 7 3  
♥ K J 9 6 5  
♦ 8 4 2  
♣ J 10 6

	N		
		E	
W			S

♠ A K 10 9 8 4  
♥ 8 4  
♦ A K J  
♣ 7 3

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

East plays in a quiet 2♣ and South leads the ♣A and another Club in response to his partner's overcall. East ruffs the third Club with the ♠10 and South over-ruffs. Now what? A Heart switch will beat 2♣; a Diamond switch into the ♦A K J lets it make. **How can South tell?** Remember that North had to lead a top Club at trick three to crush the Jack on table. The answer comes not at trick three (when giving South an over-ruff) but at trick two. The right way to play the Clubs from the North perspective is to follow with the Nine at trick one (normal encouragement) and then win the second Club with the **KING**. The third Club (the Queen, by necessity) does not give the suit-preference message, it's the playing of the King followed by the Queen that does. If South gets the message and plays a Heart North should cash two Heart tricks and play a fourth Club, promoting a second Spade trick.

West	North	East	South
1♠	3♦	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

**Hand 11**  
Love All, Dealer South

♠ 8 4  
♥ 3  
♦ A Q J 10 8 4 2  
♣ 9 5 4

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

	N		
		E	
W			S

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

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

North leads his singleton Heart against 4♠ and it all looks too easy – North-South take a Heart, a ruff, the ♦A and a trump trick for one down. **What's the problem?** Well, which Heart does South lead back at trick two, suspecting that North is going to ruff? If a high Heart (the Ten) or a middle Heart (the Seven) North might be tempted into underleading the ♦A. Oops! South's best defence is to lead back the ♥2 for a ruff and hope North gets it right. "Getting it right" means that North should cash the ♦A before leading a Club – after all, if South does have the ♣A there is no hurry to lead a Club. After the ♦A is cashed 4♠ is going to expire through natural causes; should North be in too much of a hurry to lead Clubs then the Diamond losers disappear on dummy's Clubs after declarer cashes the Ace of trumps.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

**Hand 12**  
North-South Game, Dealer West

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

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

	N		
		E	
W			S

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

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

West leads the ♣J against 4♣ and East follows with the Eight. South plays three rounds of trumps and West has to make a critical discard. What? The ♥Q, you say? But that is not your first priority. You know partner has the ♦A (if declarer has it he has six Spades and five Diamonds to cash) and he may want to know how many Diamonds to duck in order to isolate the dummy. If you signal for a Heart, an artful declarer will lead the ♦8 to the Jack and, should East duck, continue with the King. How does East know what to do? If South has only two Diamonds it may well be right for East to take the second Diamond – disaster on this layout. The best discard for West is to pitch the ♦6 on the third Spade. Now when he follows with the ♦4 on the first round of the suit East knows he has to duck twice as the Diamond layout is clear.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

**Hand 13**  
Game All, Dealer North

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

♠ 5 2  
♥ Q 10 8 2  
♦ A Q 10  
♣ 8 6 5 2

	N		
		E	
W			S

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

♠ 10 9 8 3  
♥ 7 5 3  
♦ K J 4  
♣ K Q 10

A simple contract and a simple lead – the ♥A. What next? Well, West does best to discourage the lead by playing the Two – he is desperate for a Diamond switch. Assuming East plays a Diamond at trick two West can win and play a Heart to East and get a second Diamond through. Now West has to cash the ♥Q and play a fourth Heart for a trump promotion. If East leads the ♦7 on the first round and the ♦5 on the second West may rise to the heights of realising North is unlikely to be 3-3 in the red suits. A fourth Heart would only cost if North had near solid Spades, the ♣A and a 5-3-3-2 pattern (or six Spades, which is less likely. A tricky deal, admittedly.

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	2♣	4♠
Pass	Pass	6♥	Pass

**Hand 14**  
Love All, Dealer East

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

♠ 7 3  
♥ 3  
♦ J 5 2  
♣ A 10 9 7 5 4 3

	N		
		E	
W			S

♠ A  
♥ A K Q 8 7 6 4 2  
♦ A Q 6 4  
♣ None

♠ K Q J 10 8 5 4 2  
♥ J 10  
♦ 8 7  
♣ K

South leads the ♠K against East's slam and the contract should fail if North keeps his head. East draws two trumps at tricks two and three and then plays the ♦Q. South's ♦8 tells North that East has four Diamonds, so the right defence must be to duck the Queen. With no access to dummy, declarer must lose two Diamond tricks. Sure, North should pitch his Clubs on East's subsequent run of the trumps – if East held the singleton ♣K the hand is undefendable. Count declarer's tricks – one Spade, eight Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club. As it is, he is held to one Spade, eight Hearts and two Diamonds.

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	2♥

**Hand 15**  
North-South Game, Dealer South

♠ 8 7 6 5 2  
♥ J 4  
♦ A 10 5  
♣ Q 8 4

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

	N		
		E	
W			S

♠ J 10 9 4 3  
♥ A 9  
♦ J 9 8 2  
♣ A J

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

Another modest part-score contract. West decides to lead the ♠Q against 2♥ and South has nothing better to do but take the first trick and play a trump to the Jack. Now what? Well, with Spades an open book East has to time the defence perfectly. He has to play the ♠4 and not a fatuous and unnecessary Jack. West should ruff South's Ace and pay attention to East's suit-preference signal for Clubs. A low Club (the ♣3) is led at trick four. Now what? Even though East strongly suspects West has the King (both the low Club switch and the bidding suggest that), he should take the Ace, play a Club to West and receive a Club ruff. Now, with five tricks under his belt, East can exit with a Spade. All of this is necessary to avoid being put on play later in the hand to lead Diamonds. The suit is frozen, and whoever leads it first loses out by doing so.

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	2♥	2♠
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

**Hand 16**  
East-West Game, Dealer West

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

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

	N		
		E	
W			S

♠ 9 5 3  
♥ J 10 8 3  
♦ K J 10 4  
♣ J 2

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

A straightforward deal to finish with. West plays in 4♥ after a competitive start to the auction and North leads a top Spade. He may lead the *Ace for attitude* or the *King for count* according to whim. Whatever he does South should make the key play of the Queen (in one case over-riding the request for a length signal). The Queen is **never** played as part of a high-low signal unless accompanied by the Jack. It always says that partner can underlead his other honour at trick two, should it suit him. Does it suit North to lead a low Spade at trick three? You bet it does! South takes the Jack and wastes no time in switching to a Club. Now there is no way to avoid the loss of two Spades, a Diamond and a Club. Note that playing three rounds of Spades is a soft defence – West ruffs, draws trumps and sets up three Diamond winners, dumping Club losers.