

West	North	East	South
	2♠ <sup>1</sup>	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

<sup>1</sup> *Weak two. 5-9 points.*  
North plays in 4♣ and East fails to find the devastating Heart lead, preferring the more obvious top-of-a-sequence ♣J. West takes the Ace and should see that North surely has decent Spades implying East has nothing. The contract is destined to make, given time, with Diamonds a dumping ground for North's losers. This is a tempo hand; there is no time to waste. After a passive return (a Club, say), declarer would draw trumps and take a Diamond finesse. Whatever West did next North would set up six Spades, one Heart, three Diamonds and a Club. West should be able to count declarer's tricks and should see the need for a Heart-attack (ahem!) – accordingly he must lead the ♥J (or any Heart honour) at trick two. Now the defenders have the tempo to take a Heart, two Diamonds and a Club to beat the game. Too difficult? It's a curious fact that the defence would have been far easier had West held ♥Q J 10 3 and dummy ♥A K 9.

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

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

♠ 7 2  
♥ K J 10 3  
♦ A Q  
♣ A 8 5 4 3

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

♠ K 10 4  
♥ A Q 9  
♦ K J 10 9 7  
♣ K Q

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT <sup>1</sup>
Pass	5♦	Pass	6♥

<sup>1</sup> *Blackwood.*  
Uncouth bidding to a thin slam. 4NT is Bonhomie Blackwood (bid simply to pass the time of day) and 6♥ a random punt. Nonetheless, bidding sequences like this occur all the time and misdefending slams is expensive. West might cash his Ace at trick one and save everybody a headache. However, rightly or wrongly, he decides to lead a Spade (or ♠5 or ♠4 or ♠2 – what's your poison?) Suppose that East plays the ♠K and East the ♠A. The ♥Q is finessed at trick two and East takes the King. Now what? It could be right either to return partner's Spade lead or to find West's Ace. East could have resolved this dilemma by contributing the ♠J at trick one since it is impossible that West could have underled the ♠A at trick one. Having located the ♠Q by this manoeuvre East should know enough to play back a Club at trick three. Can you see why a Diamond switch would be an error? A Club loser may disappear – a Diamond cannot.

**Hand 10**  
Game All, Dealer East

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

♠ 8 5 4 2  
♥ 4  
♦ 7 6 3 2  
♣ A 8 4 3

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

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

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	2♦ <sup>1</sup>	Dble	3♦
4♣	Pass	4♣	Pass
Pass	Pass		

<sup>1</sup> *Weak two. 5-9 points.*  
North's opening Diamond preempt gives East a hard time. With both majors he decides to Double and then bids 4♣ over West's Club bid. Whether West should Pass that is moot. Anyway, South leads the ♦A against 4♣ and can deduce that declarer has something like his actual 6-4 shape. With the Diamond layout clear how should South defend? Continuing Diamonds is wrong; the correct defence is to *isolate the dummy*. At trick two South must play a Club. Taking the second Spade with the King, South plays another Club and suddenly the contract can no longer be made. Declarer can only make five Spades, two Hearts and two Clubs and 4♣ fails. On any other defence it makes an overtrick. The bidding? Well, it's pretty lousy – 6♣ is a cakewalk when the ruffing Spade finesse succeeds.

**Hand 11**  
Love All, Dealer South

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

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

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

♠ K 7 3  
♥ Q 10 9 4  
♦ A 7 3  
♣ 8 6 2

West	North	East	South
1♥	Dble	Redble?	Pass
Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

North's take-out Double may not be everybody's taste but East's Redouble is preposterous. Still, if the opponents choose to bid in weird and wonderful ways it is not our job to give them bidding lessons. North leads a trump to 4♥ and West draws two rounds. Next comes the ♣J (ducked) and another Club. Now what? North is privileged to know that South does not have four Spades (he Passed over 1♥ Redoubled) so West is known to have four. Given South's count signal in Clubs West must be 4-5-2-2 in shape. If West has the ♦A the hand is undefendable, even if South has the ♠A. To beat 4♥ South has to have the ♦A. Switch to a low Diamond, then? Nope, South may win and play a Spade; besides, a Diamond return has dummy with three winners for discards. The winning defence is to play the ♦K, following with the Jack. West cannot avoid the doomed Spade finesse. A tough hand, but a logical one.

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

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

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

♠ 7 5  
♥ A 9 5 4  
♦ Q 7 5  
♣ K Q 10 4

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

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♣	Pass
4NT <sup>1</sup>	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	5♥ <sup>3</sup>	Pass
5♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

<sup>1</sup> *Key-card Blackwood.*  
<sup>2</sup> *"Do you have the ♠Q?"*  
<sup>3</sup> *"No!"*  
Bitten by the slam bug, East-West over-reach themselves and bid to 5♣. North leads the ♣10 and South tries the effect of the ♣Q and Ace. West ruffs and lays down the ♠A K. When the Queen fails to fall, declarer cashes four rounds of Diamonds; South may ruff or not as he pleases. If South doesn't ruff (best) he is stuck on lead with a Spade and has to open up Hearts. Well that suit is frozen and a low Heart allows declarer to make the rest. This is a series on defence, though, and the advice for the defence is to allow declarer to go wrong. Suppose, having been stuck on lead in the endgame, South were to lead the ♥Q rather than a low Heart. This can hardly cost and it gives declarer a losing option. He may play South for the ♥Q J x now and finesse the wrong way.

**Hand 13**  
Game All, Dealer North

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

♠ A K 8 6 3  
♥ A 8 7  
♦ A K 5 3  
♣ J

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

♠ Q 10 9  
♥ Q 6 4 2  
♦ 8 4  
♣ A Q 5 3

West	North	East	South
		1♥	2♣
3♥	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

This deal demonstrates another defence to an endplay. In fact, all of these last four deals (Hands 13 to 16) involve defences against attempted endplays. East reaches 4♥ after South tries to muddy the waters with a 2♣ overcall and South starts with three rounds of Spades. East ruffs, cashes the ♥A K and then runs Diamonds. When they stand up North is put on lead with a Heart, forced to open up Clubs. A low Club exit at trick ten concedes the contract. East plays low, South has to play the Queen and declarer can finesse the Ten for his contract. The Jack *might* cause East to go wrong (he may play for North to have ♣Q J and finesse the Ten). However, leading the *Nine* of Clubs defeats 4♥ by force. Whatever declarer does (covers with the Ten or not) the power of North's ♣7, lying over the ♣8, is crucial. Not easy to see, this one...

**Hand 14**  
Love All, Dealer East

♠ J 10  
♥ Q 10 8  
♦ 10 9 2  
♣ J 9 7 4 2

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

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

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

West	North	East	South
			2NT
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	6♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

Foolish bidding to a poor contract. West leads a Diamond (either the Eight or the Nine according to style), and the Jack forces the Ace. South draws trumps, plays three rounds of Hearts, ruffing, to eliminate the suit, and then exits with a Diamond. What can East do, apparently endplayed? The answer is he can **count the hand**. South is known to have started with a 4-3-2-4 hand (West presumably has given a count signal in Hearts) and it should be clear **not** to open up Clubs. A Diamond exit is quit safe, even though it concedes a ruff-and-discard. (To be clear, if South has another Diamond then leading one is safe; if he doesn't then he must have four Clubs). After this defence South has to open up the frozen Club suit himself and must lose a trick there for one off.

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

♠ J 9 7 4 3  
♥ K 9  
♦ Q 3  
♣ A 10 6 4

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

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

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

West	North	East	South
1♥	1♠	Pass	2♥ <sup>1</sup>
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

<sup>1</sup> *Game try in Spades.*  
North-South reach 4♣ and East leads a dutiful Heart. West plays three rounds of the suit, North ruffing the third one high. Next come two top trumps and a Diamond to the Queen. What next, West? This time a ruff-and-discard is fatal; the Club from dummy goes and two Clubs can be ruffed on table. West may think his only chance is to play a Club, hoping East has the Queen. Nope, he doesn't – and that's 4♣ landed in the net. Count declarer's tricks. Five Spades, no Hearts and two Aces – that's seven. A Diamond return will allow him to make three Diamond tricks but that's not enough. North has six minor-suit cards and no matter how they are distributed (North cannot have five), a Diamond lead guarantees West will make a Club at the end.

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

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

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

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

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