

Board 1

East Deals

N-S Vul



♠ A
♥ Q 10
♦ A J 7 5 4
♣ A 6 5 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♦	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
3 NT by South			

You pick up a 5-5 15 count and are all prepared to go on the offensive. Naturally you open 1 ♦ and watch the auction run away from you as it gets to 3 ♥ by the opponents before you can act again. Prudently you pass and the auction ends at 3N in the South. At least you don't have to lead....

Many players would content themselves with just waiting until dummy came down before doing any thinking about the hand, but you already have the auction! You have some idea about the shapes of the hands here, so let's put that wonderful brain of yours to work.

South's hand:

How Many Spades?

At least 5 since they overcalled. Probably not 6 since they didn't rebid it, though they had limited options over 3 ♥. So 5 possibly 6.

How Many Hearts?

Definitely not 3. Maybe 2, but with partner showing heart length and generally denying a spade fit I would think 1 more often than 2. So 1 possibly 2.

How Many Diamonds?

Well certainly a stopper. That's a lot of possibilities. Anything from ♦ Kx to ♦ KQxx are possible. I wouldn't put a lot of time into it other than saying at least 2 and at most 4.

How Many Clubs?

No real idea, but probably not a 5 card suit and likely a stopper since partner hasn't promised anything.

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♠ 4 2
 ♥ A J 9 6 4 3 2
 ♦ 9 6
 ♣ K 4



♠ A
 ♥ Q 10
 ♦ A J 7 5 4
 ♣ A 6 5 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
		1 ♦	1 ♠	
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 NT	
All pass				
3 NT by South				
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♦ 3	6	?	

OK. We did a lot of preliminary work on the previous page. Since we did that, let's write that out again here.:

Declarer has 5 or 6 spades, 1 or 2 hearts, 2-4 diamonds and <5 clubs. Now that we've seen dummy can we update any of those estimates?

Which suits should we focus on?

Hearts is the source of tricks and diamonds is the suit led.

What's going on in Diamonds?

Partner led the ♦ 3. That looks low, so partner likely has three or more diamonds. But declarer has a diamond stopper. If partner has diamond length then the ♦ 3 is their lowest. What exactly are the missing diamonds? ♦ KQT82. Partner cannot have the ♦ 2 and have five of them since declarer has a stopper.

What's going in Hearts?

Well, hearts looks dangerous. If declarer has 2 of them then we'd better hope partner has the ♥ K. However, the ♥ Kx might have tempted declarer into 4 ♥, not 3N. So there's hope.

Board 1

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♠ 4 2
 ♥ A J 9 6 4 3 2
 ♦ 9 6
 ♣ K 4



♠ A
 ♥ Q 10
 ♦ A J 7 5 4
 ♣ A 6 5 3 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
		1 ♦	1 ♠	
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 NT	
All pass				
3 NT by South				
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♦ 3	6	A	10

Wow declarer played the ♦ T! what does that tell us?

It tells us the declarer likely doesn't have the ♦ 2. Which tells us that partner started with ♦ 32.

So declarer now has 5 spades and 4 diamonds. We still need the hearts not to run so what is our source of tricks? It must be clubs!

What's going in Clubs?

Well, declarer has 2 or 3 clubs. which means partner has 3 or 4 clubs. since all of our club spots are so small we need to keep an entry to our long clubs. that means we need to lead a small club. The good news is that we're also knocking out any potential slow entry to that heart suit by either forcing declarer to win the ♣ K now or being able to take it later with the ♣ A.

Board 1

East Deals

N-S Vul

		♠ 4 2		
		♥ A J 9 6 4 3 2		
		♦ 9 6		
		♣ K 4		
♠ Q 9 6 5 3			♠ A	
♥ 8 7 5			♥ Q 10	
♦ 3 2			♦ A J 7 5 4	
♣ J 9 7			♣ A 6 5 3 2	
		♠ K J 10 8 7		
		♥ K		
		♦ K Q 10 8		
		♣ Q 10 8		
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
		1 ♦	1 ♠	
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 NT	
All pass				
3 NT by South				
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♦ 3	6	<u>A</u>	10
2. E	♣ 2	-	-	-

We've now started to setup our tricks by leading clubs and declarer only has 1 heart, 3 diamonds and 2 clubs. They won't be able to enjoy enough spade tricks before we take 3 clubs a spade and a diamond to set them.

Board 2

South Deals

N-S Vul



♠ 4
♥ A K Q 8 2
♦ 9 8 6 3
♣ J 9 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
2 ♠	3 ♣	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
3 NT by South			

Not much to be said about the auction. You are delighted to be rescued from partner's preempt and are happy to let the opponent's play wherever they end up. You know that dummy has five or more clubs (often six) and declarer has a spade stopper. Also declarer is unlikely to have five hearts.

Also with less than opening values you can pinpoint South to being in the 9-11 HCP range. With partner having at least 5 HCP and you 10, this seems like the opponent's might've been too pushy on this contract and you might be able to set them.....

Board 2

South Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A
♥ 10 7
♦ A Q 5 2
♣ A 10 8 7 6 3



♠ 4
♥ A K Q 8 2
♦ 9 8 6 3
♣ J 9 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
2 ♠	3 ♣	Pass	3 NT
All pass			
3 NT by South			
Lead: ♠ J			

Well declarer has a nice hand. Not much you can do at trick one except follow suit. so you do so.

Wait! The cardinal rule is take time at trick 1 to work out what's going on. And there's a big surprise in dummy. There's only one spade! So how many spades does declarer have? Likely five!!!

What suit is declarer likely to lead next?

Clubs.

Board 2

South Deals

N-S Vul

♠ A
♥ 10 7
♦ A Q 5 2
♣ A 10 8 7 6 3



♠ 4
♥ A K Q 8 2
♦ 9 8 6 3
♣ J 9 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	
			Pass	
2 ♠	3 ♣	Pass	3 NT	
All pass				
3 NT by South				
<i>Trick</i>	<i>Lead</i>	<i>2nd</i>	<i>3rd</i>	<i>4th</i>
1. W	♠ J	<u>A</u>	4	2
2. N	♥ 7	<u>Q</u>	5	4
3. E	♥ K	6	3	10

But declarer led a heart! Well that's weird. We win it by playing the lowest of our touching honors. Partner plays the ♥ 4 which looks low. We're playing standard so it might just be from the ♥ 43. Besides declarer's attacking the suit so they probably don't just have three of them.

Nevertheless, we cash another high heart to see if declarer is being tricky and get the ♥ 3 from partner to confirm the doubleton.

What next?

Well let's stop and count. Declarer has 5 spades and 4 hearts and isn't leading clubs. If they're letting us in they probably have the ♠ KQ. Otherwise they might be afraid of a spade through their ♠ Q. They also have the ♥ J. That's 6 HCP. If I cash the heart and setup a trick for them I'm going to give them the initiative as well as an extra trick. So that seems wrong. Since they're not attacking clubs, I'm going to guess that they only have one of them. So switching to a club while dangerous seems like the right action. If partner has the ♣ K or the ♣ Q (or both) we can setup two club tricks to go with my three hearts and set this contract. Even if declarer has the ♦ KJ, they only have 3 spades, 4 diamonds and 1 club for 8 tricks without the precious ninth trick in hearts.

Board 2
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

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

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
2 ♠	3 ♣	Pass	3 NT

All pass
 3 NT by South
 Lead: ♠ J

Board 3

South Deals

None Vul



♠	A Q 7
♥	K Q J 6 5
♦	9 2
♣	K 8 2

West

North

East

South

?

OK. A classic problem 15 HCP and a 5 card major. What should you open, 1 ♥ or 1N?

I open 1N with only 1 ace. I have rebid problems if partner says 1 ♠ or 1N over my 1 ♥ opening bid.

Board 3

South Deals

None Vul

♠ K J 9 8
♥ A 9 3
♦ Q 10 7 4
♣ 7 5



♠ A Q 7
♥ K Q J 6 5
♦ 9 2
♣ K 8 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT ¹
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. 15-17
3 NT by South
Lead: ♦ K

After 1N, partner uses Stayman and bids 3N to show a 4 card spade suit. You pass and the opening lead is the ♦ K.

This is NT, so time to count our winners

Suit	Actual		Potential
	Us	Them	Us
♠	4	0	0
♥	5	0	0
♦	0	0	2
♣	0	1	1

Seems like 9 tricks. But this is matchpoints. we also have an 8 card heart fit. What might happen in 4 ♥? Well we have 2 diamond losers and 1 club loser. but if the club finesse is working we'll have 10 tricks. That beats 3N making 3. Is there any way we can make 10 tricks in NT as well?

♠ K J 9 8
 ♥ A 9 3
 ♦ Q 10 7
 ♣ 7 5



♠ A Q 7
 ♥ K Q J 6 5
 ♦ 9
 ♣ K 8 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT ¹
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All pass	
1. 15-17			
3 NT by South			

After the opening lead North switches to the ♠T.

Which hand should I win the spade in?

The first clue is the ♦ K lead. Since the ♦ Q is in dummy I'm betting that LHO has the ♦ AK. So I can get a 10th trick in diamonds if I cross to my hand and lead towards dummy. So win the spade in my hand and push a diamond through.

♠ K J 9
 ♥ A 9 3
 ♦ Q 10 7
 ♣ 7 5



♠ Q 7
 ♥ K Q J 6 5
 ♦ —
 ♣ K 8 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT ¹
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All pass	
1. 15-17			
3 NT by South			

The first clue is the ♦ K lead. Since the ♦ Q is in dummy I'm betting that LHO has the ♦ AK. So I can get a 10th trick in diamonds if I cross to my hand and lead towards dummy.

When LHO plays low, should I get greedy and try the ♦ T or just fly with the ♦ Q?

Since 10 tricks is all I need to beat 4 ♥, I should not get extra greedy and just play the ♦ Q.

♠ K J 9
 ♥ A 9 3
 ♦ 10 7
 ♣ 7 5



♠ Q 7
 ♥ K Q J 6 5
 ♦ —
 ♣ K 8 2

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1 NT ¹
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All pass	
1. 15-17			
3 NT by South			

OK. I have my 10th trick. Anything else I should be thinking about?

Well it's rare, but hearts might be 5-0. With the ♥ 9 in dummy I can pick up ♥ Txxxx in West's hand. I have the spades for transportation so I can lead the ♥ 3 from dummy and give myself that extra chance.

Board 3
 South Deals
 None Vul

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

West	North	East	South
			1 NT ¹
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

1. 15-17

3 NT by South

Trick	Lead	2nd	3rd	4th
1. W	♦ <u>K</u>	4	6	2
2. W	♠ 10	8	2	<u>A</u>
3. S	♦ 9	3	<u>Q</u>	5
4. N	♥ 3	♣ 3	<u>K</u>	4
5. S	♥ 5	2	<u>9</u>	♣ 4
6. N	♥ <u>A</u>	♠ 3	6	7
7. N	♠ 9	5	<u>Q</u>	4
8. S	♥ <u>Q</u>	8	♦ 7	♣ 6
9. S	♥ <u>J</u>	10	♣ 5	♠ 6
10. S	♠ 7	♦ 8	<u>J</u>	♣ 9
11. N	♠ <u>K</u>	♣ J	♣ 2	♣ 10

3N making 4 is going to be a good score in any field.