U3ABC Compendium Twelve: Commentary

Introduction

This is a summary of Hands 1-18 from Compendium Twelve, complete with Commentary to help explain the recommended bidding and play. As always, your mileage might vary when you play these hands.

Advanced topics

Advanced topics are in green. These are included for completeness; you can ignore them for now or dive in if you want *more*.

The Hands

North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ AQ6
♥ AKJ
♦ AJ76
♣ 873

♠ J9732
♥ 972
♦ Q8
♣ AK4

♠ T8
♥ QT83
♦ K9532
♣ 62

♠ K54
♥ 654
♦ T4
♣ QJT95

Board: 1 Dealer: North Lead: ♠3 #2976

North has a strong, balanced hand with 19 HCP. The best way to show that is to bid 1 of a suit, then on the second round you can jump to 3NT. So North starts by bidding their longest suit, 1D.

South has a bare 6 HCP, so is not strong enough to bid their long suit (2C requires 9+ points), doesn't have 4 Diamonds, so can't bid 2D, so their only sensible bid is 1NT (6-9 HCP).

North adds up the HCP, reaching the magic 25 – just enough for 3NT. Fingers crossed – those Clubs look bad…

Advanced Discussion

One unfortunate thing about this hand is that South bid NT first so they're Declarer and North's hand is Dummy, revealing where all those points are to Defense. Can't be helped.

East	South	West	North
Pass	1♦	Dbl	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ J84
♥ Q72
♦ 986
♣ JT96

♠ K5
♥ AK84
♦ AQ74
♣ K73

♠ 9763
♥ T53
♦ 5
♣ Q8542

♠ AQT2
♥ J96
♦ KJT32
♣ A

Board: 2 Dealer: East #2812

West has 19 HCP, a balanced hand, and two stops in the opponents' suit. They double intending to bid NT on the second round; Double Then Bid, to show their strength and stop. They're a bit too strong for a 1NT overcall (which is 16-18 HCP).

This 1-level double promises 12 HCP, a shortage in the doubled suit, and a tolerance for any of the other three suits; a **Takeout Double**. Or it could be a strong hand with a long suit – see the Discussion for Board #1.

This double is forcing.

East has just 2 HCP, a poor 5-card minor and a poor 4-card major. They're forced to bid by partner's double. They bid their horrible 4-card major, 1S, a majors are preferred to minors and is more economical of bidding space than 2C

This minimum level suit bid promises very little; a 3-card suit (usually 4+) and 0-8 HCP.

West rebids 1NT as planned, to show their shape and point count (19+).

East bids their second suit, 2C, as a weakness takeout (no liking for NT and less than 6 HCP). No, it isn't Stayman, as they have already bid Spades!

West passes as there's no chance of game with less than 25 HCP.

Advanced Discussion

I think East should pass rather than bid 2C; West has promised at least one stop in Diamonds, and it's much better to have the weak hand as Dummy.

Even if East bids 2C, West should bid 2NT. This will make the weaker hand Dummy, encourage a Diamond lead for a free finesse, and NT contracts score better. If they make!

What do you think?

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

	♠KQ5 ♥65 ♦K732 ♣QJT3	
♠T73 ♥AT42 ♦QJT8 ♣97		♠J42 ♥KQJ97 ♦6 ♣K865
	♠A986 ♥83 ♦A954 ♣A42	

Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♦Q #578

South has 12 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has 11 HCP and a balanced hand. This isn't quite enough to be sure of making 3NT, as that requires 25 HCP. They bid 2NT to tell partner they have 11-12 HCP, asking them to bid 3NT if they have the maximum 14 HCP.

North does not have the maximum 14 HCP, so they pass 2NT.

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

	♠QT87 ♥75 ♦QT5 ♣KQJ5	
♠A5 ♥AQJ62 ♦A63 ♣963		♠2 ♥KT983 ♦K842 ♣A84
	♠KJ9643 ♥4 ♦J97 ♣T72	

Board: 4 Dealer: West #389

West has 15 HCP and a good 5-card Heart suit, so opens 1H.

The 1H opening bid shows 4 Hearts and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

East has 10 HCP, 5-card support for Hearts, and can add 2 points for their Singleton Spade, making 12 points.

With 12 points, East knows that their partnership has at least 24 points, nearly enough for game in a Major. They could bid 3H, asking partner to bid 4H with 15+ points. But really, partner only needs 13 points - so East decides to take the small risk of bidding straight to game, 4H. Their 5-card Heart suit is – perhaps – justification enough!

Advanced Discussion

If East wanted to be more cautious, they could respond 2D on the first round, showing 4 Diamonds, 10+ points, and forcing partner to bid again. Partner's second bid should clarify whether they are weak, intermediate, or strong. But most people would just bid 4H!

North	East	South	West
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

♠ AKQJT8
♥ A64
♦ 8
♣ Q32

♠ 92
♥ KQ32
♦ T3
♣ KJ976

♠ 64
♥ T98
♦ J9765
♣ A85

♠ 753
♥ J75
♦ AKQ42
♣ T4

Board: 5 Dealer: North Lead: ♥T #2120

North has 16 HCP and a good 6-card Spade suit in an unbalanced hand, so opens 1S. This shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP. They plan to jump rebid their Spades to show 16-19 points and 6+ trumps.

South has 10 HCP but doesn't have 4-card support for partner's major, so bids their longest suit, 2D. Bidding a new suit at the 2 level shows 10+ HCP and a 4-card suit.

North adds up their points, making 26+. With such a strong trump suit, they don't need much support from partner, so they jump to 3S as planned. A jump rebid shows 16-19 points and 6+ trumps; it is a game invitation (not a game force), it's asking partner to bid 4S if they have at least 2 Spades. (Both partners can count 26+ points, so they are unlikely to stop short of game.)

South has 3 Spades and a really nice Diamond suit, so is happy to raise to 4S.

Advanced Discussion

I think many players would bid 4S over the 2D bid, rather than leave the decision up to partner. Even if partner has 0 Spades, North should still be able to draw trumps with such a strong suit.

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

♠ A975
♥ KQJ754
♦ KQ
♣ 7

♠ QJT
♥ A82
♦ 74
♣ KQT52

♠ K6432
♥ T
♦ A93
♣ A943

♠ 8
♥ 963
♦ JT8652
♣ J86

Board: 6 Dealer: East #2081

North has 15 HCP and a good 6-card Heart suit, strong enough for a 2-level overcall.

A 2-level overcall shows 11-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

South has a terrible hand, just 1 HCP, so they pass.

North isn't strong enough to bid over 4S, so passes.

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

♠ K842
♥ A954
♦ 96
♣ T32

♠ J7
♥ QJ632
♦ AQ4
♣ J97

♠ T9
♥ K
♦ T8732
♣ A8654

♠ AQ653
♥ T87

Board: 7 Dealer: South #2565

South has 15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit, so they open 1S, intending to rebid 2S.

The 1S opening bid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP (but see the discussion for Hand 1).

North has 7 HCP, 4-card support for partner's Spades, and a Doubleton. With a total of 8 points, they're not strong enough to bid 2H (a 2-level change of suit shows 10+ points), so they respond 2S.

2S, a single raise of partner's suit, promises 6-9 and 4 trumps. This bid is not forcing.

North adds partner's 6-9 points to their 15 + 1 (for the Doubleton) and can see that game is unlikely, so they pass.

Advanced Discussion

♦ KJ5
♣ KQ

With the same points but slightly better shape (say xx in Hearts and KQx in Clubs) and slightly better Spades (say AQT98 rather than AQ653), South might bid 3S rather than pass, asking partner to bid 4S with 8-9 points.

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

♠ 84
♥ AKJ2
♦ 73
♣ J8762

♠ KJT752
♥ Q6
♦ AJ4
♣ 53

♠ Q963
♥ 875
♦ KQ9
♣ A94

♠ A
♥ T943
♦ T8652
♣ KQT

Board: 8 Dealer: West #2708

West has 11 HCP, a 6-card Spade suit, and two Doubletons. While this is 1 HCP short of the 12-19 usually required to open, applying the Rule of 20, they're just strong enough to open 1S.

(The Rule of 20 says: add your HCP and to the number of cards in your two longest suit. If you've got 20 or more, you can open.)

East has 11 HCP and 4 Spades, so can support partner's suit – but at what level? They're too strong for a single raise (2S shows 6-9 points). 3S (a double raise) shows 10-12 HCP and an Ace, while 4S (a double raise) shows 10-12 points and no Ace. So East bids 3S to show their Ace. This bid isn't forcing, but partner will usually raise to 4S.

West is as weak as they can be for their 1S opening. They can add 2 points for their Doubletons now that Spades have been agreed as trumps, but can still only see a total of 23-25 points, so they pass.

North	East	South	West
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

♠
♥ AT53
♦ AQ862
♣ J953

♠ A9
♥ QJ97
♦ J953
♣ AT6

♠ T32
♥ K842
♦ T
♣ K8742

♠ KQJ87654
♥ 6
♦ K74
♣ Q

Board: 9 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #2658

North has just 11 HCP in a three-suited unbalanced hand. This is a bit awkward to bid, so they open 1D, their longest and plan to rebid one of their 4-card suits on the second round, to show a two-suited hand. (They are just strong enough to open on the rule of twenty: 11 HCP plus 9 cards in two suits.)

South has a good 8-card major and 11 HCP in an unbalanced hand, so they respond 1S. They plan to bid Spades at least twice, to show their length!

This 1S response shows 4+ Spades, 6+ HCP, and denies a longer Heart suit, but not much else can be gleaned from the bid at this time.

North now bids one of their 4-card suits, as planned: 2C. While they would rather bid the Heart suit because it's stronger and it's a major, a 2H rebid would be above the barrier, showing a stronger(16-19 point) hand. So 2C it is!

South could support partner's Diamonds (option 1) with the 5-3 fit, but game in a minor demands more points. They don't have a stop in the unbid suit, so NT (option 2) is out. Their Spade suit is so long (at worst an 8-0 "fit") that it's good enough to rebid (option 3); they can only see 23-26 HCP, but their Spade suit is so strong (worth six or seven tricks), with partner's support for their Honours in the minors 4S is a good bet.

When you have a very long trump suit like this, HCP are much less important.

East	South	West	North
1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

	♠ A6 ♥ JT32 ♦ J987 ♣ 763	
♠ JT3 ♥ A9876 ♦ 2 ♣ AKJ8		♠ Q874 ♥ KQ4 ♦ A43 ♣ Q42
	♠ K952 ♥ 5 ♦ KQT65 ♣ T95	

Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♦K #1641

West has 5 Hearts and 13 HCP, so they start by bidding 2D, asking partner to transfer 2H.

East bids 2H as requested, what does West bid next?

They have 13 HCP, and partner has 12-14, so the partnership has 25-27. You need 25 points for 3NT or 4H, but which is the better contract? West bids 3NT to tell partner:

- I have exactly 5 Hearts
- We have enough points for game in NT or Hearts
- You decide!

Yes, it's a proper dialogue. East can pass to play in 3NT or bid 4H to play in 4H. With just two Hearts, they'd pass 3NT, as they've only got a 5-2 fit, not enough. With three Hearts, they would probably bid 4H unless they hate the idea; with four or more Hearts, they would bid 4H.

With three good Hearts, East is happy to bid 4H, game. (This type of bid is sometimes called a Correction or Preference Bid.)

Advanced Discussion

East only has three Hearts, so could pass 3NT, especially as they have a 4333 hand, but they have two good Honours in Hearts, so they decided on 4H.

I wonder which you chose - some people prefer playing in a suit, some people prefer No Trumps.

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

	♠ 5432 ♥ A765 ♦ K652 ♣ 5	
♠ J8 ♥ KJ83 ♦ QJ8 ♣ J976		♠ KQT ♥ QT92 ♦ T9 ♣ KQT8
	♠ A976 ♥ 4 ♦ A743 ♣ A432	

Board: 11 Dealer: South #24

South has 12 HCP and three 4-card suits. This is a special type of unbalanced hand called a **4441 hand**; it's a bit awkward to bid, there are extra rules to remember that will seem pretty arbitrary...

To open bidding with a 4441 hand, you open one of the 4-card suits. Which one?

- If the Singleton is red (Diamonds or Hearts), open the suit below the Singleton e.g. if you have a Singleton Heart, open 1D
- If the Singleton is black (Clubs or Spades), open the middle 4-card suit e.g. if you have a Singleton Club, open 1H

So South bids 1D. This opening bid shows 12-19 HCP and 4 Diamonds (but see the discussion for Hand 1). Their rebid will reveal more!

North has 7 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Diamonds. They could raise Diamonds, but they have 4 Hearts and 4 Spades; if partner has a fit with either of these suits, a major suit contract scores better than a minor suit contract.

So North bids the lower of their two major suits, Hearts. (Bidding the lower suit makes it easier for partner to rebid Spades if they can't support your Hearts.) This 1H change of suit response shows 4 Hearts and 6+ HCP. It is forcing.

South has to bid again. They can't raise partner's Hearts with just one (!) but they can bid their 4-card Spade suit very economically, at the 1 level. This 1S rebid shows 4 Spades and 12-19 HCP.

North has 4 Spades, so should raise partner's 1S bid. But how far? They have 7 HCP and 2 points for their Singleton Club. They also have a fit with partner's Diamonds, so decide to be optimistic and

jump to 3S. This shows 4-card support and 10-12 points; hmm.

South can see 22-23 HCP + 2 points for their Heart Doubleton, game might be possible. But with such a weak Spade suit and so many low cards, they decide to pass 3S. Phew.

Advanced Discussion

Many people won't open a 4441 hand with just 12 HCP. With 13+, open and rebid as follows:

- If partner supports your suit, raise or pass as appropriate to your point count
- If partner bids one of your other 4-card suits, raise it
- If partner bids your singleton, bid the next suit above it if you have 13-14 HCP, or NT if you have 15+

North has a 4441 hand, just like South, but they're responding, not opening; the 4441 rules don't apply to responding.

If North were stronger, they could bid 1S rather than 1H on the first round, and bid Hearts on the second round.

If South didn't have a 4441 hand, they would open their 4-card Spade suit first, and bid the 4-card Diamond suit on the second round. So this sequence of bids (1D..1S) suggest they are 4441, but they could also bid this way with 5 Diamonds and 4 Spades, so North doesn't know which type of hand South has got.

I'd say that North's 3S jump raise exaggerates their strength, they have lots of small cards and should have bid 2S – which South would then pass.

And finally... some experts recommend a simple opening rule called TAPS; with a black Singleton open 1H, with a red Singleton open 1C.

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	Pass	1♠
3♣	3♦	4♣	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

	♠K2 ♥KT872 ♦QJT72 ♣9	
♠A ♥Q65 ♦A9 ♣KQJ6543		♠T985 ♥AJ943 ♦5 ♣T82
	♠QJ7643 ♥ ♦K8643 ♣A7	

Board: 12 Dealer: West #2032

North has 10 HCP and two 5-card suits. They have the length and strength to overcall at the one-level (or two-level) without a jump – but which suit?

They choose the higher-ranked suit, Hearts, so they can bid their second suit economically on a subsequent round. Hearts is also a better-scoring suit. This one-level 1H overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

East passes because they have only 5 HCP and a 5-card suit bid by the opposition!

South really does not like partner's Hearts, with a void. They have a decent 6-card Spade suit and 10 HCP, so they bid 1S – showing 0-2 Hearts, 9+ HCP, and a good 5-card suit.

West rebids their Clubs, jumping to show both length and strength.

North doesn't like partner's Spades much; they might only have 5, for a 7-card fit. So they continue bidding as planned, with 3D.

This 3D rebid shows at least 4 Diamonds and a moderate hand. It denies 3-card support for partner's Spades.

East bids 4C to show they have some support, a bit rash.

South has excellent 5-card support for partner's Diamonds and a fairly poor hand for defending against 4C. Despite their lack of HCP, they have a void in Hearts and a doubleton in Clubs: 10 HCP + 4 SP when playing in Diamonds. Assuming partner has around 10 HCP and shortages in Spades and Clubs, 5D seems reasonably likely to make, so they bid it.

Advanced Discussion

Again, both sides were quite aggressive here, but with good reason this time; West has an excellent long suit and North-South have lots of Shortage Points if they can find a fit, which they did, in Diamonds.

It looks like both 5D and 5C could make. That's the power of shapely hands: long suits and shortages are often better than HCP!

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

	♠A986 ♥J3 ♦A954 ♣A42	
♠J42 ♥KQT872 ♦ ♣K865		♠T73 ♥A94 ♦QJT86 ♣97
	♠KQ5 ♥65 ♦K732 ♣QJT3	

Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♦Q #136

North has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 1NT, showing 12-14 HCP and a balanced hand.

South has 11 HCP and a balanced hand. This isn't quite enough to be sure of making 3NT, as that requires 25 HCP. They bid 2NT to tell partner they have 11-12 HCP, asking them to bid 3NT if they have the maximum 14 HCP.

North does not have the maximum 14 HCP, so they pass 2NT.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

Notice that the 1NT and 2NT point counts are not precise, they are ranges (12-14 and 11-12) so if you opened 1NT with 13 points and partner replied 2NT, you might have 24 points or 25 points in total; if you're feeling optimistic you might try your luck with 3NT!

25 points does NOT guarantee that you'll make 3NT, but you probably will. That's what makes Bridge a game, not a science.

East	South	West	North
1NT	Pass	4♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

	♠J6432 ♥K83 ♦KQJ4 ♣9	
♠9 ♥AQJT652 ♦A7 ♣JT5		♠AK7 ♥74 ♦T852 ♣KQ87
	♠QT85 ♥9 ♦963 ♣A6432	

Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♣9 #15
West has 7 Hearts and 12 HCP, so they know they have a good fit (partner must have 2 as they bid 1NT, so that's 9 Hearts or more) and the partnership has 24-26 HCP.

With their fit, 3 Shortage Points as described in the introduction, 2 for the Singleton Spade and one for the Doubleton Diamond, the total points are 27-29, more than enough for game.

West doesn't need to negotiate with partner, they know that 4H is almost certain, so they bid it right away. No need for a Transfer.

Advanced Discussion

It isn't a terrible idea to bid 2D to transfer to Hearts, but it's not a good idea, for several reasons:

1. You already know 4H is the best contract
2. A sequence like 1NT 2D 2H encourages the opposition to bid and they might find a good contract if you let them in
3. If you use a Transfer, your hand will be Dummy, showing the Defence your finessing holding in Hearts (AQJ); why help them?

South	West	North	East
2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

	♠852 ♥T53 ♦AQ976 ♣J8	
♠J97 ♥Q9742 ♦4 ♣KT97		♠T643 ♥K86 ♦K83 ♣542
	♠AKQ ♥AJ ♦JT52 ♣AQ63	

Board: 15 Dealer: South #1892
South has 21 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

A 2NT opening shows 20-22 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has 7 HCP, so knows they have enough points for game (27-29) but not enough for a Slam, so bids 3NT

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

♠JT975
♥2
♦T95
♣KT63

♠Q84
♥QT9843
♦AK2
♣5

♠A
♥KJ7
♦J864
♣Q9742

♠K632
♥A65
♦Q73
♣AJ8

Board: 16 Dealer: West Lead: ♠T #2786

West has 11 HCP in an unbalanced hand with a 6-card Heart suit, so they open 1H intending to rebid 2H to show their shape and point count. (They can open with 11 HCP under the Rule of 20.)

This 1H opening promises four Hearts and 12-19 points.

East has 11 HCP in a two-suited hand. They can't support Hearts, so they bid 2C to show their longer suit and points.

Partner opened, so must have 12-19 HCP. North can only see 21+ HCP, so game looks unlikely. Maybe in Hearts? It all depends on partner's rebid.

This 2C response shows 10+ HCP and 4+ Clubs. It denies 4-card support for Hearts or 4 Spades, and is forcing for one round.

South rebids 2H as planned. This bid shows a one-suited hand (6+ Hearts) and 12-15 HCP. (It doesn't deny support for Clubs, as you don't usually support a minor if there's any other bid available!)

East can now raise partner's suit (option 1) with the 6+3 fit. With 23+ HCP and 2 Shortage Points for their Spade singleton, they are strong enough to bid 4S.

Advanced Discussion

If you look at the hands, Declarer can only make the contract because they hold an unbroken sequence of Hearts, from 7 to K. This allows them to use two of Dummy's Hearts to ruff their losing Spades.

If North leads ♥2 rather than ♠T and South follows through with a second Heart, the contract is doomed.

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

♠T6
♥AQJT98
♦J852
♣2

♠KQ54
♥K542
♦A6
♣J54

♠A8
♥6
♦KT74
♣AQT976

♠J9732
♥73
♦Q93
♣K83

Board: 17 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #1276

North has 8 HCP and 6 good Hearts (with three Honours), an ideal Weak Two.

This Weak Two opening suggests 6 Hearts and 5-10 HCP, and no (other) 4-card major.

East has a good 6-card Club suit and 13 HCP, so overcalls with 2S.

This 2-level overcall of a Weak Two promises 10-16 HCP and a 6-card suit (or good 5-card suit.

West has 13 HCP, a balanced hand, and a stop in Hearts. They can see 23-29 HCP and expect East's Club suit to provide several tricks; 3NT looks easy. Should be a lot easier than 5C!

And it is.

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

	♠ 7653 ♥ T94 ♦ K86 ♣ J65	
♠ 82 ♥ K865 ♦ 742 ♣ A984		♠ AKQJ ♥ AQJ72 ♦ AQ9 ♣ T
	♠ T94 ♥ 3 ♦ JT53 ♣ KQ732	

Board: 18 Dealer: East #550

East has 23 HCP and a 5-card Heart suit. Too strong for a 1H opening, they open 2C.

An opening bid of 2C shows 21+ HCP (with a 5-card Major) or 23+ HCP in a balanced hand, or 9+ playing tricks. This is a Game Force unless opener rebids 2NT.

West has 7 HCP, so should make the negative response, 2D (0-7 HCP), but chooses the positive response of 2NT instead. Hmm

The 2NT response to the 2C opening bid promises 8+ HCP and no 5-card suit. A positive response indicates a Slam is likely.

East bids 3H to shows their 5-card suit.

West has good 4-card support for partner's suit, so raises them to 4H. This raise of opener's suit promises 3-card support.

East can see at least 31 HCP, at least 8 Hearts, and can (perhaps) add two points for their Club Singleton. With 33 points, they're fairly confident about bidding a small slam, 6H.

Advanced Discussion

West's 2NT response to the 2C opening bid is questionable. They don't have 8 HCP! You can get in trouble with the Tournament Director if you break rules like this.