

U3ABD Reinforcement Practice Five: Bidding Commentary

Introduction

This is a summary of the hands you played in this Reinforcement Practice, which covers your entire course. It is complete with Bidding Commentary to help explain the recommended bidding. As always, your mileage might have varied when you played these hands.

It also includes guidance on playing the hand in Defence, for the hands that focus on that.

The Hands

North East South West

| | | | |
|---------|----------|--------|------|
| 2♠ | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| | ♠ A98752 | | |
| | ♥ 542 | | |
| | ♦ A | | |
| | ♣ J53 | | |
| ♠ K983 | | ♠ QJT6 | |
| ♥ JT964 | | ♥ QJT | |
| ♦ JT964 | | ♦ 873 | |
| ♣ KT92 | | ♣ AQ8 | |
| | ♠ K43 | | |
| | ♥ A76 | | |
| | ♦ KQ52 | | |
| | ♣ 764 | | |

Board: 1 Dealer: North Lead: ♥Q #2719

North has a 6-card Spade suit with just one Honour but 9 HCP; the high-ish point count compensates for the single Honour in their suit.

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

South has three Spades, so they could raise to 3S based on that alone, to extend the pre-empt, but they have 12 HCP. They can see 9 Spades and 17-22 HCP. Not enough points to make 4S, but with most of their points outside Spades, their hand could be quite good in defence, so it's better to pass and see if the opposition bids.

East South West North

| | | | |
|---------|---------|---------|------|
| 1♦ | Pass | 1♥ | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | 3NT | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |
| | ♠ JT | | |
| | ♥ K84 | | |
| | ♦ J9862 | | |
| | ♣ T97 | | |
| ♠ AQ65 | | ♠ 42 | |
| ♥ QJT93 | | ♥ A | |
| ♦ K4 | | ♦ AQ753 | |
| ♣ A6 | | ♣ Q8542 | |
| | ♠ K9873 | | |
| | ♥ 7652 | | |
| | ♦ T | | |
| | ♣ KJ3 | | |

Board: 2 Dealer: East Lead: ♠J #2717

East has 14 HCP, in a very unbalanced two-suited hand. The suits are the same length, so they open 1D, the higher-ranking suit as they expect to rebid their lower suit next. Their shape makes up for their modest point count - as long as they play in Clubs or Diamonds!

This 1D opening promises four Diamonds and 12-19 points. It denies a longer major suit, but not much else can be gleaned from the bid at this time.

West has 16 HCP with two biddable majors and a fairly balanced hand; game is almost certain, with at least 28 HCP. They respond 1H, their longest suit, expecting to choose game on the second round.

East now rebids 2C as planned, showing 5+ Diamonds, 4+ Clubs and 12-15 points.

West may be tempted to rebid 2S (the fourth suit) but bidding the fourth suit has a special meaning that we haven't covered yet. Anyway, there isn't much point bidding Spades, as partner has shown 9+ cards in the minors, so the chance of a 4-4 fit in Spades is slim. West can't support either of East's suits(option 1), but does have a stop in the unbid suit, so can rebid NT. With 28+ HCP, they bid game, 3NT, with a clear conscience.

East could "correct" the bid to 5C or 5D if their hand is unsuitable for NT, but 3NT is usually a better contract!

South West North East

| | | | |
|---------|----------|---------|------|
| 1♥ | 1♠ | 3♥ | Pass |
| 4♥ | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| | ♠ 875 | | |
| | ♥ QT96 | | |
| | ♦ KQ9 | | |
| | ♣ A94 | | |
| ♠ AKJT2 | | ♠ 943 | |
| ♥ 874 | | ♥ | |
| ♦ 73 | | ♦ T8652 | |
| ♣ KJ7 | | ♣ QT862 | |
| | ♠ Q6 | | |
| | ♥ AKJ532 | | |
| | ♦ AJ4 | | |
| | ♣ 53 | | |

West North East South

| | | | |
|--------|---------|---------|------|
| 1NT | Pass | 2♣ | Pass |
| 2♦ | Pass | 3NT | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |
| | ♠ 86 | | |
| | ♥ 9832 | | |
| | ♦ 74 | | |
| | ♣ AT852 | | |
| ♠ AT2 | | ♠ KQ74 | |
| ♥ AJ4 | | ♥ Q65 | |
| ♦ 9632 | | ♦ AQJT5 | |
| ♣ KJ9 | | ♣ 6 | |
| | ♠ J953 | | |
| | ♥ KT7 | | |
| | ♦ K8 | | |
| | ♣ Q743 | | |

Board: 3 Dealer: South #376

South has 15 HCP and a good 6-card Heart suit, so they open 1H.

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

West overcalls with 1S. This one-level overcall shows at least 5 Spades and 8 HCP. **We haven't taught you about overcalls yet, so hopefully YOUR West didn't.**

North has 11 HCP and 4-card support for partner's Hearts, so jump raises to 3H. This shows 10-12 points and 4 Hearts.

South can now add 2 points for their Doubletons, playing in Hearts, making a total point count of 27-29. That's more than enough for game, but not enough to consider a slam – so they bid 4H.

Board: 4 Dealer: West Lead: ♣5 #41

North makes their best lead against a NT contract; fourth highest from their longest suit: ♣5.

East and West have reached 3NT after a Stayman auction, so South knows they've shared some useful information! From the bidding, West has 12-14 points and no 4 card major. Dummy has 14 points. South has 9 points, so North must have 3-5 points. Phew!

When North leads ♣5, South is pleased to see that Dummy has only a singleton. South plays "third hand high" with ♣Q and Declarer wins with ♣K. At trick 2, Declarer takes the losing Diamond finesse and South wins with ♦K.

It's easy to see that South should return a Club, but which one? North would really like to know how many Clubs West has. The way to tell them is to lead ♣3, your (original) fourth highest. Why? This is a bit advanced:

With three Clubs remaining South correctly returns ♣3, their original fourth highest. North now knows that South started with two or four Clubs. After beating Declarer's ♣9 with ♣T North assumes the latter and continues with ♣A to drop Declarer's ♣J. After this good Defence Declarer goes one down.

If South had returned ♣7 at trick 3 (thinking that this would make no difference) North would have assumed that South started with three Clubs and tried to put South on lead for a further Club lead through Declarer. Declarer would then finish with at least ten tricks. We manage to take 5 of the first 6 tricks to defeat the contract. The key play was returning ♣3 at trick 4, our original 4th highest, so Partner knows they can cash their remaining Clubs without trying to put us on lead again.

If you aren't using (and understanding) signals like this, South leads a small Club, North beats West's 9 with the T, and then has to guess whether West has J, Jx or Jxx.

North East South West

2NT Pass 3♣ Pass
 3♦ Pass 3NT Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ Q74
 ♥ AKQ
 ♦ AK6
 ♣ K832

♠ 6
 ♥ 987632
 ♦ Q8743
 ♣ 6

♠ AK32
 ♥ J4
 ♦ J9
 ♣ T9754

♠ JT985
 ♥ T5
 ♦ T52
 ♣ AQJ

Board: 5 Dealer: North Lead: ♠J #419

East makes a safe attacking lead in the form of ♠J, top of a four-card sequence. Dummy wins with ♠K, West following with ♠6 and Declarer with ♠4. At trick 2 Declarer runs Dummy's ♣T to East's ♣J. What should East lead to trick 3?

It would be a serious mistake to cash ♣A. This would allow Declarer to make three Club tricks, eleven in all. East should continue their attack on Spades by leading ♠T. Dummy wins with ♠A and West discards ♥2.

Declarer plays a Club to ♣K and East's ♣A. What should East lead to trick 5?

It's still wrong for East to play their Club winner, they must lead Spades again – to set up their ♠85 as winners when they get back on lead with ♣Q

Declarer cashes ♥AKQ, on which East plays their low Hearts and discards ♦2. Declarer continues with ♦AK, but has to concede the rest. Despite having 30 points, Declarer goes one down.

The Defence achieved this by leading Spades at every opportunity. Declarer didn't have time to set up their Clubs before East had set up their Spades.

East South West North

3♣ Pass Pass Pass

♠ K93
 ♥ QT2
 ♦ AT852
 ♣ Q4

♠ A742
 ♥ AJ8763
 ♦ Q
 ♣ 62

♠ QJT8
 ♥ K95
 ♦ J973
 ♣ KJ

♠ 65
 ♥ 4
 ♦ K64
 ♣ AT98753

Board: 6 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #2689

East has 7 HCP and 7 Clubs, enough for a 3-level pre-empt.

This 3C pre-empt suggests 7+ Clubs, 6-9 HCP, and no 4-card Major.

West has 11 HCP with a nice 6-card Heart suit, but that's not enough to bid Hearts. They only have 2-card support for Clubs, so can't raise to 4C – so they pass.

North and South have 11 points each, so neither is strong enough to double for take-out (needs 13-15 HCP), so they pass too.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

Remember that pre-empts are weak, in effect a sacrifice to stop the opposition making Game; you aren't promising 9 tricks, far from it!

| South | West | North | East |
|--------|--------|--------|------|
| 1NT | Pass | 3NT | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |
| | ♠ AT9 | | |
| | ♥ AQ3 | | |
| | ♦ 976 | | |
| | ♣ A865 | | |
| ♠ K42 | | ♠ Q876 | |
| ♥ T765 | | ♥ 42 | |
| ♦ AT83 | | ♦ KJ5 | |
| ♣ JT | | ♣ 9732 | |
| | ♠ J53 | | |
| | ♥ KJ98 | | |
| | ♦ Q42 | | |
| | ♣ KQ4 | | |

Board: 7 Dealer: South Lead: ♦ 3 #15

In a NT contract, it's often best to lead your longest suit. West has two 4-card suits, Hearts and Diamonds. They choose Diamonds as the suit is stronger (headed by an Ace), so they lead their fourth highest: ♦ 3. (You lead the fourth highest if the suit includes an Honour.)

When Dummy goes down, East counts the points: South's bid shows 12-14 points, Dummy has 14 points, and East has 6 points, leaving West with 6-8 points. At trick 1 East knows little else about the hands. For example: West's Diamonds could be as weak as ♦ Txxx or as strong as ♦ AQxxx.

East plays third hand high with ♦ K, which holds the trick. They return Partner's suit (usually a good idea), continuing with ♦ J, the higher of their remaining cards. This serves to unblock the suit and also tells West that they started with 2 or 3 Diamonds – with 4 they would return their fourth highest.

The Defence cash four tricks in Diamonds, Declarer and Dummy each discarding Spades. When West switches to ♣ J Declarer wins in hand with ♣ K and cashes four Heart tricks, throwing a second Spade from Dummy.

East realises that Declarer has ♣ Q and that Dummy's Clubs are a threat, so they retain all their Clubs and discard Spades down to singleton ♠ Q. Declarer then has to concede the last trick to East's ♣ 9.

The Defence defeat this contract because of East's correct play in Diamonds at the start of the hand, and careful discards near the end.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

Unblocking means playing a high card for the express purpose of making sure you don't take the lead from Partner at the worst possible time. This usually happens in NT, when Partner is leading their long suit.

For example: assume you have Qxx in Clubs and Partner has AKJxx. If Partner plays A and K, then another, your Q will win but Partner is no longer on lead and can't cash their two remaining Clubs. In this situation, you need to unblock by playing the Q earlier, when Partner leads their A or K.

It's a bit scary; what if Partner has AKxxx and Declarer has Jxx? You've just given them a trick! Unblocking is a lot less risky if Declarer has already run out of Clubs!

Of course the easiest way to handle this example would be for you to lead the Queen first, then exit with a low Club to Partner's AKxxx. But you might not get that chance.

West North East South

2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass

2NT Pass 3NT Pass

Pass Pass

♠ T63
♥ 85
♦ 52
♣ AQT863

♠ AKQ
♥ KQT4
♦ AK6
♣ K92

♠ 87
♥ AJ6
♦ J743
♣ J754

♠ J9542
♥ 9732
♦ QT98
♣

Board: 8 Dealer: West #2297

West has 24 HCP and a balanced hand. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP), 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.

East has 7 HCP, not quite enough for a positive response, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

West bids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

East doesn't have a 5-card suit to bid, or a 4-card Major to investigate with Stayman. They do have 7 HCP, more than enough to raise to 3NT

North East South West

2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass

2♥ Pass 4♥ Pass

Pass Pass

♠ AK5
♥ AKQ85
♦ AQ4
♣ Q6

♠ T973
♥ J4
♦ K865
♣ T75

♠ QJ8
♥ T7
♦ 973
♣ AKJ93

♠ 642
♥ 9632
♦ JT2
♣ 842

Board: 9 Dealer: North #485

North has 24 HCP and a balanced hand with a good 5-card Major. Too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP) or 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.

South has 1 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

North bids 2H to show their 5-card suit.

South only has 1 HCP but does have 4-card support for partner's Hearts. They don't have any other values to show, so they bid game, 4 Hearts.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

South's 4H bid feels a bit heavy-handed; the 2C opening bid is a game force, so a 3H response would give partner a bit more space for any other bids they want to make – they aren't going to miss game Still, no harm done.

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

♠ KJ762
♥ KQ
♦ KT8
♣ KT8

♠ Q
♥ T8643
♦ 754
♣ AQ75

♠ A5
♥ AJ9752
♦ QJ6
♣ 43

♠ T9843
♥
♦ A932
♣ J962

Board: 10 Dealer: East Lead: ♠T #169

South leads ♠T, the top of a 3-card sequence - a fairly passive but safe lead. You don't in general want to lead an Ace without support, or any unsupported Honour - even a Jack!

When North sees Dummy it seems that Partner's Spade lead hasn't helped much, but the Defence might still be able to take four tricks in the other suits if South can provide a little help.

North covers Dummy's ♠Q with the ♠K and Declarer wins with ♠A. Declarer ruffs a Spade in Dummy, plays a Heart to ♥A and then loses a Heart to North. South is void in Hearts and discards ♠4 followed by ♠8. What should North lead to trick 5?

Declarer has deliberately put North on lead in the hope of gaining an advantage from their next lead. Sucker! Can North find a safe lead?

There's one Spade left, ♠9 but who has it? If South has it, North must NOT lead a Spade as that would allow Declarer to ruff in one hand and discard from the other, giving them an extra trick! And it's clear that South must hold that card, since they wouldn't (shouldn't) lead ♠T from ♠T843.

North therefore has to lead from KT8 in Diamonds or KT8 in Clubs - but which? Obviously, leading a Club round to Dummy's ♣AQ would give Declarer a trick, a "free finesse"; North wants to play their Club King on that Queen.

So that leaves Diamonds. Even if leading a Diamond makes East take a finesse, they would do that anyway once they get to Dummy, so a Diamond lead can't give away a trick.

When Declarer plays ♦J South wins with ♦A and returns the suit to North's ♦K. North exits safely with their last Diamond and later wins the vital fourth trick with ♣K when Declarer finesses ♣Q. Declarer needs the Club finesse, so they go down one.

North defeated the contract by playing Diamonds each time they were on lead. Declarer was able to win the third round with ♦Q, but by playing safely (not leading a Club) North was able to defeat the contract eventually with ♣K.

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

♠ 932
♥ T983
♦ 82
♣ A765

♠ KT764
♥ K4
♦ K943
♣ 32

♠ AQJ5
♥ J
♦ AJ65
♣ QJT4

♠ 8
♥ AQ7652
♦ QT7
♣ K98

Board: 11 Dealer: South Lead: ♥T 1385

West has 9 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit with two Honours (K and T), just strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1S overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card Spade suit.

North has 4-card support for partner's Hearts and 4 HCP + 1 SP, so they raise partner to 2H; a bit misleading, as this promises 6 points, but not bad.

East has 16 HCP and excellent 4-card support for partner's Spades. They can even add 2 points for their Singleton Heart, so with 26-33 points they're strong enough to raise to game.

West North East South

2NT Pass 6NT Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ T97
 ♥ Q976432
 ♦ T2
 ♣ 2

♠ AKQ 864
 ♥ KJ5 AT
 ♦ AK953 J4
 ♣ T6 AKJ543

♠ J532
 ♥ 8
 ♦ Q876
 ♣ Q987

North East South West

1♥ Pass 1♠ Pass
 2♥ Pass 4♥ Pass
 Pass Pass

♠ T94
 ♥ KJ9752
 ♦ 7
 ♣ AK6

♠ AQ5 732
 ♥ A83 64
 ♦ KT52 J843
 ♣ 732 Q985

♠ KJ86
 ♥ QT
 ♦ AQ96
 ♣ JT4

Board: 12 Dealer: West #1933

West has 20 HCP and a balanced hand, so opens 2NT.

The 2NT opening bid promises 20-22 HCP in a balanced hand.

East has 13 HCP and a balanced hand, so can see a total of 33-35 HCP. 33 points is just enough for a Small Slam in NT, so they bid 6NT without hesitation.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

33 HCP is usually enough for a Small Slam in No Trumps, but it's not certain. Missing 7 points, the opening lead could even be the Ace from AK, taking you down immediately. Life, eh?

Board: 13 Dealer: North Lead: ♣5 #2702

North has 11 HCP and a decent 6-card heart suit in an unbalanced hand. This is just enough to open 1H, but it's a bit aggressive, as it promises 12-19 HCP and 4 Hearts. They're single-suited and weak, so plan to rebid 2H.

South has 13 HCP and only 2 Hearts, so can't raise partner's suit. Game is very likely, they need to make a forcing bid. They bid 1S to show their 4-card major at the lowest level, indicating 6-15 HCP, 4 Spades, and less than 4 Hearts. It's forcing for one round, so they can show their points on the next bid.

North still has a weak hand, but South's bid is forcing; they must bid. They can't support partner's Spades with 3 cards, but their Heart suit is long enough to bid again. So they rebid 2H bid as planned, showing 5+ Hearts and 12-15 points.

South thinks that game ought to be on with 25+ HCP, but hasn't found a fit. 3NT is a bit tempting but with a minimum of 7 Hearts, 4H seems safer, so that's the bid they chose.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

I'd prefer to play this hand in 3NT, even without seeing all the cards. What do you think?

| East | South | West | North |
|---------|---------|------|------------|
| 4♠ | Pass | 6♠ | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |
| | ♠ A | | |
| | ♥ J87 | | |
| | ♦ J932 | | |
| | ♣ QJT43 | | |
| ♠ J2 | | | ♠ KQ987654 |
| ♥ A52 | | | ♥ 96 |
| ♦ AK5 | | | ♦ T6 |
| ♣ AK952 | | | ♣ 7 |
| | ♠ T3 | | |
| | ♥ KQT43 | | |
| | ♦ Q874 | | |
| | ♣ 86 | | |

Board: 14 Dealer: East Lead: ♥K #885

East has 8 Spades and just 5 HCP; one point short of the normal range for a 4S pre-empt, but still acceptable, especially as the points are all in the Spade suit, so this hand would be worthless in defence.

The 4S pre-empt suggests 8+ Spades and 6-9 HCP.

West has 19 HCP and 2 Spades, so the partnership has 25+ HCP and 10+ Spades. Is that enough for a slam? East thinks so, and raises to 6S.

Once again, the opposition isn't strong enough to bid over the pre-empt.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

The 6S bid looks rather optimistic with just 25 HCP, but South has three Aces so there's no chance the opposition can cash AK right away, except in Spades (!). South has five instant winners (A, AK and AK) so they just need to make seven of East's eight Spades, which is highly likely. (You can go down if East is missing two of the top three honours or forgets to discard the losing Heart before drawing trumps.)

| South | West | North | East |
|---------|----------|-------|---------|
| 1♣ | 1♥ | 1♠ | 2♥ |
| 3♣ | Pass | 5♣ | Pass |
| Pass | Pass | | |
| | ♠ KQJT2 | | |
| | ♥ 65 | | |
| | ♦ A32 | | |
| | ♣ Q87 | | |
| ♠ 64 | | | ♠ A9873 |
| ♥ KQJ97 | | | ♥ T84 |
| ♦ KT4 | | | ♦ Q875 |
| ♣ 952 | | | ♣ 6 |
| | ♠ 5 | | |
| | ♥ A32 | | |
| | ♦ J96 | | |
| | ♣ AKJT43 | | |

Board: 15 Dealer: South #542

West has 9 HCP and a good 5-card Heart suit, so they're strong enough to overcall at the 1-level.

The 1-level 1H overcall shows 8-15 HCP and a 5-card suit.

East has 6 HCP and 3 Hearts, just enough to limit raise to 2H.

The 2H limit raise of the overcall shows 6-9 points and 3-card support.

West isn't strong enough to bid again.

| West | North | East | South |
|----------|----------|------|----------|
| 2♥ | 2♠ | Pass | 4♠ |
| Pass | Pass | Pass | |
| | ♠ AKJ764 | | |
| | ♥ 86 | | |
| | ♦ J | | |
| | ♣ AJ93 | | |
| ♠ 9 | | | ♠ 853 |
| ♥ AT9542 | | | ♥ K3 |
| ♦ Q7 | | | ♦ T98542 |
| ♣ KT76 | | | ♣ Q2 |
| | ♠ QT2 | | |
| | ♥ QJ7 | | |
| | ♦ AK63 | | |
| | ♣ 854 | | |

Board: 16 Dealer: West Lead: ♥K #1370

West has a 6-card Heart suit with one Honour (and a ten) and 9 HCP; the high-ish point count compensates for the missing Heart Honour.

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

North has an excellent 6-card Spade suit and 14 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).

South has 3-card support for Spades and 12 HCP, so can see 8-9 Spades and 22-28 HCP. Being rather optimistic, they bid 4S.

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

I don't like South's jump to 4S, a Game Invitation of 3S makes more sense. Partner might only have 10 points! Indeed, if you look at the hands, the Defence could cash two Hearts before Declarer can throw their Heart losers onto AK of Diamonds, eventually losing two Club tricks too, for one down.

North East South West

1NT Pass 3NT Pass
Pass Pass

♠ Q5
♥ KQT
♦ KJ75
♣ QT85

♠ AT864 ♠ K92
♥ 87653 ♥ 94
♦ ♦ ♦ QT98632
♣ K62 ♣ 4

♠ J73
♥ AJ2
♦ A4
♣ AJ973

Board: 17 Dealer: North #1449

North has a balanced hand with 13 HCP, so opens 1NT.

1NT promises a balanced hand and 12-14 HCP.

South has 15 HCP in a balanced hand, so they can see 27-29 HCP. With no 4-card or longer major, the only sensible game is 3NT.

East South West North

1♥ Pass 2♣ Pass
3NT Pass Pass Pass

♠ QJT
♥ KQT9
♦ 73
♣ JT73

♠ 973 ♠ AK5
♥ J3 ♥ A852
♦ A4 ♦ K952
♣ KQ9854 ♣ A2

♠ 8642
♥ 764
♦ QJT86
♣ 6

Board: 18 Dealer: East Lead: ♦Q #223

East has 18 points and a balanced hand, with two 4-card suits, Diamonds and Hearts. They plan to open one of a suit and rebid 2NT to show their shape and points, but which suit? With a major and a minor you will usually choose the major – not least because there's a chance that partner has four and you'll find a fit right away. So they open 1H.

West has 10 points, an unbalanced hand, and a good 6-card minor. They don't have four Hearts so can't support partner's major. They are just strong enough to bid a new suit at the two level, so they bid 2C. Bidding a new suit at the two-level shows 10+ points and 4 cards, and is forcing.

East now knows that West has 10+ points, making a total of at least 28. So, instead of rebidding 2NT, East can rebid 3NT.

South West North East

2♣ Pass 2♦ Pass
2NT Pass 3♣ Pass
3♠ Pass 4♠ Pass
Pass Pass

♠ QT32
♥ 75
♦ T532
♣ QJT

♠ 74 ♠ 865
♥ QJT ♥ K98632
♦ J987 ♦ Q
♣ 9652 ♣ K84

♠ AKJ9
♥ A4
♦ AK64
♣ A73

Board: 19 Dealer: South #2997

South has 23 HCP and a balanced hand. Slightly too strong for a 2NT opening bid (20-22 HCP), 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.

North has 5 HCP, so must make the negative response, 2D.

The 2D response to the 2C opening bid shows 0-7 HCP; a negative response indicating a Slam is unlikely.

South bids 2NT to show they have 23-24 HCP and a balanced hand. Partner can pass now if they have a very weak hand (less than 2 HCP) i.e. this rebid "cancels" the presumed Game Force.

North has 5 HCP and a 4-card Major, so bids 3C (Stayman) to check for a 4-4 fit.

South has a 4-card Spade suit, so responds with 3S.

North raises partner to 4S as they've established a 4-4 fit in Spades.

| West | North | East | South |
|--------|--------|------|-------|
| Pass | 1♦ | Dbl | Pass |
| 1♠ | Pass | 1NT | Pass |
| 2♣ | Pass | Pass | Pass |
| | ♠AQT2 | | |
| | ♥J96 | | |
| | ♦KJT32 | | |
| | ♣A | | |
| ♠9763 | | | ♠K5 |
| ♥T53 | | | ♥AK84 |
| ♦5 | | | ♦AQ74 |
| ♣Q8542 | | | ♣K73 |
| | ♠J84 | | |
| | ♥Q72 | | |
| | ♦986 | | |
| | ♣JT96 | | |

Board: 20 Dealer: West Lead: ♦J 2812

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

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; or even a very strong hand, as here!

This double is forcing.

South has just 4 HCP and only three Diamonds, a little too weak to bid (although some partners would raise to 2D to be obstructive).

West 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 decide to bid their horrible 4-card major, 1S, as majors score better than minors and 7 tricks are easier than 8.

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

East rebids 1NT as planned. This Double Then Bid followed by 1NT shows they have 19+ points and a stop in the doubled suit, Diamonds.

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

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

ADDITIONAL (ADVANCED) DISCUSSION

I think West should pass 1NT rather than bid 2C; East has promised at least one stop in Diamonds, and it's much better to have the weak hand as Dummy. And NT scores better than a minor.

Even if West bids 2C, East 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?