

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF BRIDGE'S

BRIDGE PLAYER 2150 GALACTICA

WITH INTEGRATED
TUTOR



OXFORD SOFTWORKS

The London School of Bridge's BRIDGE PLAYER 2150 GALACTICA

INTRODUCTION

After loading the program you will be asked to choose between various options given. These are self-explanatory and in general your choices will continue to apply until you enter "O" at any later stage. The main options are:

- A. to let the computer deal the hands at random;
- B. to enter hands of your own choosing;
- C. to play pre-set hands in the TUTOR mode;
- D. to load from disc a previously saved hand; and
- E. to save the previous hand to disc (obviously available only after at least one hand has been played).

If you elect for the TUTOR mode (alternative C) you can either choose a hand by its number (1-100, although to get hand 100 you need to go via hand 99) or, by entering "R" instead, let the computer select a tutor hand at random. In TUTOR mode the bidding and card play follow a predetermined pattern, with the result that, when it is your turn to bid, only one bid will be accepted by the computer as being correct: similarly when it is your turn to play, only one card will be accepted. In general, the instructions on the following pages apply whether or not you are playing TUTOR hands: see, however, "TUTOR mode" on page 7 for further information.

In TUTOR mode you are required to bid the hand before playing the cards. In the other modes the options will allow you, if you wish, to dispense with the bidding and nominate the contract and declarer. See "OTHER MAIN OPTIONS" on page 9.

Before proceeding to the hands, you will be given the opportunity to see the keying instructions: these are brief instructions as to how to use the keyboard in this program and they summarise much of what is in the following pages.

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THE BIDDING

You are always South and your hand will be shown at the bottom of the screen, with the bidding above it. The computer will bid the West, North and East hands. All legal bids are allowed, including doubling and redoubling.

To make your bid when it is your (South's) turn to do so, enter first the level (1, 2 etc.) then the suit, i.e. S, H, D, C or N (for No Trumps). Thus to bid 2 No Trumps enter 2N; to bid 6 Spades enter 6S.

The remaining possible bids are entered as follows:-

Pass (no bid) - P (or ENTER)
Double - D
Redouble - R

If you wish you can, when it is your turn to bid, let the computer make your bid for you (press the space bar) or just see what its recommendation is (press "M").

If you wish to restart the bidding, press "B" when it is your turn to bid, or when the bidding is complete.

The program uses the Acol bidding system with strong 2-bids and a conventional 2 Club opening bid showing, normally, 23+ points. In the TUTOR mode a weak (12-14 points) opening 1 No Trump is used: in other modes you can select a weak, strong or variable No Trump. (Note that the opponents always use the same No Trump range as you are using at the time.)

Opening bids at the 3 level are pre-emptive and weak. A double of an opponent's opening bid at the 3 level is for takeout (i.e. requires the doubler's partner to bid his best suit).

The next few paragraphs are for people with little if any experience of bridge: others can jump to "CONVENTIONS" on page 4

To value your hand you count 4 points for an Ace, 3 for a King, 2 for a Queen and 1 for a Jack. Generally not less than 13 points are required for an opening suit bid at the 1 level, although if you have a five-card suit you can open on 12 points, and with a six card suit on 11 points.

Opening suit bids at the two level are a little more complicated but without going into too much detail it may be said that an ideal opening bid at the 2 level includes a six-card (or longer) suit with two of the top three honours, together with at least 18 high card points and at least eight playing tricks. The following hand would be very suitable for a 2 Spade opening bid:

S A K Q J 6 3
H A 4
D K J 2
C 6

With 20-22 high card points and 4333, 4432 or 5332 shape you should open the bidding with 2 No Trumps.

It is beyond the scope of this manual to set out the principles of bidding (any good bookshop will sell bridge books dealing with this absorbing topic). Those who have not played bridge before may be helped to know that as a general proposition the combined points required for contracts at a particular level are roughly as follows:-

Level	No Trumps	Suit
1	20	17
2	23	20
3	25 (game)	23
4	(You would not	26 (game in major suit)
5	wish to play NT	29 (game in minor suit)
	at 4 or 5 level)	
6 (small slam)	33	32
7 (grand slam)	37	36

Of course you also need a reasonable distribution of cards between the two hands "a good fit"). In suit contracts this means you need at least 7 cards in the suit (preferably 8 or more): in No Trumps you need to have "stoppers" in the opponents' suits (i.e. honours which will stop the opponents winning lots of tricks in their suit).

In suit contracts when a good fit has been found the value of hands is found by adding the honour points (4 for an Ace etc.) to distribution points in outside suits: these are 3 points for a void, 2 for a singleton and 1 for a doubleton.

If your partner has opened the bidding you can work out from what is said above how many points he has as a minimum. If you like his suit then you can add your points to his and, by reference to the above table, bid to the correct level. For instance, your partner opens the bidding with 1 Spade. You hold 7 points and 4 Spades so you are more than happy to play in a Spade contract. Partner's opening bid has shown a minimum of 13 points. Add on your 7 points and by reference to the above table you can expect to make 2 Spades so you bid it. If instead you held 11 points you would bid 3 Spades because your combined point count would be at least 24.

This description oversimplifies the bidding process enormously but should give novices an idea of what the bidding is all about.

Once the bidding is over, the play of the hand begins, with trumps as the last suit (which for this purpose includes No Trumps) bid.

Declarer will be the person who made that bid *except* that his partner will be declarer if he was the first of that pair to bid that suit (as will often be the case). For instance, South opens the bidding with 1 No Trump and North, his partner, bids 3 No Trumps. Because South bid No Trumps first, he becomes the declarer and his partner, North, becomes dummy (which means that North's hand goes down on the table for all to see, after the opening lead has been made). Declarer decides, not only which card to play from his own hand: he also decides which card to play from dummy.

To make the contract, declarer will need to make at least the number of tricks in

the contract plus 6. For example, if the contract is 4 Spades, declarer will need to make at least 10 tricks (4 + 6) to make his contract.

* * * * *

CONVENTIONS

The following conventions are used in this program:

Stayman: While a bid of a suit at the 2 level over partner's 1 No Trump opener is a weak takeout, a bid of 2 Clubs over his 1 No Trump bid has a special meaning. It requests partner to bid a 4 card major suit if he has one, otherwise to bid 2 Diamonds. (This is with a view to seeing if it might be better to play in a major suit than No Trumps. The person initiating Stayman will always have at least 4 cards in at least one major suit). If you wish to play in Clubs at the lowest possible level after your partner has opened 1 No Trump, you must first bid 2 Clubs, and then bid 3 Clubs over your partner's rebid.

Blackwood: A bid of 4 No Trumps asks partner to show by his next bid how many Aces he holds and thereafter a bid of 5 No Trumps asks him to show how many Kings he holds. He must reply to these bids as follows:-

In response to:

4 No Trumps		5 No Trumps	
<i>With</i>	<i>he bids</i>	<i>With</i>	<i>he bids</i>
0 or 4 Aces	5 Clubs	0 or 4 Kings	6 Clubs
1 Ace	5 Diamonds	1 King	6 Diamonds
2 Aces	5 Hearts	2 Kings	6 Hearts
3 Aces	5 Spades	3 Kings	6 Spades

Gerber: A bid of 4 No Trumps over an opening 1 No Trump bid or 2 No Trumps bid is quantitative, not Blackwood. To ask for Aces or Kings when your partner has opened with 1 No Trump or 2 No Trumps, you bid 4 Clubs. A response of 4 Diamonds shows 0 or 4 Aces, 4 Hearts shows 1 Ace, etc. If thereafter you want to find out how many Kings partner has, you bid 5 Clubs. With 0 or 4, he will bid 5 Diamonds, with 1 he will bid 5 Hearts, etc.

Grand Slam Force (Josephine): A player who bids 5 No Trumps once a trump suit (i.e. not No Trumps) has been agreed (and where Blackwood is not being used) asks his partner to bid 7 of the agreed suit if he has two of the top three honours in the agreed suit, otherwise to bid 6 of that suit.

Unusual No Trump: A bid of 2 No Trumps after the opponents have bid one or both major suits (and before partner has made a positive bid or doubled) promises at least 5 cards in each minor suit and a near opening bid and asks partner to bid his better minor suit.

Note. While the computer will recognise and respond appropriately to the Stayman, Blackwood, Gerber, Grand Slam Force and Unusual No Trump conventions it will not (except in TUTOR mode) initiate them.

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THE PLAY OF THE CARDS

You are always South but, in order to avoid your being dummy and merely watching the play of the cards when your partner has become declarer, you will play both the North and South hands whenever you (South) or your partner (North) are declarer.

Once the bidding is complete the opening lead will be made, dummy's hand will go down and play will proceed. The computer will play the East/West cards, also North's unless he is dummy or declarer.

When it is your turn to play, you can play any legally permissible card. Note that if there is only one card which you can legally play (i.e. you hold a singleton in the suit led, or you have only one card left in your hand) the computer will, to speed up the game, automatically play this card for you.

The standard way of entering the card you want to play is to enter first the suit to be played (S, H, D or C) and then the card (A, K, Q, J, T (for 10), 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3 or 2). To play the Queen of Hearts, therefore, enter H (for Hearts) followed by Q (for Queen).

To speed things up, however, you can, if you wish, take advantage of the following facilities:-

- (a) if you are following suit:-
 - (i) you need not enter the suit itself but can simply enter the card; and
 - (ii) if you want to play the lowest card which you hold you need only press the "ENTER" key; and
- (b) to play the lowest card held in any suit you need only enter the suit (followed by the "ENTER" key).

To take an example, the player on your right has led the Queen of Hearts. You hold the K, 10, 7, 4 of Hearts. If you want to play the 4 of Hearts you can (because it is your lowest card of the suit led) simply press the "ENTER" key to play this card. If on the other hand you want to play the King of Hearts you can, if you wish, simply enter K.

If you hear a "beep" during the play of the cards, it will be to alert you to the fact that a defender has ruffed (i.e. trumped a side suit).

When it is your turn to play a card you can review the bidding before playing

your card (by entering "B"), see the play to the earlier tricks (by entering "E") or peep at the other players' hands (by entering "P"). This information will be deleted from the screen once you have played your card.

By entering "M" you can also (except when in TUTOR mode) get the computer's suggestion as to what card to play from your hand. In any mode, if you simply press the space bar the computer will play the recommended card for you.

(This may well not be the same card as would be played if you entered "F" to find the best card on a double dummy basis - see below).

In addition you can (except when in TUTOR mode) claim the rest of the tricks, when it is your turn to play, by entering "Z", or concede the rest of the tricks by entering "Y". The computer will accept your claim or concession (even if unjustified!) and will score the hand accordingly.

You can also, when it is your turn to play, recommence the play of the cards at trick 1 by entering "R".

To (re)bid and replay the current hand in its entirety, enter "G". To play the current hand in a different contract (and/or with a different declarer) enter "V". Note that selection of either of these alternatives will affect subsequent hands (until you return to the Options menu) in that bidding will not (if you enter "V") or will (if you enter "G") take place on later hands.

At the end of each trick the message "Press any key to continue" will appear. If at this stage you wish to replay the trick you should enter "U" and the computer will take you back to the start of the trick. Pressing any other key will take you on to the next trick.

After the first trick, the cards played to the previous trick are shown at the bottom right of the screen. An arrow indicates the card which won that trick. The number of tricks won by each side is shown at the bottom left of the screen.

DOUBLE DUMMY PLAY

Entering "F" at trick 8 or thereafter (except in TUTOR mode) instructs the computer to find the best card to play on a double dummy basis, i.e. it will, if necessary, go through every possible permutation and combination of card play and select the card which, assuming best play all round, is guaranteed to produce the best (or equal best) result. You can use this facility to do double-dummy bridge problems by composing a full hand, electing to play the cards from all 4 hands yourself so as to leave the right cards in each hand at trick 8 or thereafter, and then entering "F" each time you want to know which is the best card to play.

The time taken to find the best card will depend largely on how many cards

remain in each hand: selecting this option at trick 12 will produce an almost instantaneous result: at trick 8 it may take some hours to produce the result, since the computer will have to examine millions of possible lines of play. It normally takes less time when following suit than when on lead, because there are less possibilities needing to be considered.

In carrying out this exercise the computer will, if you are on lead, look first at your Spade suit (if any), then your Hearts etc. and will, within any suit, start with the top card held and work down, ignoring at this stage any lower touching cards. While the computer is working out the best card to play, the screen will show which card it is then considering, and the number of lines of play considered to date.

If the computer finds a card which, assuming best play all round, will result in your winning the rest of the tricks, it will stop the search there and then (even if that card would not be your normal choice).

The technique for finding the optimum card in this way is universally used in chess-playing computer programs: so far as is known, Bridge Player Galactica is the first published bridge playing program to include this technique. For those interested, the algorithm is known as a minimax search.

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TUTOR MODE

Each of the 100 TUTOR hands has been selected with a view to demonstrating one or more key aspects of bidding and/or play and it is hoped that you will find them interesting and instructive. Most of the hands were contributed by Nicola Gardener and Richard Wheen, although a number were kindly contributed by Raymond Brock, Dennis Halliwell and Paul Gait. All of the hands contributed by others have, however, been verified, as to both bidding and play, by Nicola Gardener and/or Raymond Brock, to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude.

Details of each TUTOR hand are set out later in this manual with a brief commentary on the bidding and play, which you are recommended to read after playing the hand.

The hands are deliberately not grouped by subject, as it were, but broadly speaking the simpler hands are the lower numbers while the more advanced hands are the higher numbers. There is, however, an index at the end of this manual so that you can identify hands of a particular type if you wish.

As explained on page 1, only one bid or card will be accepted when it is your turn to bid or play. It may not matter much, or at all, at the table which card you play from a suit when holding AKQ of that suit, but in TUTOR mode the

computer will only accept one of them. To save frustration it will help you to know that the normal rules when playing TUTOR hands are:- (a) when leading, the higher of touching cards is played and (b) when following suit, the lower is played.

If you get stuck over which bid to make or which card to play, then if you press the space bar the computer will make your bid or play your card for you.

The score at the start of each TUTOR hand (including any part score) is shown on the screen (top left corner) in the usual way. When the hand is over, the score sheet reflects this, and assumes that the pair making any previous game in the same rubber then scored 100 points only and that there were no other part score or penalty points.

At the end of the hand you can, as when playing randomly dealt hands, go on to the following TUTOR hand or go to the list of Options. If you wish to go on to a TUTOR hand other than the one with the next higher number then you must go via the list of Options (press "O") and, when asked, enter the hand number you then wish to bid and play, or enter "R" if you wish the computer to select a hand at random.

By pressing "L" you can, while bidding or playing a hand in TUTOR mode, abandon the TUTOR mode but continue to play the hand as if it had been randomly dealt (i.e. any legal bid or card played by you will be accepted). (If you do this at trick 8 or thereafter and then use the double dummy facility (by entering "F" when it is your turn to play) you may be able to find other (possibly just as good or - who knows - better) lines of play than those prescribed when playing in TUTOR mode.)

After pressing "L" the computer will continue to play a weak (12-14) No Trump and subsequent hands will be in the random deal mode until you go back to the list of options.

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SCORING, REVIEW OF THE HAND, ETC.

At the end of each hand the score on that hand will be shown in the customary format, together with the score brought forward from previous hands during that rubber. The scoring in all modes is the same as in normal rubber bridge and includes penalty points, honours, slam and rubber points. A replayed hand will not be scored, nor will a hand which has been abandoned.

At the end of a hand you can get a print-out of full details of the hand, including the bidding and card play, etc., or you can see North's and South's original

hands on the screen and then rebid and/or replay the hand. Alternatively you can, if you prefer, go straight on to the next hand or back to the list of options.

* * * * *

OTHER MAIN OPTIONS

1. By pressing the appropriate key when the various options are described, you can dispense with the bidding and go straight on to the play of the cards. In this case you will have to nominate both the contract and the declarer. Having selected this option the computer would in the ordinary way play the East/West cards, but if you have elected to see all four hands you can, if you wish, decide to play from all four hands yourself. Note that (by pressing "M") you can still get the computer to recommend a card for you to play or (by pressing the space bar) get it actually to play the card or (at trick 8 or thereafter by pressing "F") get it to play the best double dummy card. Thus you could decide to play the North and South hands yourself, but let the computer play the East and West hands by pressing the space bar (or from trick 8 on, "F") when it is their turn to play.

2. You can input a deal of your own choosing and then bid and play it as usual. If you decide to do this, please note that (i) you will first be asked to enter North's Spades, then his Hearts, etc., but the cards in any suit can be entered in any order; (ii) to go on to the next suit press the "ENTER" key; and (iii) no suit of over 8 cards is permitted (indeed the computer will automatically go on to the next suit once you have entered 8 cards in a suit, and on to the next hand once you have entered 13 cards in a hand).

3. You can save the hand just played (unless it was a TUTOR hand) to disc. To do this you must go to the list of options at the end of the hand and then enter "E".

You will then have to select the disc drive to be used (ignore "B:" if your computer has only one drive) and the name of the file which is to hold the saved hand. This name must begin with a letter of the alphabet but otherwise can contain letters or figures.

4. You can load from disc a hand previously saved. To do this enter "D" when the list of options appears, and then follow the instructions. When the hand has been loaded successfully, the bidding will be started if, when the hand was originally saved, you were in the bidding mode. Otherwise you will, as before, have to nominate the contract and declarer. Remember however that you can change this by use of the "G" and "V" keys (see page 6).

The disc enclosed with this manual already includes a number of hands which

can be loaded in this way. They are named HAND1.GEN, HAND2.GEN, etc. Do not yourself use these filenames when saving hands yourself on that disc or you will erase the original hands with those filenames.

It is important to appreciate that HAND1.GEN, HAND2.GEN, etc., on the enclosed disc are not TUTOR hands. When loaded, they can be bid and played in the same way as any other randomly dealt hand. The TUTOR hands are not contained in separate files on the disc: they are loaded with the main program and are accessed via Option C.

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GENERAL

Please note that:-

- (a) the computer accepts CAPITAL or small letters as input. However, to enter a number lower case must be set;
- (b) you can, at any time when it is your turn to bid or play, abandon the current hand (enter "N") or revert to the list of options (enter "O");
- (c) if, at any time during the bidding or the play, you would prefer to be holding one of the other players' hands (for instance, because North's bidding suggests he has a more interesting hand than you) you can, by entering "W", restart the same hand but with you (South) holding East's cards, East holding North's etc. (i.e. the hands are moved one place clockwise round the table). If you wish to exchange hands with North (your partner) you will thus need to enter "W" twice to achieve this. This facility is not available on TUTOR hands;
- (d) you can use the DELETE key to delete your choice of the level at which to bid or the suit you wish to play. However, once you have given the computer all the information it needs for your bid or card played (e.g. you have entered "P" for Pass or, in following suit, have pressed the ENTER key so as to play a low card) it is then too late to use the delete key. To change a bid you will need to restart the bidding (press "B"). To change your card played to the current trick you should press "U" when invited to "press any key to continue" at the end of the trick and the entire trick will then be replayed. If you wish to go back to previous tricks you will need to press "R" when it is your turn to play a card: the computer will then restart the play of the cards from trick 1;
- (e) to watch the computer bid or play the entire hand on its own, keep your finger on the space bar. (Actually, because the entire program is written in machine code, the computer bids and plays so fast that you will not be able to follow what is going on unless you release the space bar from time to time!).

Hand 1

Dealer North
N/S game

	North	
	S 7	
	H J 4 3 2	
	D J 7 6	
	C Q 9 7 4 3	
		East
		S J 9 3
		H 5
		D K 10 8 4
		C K J 6 5 2
West		
S K Q 10 8 6		
H Q 8 6		
D Q 9 5		
C 10 8		
	South	
	S A 5 4 2	
	H A K 10 9 7	
	D A 3 2	
	C A	

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening Lead SK
-	-	1H	-	
2H	-	4H	-	
-	-			

You would need a six card suit to open 2 Hearts so despite your excellent hand you regretfully have to open at the one level. Your partner's response of 2 Hearts shows 6-9 points, which won't be enough for a slam so you merely bid game.

The Play

Count your winners. One Spade, four Hearts (five if you catch HQ), one Diamond and one Club. That leaves you two or three tricks short of your contract. Spade ruffs in dummy will give you the extra tricks. The sequence of card play is: win the lead with SA, ruff a Spade low, return to hand with a Club, ruff another Spade (low again), return to hand with a Diamond and ruff another Spade, this time with SJ in case East is out of Spades (if he overruffs you will make five trump tricks in hand, enough for the contract). Then play Hearts from the top, giving the opponents HQ and two Diamond tricks at the end.

Hand 2

Dealer East
Vul: none

	North	
	S K 3 2	
	H A 9 4	
	D J 10 8 4	
	C Q 6 3	
		East
		S Q 10 9 7 4
		H J 10 8
		D K 5
		C 8 5 2
West		
S J 8		
H Q 5 2		
D A 7 3 2		
C J 10 9 4		
	South	
	S A 6 5	
	H K 7 6 3	
	D Q 9 6	
	C A K 7	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead CJ</i>
-	1H	-	2D	
-	2NT	-	3NT	
-	-	-		

You are too strong for 1 No Trump so you open with 1 Heart. Over North's 2 Diamonds, however, you can show your No Trump shape and your 17 points by bidding 2 No Trumps, raised to game by partner.

The Play

You have seven top tricks and you look to Diamonds for the two extra tricks required.

So win the Club lead and play a Diamond. Win the Club return and play another Diamond. Again win the Club return. Now play a Heart to H9, keeping West (with the long Club) off lead and making an overtrick when Hearts break 3-3.

Hand 3

Dealer South

Vul: none

	North		
	S 3 2		
	H K J 8 3		
	D A J 5		
	C A 8 5 4		
		East	
		S 9 4	
		H Q 7 6 4	
		D 10 9 7 2	
		C K 9 6	
			South
			S K J 5
			H A 10
			D K Q 6 3
			C Q J 10 7

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead S8</i>
1D	-	1H	-	
1NT	-	3NT	-	
-	-	-	-	

With 16 points you are too strong to open 1 No Trump so you bid 1 Diamond. Over partner's Heart response you have an ideal 1 No Trump rebid (15-16) and partner bids game.

The Play

On the lead you will make one Spade trick, two Hearts, four Diamonds and a Club - eight tricks in all. The ninth trick could come from Clubs or Hearts. Which is it to be? The answer depends on East's play to the first trick. Take his S9 with SJ. It is now dangerous to let East get the lead since, if he does so, he is likely to return a Spade through your SK5. So, cross to dummy with a Diamond and lead a Heart, playing the H10 when East plays low. It does not matter if West wins this trick since he cannot profitably lead Spades. H10 wins and your contract is secure. Note, however, that you still cannot afford to take the Club finesse.

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead SK</i>
-	-	2H	-	
3H	-	3S	-	
4D	-	4H	-	
4S	-	4NT	-	
5D	-	6H	-	
-	-			

With your distribution your hand is just worth a 2 Heart opening bid. Partner's 3 Heart bid shows Heart support and some high card points. You can now cue-bid your SA. North bids 4 Diamonds, showing DA or a void in Diamonds. Even so, your hand does not justify going beyond game so you bid 4 Hearts. Partner, however, now bids 4 Spades, showing SK or a Spade singleton. Since partner is known to have good Heart support, this is indeed good news. Use Blackwood just to make sure partner has DA, and then bid the slam.

The Play

The hands are a very good fit. You have nine top tricks and three more will come from ruffing Spades in dummy. Win the Spade lead and ruff a Spade. Return to hand with a trump (remember, you only need to ruff three Spades so you can afford to, and should, take out one round of trumps). Ruff another Spade, this time returning to hand with CA. Ruff your last Spade with dummy's last trump. To get back to hand, play DA and ruff a Diamond high. Draw the remaining trump and claim.

Hand 6

Dealer East
N/S game

	<i>North</i>	
	S J 7 4	
	H J 10 2	
	D 7 3	
	C A Q 10 9 3	
		<i>East</i>
		S K 8
		H Q 9 6
		D K 9 6 2
		C J 8 7 6
	<i>South</i>	
	S A 9 3	
	H A 5	
	D A Q J 4	
	C K 5 4 2	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead S5</i>
-	1C	-	3C	
-	3NT	-	-	
-				

We favour an opening bid of 1 Club on your strong hand, since it keeps the bidding low and allows for a slam in either minor. Over partner's limit bid you forget about slam but have sufficient strength and cover to bid 3 No Trumps.

The Play

You appear to have five Club tricks, three other Aces and DQJ will be good for your ninth trick.

Win the first trick (on the play to this trick West must have S10 and probably also has SQ) and start on Clubs. Lead a small Club to CQ so as to capture CJ876 with either defender. Lead C10, playing low from hand when East doesn't cover. While still in dummy take the Diamond finesse. When this wins, cash the Clubs and repeat the Diamond finesse. Cash the long Diamond and play a Spade towards SJ for twelve tricks.

Hand 7

Dealer South

N/S game

	North	
	SA 10 6	
	H 6 3	
	D Q 9 4 2	
	CAK 10 4	
		East
		SK 8 2
		H 8 5
		D 7 6
		C 8 7 6 5 3 2
West	South	
S 9 4 3	SQJ 7 5	
H A J 10 9 4 2	H K Q 7	
D K 8 5	D A J 10 3	
C 9	C Q J	

The Bidding

South	West	North	East	Opening Lead HJ
1S	2H	3H	-	
3NT	-	-	-	

Too strong to open 1 No Trump, you bid 1 Spade. Your partner cue-bids over the 2 Heart overcall: this shows game values and asks you to describe your hand further. In view of your Heart holding you happily bid 3 No Trumps.

The Play

You have nine tricks even if you take a losing finesse. Which suit to finesse?

On the bidding West is quite likely to have both SK and DK and therefore the Spade finesse would seem more likely to work. However if the Spade finesse lost, East could play a Heart and West would cash enough Hearts to defeat the contract. So the suit in which to finesse is Diamonds, because you can ensure that East does not win a trick in the suit. Cash CQ and overtake CJ to lead D9. This is important so that if it holds dummy retains the lead to repeat the finesse. West wins and plays a Spade. Win with SA and cash your remaining winners.

Hand 8

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	S A K 5 2	
	H Q J 7 4	
	D 9	
	C A 8 3 2	
	East	
	S Q J 7	
	H 8 6 5 2	
	D A 2	
	C Q J 10 6	
West		South
S 10 4 3		S 9 8 6
H 3		H A K 10 9
D K Q J 10 8 6 5		D 7 4 3
C 9 5		C K 7 4

The Bidding

West	North	East	South	Opening
3D	Dble	-	4H	Lead DK
-	-	-		

Over West's pre-emptive 3 Diamond opener, North's double is for take-out. With your good values you must jump to game in your best suit (after all, you could have held a yarborough).

The Play

DK is led, followed by a Club. Count your tricks. Two Spades, two Clubs and four Hearts is eight. The other two will come from Diamond ruffs. Win trick 2 with CK, ruff a Diamond in dummy, re-enter hand with a trump and ruff another Diamond (this time with a high trump - East is almost bound to be void by now). Overtaking dummy's HQ draw all the trumps and take your remaining winners for the contract.

Hand 9

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North	
	S 8 5 4 3	
	H A 9 7 5	
	D 7 3	
	C J 10 5	
	East	
	S K 9 6	
	H J	
	D Q 10 8 4 2	
	C Q 9 6 2	
West		South
S J 7 2		S A Q 10
H 10 3 2		H K Q 8 6 4
D J 9 6		D A K 5
C A K 8 3		C 7 4

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead CA</i>
-	-	1H	-	
2H	-	4H	-	
-	-			

With your excellent hand you have no alternative but to open 1 Heart. When partner raises to 2 Hearts you can continue to game.

The Play

Count your tricks. Five Hearts, two Diamonds and one top Spade makes eight tricks. A Diamond ruff will yield one more trick and a successful Spade finesse would give you an extra trick. If Hearts break 2-2 an elimination and endplay will work.

Trump the third Club lead and draw trumps: unfortunately this takes three rounds. Win the third round in dummy and finesse S10. West wins and returns a Diamond. Win with DK, cash DA and ruff the last Diamond in dummy. Now finesse SQ which succeeds. SA and the last trump make up ten tricks.

Hand 10

Dealer East

E/W game

	North	
	SA Q J 6	
	H 9	
	DK 8 6 4 2	
	C J 7 2	
		East
		S 10 9 5 3 2
		H 10 8 7 5
		D Q J
		C 5 4
	South	
	S 7 4	
	HA Q J 6 4 3	
	DA 7 5	
	CA 8	
West		
SK 8		
HK 2		
D 10 9 3		
CK Q 10 9 6 3		

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead H9</i>
-	1H	2C	Dble	
-	-	-		

West competes with 2 Clubs over your 1 Heart opener and your partner doubles. This must be for penalties: partner has a fair hand and is likely to have few, if any, Hearts. You therefore pass.

The Play

Your partner leads H9, which looks like a singleton, and you win with HA.

Partner's points must be in Spades and Diamonds. In case partner has a tenace in Spades, lead the Spade and watch partner cash SAQ and lead SJ. Declarer will probably be able to ruff this, so you must discard a Diamond. Declarer indeed ruffs and leads CK which you win. Now is the time to give partner his Heart ruff, leading your lowest Heart to

suggest a return of the lowest non-trump suit, namely Diamonds. Partner now leads a Diamond to your Ace as requested and you return the suit. When partner wins and leads a third round, East ruffs, but fortunately you can overruff. Another Heart for partner to ruff with CJ leads to four down doubled and an enormous penalty.

Hand 11

Dealer South

Vul: none

	North	
	S K 10 7 3	
	H Q 6	
	D A 10 9 4	
	C K 10 5	
		East
		S Q 9 8 6
		H A 10 5
		D Q J 8 6 3
		C 7
West		South
S 5 2		S A J 4
H J 8 4 3 2		H K 9 7
D K 2		D 7 5
C Q 6 4 3		C A J 9 8 2

The Bidding

South	West	North	East	Opening Lead H3
1NT	-	2C	-	
2D	-	3NT	-	
-	-	-	-	

With 13 points you have a good 1 No Trump opening bid. North's bid is Stayman, asking you to bid a four card major if you hold one. You don't, so you bid 2 Diamonds and North's 3 No Trumps closes the auction.

The Play

You have no shortage of tricks but will need to develop the black suits. However if a finesse loses the defence may cash too many Hearts.

Best play is HQ from dummy at trick 1. East wins and returns a Heart. Duck to sever communications and win the third round. West is the danger hand so finesse against him leading C8. When it holds continue with a small Club to C10 and cash CK. Return to SA to cash the long Clubs. The contract is safe so take the Spade finesse. It loses but you make an overtrick nevertheless.

Hand 12

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	S 7 5 2	
	H Q J 10 9 8	
	D A 8 4	
	C K 7	
		East
		S 6 4
		H K 7 6
		D 7 6 3
		C J 10 9 8 6
West		
S Q J 10 9 3		
H A 5 3		
D Q 10 9		
C 4 2		
	South	
	S A K 8	
	H 4 2	
	D K J 5 2	
	C A Q 5 3	

The Bidding

West	North	East	South	Opening Lead SQ
-	-	-	1D	
1S	2H	-	3NT	
-	-	-		

Your hand is too strong for 1 No Trump so you open 1 Diamond. West overcalls with 1 Spade, and your partner bids 2 Hearts. You now know that the partnership holds 26+ points, so you go direct to 3 No Trumps.

The Play

West leads SQ. Count your tricks: two Spades, two Diamonds and three Clubs: the Heart suit looks the best bet for the remaining tricks. You must duck the first Spade in case East wins the first round of Hearts and clears the Spades while West still has a Heart entry. Having won the second Spade lead, you play a Heart and when East wins this with the King, you are in clover because East has no more Spades left. When you win the next trick, you can set up extra Heart tricks at leisure.

Note that West could have put you to a guess had he rushed in with HA on the first round and cleared the Spades. You then have to decide whether to play East for HK or to bring the Diamonds home for four tricks (for which a 3-3 division and a finesse is necessary).

Hand 13

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North	
	SAK963	
	H876	
	DA86	
	C43	
West		East
SJ8		SQ1052
HQ4		HJ103
DKJ52		D1094
CQJ976		CK82
	South	
	S74	
	HAK952	
	DQ73	
	CA105	

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening
-	-	1H	-	Lead CQ
1S	-	2H	-	
4H	-	-	-	

Your natural opening bid is 1 Heart. Over partner's 1 Spade you are too weak to bid 1 No Trump so you rebid the Hearts. Partner bids the game.

The Play

Count your tricks. Two Spades, probably four Hearts, one Diamond and a Club makes eight tricks. A Club ruff, together with DQ if East has DK, or a long Spade, would provide the two extra tricks needed. So, duck the lead preparing for a later ruff, and win the continuation. Cash two top trumps and play off SAK and ruff a Spade. Now ruff the Club and then the fourth Spade. Cross to DA to cash the good Spade.

Hand 14

Dealer East

Vul: none

	North	
	SA	
	H987	
	DAKJ1062	
	CQ53	
West		East
SJ109854		S632
HKJ10		HQ54
D-		DQ984
CJ986		CA42
	South	
	SKQ7	
	HA632	
	D732	
	CK107	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead SJ</i>
-	1NT	-	3D	
-	3NT	-	-	

You open a 12-14 No Trump. North responds 3 Diamonds and you make the obvious 3 No Trump rebid.

The Play

West leads SJ won by SA in dummy. Clear thinking lands this contract. Count your tricks: three Spades, one Heart and five Diamonds are enough. How can you ensure five Diamond tricks, bearing in mind that you now have no sure entry to dummy outside the Diamond suit? Lead DJ at trick two - if East ducks, follow with D10 and there is no defence to beat the contract.

The point of this hand is that it is all right to let the opponents win the first or second round of Diamonds: it is vital not to let them win the third or fourth round since you have no entry to dummy to cash the long Diamonds thereafter.

Hand 15

Dealer South

N/S game

	<i>North</i>	
	S A K 4 3 2	
	H 8	
	D Q J 9 2	
	C A K 3	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
S 9 7		S Q J 10 8
H K Q 10 6 4		H 9 7
D 7 3		D 10 6 5
C Q 10 9 2		C 8 6 5 4
	<i>South</i>	
	S 6 5	
	H A J 5 3 2	
	D A K 8 4	
	C J 7	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead HK</i>
1H	-	2S	-	
3D	-	4D	-	
4H	-	4NT	-	
5H	-	6D	-	
-	-			

Over your 1 Heart opening North forces, showing a good hand, and then supports your Diamond bid. Blackwood then leads to 6 Diamonds.

The Play

You have only 9 top tricks.

The shape of each hand suggests a cross-ruff. You must first, however, cash your outside winners. You then ruff a Club (safer than a Spade). Ruff a Heart low. Now continue the cross ruff using high trumps (to avoid an overruff). Your D8 and D9 are good for the twelfth trick.

Hand 16

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	SQ 10 9 8 2	
	HK 3 2	
	DQ 7 5	
	CQ 3	
West		East
SA		S 7 3
HQJ 10 9		H 8 7 6
DJ 8 4 3		DA 10 9 2
C 7 6 5 2		CA 10 8 4
	South	
	SKJ 6 5 4	
	HA 5 4	
	DK 6	
	CKJ 9	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead HQ</i>
-	-	-	1S	
-	3S	-	4S	
-	-	-		

When your 1 Spade opener is raised to 3, you are happy to bid game.

The Play

West leads HQ. Count your losers: one Spade, one Heart, one Diamond and one Club - too many! How can you avoid one of these losers? The answer is to play on Clubs immediately and, when you win the return, discard a Heart on the third round of Clubs. Note that this must be done before you touch trumps or Diamonds. The key play, therefore, is to win trick 1 with HK in dummy, thus preserving HA in your hand as an entry to the established CK, should either defender sneakily duck the first round of Clubs.

Hand 17

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North	
	S 7 4	
	HJ 10 4	
	DAQJ 6	
	C 10 9 7 3	
West		East
SJ 10 9 5 2		SK 8 3
HA 9 5 3		H 8 2
D 8 3 2		DK 7 5
CQ		CJ 8 6 4 2
	South	
	SAQ 6	
	HKQ 7 6	
	D 10 9 4	
	CAK 5	

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead SJ</i>
-	-	1H	-	
2H	-	2NT	-	
3NT	-	-	-	

With eighteen points you are far too good to bid 1 No Trump so you call 1 Heart. Partner raises to 2 Hearts. Now you bid 2 No Trumps (showing 17-18 points) which partner happily raises to 3 No Trumps.

The Play

You have ample tricks, but if the Diamond finesse is wrong you will lose two red suit tricks and the defence may have time to establish Spades.

So when East plays SK at trick 1, duck the first Spade and win the continuation.

West appears to have the long Spades so he is the danger hand. Since he cannot win a trick with DK, play on Hearts until HA is played (as it happens, by West). Win the Spade return and finesse Diamonds. East wins but has no Spade to return. Ten tricks.

Hand 18

Dealer East
Game all

	<i>North</i>	
	S 9 7 4	
	H K J 3	
	D 7	
	C K J 9 6 4 3	
		<i>East</i>
		S Q J 5 2
		H 10 8 6 2
		D 8 2
		C A 10 5
<i>West</i>		<i>South</i>
S A K 10 3		S 8 6
H 4		H A Q 9 7 5
D J 10 5 3		D A K Q 9 6 4
C Q 8 7 2		C -

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead SA</i>
-	1D	-	1NT	
-	3H	-	4H	
-	-	-	-	

Clearly you must open the bidding with a Diamond bid. With two-suiters such as this it is preferable to open at the one level. Over partner's 1 No Trump bid, you bid 3 Hearts to show your strong distributional hand. North raises to game.

The Play

With good breaks you have only two losers, so this is the time to take care. Ruff the third Spade, cash one high Diamond and ruff a small one in dummy. Cash HK and follow with HJ. If you play low on this you will have to ruff to get back to hand and will lose control if trumps are 4-1. So overtake HJ and cash HA. Play Diamonds until a defender ruffs. Win any return and claim.

Hand 19

Dealer South
E/W game

	North	
	S 8 7	
	H K 2	
	D A Q 10 8 4 2	
	C A 9 3	
		East
		S A 5 4 3 2
		H 8 6 5 4
		D K J 7 3
		C -
West	South	
S Q 10 6	S K J 9	
H Q J 10	H A 9 7 3	
D 9 5	D 6	
C 10 7 6 5 2	C K Q J 8 4	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead S6</i>
1C	-	1D	-	
1H	-	1S	-	
1NT	-	3NT	-	
-	-			

Your obvious opening bid is 1 Club, and in response to North's 1 Diamond you naturally rebid Hearts, your second suit. North says 1 Spade (fourth suit forcing). In view of North's Diamond call your best bid is now 1 No Trump which is raised to 3 No Trumps.

The Play

West leads a low Spade to East's SA, and another Spade comes back. Your contract is safe: five Clubs, one Diamond, two Hearts and one Spade is enough. In the circumstances you might as well try for a second Spade trick so play SJ at trick 2. This loses but you win the third round. Now you turn to Clubs where you need five tricks. You can ensure this by simply cashing the King in hand - no problem if all follow: however there is a marked finesse of C10 when East shows his void.

Hand 20

Dealer West
Vul: none

	North	
	S A K 2	
	H J 9 8 7 2	
	D A 4 2	
	C A 5	
		East
		S Q J
		H K 6 5
		D Q 9 8 7 3
		C 9 6 2
West	South	
S 10 9 8 7	S 6 5 4 3	
H A Q 3	H 10 4	
D J 10	D K 6 5	
C Q J 10 8	C K 7 4 3	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead CQ</i>
-	1H	-	1NT	
-		-		

Over partner's 1 Heart, it is better to bid 1 No Trump than 1 Spade on account of the poor quality of your Spades. Partner passes so 1 No Trump becomes the contract.

The Play

Count your winners. You have two Spade tricks, two Diamonds and two Clubs. One more is needed from one of the majors. Hearts are to be preferred because they can be established whatever the break: an extra Spade trick depends on a 3-3 break.

It would be a mistake to duck the Club lead, as a switch to Diamonds might give the defence three Hearts, three Diamonds and a Club. So win the Club in hand and lead Hearts at each opportunity, making seven tricks in all.

Hand 21

Dealer North

Vul: none

	<i>North</i>	
	S 6 5 3	
	H K J 8	
	D Q J 6	
	C J 9 8 5	
		<i>East</i>
		S 10 8 4 2
		H 6
		D K 9 8 7 4
		C K 10 6
	<i>South</i>	
	S A K J 9 7	
	H A Q 10 4	
	D 3	
	C A 3 2	

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead C4</i>
-	-	1S	-	
1NT	-	3H	-	
4S	-	-	-	

Despite the power of your hand you can only open 1 Spade. North responds 1 No Trump, and over your 3 Hearts (showing 18+ points with five Spades and four Hearts) North jumps to 4 Spades.

The Play

West leads a low Club. He would not have underled CKQ so there is no point in playing CJ from dummy. In case West has C10 you should play C8. However East covers with C10 and there is no reason not to win with CA. With two Club losers and one Diamond loser, essentially the contract depends on a 3-2 Spade break and the finesse of SQ (34%) - not very hopeful. An extra chance, however, is to lay down SA before entering dummy for the finesse, just in case the singleton Queen falls - it does, and now after cashing another top Spade there is a marked finesse against S10 to land this rather ambitious contract.

Hand 22

Dealer East

Game all

	North	
	S K J	
	H A 9 8 4 2	
	D 6 4	
	C A Q 7 4	
		East
		S Q 10 8 6 4
		H Q 7 6
		D 10 8
		C K 3 2
West		
S 9 7 5 3 2		
H J 10		
D Q 5 2		
C 8 6 5		
	South	
	S A	
	H K 5 3	
	D A K J 9 7 3	
	C J 10 9	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead S7</i>
-	1D	-	1H	
-	3D	-	3S	
-	4H	-	5C	
-	6D	-	-	
-				

Not quite strong enough to open at the 2 level, you must jump in Diamonds over North's 1 Heart response. North now bids 3 Spades and it is time to support his Hearts. North then makes a slam try with 5 Clubs and you accept his invitation.

The Play

Ostensibly the contract depends on one of two minor-suit finesses working, which is odds-on. Is there a better line?

Win the Spade lead and cash the top Diamonds - DQ might drop. Play HK then HA and discard the third Heart on SK. A Heart ruff now establishes the suit. Concede a Diamond and then cash CA and discard the losing Clubs on the long Hearts.

Hand 23

Dealer South

Game all

	North	
	S K Q J 10	
	H K 7 3	
	D K 10 7 3	
	C 5 4	
		East
		S 9 7 6 4 2
		H Q J 10 5
		D 6
		C 10 3 2
West		
S A 8 5 3		
H 9 8 6		
D 8 4		
C A Q 9 7		
	South	
	S -	
	H A 4 2	
	D A Q J 9 5 2	
	C K J 8 6	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead H9</i>
1D	-	1S	-	
2C	-	2H	-	
3D	-	4D	-	
4H	-	5D	-	
-	-			

After a natural 1 Diamond-1 Spade-2 Clubs sequence, North introduces 2 Hearts, "fourth suit forcing", a useful temporising measure on hands which don't have a clear cut bid. In response, you rebid your Diamonds which partner raises. You make a slam try with 4 Hearts but partner is not interested so you stop in game.

The Play

Count your top winners. Six Diamonds and two Hearts: the best bet is to look to the Spades for the other three tricks.

Win the Heart lead in hand, draw trumps in two rounds ending in dummy and then lead a Spade, discarding unless East plays SA, in which case you ruff rather than face the prospect of his leading Clubs through your CKJ. In either event you establish three Spade winners without letting East into the lead, and there are ample entries to dummy to enjoy them.

Hand 24

Dealer West
E/W game

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
S 6 4	S K 10 3	S 5	S A Q J 9 8 7 2
H A K Q 7 4	H J 10 9 3	H 8 6 5 2	H -
D K 10 6	D 7 4 2	D J 9 5 3	D A Q 8
C Q J 10	C 9 7 4	C K 8 5 3	C A 6 2

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead HA</i>
1H	-	2H	4S	
-	-	-		

What are you to do over East's 2 Heart bid? You have a hand of real quality, needing very little from partner to make game. (Clearly partner cannot have the points to justify a slam try). So bid 4 Spades.

The Play

Count your top winners. Seven Spades and two other Aces leaves you one trick short of making your contract.

Should you take the Diamond finesse for your tenth trick? Surprisingly the Heart suit offers a better chance. Ruff the Heart lead with S7 to retain three entries to dummy and play S8 to S10. Continue with HJ and discard a Club. Win the Club return, lead S9 to SK to play H10, discarding another Club. Win the return and enter dummy by leading the carefully preserved S2 to dummy's S3 and cash the good Heart.

Hand 25

Dealer North
Vul: none

	North	
	S J 9 4	
	H K 7 2	
	D 7 6 5	
	C A 9 6 2	
		East
		S 10 8 6 3 2
		H 10
		D Q 10 8 4 2
		C K 7
West		South
S A K Q 7		S 5
H 8 6 5 3		H A Q J 9 4
D J 9		D A K 3
C 8 5 4		C Q J 10 3

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening Lead SA
-	-	1H	-	
1NT	-	3C	-	
4H	-	-	-	

You have no other opening bid but 1 Heart. Over partner's 1 No Trump you need to show partner the strength of your hand: jumping and bidding your second suit does this. Partner now jumps to game in your first suit.

The Play

Count your tricks. This looks like a simple contract with five Heart tricks, two Diamonds and three Clubs. What could go wrong? What if the trumps break 4-1? If you have to ruff two Spades in hand your trumps will be shorter than those of one of the opponents and you will lose control.

Ruff the second Spade and play HK and HJ. East shows out on the second round of trumps. You must abandon trumps for now and switch to Clubs. East wins the finesse and, as expected, plays on Spades.

Instead of ruffing, you must discard a losing Diamond. West wins to play another Spade. This time you can ruff in dummy. Cross to hand with a Diamond and draw trumps.

Hand 26

Dealer East

Vul: none

	North	
	S K 7 6 4	
	H 10 4	
	D A K Q	
	C 7 6 3 2	
		East
		S J 9 5
		H Q 7 6
		D J 7 5 4 2
		C Q 8
	South	
	S A 3 2	
	H A 9 3	
	D 9 6 3	
	C A K 9 4	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead H5</i>
-	1C	-	1S	
-	1NT	-	3NT	
-	-	-		

Your hand is too good to open 1 No Trump so you bid 1 of your 4-card suit. When partner responds 1 Spade you have an ideal 1 No Trump rebid (15-16 points). Partner raises to game.

The Play

With two Spade tricks, one Heart, three Diamonds and two top Clubs you are one trick short. Clubs offer the best odds provided the defenders don't cash Hearts.

On principle duck the first two rounds of Hearts, hoping that whoever gains the lead later in Clubs will then be void of Hearts. Win the third round of Hearts and cross to dummy to lead a Club. When East plays low, win with CK and return to dummy to lead another Club. When East plays CQ let him win it, on the basis that West appears to have the long Hearts. Win the return to cash two more Club tricks. Win any return and the rest is easy.

Hand 27

Dealer South

N/S game

	North S A Q J 3 H A J 7 5 D K J C 9 8 4	
West S 8 H 10 9 3 D 8 5 4 2 C Q 10 6 5 3		East S K 9 6 4 2 H 6 D Q 10 9 7 C K 7 2
	South S 10 7 5 H K Q 8 4 2 D A 6 3 C A J	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead S8</i>
1H	-	2S	-	
2NT	-	4H	-	
6H	-	-	-	

Partner forces with 2 Spades over your 1 Heart opening bid. To show your balanced hand with stoppers in the unbid suits your best bid is 2 No Trumps. North shows his four-card Heart fit with a jump to 4 Hearts. With good trumps and controls you can safely bid 6 Hearts.

The Play

Count your tricks. The Spade lead looks sinister (probably a singleton or doubleton) but even if East has SK, you have three Spade tricks, five Hearts, two top Diamonds and one Club - one trick short. Should you take the Spade finesse or aim for a Diamond ruff in dummy?

Disdaining the finesse, play SA and draw trumps. Now play on Spades. When East wins with his SK, win the return, enter dummy to discard the Club on the good Spade and ruff the losing Diamond.

Hand 28

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North S 4 3 H K J 10 8 D Q 6 C K 9 7 4 2	
West S A Q J 9 7 6 H 7 4 D J 10 9 C Q 8		East S 10 8 2 H 6 5 D K 8 7 5 2 C J 5 3
	South S K 5 H A Q 9 3 2 D A 4 3 C A 10 6	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead DJ</i>
-	-	-	1H	
1S	3H	-	4H	
-	-	-		

With a five card major and 17 points you open 1 Heart. West overcalls but when your partner bids 3 Hearts you can raise to game.

The Play

Count your losers. Unless CQJ are doubleton or an honour is singleton you have one Club loser, probably a Diamond and (on West's bid) probably 2 Spades.

The Clubs will, however, provide discards so long as, in establishing Clubs, East doesn't get in to lead a Spade. You must, therefore, make sure that East is not allowed to win a trick.

Duck the lead in both hands (thus preventing East getting the lead on this or the next round of Diamonds). Win the continuation and draw trumps ending in dummy. Continue with a low Club and when East plays low, play C10 so that the trick is won by the safe hand. When West fails to cash SA, you make eleven tricks.

Hand 29

Dealer North

Vul: none

	<i>North</i>	
	SK54	
	H84	
	D832	
	CKQ1073	
	<i>East</i>	
	S9763	
	H10952	
	D105	
	CA92	
<i>West</i>		<i>South</i>
SQ1082		SAJ
HAK6		HQJ73
DJ964		DAKQ7
C85		CJ64

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead S2</i>
-	-	1H	-	
2C	-	3NT	-	
-	-			

1 Heart is your only possible opening bid since you are much too strong for 1 No Trump. Over partner's 2 Club response you can show your No Trump shape and extra values with a jump to 3 No Trumps, which is passed out.

The Play

Count your tricks. Three spades (on the lead), three Diamonds and four Clubs once the Ace has gone. What if the opponents hold up their CA to the third round?

If you win the first trick with SJ then you cannot get to dummy later to run the Clubs. You must therefore sacrifice your third Spade trick to keep an entry to SK later.

So play SA to the first trick and switch to Clubs. Once CA is taken enter dummy with SK to cash the remaining Clubs.

Hand 30

Dealer East

Vul: none

	North	
	S K Q 9 6	
	H 8 5	
	D A 7 5	
	C K Q 6 3	
West		East
S J 7		S 10 8 2
H A K Q 10 3 2		H 9 4
D 9		D Q 8 6 4 3 2
C J 10 7 4		C 9 8
	South	
	S A 5 4 3	
	H J 7 6	
	D K J 10	
	C A 5 2	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead HA</i>
-	1NT	2H	3H	
-	3S	-	4S	
-	-	-	-	

With 13 points and No Trump shape you open 1 No Trump, overcalled by West with 2 Hearts. North, stuck for a bid, cue bids 3 Hearts, over which East passes. If you had held strong Hearts you could now bid 3 No Trumps, but in the circumstances you must respond 3 Spades, which North raises to game.

The Play

West leads HAKQ. Although East is likely to be void in Hearts (because he petered on the lead of HAK), it is best to ruff HQ - try S9 in case West has both SJ10. East overruffs and returns a trump. Win and draw the remaining trumps. Now you embark on the Clubs. Unluckily these break poorly. You are left with the Diamond finesse for your contract - is it a guess which way to finesse? No, a certainty - West has shown six Hearts, two Spades and four Clubs and therefore must have precisely one Diamond. Lay down DA (in case his Diamond is DQ) and finesse on the next round.

Hand 31

Dealer South

Vul: none

	North S 9 8 H Q 5 4 D A K Q 7 4 3 C 8 6	
West S K J 4 3 2 H K 10 8 2 D 5 C J 3 2		East S 10 6 5 H A 9 D J 10 8 2 C Q 10 9 5
	South S A Q 7 H J 7 6 3 D 9 6 C A K 7 4	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead S3</i>
1NT	-	3NT	-	
-	-			

Your natural opening bid is 1 No Trump to which North responds 3 No Trumps on the strength of his strong Diamond suit.

The Play

West leads a Spade which you must win with SQ. Count your top tricks: two Spades, two Clubs and three Diamonds plus another three if they divide 3-2 (68% of the time).

However if the Diamonds break 4-1 you will lose one Diamond trick. The point of the hand is that, since there are no entries to dummy in other suits, you must make sure to duck the first round of Diamonds so that you still have a Diamond in hand to lead to dummy on the second round, now that the Diamonds are established. Note that the contract is unmakeable if the Diamonds break 5-0 so you ignore that possibility.

Hand 32

Dealer West

Game all

	North S A Q 9 4 H A Q J 10 D 8 4 C 9 6 2	
West S 7 5 2 H K 8 5 2 D K J 6 C A 5 4		East S 6 H 9 7 4 3 D Q 10 9 5 C Q J 10 7
	South S K J 10 8 3 H 6 D A 7 3 2 C K 8 3	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead S2</i>
-	1NT	-	3S	
-	4S	-	-	
-				

When partner opens 1 No Trump, game looks likely: the bid to make is 3 Spades which asks partner to choose between 3 No Trumps and 4 Spades. He selects the latter.

The Play

Count your top winners. Five Spades, one Heart and one Diamond makes seven. Two extra Hearts and a Diamond ruff make ten. However there is a problem with entries and you want to avoid losing a trick to East in case he leads a Club to West's Ace and you are one down.

Take out two rounds of trumps, lead to HA and lead a Heart back, discarding a Club if East plays low (if he plays HK you ruff and the rest is easy). West wins and returns a trump. Win in dummy to cash the two Heart winners. Ruff a Diamond in dummy for your tenth trick.

Hand 33

Dealer North
Game all

	<i>North</i>		
	SA 10 7		
	HK 6 4 3		
	DJ 6		
	CQJ 8 4		
		<i>East</i>	
		SQ 8 6 4 3 2	
		HQ 9 7	
		DQ 4	
		C 10 3	
			<i>South</i>
			SKJ 5
			HA 2
			D 7 5 2
			CAK 9 6 2

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead DA</i>
-	-	1C	1D	
1H	-	2C	-	
3C	-	5C	-	
-	-			

You have no alternative but to open 1 Club. Partner bids 1 Heart over the overall and you have no choice but to rebid your Clubs. Partner now supports and you gladly bid game.

The Play

You will make five Club tricks, a Diamond ruff, two Hearts and two Spades, ten tricks in total - a trick short with the Spade to guess. Ruff the third Diamond (noting that East started with two only), draw trumps and play out the Hearts, ruffing the third and fourth round, to find out more about the opponents' shapes. West has now shown six Diamonds, two Clubs and four Hearts. He must, therefore, hold exactly one Spade. Cash SA (in case his Spade is SQ) and finesse SJ for the contract.

Hand 34

Dealer East
Game all

	North	
	S A Q 9 2	
	H 7	
	D A Q 7 4	
	C K 8 6 5	
		East
		S 8 6 4 3
		H J 8 6
		D 10 8 6
		C A 10 9
West		
S 7		
H K Q 10 9 4		
D K J 9 2		
C Q J 7		
	South	
	S K J 10 5	
	H A 5 3 2	
	D 5 3	
	C 4 3 2	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead HK</i>
-	-	1H	Dble	
2H	2S	-	3S	
-	4S	-	-	
-				

North's double is for takeout, demanding your longest suit. Will fair values you bid 2 Spades over East's 2 Heart bid. When North shows a better than minimum hand by raising your Spades you can bid the game.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Four Spades, one Heart and one Diamond are not enough. Heart ruffs in dummy and one extra trick in a minor suit will suffice.

Win the lead and (so as to give yourself a way back to hand) finesse DQ, which wins. Cross to hand with a trump (you can afford to take out one round) and now cross ruff. You end up making four Spades in hand and three in dummy with one Heart trick and two Diamonds.

Hand 35

Dealer South
Game all

	North	
	S A Q 7 5 4 2	
	H 10 4	
	D A 7 3	
	C Q 8	
		East
		S K 8
		H 9 7
		D Q 10 5 4 2
		C J 7 6 2
West		
S J 10 9		
H 8 5 2		
D J 9 8		
C A K 9 5		
	South	
	S 6 3	
	H A K Q J 6 3	
	D K 6	
	C 10 4 3	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead CK</i>
1H	-	1S	-	
2H	-	3S	-	
4H	-	-	-	

You open 1 Heart. Over your partner's Spade bid you show your long suit and weak hand by rebidding your Hearts at the cheapest possible level. Partner's 3 Spade bid shows a six card suit and opening values and with your fine Heart suit you decide to bid the Heart game.

The Play

When dummy goes down, you appear to have nine tricks plus a Club ruff until West switches to a trump at trick 2. The alternative is a successful finesse of SQ or to set up the Spades. Win the trump in hand and take the Spade finesse - it loses. Back comes a trump. Win, and after drawing the last trump play a Spade to SA and ruff a Spade. The Spades are now good so cross to DA to cash them, discarding losers on them.

Hand 36

Dealer West

E/W game

		<i>North</i>			<i>East</i>
		S A K 10 9 7 6 3			S J 5
		H A 6			H 8 7 5 2
		D J 7			D 2
		C Q 4			C A K 10 7 3 2
	<i>West</i>				
	S Q 8 2				
	H J 10 4				
	D A Q 10 9 8 5 4				
	C -				
		<i>South</i>			
		S 4			
		H K Q 9 3			
		D K 6 3			
		C J 9 8 6 5			

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead SA</i>
-	4S	-	-	
5D	-	-	Dble	
-	-	-	-	

Your partner opens 4 Spades. Clearly you can do no good by bidding so you pass. West now bids 5 Diamonds and when the bidding comes round to you, you should double: you have reasonable prospects of making two tricks on your hand and partner must have a trick or two for his bid.

The Play

Partner leads SA and switches to HA, on which you must play your lowest Heart to tell partner that you don't want a Heart continuation. He cashes SK then follows with S10. Dummy ruffs and you overruff, noting the fall of West's SQ.

Partner's S10 was his highest remaining Spade, requesting the return of the higher of the two other non-trump suits, Hearts.

So cash HK and HQ, Partner discarding a small Club on HQ.

Now lead H9, ruffed and overruffed. You later make your natural Diamond trick for 6 down doubled and vulnerable and a massive score.

Note: the bidding on this hand (apart from your double) does not commend itself.

Hand 37

Dealer North

N/S game

	North	
	S 6 4 3 2	
	H 5 4 2	
	D A K 4	
	C 10 9 2	
	East	
	S J 10	
	H 7 3	
	D 9 8 6 3 2	
	C 6 5 4 3	
	South	
	S A K 9 8 7 5	
	H A J 10 9	
	D J	
	C Q 8	
West		
S Q		
H K Q 8 6		
D Q 10 7 5		
C A K J 7		

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening Lead
-	-	1S	Dble	CK
3S	-	4S	-	
-	-			

Your hand is not quite worth a bid at the 2 level so you open 1 of your longest suit. Your partner's bid of 3 Spades over West's takeout double is pre-emptive, showing a sound raise to 2 Spades (vulnerable). With your good shape you decide to bid game.

The Play

West leads CK, then CA, then CJ which you ruff with S7, keeping S5 for a possible entry to dummy later. You should by now have counted your top tricks. Six Spades (with luck), one Heart and two Diamonds makes nine. West is likely, on his bid, to hold HKQ. What are you to do?

Draw trumps, cash DAK and ruff the third round. Cross to dummy, playing S5 to S6, and finesse the Heart. This loses but West is endplayed and any lead gives you the tenth trick.

Hand 38

Dealer East

Vul: none

	North	
	S K Q 6 5	
	H K J 4 2	
	D 8 7	
	C K 5 4	
		East
		S A 4 3 2
		H 6
		D Q J 10 9
		C J 10 7 3
	West	
	S J 10 9 8	
	H 8 3	
	D A 5 4 3 2	
	C Q 9	
		South
	S 7	
	H A Q 10 9 7 5	
	D K 6	
	C A 8 6 2	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead SJ</i>
-	1H	-	4H	
-		-		

Your obvious 1 Heart opener is raised to 4 and you can do no more.

The Play

West leads SJ. Count your losers: one Spade, one or two Diamonds, and a Club. How can you avoid four losers? The answer is simple if you pause to think before playing to trick 1. East is marked with SA. Therefore the correct play is to duck the opening lead, leaving West on play. He can do you no harm, and you will be able, at leisure, to ruff out East's SA and discard a Diamond on the established Spade, conceding three tricks in all.

Note that if East plays SA at trick 1, you will be able later to avoid a Club loser by discarding two Clubs from hand on dummy's SKQ.

Hand 39

Dealer South

Game all

	North	
	S A 5 3 2	
	H 8 4 3	
	D K Q J	
	C J 8 3	
		East
		S Q 10 8
		H J 10 7
		D 10 7 5
		C 9 7 5 4
	West	
	S -	
	H K 9 5 2	
	D 9 6 3 2	
	C K Q 10 6 2	
		South
	S K J 9 7 6 4	
	H A Q 6	
	D A 8 4	
	C A	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead CK</i>
1S	-	3S	-	
4NT	-	5D	-	
5NT	-	6D	-	
6S	-	-	-	

You have a fine hand but unfortunately your Spades are too poor to open with a 2-bid. Over your partner's limit raise a slam ought to be on, so after you find out (using Blackwood) that he has SA but only one King, you settle for 6 Spades.

The Play

You should make six Spade tricks, three Diamonds, one Club and one top Heart. Another Heart trick is needed.

Win the Club trick and draw trumps, leading first to SA in case East has three. Finesse SJ and cash SK. Enter dummy to ruff out a Club, then eliminate the Diamonds, ending in dummy. Now lead CJ and discard a Heart. West is thrown in and any return gives you your twelfth trick.

This hand demonstrates a "loser on loser" throw-in.

Hand 40

Dealer West
N/S game

		<i>North</i>	
		S Q 3	
		H A K 2	
		D J 10 9	
		C J 8 6 5 3	
			<i>East</i>
			S K 4 2
			H Q 10 8 4
			D K 7 5 3
			C 9 7
		<i>South</i>	
		S A 9 7	
		H 6 5 3	
		D A Q 8 6	
		C A K 4	
<i>West</i>			
S J 10 8 6 5			
H J 9 7			
D 4 2			
C Q 10 2			

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead SJ</i>
-	-	-	1D	
-	2C	-	3NT	
-	-	-	-	

You have too big a hand for 1 No Trump so you open with your longest suit. When partner bids 2 Clubs you have the shape, and enough points, for game in No Trumps.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Two Clubs, one Diamond, two Hearts and one Spade make six tricks.

Three more tricks are needed. If SQ loses, which minor should you play? When SQ is covered, hold up SA till the third round, hoping that if you have to lose the lead again it will be to the defender who has by then run out of Spades.

Cash the top Clubs. When CQ does not fall, abandon Clubs, cross to dummy with a high Heart and take the Diamond finesse. In this way you combine your chances of extra tricks in the minors.

Hand 41

Dealer South

Vul: none

	North		
	S A K Q 3		
	H K 10 3		
	D A 3		
	C A 9 5 2		
		East	
		S J 8 2	
		H 9 8	
		D J 9 2	
		C J 10 8 6 4	
West			
S 10 9 6 4			
H J 5 4			
D K 5			
C K Q 7 3			
	South		
	S 7 5		
	H A Q 7 6 2		
	D Q 10 8 7 6 4		
	C -		

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead CK</i>
2NT	-	3H	-	
3S	-	4D	-	
5C	-	5H	-	
6H	-	-	-	

In response to North's 2 No Trump opener (20-22) you must clearly bid a red suit and it is more practical to bid the major first. North's 3 Spades agrees Hearts; with that encouragement you try 4 Diamonds: North bids 5 Clubs, a cue-bid which does not improve your hand, so you sign off in 5 Hearts. North now bids the slam with a fistful of controls and a doubleton Diamond.

The Play

West leads CK to CA. For your contract you are going to have to set up the Diamonds without losing more than one Diamond trick on the way. The best shot here is a low Diamond from dummy. If East follows low, insert D10. It is unsafe to release DA first because a third round of Diamonds might promote HJ. The alternative of drawing trumps and leading to DA and guessing on the return is not so good, since if you guess wrong you do not have the extra chance of ruffing out the Diamond.

Hand 42

Dealer East

Vul: none

	North	
	S K 8 4	
	H A 10 2	
	D K J 8 6 2	
	C Q 6	
		East
		S A J 6 3
		H 4
		D 10 9 7 5
		C K 10 3 2
West	South	
S Q 10 9 5	S 7 2	
H Q 8 6 3	H K J 9 7 5	
D 3	D A Q 4	
C J 9 8 5	C A 7 4	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead C5</i>
-	1H	-	2D	
-	3D	-	4H	
-	-	-		

You open 1 Heart and when partner responds 2 Diamonds you support the suit because of the known fit. However partner now puts you back to 4 Hearts. There is no question of slam so you pass.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Two Hearts, five Diamonds and one Club - eight tricks in all. Clearly the Hearts will provide the additional two tricks required. The danger lies in losing one Heart, one Club and, should West lead them, two Spades. It is vital, therefore, to prevent West getting the lead.

Play CQ at trick 1 (if it doesn't win now, it never will) and, when East covers, duck to avoid West winning the second round of Clubs. Win the return and lead H9. When West plays low, play low from dummy also. Repeat the finesse, cash HA and return to hand with a Diamond to draw the last trump. The Diamonds provide discards for eleven tricks.

Hand 43

Dealer South
Game all

	North	
	SAJ6	
	H1063	
	D10	
	CA109642	
West		East
S10872		SK95
HKJ52		HQ974
DQ952		D874
C8		CK53
	South	
	SQ43	
	HA8	
	DAKJ63	
	CQJ7	

The Bidding

South	West	North	East	Opening Lead S2
1D	-	2C	-	
3NT	-	-	-	

You have a hand too good for 1 No Trump and not good enough for 2 Diamonds so you settle for 1 Diamond. Over partner's 2 Club response you have the points and shape to bid 3 No Trumps.

The Play

Before touching a card in dummy, count your tricks. One top Spade, one top Heart, two top Diamonds and one top Club is five. Clubs will give you the extra trick, even if the finesse loses.

You must reject the Spade finesse at trick one. (If it lost and CK were with East, a Heart return would set the contract).

So win with SA, cross to hand with DK (again rejecting the finesse) and lead Club honours for a finesse. East takes CJ and can cash a Spade if he wishes but thereafter you can claim.

Hand 44

Dealer West
Vul: none
N/S 60

	North	
	SA8	
	H10973	
	DKJ43	
	CAQ6	
West		East
SK10962		SQJ753
HKJ5		H642
D52		D109
C874		CJ93
	South	
	S4	
	HAQ8	
	DAQ876	
	CK1052	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead S6</i>
-	1NT	-	3D	
-	4D	-	4H	
-	4S	-	5D	
-	6D	-	-	

Since at the score your partner could hold more than 14 points for his 1 No Trump opening bid, it is worth exploring the possibility of the best game on your excellent hand. You accordingly bid your Diamond suit which is supported by partner. You can now cue bid your HA by bidding 4 Hearts, to which partner responds 4 Spades showing SA. At this stage, being minimum for your initial 3 Diamond bid, you sign off in 5 Diamonds. However partner, holding CA and excellent trumps, presses on to slam.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Four Clubs (one can be ruffed if they don't break), five Diamonds and two other Aces makes eleven tricks. The twelfth trick must come from Hearts.

Win the lead, draw trumps, ruff the Spade in hand and cash the Clubs. Cross to dummy to lead H10. West wins and is endplayed - any lead gives you your twelfth trick.

Hand 45

Dealer North

Vul: none

		<i>North</i>		
		S 10 9 8 6		
		H K 7 2		
		D 7 5		
		C A K Q 3		
<i>West</i>	<i>East</i>			
S J	S Q 7 5			
H Q J 6 4	H 10 8 5 3			
D A 8 3 2	D 6 4			
C J 9 6 5	C 10 7 4 2			
		<i>South</i>		
		S A K 4 3 2		
		H A 9		
		D K Q J 10 9		
		C 8		

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead HQ</i>
1NT	-	3S	-	
4S	-	4NT	-	
5D	-	6S	-	
-	-	-	-	

Your partner opens 1 No Trump (12-14). You must make a forcing bid at the 3 level so you call 3 Spades since it is preferable to bid a major. When your partner raises to game a small slam must be on, subject to checking up on Aces. When you find there is only one missing Ace you bid 6 Spades.

The Play

West leads HQ. There is one certain loser, and the trump suit has to lie well. You should start by laying down SA on which SJ falls from West. The correct play is now to enter

dummy with a Club and run S10. Unlucky if West was dealt QJ bare, you played the odds. You land your contract on this hand by using "Restricted choice". Playing for the drop will win 35 per cent. of the time. Finessing wins 65 per cent. Almost two to one in favour of the finesse!

Hand 46

Dealer East
E/W game

	North			
	SKQ82			
	HAKJ			
	D752			
	CQJ3			
		East		
		S6		
		H97642		
		DA103		
		CA1062		
	South			
	SAJ109753			
	H8			
	DQ98			
	C74			

The Bidding

East	South	West	North	Opening
-	3S	-	4S	Lead H3

You have an ideal hand on which to open a pre-emptive 3 Spades. This is raised to game by North.

The Play

West leads a low Heart and you count your losers: three Diamonds and two Clubs. There is a slim chance of making the contract, namely that West has led from HQ. (This is far more likely than the only alternative line of play, namely that East holds DAK. Finding one card well placed is an even-money bet: finding two right is 3 to 1 against). So finesse HJ at trick 1 and when it holds, draw trumps and discard your two losing Clubs on HAK. You later lose three Diamonds tricks but that is all.

Hand 47

Dealer South
Vul: none

	North		
	SQ543		
	HQ62		
	DA75		
	CA65		
		East	
		SJ8	
		HA95	
		DQ962	
		CQ743	
	South		
	SAK62		
	HJ83		
	DK84		
	CKJ2		

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead C10</i>
1S	-	3S		
4S	-	-		

You have 15 points, too many for 1 No Trump, so bid your four card suit. Partner's support shows 11-12 points and together you should have enough points for game in 4 Spades.

The Play

On the lead you have three Club tricks, two Diamonds and four Spades (barring a 4-1 split). You need one Heart trick but if you have to lead Hearts, you won't make any tricks in the suit.

Win the lead in hand as cheaply as possible, draw trumps and cash your minor suit winners. Now lead your last Diamond. Whoever wins will be forced to give a ruff and discard or lead Hearts - either way giving you your tenth trick.

Hand 48

Dealer West

Vul: none

<i>North</i>		<i>East</i>
S K 5 2		S A Q 4 3
H 10 9 4 2		H Q 8
D A J 5		D K 7 2
C K J 7		C 8 6 4 2
<i>West</i>		<i>South</i>
S J 10 9 6		S 8 7
H J 5		H A K 7 6 3
D 8 6 4 3		D Q 10 9
C Q 9 5		C A 10 3

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead SJ</i>
-	-	-	1H	
-	4H	-	-	

You have an obvious 1 Heart opening bid, raised to game by partner.

The Play

On the lead your losers are:- two Spades (probably), perhaps one in each red suit and the Clubs to play.

Duck the lead in case SK can be established later. West continues Spades and this time you play SK which loses. East returns SQ which you ruff. Draw trumps - fortunately they break. You have no choice about how to play the Diamond suit so take the finesse, which loses to East.

If you have been counting you will know that East has now shown 11 points and yet he did not open the bidding. Clearly West must have CQ so you win the Diamond return, cash CA and finesse CJ.

Hand 49

Dealer North
Game all

	North	
	SA 10 6 3	
	HKJ 10	
	D 8 4 3 2	
	C 5 2	
West		East
S Q J 9 4		SK 8 2
H 9 4		H 7 5
D K 7 5		D J 10 9
C Q 9 6 4		C K 10 8 7 3
	South	
	S 7 5	
	HAQ 8 6 3 2	
	DAQ 6	
	CAJ	

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead SQ</i>
-	-	1H	-	
1S	-	3H	-	
4H	-	-	-	

You naturally open with 1 Heart. When partner bids his suit, you must rebid 3 Hearts because you are significantly better than a minimum opening. Partner raises to game.

The Play

Count your top winners. Six Hearts, one Spade, one Diamond and one Club make nine tricks, and the Diamond finesse (if it works) would be your tenth trick. Is there any way of avoiding having to rely on the Diamond finesse?

Duck the opening lead to prevent East getting the lead to switch to Diamonds. East cannot overtake without setting up a finesse of S10. Win the next lead with SA and play a Club to CJ. Win the Club return, cross to dummy with a trump and ruff a Spade. Return to dummy with another trump and lead S10. When East discards, throw a Diamond. West is "thrown-in" and any lead gives you your tenth trick.

Hand 50

Dealer East
Vul: none

	North	
	S 7 4 3	
	HAJ 3	
	DA 7 4 2	
	CA 7 4	
West		East
SQ 10 9 2		SAJ 6 5
HK 9 4		H 10 8 5 2
DQ 10 9 5		D 3
C 8 6		CJ 9 5 2
	South	
	SK 8	
	HQ 7 6	
	DKJ 8 6	
	CKQ 10 3	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead S2</i>
-	1NT	-	3NT	
-	-	-	-	

With 14 points and the right shape you have a natural 1 No Trump opening bid. Partner raises to game.

The Play

West leads S2 (probably from a four card suit). East plays SA and returns S5, won by your SK.

Count your tricks. One top Spade, one top Heart, two top Diamonds and three top Clubs - seven tricks.

Since Diamonds might produce the two extra tricks, play a Diamond to DA and a small Diamond back. When East discards, there is no point in finessing so play DK. You will now need a second Heart trick so lead a small one from hand and finesse HJ, which holds. Cash HA but HK doesn't appear. Play to CK then CA. By this time West has shown four Spades, two Hearts (plus presumably HK), four Diamonds and therefore only two Clubs. Lead a small Club from dummy and finesse C10 confidently.

Hand 51

Dealer South
Game all

	<i>North</i>	
	S A K 7 4	
	H A J 7	
	D K J 9	
	C A 10 6	
		<i>East</i>
		S 3
		H Q 8 2
		D 6 5 4 2
		C Q 9 8 4 2
	<i>South</i>	
	S Q J 9 6 2	
	H K 9 4	
	D A 10 7	
	C K 7	
<i>West</i>		
S 10 8 5		
H 10 6 5 3		
D Q 8 3		
C J 5 3		

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead S5</i>
1S	-	3C	-	
3NT	-	6S	-	
-	-	-	-	

With 13 points and a five card major, you open 1 Spade. Partner's 3 Club bid shows 16 or more points with, presumably, a Club suit. While you could now rebid your Spades at the 3 level to show a five card suit and a minimum opener, 3 No Trumps is preferable as it shows a minimum opening bid with controls in the unbid suits. Partner now jumps direct to 6 Spades.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Five Spades, two Hearts, two Diamonds and two Clubs makes

eleven tricks, with chances for a twelfth on a successful finesse in either red suit. It would be unlucky to lose both finesses - or would it?

Draw trumps, cash the Clubs and ruff the losing Club.

Now play HA, HK then the third Heart. Whoever wins this trick has to concede a ruff and discard or lead a Diamond into the tenace for your twelfth trick.

Hand 52

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	S K J 10 8	
	H Q 10 5 3	
	D Q 7 4 3	
	C 9	
West		East
S 6 4 3		S 5
H A 9 7 4 2		H K J 8 6
D J 10 5		D K 9 2
C K J		C Q 10 7 5 4
	South	
	S A Q 9 7 2	
	H -	
	D A 8 6	
	C A 8 6 3 2	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead S3</i>
-	-	-	1C	
-	1D	-	1S	
-	3S	-	4D	
-	4S	-	-	
-				

With five Clubs and five Spades you should open the bidding with 1 Club. Partner bids 1 Diamond and then double raises your 1 Spade rebid. In view of this you make a mild slam try by cue bidding your DA, but North signs off in 4 Spades and you can go no further.

The Play

You have five top Spade tricks and two other Aces. The other three tricks will come from a cross-ruff.

Note that you cannot afford to draw a single round of trumps on this hand after the opening lead, and that you must cash your outside winners (i.e. DA and CA) early on lest a defender discards from one of those suits and later ruffs the Ace. The sequence of play is therefore: win the lead in dummy, cross to CA, cash DA and then cross ruff in Clubs and Hearts.

Hand 53

Dealer North

Vul: none

N/S 40

	North	
	S 8 4	
	H A K 5	
	D A 10 9 2	
	C A 8 5 4	
		East
		S Q
		H Q 10 7 6
		D Q 8 5 4
		C K 9 6 3
West		
S K 10 9 3		
H J 8		
D K J 6 3		
C Q 10 7		
	South	
	S A J 7 6 5 2	
	H 9 4 3 2	
	D 7	
	C J 2	

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening Lead D3
1D	-	1S		
1NT	-	2S		
-	-	-		

Over your partner's 1 Diamond bid you have no choice but to bid Spades at the cheapest level. When he rebids 1 No Trump it is best to bid your Spades again, expecting to make tricks with the long Spades, which would be unlikely in No Trumps.

The Play

Count your top winners. One Club, one Diamond, two Hearts and one Spade is five tricks. Three more Spade tricks are needed. However drawing trumps requires a good break.

Instead you should trump losers with your long Spades. Win the first trick and ruff a Diamond. Enter dummy twice more to ruff two more Diamonds. These three ruffs, when added to your top winners, give you eight tricks and the contract.

Hand 54

Dealer East

Game all

	North	
	S K 9	
	H A 8 3	
	D 8 6 5 2	
	C A K 9 4	
		East
		S 8 7 6 3
		H 6 5 2
		D K 9
		C Q J 7 5
West		
S 4		
H K Q J 9 7 4		
D A Q 10		
C 10 6 2		
	South	
	S A Q J 10 5 2	
	H 10	
	D J 7 4 3	
	C 8 3	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead HK</i>
-	-	1H	-	
1NT	-	2H	-	
-	2S	-	4S	
-	-	-		

Being vulnerable you decide to pass. However when the opponents subside in 2 Hearts, it is clear that your partner must have a fair number of points so you reopen with 2 Spades, raised to game by your partner.

The Play

You have six Spade tricks, one Heart and two Clubs, and your tenth trick will have to come from the Diamond suit - a long road. If, however, you draw trumps (and they break badly) you will run out of trumps before the long Diamond is established.

So, win the Heart lead and immediately play a Diamond. East wins and returns a Heart. Ruff in hand and play another Diamond, again ruffing the Heart return. Another Diamond and a Heart return: however this time you can ruff in dummy. Draw trumps and claim.

Hand 55

Dealer South

Vul: none

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
S J 9 8 7	S 10 6 5	S 4 3 2
H Q 10 7 5	H A 8 4	H -
D Q J 10	D A 7 4	D K 8 6 3 2
C 7 4	C K Q 8 5	C A J 9 6 3
	<i>South</i>	
	S A K Q	
	H K J 9 6 3 2	
	D 9 5	
	C 10 2	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead DQ</i>
1H	-	2C	-	
2H	-	4H	-	
-	-			

You open 1 Heart, and when North responds 2 Clubs your only possible rebid is 2 Hearts which partner raises to game.

The Play

Count your losers on the lead of DQ: one Diamond, one Club and one or two in Hearts. How can we hold the Heart losers to one? Fortunately there is a 100% line to safeguard against two Heart losers. Win the Diamond lead with DA in dummy, and lead a low Heart to HK. If all follow, well and good: otherwise play the next round of Hearts through the hand holding Q10xx, West in this case. When West plays H10, cover with HA and West now makes only his HQ.

Hand 56

Dealer West

Game all

	North	
	S Q 10 7 5 3	
	H J 6	
	D A 9	
	C Q 7 4 2	
		East
		S 8 4
		H 9 8 5 4
		D Q J 5
		C 10 8 5 3
	South	
	S A K J 9 6 2	
	H A 3	
	D K 7 4	
	C A J	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead HK</i>
-	-	-	2S	
-	3S	-	4C	
-	4D	-	4H	
-	5S	-	6S	
-	-	-		

With a good 6-card suit and 20 points you have an ideal 2 Spade opening bid. Partner's response agrees trumps and shows a fair hand (he would bid 2 No Trumps if weak). Slam must now be odds on. You need however to enquire about partner's controls. So you bid 4 Clubs showing CA. Partner responds (as hoped for) 4 Diamonds showing first round control of Diamonds (DA or a void). You now bid 4 Hearts (showing first round control). Partner's jump to 5 Spades shows extra values so you bid the slam.

The Play

When dummy goes down, count your tricks. Six Spades, one Heart, two top Diamonds and a Diamond ruff and one top Club constitutes eleven tricks. Is there anything better than the Club finesse for the twelfth trick?

Win the lead with HA, draw trumps and then play three rounds of Diamonds, ruffing the third round in dummy. Now lead HJ. West wins and has no good lead. In the event he returns a Club which gives you a free finesse in the suit for your twelfth trick.

Hand 57

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North			
	S J 10 2			
	H J 10 4			
	D A 10 9 8 3			
	C K 6			
		East		
		S 7 5		
		H K 9 8 6 2		
		D K 2		
		C A Q J 10		
			South	
			S A K Q 8 3	
			H A 7	
			D Q J 4	
			C 8 7 5	

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening
-	1H	1S	-	Lead H3
2S	-	3H	-	
4S	-	-	-	

Because of your five card Spade suit 1 Spade is a better bid over East's 1 Heart than a takeout double. Over North's 2 Spade response you can bid 3 Hearts, inviting partner to bid game with more than a minimum, which he duly does.

The Play

West leads a low Heart to East's HK. If you make the "natural" play of HA you will go down, because when East gains the lead with DK he will put West on lead with HQ and West will lead through dummy's CK. Ducking the opening lead avoids this risk since there is no danger leaving East in the lead. A neat little avoidance play.

Hand 58

Dealer East

Vul: none

	North			
	S A 5			
	H K J 9 5 2			
	D K Q 3			
	C J 7 3			
		East		
		S 9 4 2		
		H A Q 6		
		D 9 6		
		C A K 10 8 5		
			South	
			S K Q 10 8 6 3	
			H 3	
			D A 8 5 4	
			C 9 2	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening</i>
1C	1S	-	2H	Lead C4
-	2S	-	3S	
-	4S	-		
-				

Over East's 1 Club opening bid you are too weak to double but a 1 Spade overcall is warranted. Partner bids 2 Hearts - just what you didn't want to hear. You must rebid your Spades as cheaply as possible. However when partner now supports your Spades, your hand is worth a raise to game.

The Play

You have three top losers beside the fourth Diamond. The Hearts look useful but when West plays CQ East, who opened, is likely to hold HAQ. Ruff the third Club and draw trumps. Lead your singleton Heart and play H9, hoping that West has H10. He appears to, for East wins with HQ.

Ruff the Club return and cross to dummy in Diamonds to lead HK. East covers with HA, so you ruff and cross to dummy again in Diamonds to lead the established HJ, discarding your small Diamond. This is your tenth trick.

Hand 59

Dealer South
N/S game

	<i>North</i>	
	S 10 9 5 3	
	H A 7 6	
	D A Q 10 7 6	
	C A	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
S 2		S 7
H Q 10 9 5		H K J 8 4 3
D 9 8		D K J 4
C K Q J 9 8 6		C 10 7 5 2
	<i>South</i>	
	S A K Q J 8 6 4	
	H 2	
	D 5 3 2	
	C 4 3	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening</i>
4S	-	6S	-	Lead CK
-	-			

With a solid seven card Spade suit your hand merits a 4 Spade opening bid. North bids 6 Spades, no doubt gambling on the opening lead plus a little luck.

The Play

West leads CK taken in dummy. The only risk of the contract failing is if East has both missing Diamond honours. To cater for that possibility you need to set about an

elimination: SA, HA, ruff a Heart, ruff a Club and ruff the last Heart. Now, with all your (and dummy's) Hearts and Clubs gone, lead a Diamond to D10. East wins but is endplayed. A Heart or a Club lead would give you a ruff and discard, and a Diamond gives you a free finesse.

Hand 60

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	S 7 2	
	H K 7 5 3	
	D 7 5 4	
	C A 9 4 2	
West		East
S K Q J 6 5		S 10 8 3
H Q J 9		H 10 8 4 2
D J 9 8		D K 10
C Q J		C 10 7 6 3
	South	
	SA 9 4	
	HA 6	
	DA Q 6 3 2	
	CK 8 5	

The Bidding

West	North	East	South	Opening Lead SK
1S	-	-	Dble	
-	2H	-	2NT	
-	3NT	-	-	
-				

Too strong for a protective 1 No Trump, you decide to double for takeout, on the basis that if partner bids Hearts, you can then bid No Trumps. This duly happens and partner raises to game.

The Play

Duck the first two Spades, hoping to exhaust East of Spades in case he gets the lead. Win the third round, cross to dummy and take the Diamond finesse, which wins.

Now return to dummy and play another Diamond. When DK appears, let East win the trick so that he, the safe hand, is on lead. Win the Club return and claim.

Hand 61

Dealer North

Vul: none

		North		
		S Q J 6		
		H 7 4 3		
		D Q 10 9		
		C Q 7 4 3		
			East	
			S K 10 8 7	
			H K 10	
			D K 6 3	
			C 10 8 5 2	
	West			
	S 9 5			
	H J 9 5 2			
	D 8 5 4 2			
	C J 9 6			
		South		
		S A 4 3 2		
		H A Q 8 6		
		D A J 7		
		C A K		

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening Lead
-	-	2NT	-	S9
3NT	-	-	-	

With 22 points and 4432 shape you have an ideal hand on which to open 2 No Trumps. Partner raises to game.

The Play

The lead looks as if it is top of two or more, in which case East will have SK. With that in mind, count your tricks. Two Spades, one Heart, two Diamonds even if the finesse loses and three Clubs - eight tricks in all. The remaining trick will come from a successful red suit finesse.

The difficulty is entries. You need to get to dummy to cash CQ after cashing CAK and also to lead Diamonds and Hearts for the finesses.

The key play is to play low in dummy at trick 1 and win the trick with SA. Cash the top Clubs. Continue with a Spade to SJ and win the Spade return. Lead DQ and unblock with DJ. Continue with D10 (if East covers, D9 becomes an entry) which holds. Cash CQ and take the Heart finesse for an overtrick.

Hand 62

Dealer East

Vul: none

		North		
		S 6 2		
		H A 10 9 7		
		D A Q 10		
		C K 5 3 2		
			East	
			S J 7 5 3	
			H Q 6 3	
			D 7 5 4 2	
			C 9 7	
	West			
	S 10			
	H 8 5 4 2			
	D 9 8 6 3			
	C J 8 6 4			
		South		
		S A K Q 9 8 4		
		H K J		
		D K J		
		C A Q 10		

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead D9</i>
-	2C	-	2H	
-	2S	-	2NT	
-	3S	-	4D	
-	4NT	-	5H	
-	5NT	-	6D	
-	7S	-	-	

With 23 high card points you open the bidding with an Acol 2 Club bid. Partner's 2 Heart bid is a natural response showing an Ace and a King or more, as well as a Heart suit. You now bid your suit, Spades. Partner marks time with a 2 No Trump bid. Bid your Spades again to show a long suit. Partner's 4 Diamonds cue-bids DA and after ascertaining, via Blackwood, that no Aces or Kings are missing, you confidently bid 7 Spades.

The Play

You have no shortage of tricks. The only thing which could go wrong would be a 4-1 Spade break. Win the lead and cash two Spades, West showing out on the second round. Nonetheless, all being well this contract is still makeable by means of a "trump coup". To make it, however, you must reduce the length of your Spade suit to that of East. Cash HK, HA and ruff a Heart. Cash two top Clubs and ruff another Heart (East discarding). Continue with Diamonds (discarding your last Club if East does not ruff). At trick 12 lead any card from dummy and cover whichever Spade East plays.

Hand 63

Dealer South
N/S game

	<i>North</i>	
	SA 10 5 2	
	H 5 4 2	
	DAK 10 4	
	CK 7	
		<i>East</i>
		S 7 3
		HJ 10 7
		D 9 8 6
		C 9 6 5 4 2
	<i>South</i>	
	SKJ 9 8 4	
	HK 8 6	
	DQJ 3	
	CA 3	
<i>West</i>		
SQ 6		
HAQ 9 3		
D 7 5 2		
CQJ 10 8		

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead CQ</i>
1S	-	4S	-	
-	-	-	-	

1 Spade is the mandatory opening bid, raised to four by partner.

The Play

Count your tricks. Two top Spades, four Diamonds and two Clubs makes eight tricks. The Spades are bound to be good for two or three more.

There is just one danger, namely that East might win a trick with SQ and lead a Heart to West's presumed HA. You must therefore stop East gaining the lead. So cash SA and then finesse SJ (the "finesse obligatoire"). As it happens West wins, but cannot cash three Hearts. You have time to discard a Heart on the long Diamond.

Hand 64

Dealer West
N/S game and 30

	North	
	S K 7 3	
	H Q 3 2	
	D 10 6 5	
	C Q 10 9 3	
West		East
S Q 6		S 10 9 8 4 2
H K J 10 9 5		H 7 4
D A J 7		D Q 9 8 3
C K 8 2		C 7 5
	South	
	S A J 5	
	H A 8 6	
	D K 4 2	
	C A J 6 4	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead HJ</i>
1H	-	-	Dble	
-	2C	-	2NT	
-	-	-		

West's Heart opener is passed round to you. You double, intending to bid No Trumps at the next opportunity. Partner bids 2 Clubs and you duly bid 2 No Trumps which becomes the final contract.

The Play

Where are your tricks coming from? Two Spades, two Hearts (HQ wins trick 1) and three Clubs, (as West is likely to have CK). This leaves you needing one more trick. At tricks 2 and 3 you lead Clubs in such a way that if the finesse wins the lead remains in dummy. West wins the second round and leads another Heart. When East follows suit the contract is safe. Take HA, cash one more Club only (a second would force an inconvenient discard later) and throw West in with a Heart. West wins this and two more Heart tricks (on which you need to throw a Club) and is then endplayed to lead from one of his honours to give you your eighth trick.

Hand 65

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North	
	S 10 7	
	H 7 6 5 3	
	D A K Q	
	C 8 7 3 2	
		East
		S Q 9 4
		H K 10 9
		D 8 4
		C Q 10 9 5 4
West		
S J 8 6 3		
H Q 8		
D J 10 9 6		
C K J 6		
	South	
	S A K 5 2	
	H A J 4 2	
	D 7 5 3 2	
	C A	

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead DJ</i>
-	-	1H	-	
3H	-	4H	-	
-	-			

Your Diamonds are not a biddable suit, so you open 1 Heart to maximise the chances of finding a 4-4 major suit fit. Over partner's 3 Heart bid you have enough in hand to bid 4.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Two Spades, one Heart, three Diamonds and one Club makes seven tricks, with, hopefully, one more if the Hearts break 3-2. Two Spade ruffs in dummy should give you enough. First take two rounds of trumps by leading a Heart to HJ (East might have HKQ) and playing out HA on regaining the lead. Now cross ruff. The defenders can take their top trump whenever they like: the contract is secure.

Hand 66

Dealer East

N/S game

	North	
	S 7 2	
	H A 9 3 2	
	D A J 8 4	
	C J 5 4	
		East
		S 10 8 6 5 4
		H 10 7
		D 10 9
		C K 9 8 2
West		
S Q J 9 3		
H Q 8 5		
D 7 6 3		
C A 10 7		
	South	
	S A K	
	H K J 6 4	
	D K Q 5 2	
	C Q 6 3	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead SQ</i>
-	1H	-	3H	
-	4H	-	-	
-		-		

Your natural opening bid is 1 Heart. When partner raises to 3 Hearts you have ample points in hand to bid game.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Two Spades, two Hearts and four Diamonds makes eight, with a Heart break producing the ninth. Should you try the Heart finesse for the tenth trick or try and set up a Club trick?

Win the lead and play off HAK (perhaps HQ will drop). Cash your other Spade winner and then play off the Diamonds. Neither opponent ruffs so play a trump to endplay the opponents.

They take their two Club tricks, and thereby establish a Club as your tenth trick.

Hand 67

Dealer South
N/S game

	North	
	SA 8743	
	HQ 1072	
	D 7	
	CA 75	
		East
		SJ 10
		HK 94
		DA 105
		CK 8432
	South	
	SQ 6	
	HAJ 53	
	DKQJ 6	
	CJ 96	
West		
SK 952		
H 86		
D 98432		
CQ 10		

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead H6</i>
1NT	-	2C		
2H	-	4H		
-	-			

Your hand is ideal for a 1 No Trump opening bid. Partner's 2 Clubs is Stayman, so you bid your four card Heart suit, raised to game by partner.

The Play

With (probably) four Heart tricks on the lead, one Spade and one Club you are going to have to play for a couple of Diamond tricks, throwing Clubs from dummy, and to ruff a couple of Clubs. Because of the entry situation, it does not look as good to try and make SQ or set up the Spades.

Play HQ to trick 1, which wins. Lead dummy's Diamond and play a high honour from your hand. This wins, so East must have DA and has played well in holding it up. Continue with

a high Diamond, throwing a Club. East wins and returns a Club. Take CA, finesse HJ, discard dummy's last Club on your remaining Diamond honour and ruff a Club.

Your best bet now is to play SA and another Spade, which is won by West who returns a Diamond. Discard a Spade from dummy to avoid an overruff and ruff the Diamond continuation in hand. Ruff your last Club in dummy and HA is the last trick. You lose two Diamonds and one Spade and make the contract.

Hand 68

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	S J 10 9 6	
	H 9 7	
	D 10 7 4 3	
	C Q 6 2	
West		East
S -		S K Q 7
H J 10 8 5 3 2		H Q 6 4
D Q 8 5		D J 9 6 2
C 10 9 8 5		C 7 4 3
	South	
	S A 8 5 4 3 2	
	H A K	
	D A K	
	C A K J	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead HJ</i>
-	-	-	2C	
-	2D	-	2S	
-	4S	-	6S	
-	-	-		

You have too many points to bid anything but a conventional 2 Clubs. North gives a negative response and you now bid your suit. North's 4 Spade bid guarantees four card support (3 Spades from North would be forcing). You must now bid 6S which at worst appears to depend on the Club finesse.

The Play

West leads HJ and your only concern is the trump suit. There is no difficulty unless one opponent has all three missing Spades. If West has them you can do nothing about it. What if East has them? Win the lead and play a low Spade to dummy's S9. West shows out and East wins. Whatever he does his side will only score that trick because you can enter dummy in Clubs and finesse East's remaining Spade honour.

Hand 69

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North	
	S J 9 4 3	
	H 8	
	D K Q 10 3	
	C Q J 10 4	
		East
		S K 2
		H 6 5 3 2
		D 9 8 7 4
		C A K 7
West		
S A Q		
H Q J 10 9		
D J 6 2		
C 8 6 5 3		
	South	
	S 10 8 7 6 5	
	H A K 7 4	
	D A 5	
	C 9 2	

The Bidding

North	East	South	East	Opening Lead
-	-	1S	-	HQ
4S	-	-	-	

Since you are third in hand a bid of 1 Spade is in order. Your partner raises you to game and, since he passed initially, you fear, when you hear his bid, that 4 Spades may be a difficult contract.

The Play

You have two Club losers and up to three Spade losers. To dispose of your Club losers, win the lead and play three rounds of Diamonds, discarding a Club. Continue by playing D10 and discard the last Club. West ruffs and returns a Club. Ruff it, and ruff a Heart, a Club and another Heart. Now play a round of Spades and when they break, claim.

Hand 70

Dealer East

Vul: none

	North	
	S K 9 5	
	H A J 5 3	
	D K J 2	
	C 10 7 2	
		East
		S J 6 4
		H K 10 4 2
		D A Q
		C J 9 6 5
West		
S Q 8 7 3 2		
H Q 8		
D 10 8 7 6		
C 8 3		
	South	
	S A 10	
	H 9 7 6	
	D 9 5 4 3	
	C A K Q 4	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead S3</i>
-	1NT	-	3NT	
-	-	-	-	

With 13 high card points and 4432 shape you open 1 No Trump. Partner raises to game.

The Play

You have probably got three Spade tricks on the lead, one top Heart and three top Clubs. Two more tricks are needed. The Clubs may provide one, but one more at least must come from the red suits.

On the opening lead win East's SJ with SA. The combined Heart suit is marginally better than the combined Diamond suit so attack Hearts first, finessing HJ on the first round. East wins and returns a Spade to the tenace in dummy. Return to hand with a Club and lead another Heart, covering HQ with HA. Now lead H3, which East wins with H10, West discarding. Hearts have not broken 3-3 as you had hoped, but your H5 is now the top Heart left (had you realised?). East returns a Spade and you discard a Diamond from hand and win in dummy. Cash H5. On CK, which comes next, West shows out so East must have one left despite his play of CJ.

Should you now play towards DK hoping West has DA? No! If he has it he will play it and cash two Spades to set the contract. So you must assume that East has DA. Give him his Club trick. He has to return a Diamond to dummy - contract made.

Hand 71

Dealer South
E/W game
N/S 60

	<i>North</i>		
	SK 10 3		
	HA 7 6		
	DQ 4 3		
	CA 9 5 4		
		<i>East</i>	
		S 8 6 5	
		H J 9 8 3 2	
		D J	
		C 10 8 3 2	
	<i>South</i>		
	SAQJ 4 2		
	HK 5 4		
	DAK 6 2		
	C 6		
<i>West</i>			
S 9 7			
H Q 10			
D 10 9 8 7 5			
C K Q J 7			

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead CK</i>
1S	-	2C	-	
2D	-	2H	-	
3H	-	6S	-	
-	-	-	-	

You open with one of your longest suit and, after North bids Clubs, you bid your second suit, Diamonds. North's Heart bid is now "fourth suit forcing", asking you to describe your

hand further. With an obvious limit bid your best response is to raise Hearts, showing a very good hand. Partner now bids the Spade slam.

The Play

You have a Heart loser and, if the Diamonds don't break, you will need to ruff one in dummy. Win CA and draw two rounds of trumps with SK and SJ. Play a Diamond to dummy's DQ and return a Diamond. East discards (if he were to ruff his trumps would be exhausted and you would throw a Heart on the fourth Diamond and ruff a Heart). Cross to HA and play another Diamond. East discards again. Win and ruff your last Diamond in dummy, ruff a Club in hand and draw the last trump, merely losing one Heart trick.

Hand 72

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	SK 8 5 4	
	HA 10 9 5	
	DQ 10 2	
	CA 8	
West		East
SQJ		S 10 9 7 6 2
HQJ 4 3		H 8 6
DA 9		DJ 7 6
CK 7 6 4 3		C 9 5 2
	South	
	SA 3	
	HK 7 2	
	DK 8 5 4 3	
	CQJ 10	

The Bidding

West	North	East	South	Opening
1C	Dble	-	3NT	Lead C4
-	-	-	-	-

Over West's opening 1 Club bid North makes a takeout double. You have an awkward bid but with 13 points, no major and a guard in Clubs you eventually decide to settle for 3 No Trumps.

The Play

West leads a low Club. Since he bid (and there are only 14 high card points between the defenders' hands) he is virtually certain to have CK so you let the lead run round to your hand.

Count your winners. Two Spades, two Hearts and two Clubs. You need therefore to make three tricks in Diamonds but because of the Club position you cannot afford to lose the lead more than once in Diamonds. Playing the suit in a vacuum, it would be correct to lead low from dummy towards DK, and finesse D10 on the next round. However the opening bid by West alters these odds. The right play is in fact to lead a low Diamond from hand to DQ and duck the return. West continues Clubs, but now you have ten tricks, DK taking DJ.

Hand 73

Dealer North
N/S game

	North	
	S 3 2	
	H A J 10	
	D Q 10 8 5	
	C 10 9 4 3	
		East
		S 10 9 7 6 5 4
		H 9 8 7 5
		D 3
		C 8 7
	West	
	S K J 8	
	H K Q 6 4 3 2	
	D 9	
	C K J 2	
		South
		S A Q
		H -
		D A K J 7 6 4 2
		C A Q 6 5

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead HK</i>
-	-	2D	2H	
3D	3H	4C	-	
4H	-	4S	-	
5D	-	6D	-	
-	-			

You have a hand which is not good enough to bid 2 Clubs but is very suitable for a 2 Diamond bid. Note West's overcall of 2 Hearts, which should show a long suit and a fair hand. North supports your Diamonds at the 3 level, thus showing good support and a number of points. East's Heart bid must be mainly on distributional values.

A Diamond slam is clearly on but should it be a grand slam? Cue bid your Clubs. North's next bid shows HA (or a Heart void) and you now show your SA by bidding 4 Spades. North is unable to co-operate in further cue bidding so you settle in 6 Diamonds.

The Play

Count your tricks. You have seven Diamonds and three other Aces for sure. Where are the other two tricks to come from? A Spade or Club finesse looks doomed in view of West's overcall.

The lead allows you to establish a second Heart trick - still one trick short. Win the first trick with HA discarding a Club, and continue with HJ, again discarding a Club. Win the trump return in dummy and cash H10, discarding yet another Club. Now cash CA and return twice to dummy to ruff Clubs. Finally cross to dummy with a trump and throw the losing Spade on the winning Club.

Hand 74

Dealer East
N/S game

	North	
	S J 7 4 2	
	H A Q 2	
	D 10 6 3	
	C 7 3 2	
		East
		S 8 5
		H 8 4
		D J 9 5 4 2
		C A J 10 6
West		
S 10 9 6 3		
H 9 6 5		
D A Q 7		
C Q 8 5		
	South	
	S A K Q	
	H K J 10 7 3	
	D K 8	
	C K 9 4	

The Bidding

East	South	West	North	Opening Lead H5
-	1H	-	2H	
-	4H	-	-	
-	-	-	-	

With 19 points you are too weak for 2NT or 2 Hearts so you open 1 Heart. Over partner's 2 Heart bid you have ample points to bid 4 Hearts.

The Play

You should make five Heart tricks, four Spade tricks and, with luck, one minor suit King. There is, however, an entry problem. You have only two entries to dummy, both in trumps, and you may need to lead both minors from dummy as well as cash SJ. Careful timing is necessary.

Win the lead in dummy and lead a Diamond (not a Club, which would lose four tricks if CA were with West).

West wins with DA and plays a second Heart. Win in hand and cash three Spades, before crossing to dummy in trumps to cash SJ. Lead a Club and all is well when East has CA.

Hand 75

Dealer South
Vul: none

	North	
	S K 8	
	H K 9 6	
	D A K 5 4	
	C K 7 6 3	
		East
		S 10 7 6 5
		H 7
		D 10 9 8 7 3
		C J 10 2
West		
S J 3 2		
H Q 10 8 2		
D Q J 2		
C 9 5 4		
	South	
	S A Q 9 4	
	H A J 5 4 3	
	D 6	
	C A Q 8	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead DQ</i>
1H	-	2C	-	
2S	-	3H	-	
4C	-	4NT	-	
5S	-	6D	-	
6H	-	-	-	

North responds 2 Clubs to your 1 Heart opener. With a very good hand you have no hesitation in reversing into 2 Spades (showing at least five Hearts and four Spades). North supports your Hearts and a slam looks possible. Cue bid your CA by bidding 4 Clubs. Partner's 4 No Trumps is Blackwood and having three Aces you respond 5 Spades. Partner's bid of 6 Diamonds (a suit not yet bid) is a grand slam force asking you to bid 7 Hearts if you hold two of the top three honours in the suit. Since you don't, you settle for 6 Hearts.

The Play

West leads DQ which you win in dummy. You have at least eight winners and no losers outside the trump suit: the fourth Spade can be discarded on DK. So you must keep your Heart losers to one. Provided Hearts break no worse than 4-1 this contract is safe. You must however not take the Heart finesse but lead a low Heart to HA, then a small Heart from hand. If West follows, cover whatever he plays, thus ensuring four Heart tricks. If West shows out on the second round of Hearts, play HK and lead another Heart from dummy towards HJ.

Hand 76

Dealer West

Vul: none

	<i>North</i>	
	SAQ	
	H753	
	DAJ652	
	C962	
		<i>East</i>
		S652
		HJ8
		DKQ9
		CK10543
<i>West</i>		<i>South</i>
SJ10974		SK83
HQ1064		HAK92
D103		D874
CJ7		CAQ8

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead SJ</i>
-	-	-	1H	
-	2D	-	2NT	
-	3NT	-	-	
-				

With 16 points you are too strong to open 1 No Trump so you bid 1 Heart. Over partner's 2 Diamond bid you bid 2 No Trumps (showing 15-16 points) and partner bids game.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Three Spades, two Hearts, one Diamond and one Club makes seven tricks. Two more tricks will come from the Diamond suit.

Win the lead with SA and play a Diamond from dummy - a small one as you will need DA as an entry later. East wins and returns a Spade to SQ. Play another small Diamond, won by East who again plays a Spade (won by SK in hand). Enter dummy with the carefully preserved DA to enjoy the long Diamonds. Since West throws a Spade, finesse CQ, without risk, for an overtrick.

Hand 77

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North	
	S Q J 7 2	
	H 5	
	D Q 9 4 3	
	C A Q 10 5	
		East
		S A 10 9 8
		H J 7 6 2
		D A J 10
		C 7 4
	South	
	S K 4	
	H A K 10	
	D K 7 6 5	
	C K J 8 2	
West		
S 6 5 3		
H Q 9 8 4 3		
D 8 2		
C 9 6 3		

The Bidding

North	East	South	West	Opening Lead H4
-	-	1D	-	
1S	-	2NT	-	
3D	-	3NT	-	
-	-	-	-	

You are too strong to open 1 No Trump so you bid 1 Diamond. Over partner's Spade response your hand merits a 2 No Trump rebid. Partner's 3 Diamond bid is forcing and suggests a Diamond contract. With poor Diamonds and no obvious weakness you rightly prefer No Trumps.

The Play

You will have nine tricks once SA and DA have been forced out. The trouble is that East may clear the Hearts before the defence win their second Ace. (A Heart from West would of course give you the ninth trick).

So you must play to keep East out of the lead for a while. Win the lead, cross to C10 and lead a low Spade - by taking SA East would give you three Spade tricks and the contract, so he plays low. Win with SK and return to dummy in Clubs to play a Diamond. Again East must play low. Win, play a Spade to SJ and claim.

Hand 78

Dealer East

N/S game

	North	
	S K Q J	
	H K 7 4	
	D K 10 6 2	
	C K Q 6	
		East
		S 8 6 4 3
		H 6 3
		D 7
		C 10 8 7 5 4 2
	West	
	S 7 5 2	
	H 10 9 8 5 2	
	D J 8 5 4	
	C 3	
		South
		S A 10 9
		H A Q J
		D A Q 9 3
		C A J 9

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead H10</i>
-	2NT	-	5NT	
-	7NT	-	-	
-		-		

With 22 points and No Trump shape you open 2 No Trumps. Partner's 5 No Trump bid is quantitative, ordering you to bid 7 No Trumps with a maximum or 6 No Trumps with a minimum. You have a maximum and therefore bid 7 No Trumps.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Three Spades, three Hearts, four Diamonds and three Clubs is all you need. What could go wrong? If Diamonds break 4-1 you will need to finesse for your fourth Diamond trick. Play out some winners to find out about the opponents' shape. Start with the suit led, since it is likely to be from a long or short suit: East shows out on the third round. Since he discarded a Club, cash three Club winners. West shows out on the second round.

Cash the Spades - both opponents follow. You now know that West started with three or four Spades, five Hearts and one Club, so he has either three or four Diamonds. Play DAQ and when East shows out, take the marked finesse.

Hand 79

Dealer South

Vul: none

	North	
	S A J 3	
	H J 6 2	
	D A 10 7 4 2	
	C A 5	
West		East
S Q 9 7		S K 10 8 5
H 8		H 10 9 7 5 4 3
D Q J 9 5		D 6
C K J 7 6 2		C Q 9
	South	
	S 6 4 2	
	H A K Q	
	D K 8 3	
	C 10 8 4 3	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead C6</i>
INT	-	3NT		

With a No Trump shape and 12 points you open 1 No Trump, raised to 3 by partner.

The Play

With one Spade trick, three Hearts and one Club, you need four Diamond tricks for the contract and would be unlucky not to get them. However you are almost certain to lose a Diamond on the way and the danger is that the opponents cash four or more Club tricks. To avoid this play CA at trick one! If Clubs break there is no problem: however if West has five, playing CA will block the suit when East holds a doubleton honour. (West would lead CK from CKQJxx). Play a Diamond to DK and follow with a small one to D10. If East wins, the suit has broken 3-2. If West has four Diamonds it gains a trick. D10 wins and you clear the suit. West wins but the Clubs are blocked and the contract is safe.

Hand 80

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	S J 6 5	
	H Q 9 6 2	
	D Q 3	
	C 7 5 4 2	
West		East
S A Q 7		S 9 8 4 2
H 5 4		H 10 8 7 3
D J 10 9 8		D 7 6 5 4
C K J 9 6		C 3
	South	
	S K 10 3	
	H A K J	
	D A K 2	
	C A Q 10 8	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead DJ</i>
-	-	-	2C	
-	2D	-	2NT	
-	3C	-	3NT	
-	-	-	-	

With such a power-house a 2 Club opening bid is mandatory on your hand. Partner bids a negative 2 Diamonds and you should now show your balanced 23-24 points by rebidding 2 No Trumps. North's 3 Club bid is Baron (asking you to bid your four card suits in ascending order). Since your only 4 card suit is Clubs you respond 3 No Trumps.

The Play

West leads DJ. Count your tricks:- four Hearts, three Diamonds and one Club. It is tempting to embark on the Clubs for your extra trick. Resist it and play for the certain ninth trick in Spades.

Care is needed, however, to ensure four Heart tricks. You must preserve your only guaranteed entry to dummy (DQ) until you have cashed three Heart tricks in hand. So win the opening lead in hand and cash three Hearts. Then play on Spades. When a Diamond is played back, cash your fourth Heart before turning again to Spades.

Hand 81

Dealer North

Vul: none

	<i>North</i>	
	S 5	
	H 10 9 5 4	
	D A 10 8 5 4	
	C J 10 9	
<i>West</i>		<i>East</i>
S A 10 8 3		S K Q 7 4
H Q J 6		H A K 8 7
D Q 3		D 9 7
C A 8 7 4		C K 6 2
	<i>South</i>	
	S J 9 6 2	
	H 3 2	
	D K J 6 2	
	C Q 5 3	

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead CJ</i>
-	1H	-	1S	
-	3S	-	4S	
-	-	-	-	

The opponents bid to a Spade game while you and your partner pass throughout.

The Play

North leads CJ which West wins in hand with SA. West then leads a trump to SQ. If you follow with S2, Declarer will no doubt play SK on the next round, discover that North started with a singleton, and finesse your Jack on the following round. So - play S9 under

SQ and maybe he will misread the lie of the Spades. And indeed West, taken in by this false card, continues with a Spade to SA, guaranteeing you one Spade trick. When he turns to playing on Hearts (no doubt planning to discard a Diamond on the fourth Heart) you ruff the third round, cash two Diamonds before the mice get at them and sit back and wait for your Club trick. One down.

Hand 82

Dealer East

E/W game

	North	
	S 9 2	
	H A Q	
	D A Q 7 6 4 2	
	C Q J 7	
		East
		S J 10 7 4
		H 9 7 5
		D 9 5
		C K 10 6 3
	South	
	S -	
	H K J 10 8 6 4 3 2	
	D 3	
	C A 9 4 2	
		West
	S A K Q 8 6 5 3	
	H -	
	D K J 10 8	
	C 8 5	

The Bidding

East	South	West	North	Opening Lead SA
-	4H	4S	5H	
5S	-	-	6H	
-	-	-		

With an eight-card suit and limited high card strength it makes sense to open Hearts at the 4 level. Thereafter you must leave the bidding to North, who duly bids the slam in a competitive auction.

The Play

Count your tricks. Eight Hearts, one Diamond and one Club with a second Club from CQJ. A further Club, or a Diamond finesse, is required but how best to combine the chances? Ruff the lead, draw trumps (playing HA on the first round, then overtaking HQ with HK so as to be in hand to lead a third round).

Now lead a low Club to CJ which holds, return to hand with a Spade ruff and lead another Club to CQ. East wins and you trump his Spade return. CA does not drop CK so you have to fall back on the Diamond finesse, which as it happens wins.

This line of play fails only in the unlikely event of East holding CK10xx and DK.

Hand 83

Dealer South

Game all

	North S K Q H A K 5 D 9 7 6 4 3 C K Q 6	
West S 10 5 H J 9 6 3 D K Q J 10 8 5 C 7		East S 9 8 7 6 4 H 8 2 D - C 10 9 5 4 3 2
	South S A J 3 2 H Q 10 7 4 D A 2 C A J 8	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead DK</i>
1H	-	2D	-	
2NT	-	4NT	-	
6NT	-	-	-	

1 Heart is the recommended bid on hands of this shape and size. Over partner's 2 Diamond response your best bid is 2 No Trumps (if partner had Spades he would no doubt have bid them). Partner's raise to 4 No Trumps is quantitative and with your maximum hand you accept the slam invitation.

The Play

Count your top winners: four Spades, three Hearts, one Diamond and three Clubs makes eleven tricks. The twelfth trick must come from Hearts.

Win the first trick and cash the black suit winners. You thereby discover that West started with two Spades, six Diamonds, one Club and hence four Hearts. Cash HAK and now play a Diamond. West wins with his last Diamond and is forced to lead a Heart to your HQ10.

An alternative way of making this contract would be to duck the opening lead. This produces a squeeze on West, who cannot guard both Hearts and Diamonds.

Hand 84

Dealer West
Game all

	North	
	S K 8	
	H A 6 4 3	
	D 7 5 2	
	C K 6 4 3	
		East
		S Q 10 7 6
		H J 9 7 5
		D 8
		C Q J 7 5
West	South	
S J 9 4	S A 5 3 2	
H Q 10 2	H K 8	
D Q J 10 9 6 4	D A K 3	
C 8	C A 10 9 2	

The Bidding

West	North	East	South	Opening Lead
-	-	-	1S	DQ
2C	-	-	3NT	
-	-	-		

Since opening the bidding with 1 Club and then rebidding 1 Spade would show distribution and not a balanced 18 points, you open 1 Spade. Over partner's 2 Club bid, and with an excellent hand with cover in each suit, you bid 3 No Trumps, which partner passes.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Two in each suit. You would be unlucky not to make another Club. Duck the opening lead to hamper communications between the defenders. Win the continuation while East discards a Spade. Play a Club to CK and return a Club, playing C10 when East plays low. This guarantees three Club tricks.

With the contract secure play SK, SA and another Spade (East discarded a Spade at trick 2 - in fact he was squeezed). Your fourth Spade is now good for an overtrick.

Hand 85

Dealer North
E/W game

	North	
	S K 8 3 2	
	H K 5 2	
	D 10 6 2	
	C K J 9	
		East
		S 9
		H 9 7 6 4
		D Q 8
		C Q 8 7 6 3 2
West	South	
S 10 7 6	S A Q J 5 4	
H A 10 8	H Q J 3	
D A K J 7 4 3	D 9 5	
C 10	C A 5 4	

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead DA</i>
-	-	1S	2D	
3S	-	4S	-	
-	-			

West overcalls your 1 Spade opener with 2 Diamonds but partner bids 3 Spades and you have enough in hand to raise to 4.

The Play

You have three losers in the red suits, with the Clubs to negotiate. Ruff the third round of Diamonds, draw trumps and drive out HA. Win the Heart return and cash the other Heart. By now, West has shown six Diamonds, three Spades and followed to three Hearts, leaving him with at most one Club. Lead to CK (noting that West's Club was C10) and return CJ for a successful finesse.

Hand 86

Dealer East

Vul: none

	<i>North</i>		
	SA 7 6 5		
	HA		
	DA Q J 8		
	CK J 4 3		
		<i>East</i>	
		S Q 9 8 2	
		H 8 6 4 3	
		D 5 4 2	
		CA 2	
	<i>South</i>		
	SK J 10 3		
	HK 9 2		
	DK 3		
	C Q 10 7 5		
<i>West</i>			
S 4			
H Q J 10 7 5			
D 10 9 7 6			
C 9 8 6			

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead HQ</i>
-	1NT	-	2C	
-	2S	-	6S	
-	-	-		

With 12 points, nice tenaces and good No Trump shape you open 1 No Trump. North's 2 Club bid is Stayman, so you show your Spades, and North makes a value bid of 6 Spades.

The Play

West leads HQ, and you survey the dummy - there is a definite loser in Clubs, and the location of SQ to be guessed. Is it a guess? No. You are missing five Spades to the Q98 and you should say to yourself "if West has Q9xx I have to go down: however if East has this holding I can succeed". The odds therefore favour laying down SA, then finessing S10. In the event West shows out on the second round and you return to dummy and finesse the Spade again. When all the trumps have gone, you let the opponents take their CA and claim the rest.

Hand 87

Dealer South

Vul: none

	North	
	S A K J 4	
	H Q 8	
	D 6 5 2	
	C K J 7 5	
	East	
	S 9 8	
	H K 7 5 2	
	D Q J 4	
	C A 10 9 8	
West		South
S 10 5 3 2		S Q 7 6
H J 9 6 3		H A 10 4
D K 10 9 8		D A 7 3
C 3		C Q 6 4 2

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead D10</i>
1NT	-	2C	-	
2D	-	3NT	-	

Your obvious opening bid is 1 No Trump. Partner uses Stayman to see if you have a 4 card major. When you deny it with 2 Diamonds, partner jumps to 3 No Trumps.

The Play

West leads D10 and it must be right to hold up DA till the third round. It looks as if the best suit in which to develop tricks for the contract is Clubs so you lead a low Club to CJ, won by East's CA. If East were a brilliant player he would now lead a Heart and put you to a horrible guess: whether to take HA and play for the Clubs to break (68%) or run the Heart round to dummy: in practice you would go down. However East returns C10 on which West discards. Your only chance now is to endplay East, hoping that he has to lead away from HK. Cash the Spades and CQ and throw East in with the last Club. Fortunately he has to lead a Heart, which you win in dummy with HQ. HA is your ninth trick.

Hand 88

Dealer West

Vul: none

	North	
	S 6 3	
	H 10 6 2	
	D A 9 7 5 2	
	C J 6 3	
	East	
	S A 9 7 4	
	H A 7 3	
	D 8 6 4	
	C 7 5 2	
West		South
S K 2		S Q J 10 8 5
H K 9 5		H Q J 8 4
D Q J 10		D K 3
C A K 10 9 8		C Q 4

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead D5</i>
1C	-	1S	-	
2NT	-	3NT	-	
-	-			

You have to pass throughout the auction.

The Play

North leads a low Diamond on which you play DK, which holds. You return a Diamond to partner's DA, and he then leads a third round. On this you must discard CQ in order to defeat the contract. If not, West wins the third Diamond, enters dummy with SA and leads a low Club to the King, re-enters dummy with HA and leads another Club, allowing your CQ to hold, with the result that your partner never regains the lead. Once you have discarded CQ, partner is bound to get the lead with CJ, to cash his good Diamonds.

Hand 89

Dealer North

Vul: none

	<i>North</i>		
	SA 9 7 5		
	HK 8 3		
	DK 8 7 6		
	CJ 4		
		<i>East</i>	
		S -	
		HA 7 5 4 2	
		DJ 9 5	
		CK 7 5 3 2	
			<i>South</i>
			SQ 10 8 6 4 3
			H 9 6
			DA 3
			CAQ 10
<i>West</i>			
SKJ 2			
HQJ 10			
DQ 10 4 2			
C 9 8 6			

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead HQ</i>
-	-	1S	-	
3S	-	4S	-	
-	-			

You only have 12 high card points but since you have a six card suit an opening bid of 1 Spade is mandatory. Over partner's 3 Spade bid your distribution tips the balance in favour of bidding game.

The Play

Count your tricks. Four to six Spades, probably no Hearts (this is confirmed after the first couple of tricks), two Diamonds and two to three Clubs. This makes eight to eleven tricks, depending on whether the Club finesse is right and on how the Spades go.

There are several possible ways of playing the Spades depending on how many Spade tricks you need. This in turn depends on how many Club tricks you make: if you have to lose a Club, you cannot afford to lose any Spades: if the Club finesse wins (as in fact is the case) you can afford to lose one Spade. So ruff the third Heart, take the Club finesse and when it wins play a Club to CA.

Knowing now that you can afford to lose one Spade but not two, lead a small Spade from hand and cover West's card. If this loses, the suit has broken 2-1. Should West discard you play SA and lead towards SQ.

Hand 90

Dealer East

N/S game

	North	
	S A J 3 2	
	H 9 8 7	
	D Q J 6	
	C K Q 4	
		East
		S 10 8 7 6
		H J 10 5 2
		D 7
		C J 10 6 5
West		
S Q 4		
H Q 6 4		
D 10 9 8 5 4 3		
C 9		
	South	
	S K 9 5	
	H A K 3	
	D A K 2	
	C A 8 7 2	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead D10</i>
-	2NT	-	6NT	
-	-	-	-	

You have 21 points and a No Trump shape, so you have a perfect opening bid of 2 No Trumps. Partner does not believe in messing about and bids the slam.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Three Clubs, three Diamonds, two Hearts and two Spades - ten tricks. Extra tricks might come from the black suits - or perhaps a squeeze.

Win the lead in hand and play SK and another Spade, taking SQ with SA.

Play a small Heart from each hand so that the timing is right for a squeeze if Clubs don't break. West wins and returns a Diamond. Cash the red suit winners before playing Clubs. They break! East couldn't keep both black suits as he was forced to discard.

Hand 91

Dealer South

N/S game

	North	
	S K Q 5 2	
	H A J 3 2	
	D A K 4	
	C 6 2	
		East
		S 8 7 6
		H K 8 7 5
		D 8 5
		C 10 9 8 4
West		
S 10		
H 10 9 6 4		
D 10 7 6 3		
C K Q 7 5		
	South	
	S A J 9 4 3	
	H Q	
	D Q J 9 2	
	C A J 3	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead CK</i>
1S	-	3H	-	
4D	-	5S	-	
6C	-	7S	-	
-	-			

You open 1 Spade. Over partner's force you show your second suit, Diamonds. Partner now jumps to 5 Spades which commands you to bid 6 with a control in Clubs - the unbid suit. You are not ashamed of your hand and cue bid your Club control, at which point partner jumps to 7 Spades.

The Play

Count your top tricks. Five Spades, one Heart, four Diamonds and one Club - eleven tricks.

There are various possibilities but the best is to count Spades as four in dummy with three Heart ruffs in hand - this gives the two extra tricks.

The procedure is: win the Club lead, cash SA and HA followed by a Heart ruff. Cross with a Spade to SQ to ruff another Heart, then a Diamond to DK to ruff the last Heart. Use DA as an entry to draw the last trump and discard dummy's Club loser on the fourth Diamond.

This is called a "dummy reversal".

Hand 92

Dealer West
N/S game

	North	
	S K 9	
	H 8	
	D Q J 10 9 3	
	C J 10 9 4 3	
	South	
	S A J 10 8 7 5	
	H A 5 3 2	
	D A	
	C A 7	
West		East
S 6		S Q 4 3 2
H K Q J 9 7 6 4		H 10
D 8 6		D K 7 5 4 2
C K 6 2		C Q 8 5

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead HK</i>
3H	-	-	4S	

West opens 3 Hearts. Your own long Hearts indicate that partner will be short, increasing the chances of a fit. Too good for 3 Spades, you bid 4 Spades.

The Play

Count your tricks. Five Spades (on the likely assumption that you don't catch SQ) and three other Aces make eight tricks. Two Hearts can be ruffed in dummy, but the danger is that East will overruff S9 and return a trump.

The key play, after winning the first trick with HA, is to ruff a Heart with SK. You then return to hand and ruff a third Heart with S9. This gets overruffed but you now make one ruff in dummy, six Spade tricks and three other Aces.

Hand 93

Dealer West
Vul: none

	North	
	S 6 3 2	
	H A 4	
	D 10 8 7 4	
	C A Q 8 2	
	South	
	S A K J 9 7 4	
	H K 10 7 3	
	D	
	C K 7 4	
West		East
S Q 10 8 5		S -
H Q J 9		H 8 6 5 2
D A K 2		D Q J 9 6 5 3
C J 10 9		C 6 5 3

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead DA</i>
-	-	1S	-	
2C	-	2H	-	
3S	-	4C	-	
4H	-	6S	-	
-	-			

Your hand is not strong enough for an Acol 2-opener so you bid 1 Spade. Over partner's 2 Club response it makes sense to bid your second suit, Hearts. Partner's 3 Spade bid now shows 10-11 points with three-card support. Slam now looks possible so you decide to show partner your Club fit. Partner's 4 Heart bid shows first round control in Hearts and with all this information you confidently bid the Spade slam.

The Play

Count your tricks. With luck you will make five or six Spades, two Hearts and two Heart ruffs if necessary and three or four Clubs - ample tricks unless something goes badly wrong. So you ruff the lead in hand and lay down SA on which East shows out. West now has SQ108 and appears to have two certain Spade tricks. However, all is not lost. Play a Heart to HA and ruff a Diamond. Enter dummy with a Club and ruff another Diamond. Cash HK. You now have to guess West's distribution. On the basis that it is 4333 you ruff a Heart, cash two Clubs and continue with the winning Club discarding a Heart. West is forced to ruff and to lead a Spade to your SKJ. His second trump trick has evaporated.

Hand 94

Dealer East
Game all

	<i>North</i>	
	SKQ93	
	H8764	
	DAK9	
	CJ3	
		<i>East</i>
		SJ104
		H32
		DQ865
		C9852
	<i>South</i>	
	SA8652	
	HAQ5	
	D743	
	CA7	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead CK</i>
-	1S	-	4S	
-	-	-		

With a five card major you open 1 Spade, raised to game by partner.

The Play

First count your top tricks. Five Spades (unless East has four Spades), one Heart, two

Diamonds and one Club makes nine tricks. A finesse of HQ will give the tenth trick half of the time: an elimination and throw-in is a much better bet.

Win the lead and play SA, in case West has four Spades, when S9 can be finessed. Draw the remaining trumps and play Ace, King and a third Diamond. East wins and returns a Heart. Should you finesse? By no means. Rise with HA and now throw West in with the Club. He is endplayed and concedes a ruff and discard for your tenth trick.

Hand 95

Dealer South
E/W game

	North	
	S A J 4	
	H J 6 3	
	D J 10 2	
	C Q 8 4 2	
		East
		S 10 9 5 2
		H 7
		D 9 8 7 5
		C J 10 6 3
West		South
S K Q 7 6 3		S 8
H 9 5		H A K Q 10 9 4 2
D A K Q 6 4		D 3
C 7		C A K 9 5

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead DA</i>
2H	2S	3H	3S	
4NT	-	5D		
6H	-	-	-	

You have a classic Acol 2 Heart opener. Partner's bid shows Heart support and some points, although because of West's overcall it is difficult to be sure how many. If North has an Ace it must be worth being in slam. So you use Blackwood to enquire about his Aces. When North shows one Ace, 6 Hearts must be a good bet.

The Play

If Clubs break 3-2, South has twelve top tricks (seven Hearts, four Clubs and one Spade). What if Clubs don't break? There are no possible ruffs in dummy but SJ and DJ suggest a squeeze against West (who has bid).

Ruff the second Diamond, draw trumps and test the Clubs. They don't break. Run the Hearts (keeping SAJ and DJ in dummy). The last Heart squeezes West who has to discard from SKQ and DQ. Dummy discards whichever suit West doesn't and makes the last two tricks.

It is lucky that West didn't switch to a Spade at trick 2 to remove dummy's entry for the squeeze.

Hand 96

Dealer North

Vul: none

	North S 9 8 7 6 5 H J 9 3 2 D K 6 C 9 7	
West S K Q J H Q 7 6 D A Q J 3 2 C 6 3		East S 4 3 H A 8 D 5 4 C K Q J 10 8 4 2
	South S A 10 2 H K 10 5 4 D 10 9 8 7 C A 5	

The Bidding

West	North	East	South	Opening Lead S9
1D	-	2C	-	
2NT	-	3NT	-	
-	-			

E/W bid to game while you pass throughout.

The Play

North leads S9 to your SA - there is no point in holding up. The key play is that you must now return HK to knock out dummy's entry to the long Clubs even though this lead may give declarer an extra Heart trick. Dummy wins, and West then finesses DQ, wins the Heart return and plays on Diamonds. Once the Diamonds do not break 3-3, the contract drifts two down.

This entry destroying play is known as the Merrimac coup. Any other lead at trick 2 would have enabled declarer to set up the Clubs while still having the Heart entry.

Hand 97

Dealer North

E/W game

	North S K 5 4 H 8 3 D Q 5 4 2 C A K 5 2	
West S 8 7 H Q J 10 D 10 9 8 6 C 10 9 7 4		East S 6 3 2 H A 9 7 6 5 4 2 D J C J 8
	South S A Q J 10 9 H K D A K 7 3 C Q 6 3	

The Bidding

<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>Opening Lead HQ</i>
1NT	-	3S	-	
4S	-	4NT	-	
5D	-	6S	-	

Over partner's 1 No Trump you must force with 3 Spades. When this is supported by partner it is not unreasonable to bid slam, checking up on Aces on the way.

The Play

West leads HQ to East's HA and your HK. Count your tricks. Five Spades, three top Diamonds and three top Clubs make eleven tricks. The twelfth would come from Diamonds breaking 3-2 or Clubs 3-3. East returns a Heart at trick 2 which you must ruff. There is no reason not to draw trumps in three rounds. You then turn your attention to Diamonds and lead a small one to DQ and back to DK discovering the bad news. The position is now as follows:-

	North	
	S -	
	H -	
	D 5 4	
	C A K 5 2	
		East
		S)
		H) immaterial
		D)
		C)
West		
S -		
H -		
D 10 9		
C 10 9 7 4		
	South	
	S 10	
	H -	
	D A 7	
	C Q 6 3	

You must now make the key play of cashing the last trump. You have two chances: either the Clubs break 3-3 or you may squeeze West in the minor suits. As it happens when you lead the last trump West is squeezed and you make the extra trick in whatever suit he discards.

Hand 98

Dealer East

Game all

	North	
	S K 7 3 2	
	H A 10 4 3	
	D Q 7 3	
	C 10 3	
		East
		S 9 8
		H J 8 6
		D J 8 5 4 2
		C 8 5 4
West		
S Q 10 6 5		
H 9 5		
D A 9		
C K Q J 9 7		
	South	
	S A J 4	
	H K Q 7 2	
	D K 10 6	
	C A 6 2	

The Bidding

<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>Opening Lead CK</i>
-	1H	2C	3H	
-	4H	-	-	
-				

You are too strong to open 1 No Trump so you bid 1 Heart. Over West's interference partner raises to 3 Hearts. Even though, because of the overcall, partner could be a bit lighter than usual for this call, you have enough points to spare to bid the game with confidence.

The Play

Nine tricks are available. Two Spades, with luck four Hearts, one Diamond, one Club and a Club ruff. Spades or Diamonds might provide the extra trick. Win the lead and play two rounds of trumps. When all follow take out the last trump.

Now take the Spade finesse (East could have SQ). West wins to play two more rounds of Clubs. Ruff the second in dummy and cross to SA. The time has come to play on Diamonds. Since West must have DA to have enough points for his vulnerable overcall at the 2 level, you play low from hand and when West plays low, insert DQ, which wins. In dummy for the last time, cash SK, on which East discards. You therefore revert to Diamonds, playing a low one from dummy. West has shown up with four Spades and two Hearts and must have five Clubs for his overcall. So he started with two Diamonds only, of which DA is one. Play a low Diamond from hand. West wins with DA and your contract is safe.

Hand 99

Dealer South
N/S game

	<i>North</i>	
	S K 4 2	
	H K Q J 5	
	D Q 5 2	
	C J 8 3	
		<i>East</i>
		S Q J 10
		H A 6
		D J 10 8 6 4
		C 10 7 6
<i>West</i>	<i>South</i>	
S 9 8 7 6 5	S A 3	
H 10 9 8 7	H 4 3 2	
D 9	D A K 7 3	
C 9 5 2	C A K Q 4	

The Bidding

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>Opening Lead H10</i>
2NT	-	6NT	-	
-	-			

With 20 points and 4432 shape you have a perfect 2 No Trump opening bid. Your partner decides not to give the opponents information by using the Blackwood convention and bids 6 No Trumps direct.

The Play

Count your tricks. Two Spades, two or three Hearts, three or four Diamonds and four Clubs. Ample tricks, if the red suits break kindly, with squeeze possibilities if they do not.

Cover the lead which East wins to return SQ. Take SA and cash your red suit winners.

Neither suit breaks: West guards the Hearts and East the Diamonds. This is a double squeeze position: neither defender can guard the Spades. Cash your Clubs on which West discards a Spade (or dummy's Heart is good). Dummy discards the Heart and East also has to discard a Spade (or South's Diamond is good). Cross to SK and dummy's S4 wins the last trick.

Hand 100

Dealer West

Game all

	North	
	S A 10 7	
	H Q J 4	
	D K 8 7 4 2	
	C 6 5	
		East
		S J 4 3 2
		H 9 6 5
		D Q 10 5
		C Q 9 2
West	South	
S Q 8 6	S K 9 5	
H 10 8 7 3	H A K 2	
D -	D A J 9 6 3	
C K J 10 8 7 4	C A 3	

The Bidding

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>Opening Lead CJ</i>
-	-	-	1D	
-	3D	-	4NI	
-	5D	-	6D	
-	-	-		

When partner raises your opening bid of 1 Diamond to 3 Diamonds, you contemplate a small slam. The Blackwood convention discloses that partner has the fourth Ace so you happily bid 6 Diamonds.

The Play

You have a Club loser and, unless a defender can be persuaded to lead Spades, a Spade loser. Win the lead and lead low to DK in case East has all three outstanding trumps (as he has). Finesse DJ and cash DA. Now cash three Hearts and exit with a Club. As it happens, West wins and leads SQ. Who has SJ? It is best to play for split honours in these situations - with S10 in dummy West might lead small from SQJx. Take SA and finesse S9 for your twelfth trick.

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 71,75,79,84,94, 100
 trump coup 62,90
 unblocking 7,61
 2. As *Defender* 10,36,81,88,96
 Signalling 10,36
 Deception 81
 Merrimac coup 96
 Unblocking 88

KEYS TO USE IN ENTERING YOUR BID OR CARD, ETC.

Bidding

S	Spades	N	No trumps
H	Hearts	P(or ENTER)	Pass (no bid)
D	Diamonds	D	Double
C	Clubs	R	Redouble
B	to restart the Bidding		
L	to Leave the TUTOR mode and bid and play the hand as if randomly dealt		
M#	to see computer's recommended bid		
Space	to get computer to make for you the bid which it recommends		

Play of the cards*

S	Spades	A	Ace
H	Hearts	K	King
D	Diamonds	Q	Queen
C	Clubs	J	Jack (Knaive)
T	Ten		
B	to review the Bidding		
E	to see the cards played to Earlier tricks		
F#	to get the computer to play the best card on a double dummy basis (trick 8 onwards)		
G	to Go back and (re)bid and replay the hand		
L	to Leave the TUTOR mode but continue to play the same hand as if randomly dealt		
M#	to see computer's recommended card to play		
P	to Peep at the other hands		
R	to Recommence the play of the cards		
U	(when trick completed) to Unplay this trick		
V#	to Vary the contract and/or declarer on this hand and restart the play of the cards		
Y#	to concede the rest of the tricks		
Z#	to claim the rest of the tricks		
Space	to get computer to play for you the card which it recommends		

At any time during bidding or play

N	to abandon current hand and proceed to Next hand	O	to abandon current hand and return to list of Options
W#	to switch the hands round the table clockwise and start the hand again		

Notes

- * See also the abbreviated system of entering cards described in the text under "The play of the cards".
- # These keys are not used in TUTOR mode.

