

## #1 TWO-SUITER

Dlr: North

Vul: N-S

IMPs

North

S. AJ10875

H. A4

D. 764

C. A4

South (you)

S. 4

H. KQJ32

D. 32

C. KQ765

North	East	South	West
1S	2D	2H	3D
Pass	Pass	4C	Pass
4H	All Pass		

Opening lead: D2. East plays the ace, then the queen and then the jack of diamonds. You ruff the third diamond low, West following with the 9 and the king. Plan the play from here.

Solution:

West must have raised on his good looks. In any case you have to bring in the clubs and still keep control of the hand. Best is to play the ace-king of clubs and ruff a low club with the HA. Next, return to your hand with a trump and play the KQJ of hearts. If hearts divide 3-3, you have the rest. If hearts are 4-2, play winning clubs and the most you can lose is two diamonds and heart. Yes, if clubs are 3-3 and hearts 4-2, you lose an overtrick, but this is IMPs and making the contract is far more important than risking your contract for an overtrick. (If you draw four rounds of trump before touching clubs, in effect playing the hand at notrump, down you go.

The West hand: S.63 H. 9875 D. K92 C. J983

The East hand: S. KQ92 H. 106 D. AQJ103 C. 32

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Ruffing a loser high when dummy has honor doubleton in trump, is a good way of unblocking the trump suit not to mention avoiding a possible overruff.

North's pass to 3D shows a minimum opening and denies three card heart support.

## #2 THE RIGHT CARDS

Dlr: North  
Vul: Both  
Matchpoints

East  
S. A7532  
H. A104  
D. K6  
C. J98

South (you)  
S. Q9  
H. KJ875  
D. AQJ852  
C. -

North	East	South	West
1S	2C	2D	Pass
2S (1)	Pass	3H	Pass
4D (2)	Pass	4H	Pass
5H (3)	Pass	6H	All Pass

- (1) Not the kind of suit you like to rebid, but North has no second choice.  
(2) A heart raise at this point (direct raise of a second suit) shows four hearts with a likely six spades.  
(3) Looks like the right hand (fitting honors in partner's long suits), facing 11 red cards.

Opening lead: C2, East plays the A. Plan the play.

Solution:

You have a spade loser and a possible heart loser, however your spade loser can be ruffed in dummy! All you need is a 3-2 trump break. Ruff the opening lead, play the ace-king of hearts, and assuming no queen has appeared and the suit divided 3-2, start playing diamonds discarding spades from dummy. Whether an opponent trumps in or not, you can discard four spades from dummy and eventually ruff your SQ in dummy.

The West hand: S. KJ86 H. Q32 D. 104 C. 10752  
The East hand: S. 104 H. 96 D. 973 C. AKQ654

THE BOTTOM LINE:

With high honors in partner's long suits bid aggressively.

Finesses in the trump suit can be an optical illusion when a trump is needed in dummy to ruff a loser in dummy's long suit! Of course this presupposes that you can rid dummy of enough cards in that long suit on your own long side suit.

When partner leads a suit in which you have the AKQ and dummy has length in the suit, take the first trick with the ace, not the queen. If declarer ruffs, partner will know you have the AKQ. If the Ace lives, continue with the queen. If declarer ruffs, partner will know you started with the AKQ. By playing the ace first, you do not give away the strength of your suit. The original play of the queen (which shows the AKQ unless partner has underled the ace!) makes it easier for the declarer to place the other missing honor cards.

### #3 STRETCHING

Dlr: South  
Vul: Both  
IMPs

North  
S. A86  
H. K10753  
D. 86  
C. AJ5

South (you)  
S. K109  
H. A9  
D. AK42  
C. KQ92

South	West	North	East
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2NT	Pass	4NT (1)	Pass
5C (2)	Pass	5NT (3)	Pass
6NT (4)	All Pass		

- (1) A real stretch given that you show 18-19.
- (2) Acceptance showing four clubs in case partner also has four clubs.
- (3) Not forcing. Showing a minimum slam try; no kidding.
- (4) I'm not letting you off the hook.

Opening lead: DQ In spite of your opening 1D bid, West leads your suit. East plays the D7. Plan the play.

Solution:

With eight top tricks outside of hearts, the suit you must develop, you need to play hearts to your best advantage for FOUR TRICKS. The best play with this combination is to lead low from dummy and insert the 9. You score four heart tricks anytime the suit breaks 3-3 or East has Jx, Qx, or QJxx; not a bad parlay.

The West hand: S. J75 H. J842 D. QJ10 C. 864

The East hand: S. Q432 H. Q6 D. 9753 C. 1073

#### THE BOTTOM LINE:

After partner makes an invitational raise to 4NT, a new suit by the opener is natural, it is not some sort of response to a non-existent Blackwood bid.

At notrump (or suit), count your sure tricks outside of the suit you must develop so you will know how many tricks you need in your main suit.

With K10xxx facing A9 doubleton the best play for four tricks is to lead low to the nin. Similarly, with A10xxx facing K9 doubleton the best play for four tricks is to lead low to the nine.

#### #4 A GIMME

Dlr: South

Vul: None

IMPs

North

S. Q42

H. 653

D. AQ1096

C. K6

South (you)

S. A6

H. AK7

D. J832

C. A875

South

1NT

West

Pass

North

3NT

East

All Pass

Opening lead: SJ Plan the play

Solution:

This hand is supposed to be a "confidence builder". In order to get an "A" all you have to do is play low from dummy and preserve the queen as a

stopper in case East gets the lead. Since the diamond finesse is going into East, that seems to be a clever idea.

After the winning the SA, run the D8 (or the DJ). As it happens it loses, but East cannot attack spades without surrendering a trick to dummy's queen. In the meantime, you now have nine tricks: four diamonds, two hearts, two clubs and one spade. Playing the SQ at trick one is an optical illusion. If West has led from the king, you can always take a second spade trick later and if East has the king, your now guarded queen protects you from a further spade attack.

The West hand: S. J108 H. Q82 D. 54 C. J9432

The East hand: S. K9753 H. J1094 D. K7 C. Q10

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Defensively, when the bidding goes 1NT pass 3NT, it is healthier to lead a major suit as opposed to a minor. If dummy had one or two four card majors, 2C would have been the original response. In the absence of a 2C response, expect minor suit length to hit the table.

When the opponents lead a jack against your notrump contract, find out if they are using the lead convention "jack denies". If they are, the jack is the opening leader's highest card and there is not much point in playing the queen from dummy.

With Ax facing Qxx in the dummy, it is usually right to win the opening lead with the ace, particularly if you plan to take a finesse into your right hand opponent. However, if you absolutely need two quick tricks in the suit, play the queen.

#5 WRONG GAME?

Dlr. South  
Vul: Neither  
IMPs

North  
S. A65  
H. A8765  
D. AK8  
C. 54

South (you)  
S. 3  
H. K43  
D. QJ109654  
C. KJ

South	West	North	East
3D	3S	5D	All Pass

Opening lead: SK

Well, you 'successfully' avoided 4H and 3NT (from your side) to land in 5D. Things could be worse as 5D is certainly playable. How would you play it?

Solution:

The best way to handle this situation is to duck the opening lead! In effect you are exchanging a spade loser for a heart loser. If a spade is continued, ruff, draw two rounds of trumps ending in dummy, discard a heart on the SA and play the AK and ruff a heart. If hearts are 3-2, you can discard both clubs on the established hearts and make an overtrick. The only way West can save the overtrick is to cash the CA at trick two- an unlikely play to say the least.

West hand: S. KQJ 874 H. 109 D. 32 C. AQ8  
 East hand: S. 1092 H. QJ2 D. 7 C. 1097632

## THE BOTTOM LINE

Exchanging one loser for another can be a neat form of an avoidance play.

## #6 IF IT HAS AN ODOR

Dlr: South  
 Vul: Both  
 IMP scoring

North  
 S. 9843  
 H. A3  
 D. KJ6  
 C. KJ94

South (you)  
 S. AKQ2  
 H. Q92  
 D. 1087  
 C. A63

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2C	Pass

2S            Pass            4S            All Pass

Opening lead: DA

East plays the D9 and West continues with the D2. Plan the play.

Solution:

If a lead looks like a doubleton and smells like a doubleton, it probably is a doubleton. Why would anyone lead from an AQ into a notrump bidder? Win the DK and assuming a 3-2 trump division, draw trump and exit with the DJ. Note: When the adverse trumps are 4-1, a long suit is usually led.

East, on play with the DQ has an unhappy choice of plays. If East elects to exit a heart, play the queen and if it is covered, you are reduced to the club finesse. If East exits a club, the most you can lose is a heart. If East exits a diamond, ruff in your hand and discard a heart from dummy. You now have to play clubs for one loser. The best play is low to the king, low to the ace and then low to the jack if the queen hasn't appeared.

West hand: S. 1052 H. J864 D. A2 C. 10875

East hand: S. J7 H. K1075 D. Q9543 C. Q2

#7 ONCE IN A LIFETIME-DON'T BLOW IT

Dlr: South

Vul: Both

IMP scoring

North

S. Q862

H. 76

D. AK42

C. 543

South (you)

S. A43

H. AKQJ10952

D. -

C. AK

South	West	North	East
2C	Pass	2D	Pass
2H	Pass	2NT	Pass
3H	Pass	4D	Pass
4S	Pass	5D	Pass
6H	All Pass		

Opening lead: CQ

During the bidding you discover that partner has the DAK, but how are you going to get over there to use them? After the opening lead, you have the same problem. Plan the play.

Solution

The West hand: S. J5 H. 83 D. J976 C. QJ1092  
The East hand: S. K1097 H. 4 D. Q10853 C. 876

With two possible spade losers staring you in the face, the safest way to dummy's AK of diamonds is to lead a low heart to the six at trick two! This has the effect of forcing a dummy entry with the H7. That's all there is to it.

#8 UP OR DOWN MR. BROWN?

Dlr: South  
Vul: Neither  
IMPs

North  
S. A1054  
H. 43  
D. KJ9  
C. 7654

South (you)  
S. K632  
H. A10  
D. AQ10  
C. A932

South	West	North	East
1NT	Pass	2C	Pass
2S	Pass	3S	Pass
4S	All Pass		

Opening lead: HK

Say you win the HA and duck a club to East's J. East cashes the HJ and exits with the CK, to your ace, West playing the ten. Wondering about spades? O.K, the time has come; you play the SK and East plays the jack. When you continue with a second spade, West plays low, of course. Which spade do you play from dummy, and worse, why?

Solution



This one's a gimme. You can't make the hand if the SJ is a singleton as you will have a natural spade loser to go along with a heart and two club losers. The only hope to make your contract is that East has QJ doubleton so rise with the ace. Play to make!

West hand: S. 987 H. KQ82 D. 876 C. Q108  
East hand: S. QJ H. J10762 D. 5432 C. KJ

#9 WILD MAN, WILD

Dlr: South  
Vul: N-S  
IMPs

North  
S. 5432  
H. -  
D. 7632  
C. J8643

South (you)  
S. AKJ108  
H. AK  
D. AKQJ5  
C. 9

South	West	North	East
2C (1)	2H	Pass	4H
4S	5C	5S	6H
6S	Pass	Pass	Dbl.
All Pass			

(1) Artificial

Opening lead: CA

East plays the CK and West shifts to the HQ. Plan the play.

Solution

East and West have badly misjudged the situation. They have a great non-vulnerable save in 7H. In addition, East has tipped off the location of the SQ.

Your play is to ruff the heart continuation at trick two using both of your high hearts as dummy entries to take two spade finesses as West figures to be void in spades.

West hand: S. - H. QJ10643 D. 8 C. AQ10752  
 East hand: S. Q976 H. 98752 D. 1094 C. K

## THE BOTTOM LINE

When playing against a whopping two-suiter, you may have to make adjustments in the play of the other suits.

## #10 KEY CARD BLACKWOOD ANYONE?

North

S. 1064  
 H. K765  
 D. A54  
 C. 543

South (you)

S. AQJ832  
 H. AQ  
 D. K3  
 C. KQJ

You and your partner were not using Key Card Blackwood, so after partner supported spades and you found out via regular Blackwood that partner had one ace you had no way of knowing whether he had the SK as well so you fearlessly bid 6S.

The opening lead is the HJ. Plan the play.

Solution:

You are off the CA and need to find the SK with East, so assume it is there. First hurdle. Next, you must allow for East having all four spades in which case you need to lead spades TWICE from dummy to pull in the suit.

Make the key play of the HK at trick one and the next key play of the S10 at trick two. If East plays low, run the ten, and repeat the finesse. If West has shown out on the first spade, you can return to dummy with the DA to finesse spades one last time.

There are two traps here: (1) winning the opening lead in your own hand. Now you may need two dummy entries to pull in the spades and if East has a singleton heart, you don't have them; (2) even if you win the HK at trick one, you must start with the S10 at trick two. If you lead low to the queen and West shows out, you will need TWO more dummy entries to pick up the spades and you only have one.

West hand: S. - H. J109843 D. J986 C. A102  
 East hand: S. K975 H. 2 D. Q1072 C. 9876