

North East South West

1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		

♠ AT2
♥ AJ4
♦ QJ63
♣ KJ9

♠ J953
♥ KT7
♦ K8
♣ Q743

♠ 86
♥ 9832
♦ 74
♣ AT852

♠ KQ74
♥ Q65
♦ AT952
♣ 6

Board: 1 Dealer: North Lead: ♣5 #41

South and North have reached 3NT after a Stayman auction, so West realizes that declarer has 15-17 points with no 4 card major. Dummy has 11 points and West has 10, so East's points will be in the 2-4 range.

When East leads ♣5, West is pleased to see that dummy has only a singleton. West plays "third hand high" with ♣Q and declarer wins with ♣K. At trick 2 declarer takes the losing diamond finesse and West wins with ♦K.

What now? It's easy to see that West should return a club, but it's important to choose the right card. With three clubs remaining West correctly returns ♣3, his original fourth highest.

East now knows that West started with two or four clubs. After beating declarer's ♣9 with ♣T he assumes the latter and continues with ♣A to drop declarer's ♣J. After this good defence declarer finishes one down.

If West had returned ♣7 at trick 3 (thinking that this would make no difference) East would have assumed that West started with three clubs and tried to put West on lead for a further club lead through declarer. Declarer would then finish with at least ten tricks.

East South West North

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

♠ QT653
♥ QT93
♦ 862
♣ K

♠ K984
♥ 5
♦ QT54
♣ T986

♠ 72
♥ 862
♦ K73
♣ AQ754

♠ AJ
♥ AKJ74
♦ AJ9
♣ J32

Board: 2 Dealer: East Lead: ♣T #123

East is clearly going to win the first trick. How can the defence find 3 more tricks to defeat the contract?

If West has ♠A or ♠K he'll win a trick with that card whether or not East leads a spade now. If, however, West has some strength in diamonds East needs to attack the suit straight away by leading towards dummy's weakness. He leads low from 3 to an honour to tell West that he has an honour in the suit.

Declarer plays ♦9 and West wins with ♦T. West returns the suit to East's ♦K and declarer's ♦A. After drawing some trumps declarer takes the spade finesse, but West wins and cashes ♦Q to defeat the contract by one trick.

South	West	North	East
1♥ Pass	Pass Pass	4♥	Pass
	♠Q ♥T8643 ♦754 ♣AQ75		
♠T9843 ♥ ♦A932 ♣J962		♠KJ762 ♥KQ ♦KT8 ♣KT8	
	♠A5 ♥AJ9752 ♦QJ6 ♣43		

Board: 3 Dealer: South Lead: ♠T #169

When East sees dummy he reasons that his partner's spade lead probably hasn't helped much, but the defence might still be able to take four tricks in the other suits if West can provide a little help.

Dummy's ♠Q is covered by East's ♠K and declarer's ♠A. Declarer ruffs a spade in dummy, plays a heart to his ♥A and loses a heart to East. West is void in hearts and discards ♠4 followed by ♠8. What should East lead to trick 5?

Declarer has deliberately put East on lead in the hope of gaining an advantage from his next play. How can East get off lead safely?

The only missing spade is ♠9 and it should be clear that West holds that card, since he wouldn't have led ♠T from an original holding of ♠T843. East therefore shouldn't lead a spade, since this would concede a ruff and discard.

He therefore has to choose between his two KT8 suits. East obviously don't want to lead away from his ♣K into dummy's ♣AQ.

This leaves only diamonds. Even if East's play turns out to be taking a finesse for declarer, he would have been able to do the same himself, so a diamond lead can't give away a trick. East leads low in case declarer has a guess in the suit.

When declarer plays ♦J West wins with ♦A and returns the suit to East's ♦K. East exits safely with his last diamond and later wins the setting trick with ♣K when declarer finesses ♣Q unsuccessfully.

West	North	East	South
Pass Pass Pass	1♥ 4♥	1♠ Pass	3♥ Pass
	♠K6 ♥QJ8543 ♦KT ♣A64		
♠32 ♥A7 ♦9753 ♣T9872		♠JT9874 ♥6 ♦AQJ2 ♣KJ	
	♠AQ5 ♥KT92 ♦864 ♣Q53		

Board: 4 Dealer: West Lead: ♠J #170

West is fairly hopeful when he sees dummy's balanced hand. East must be strong in at least one of the minor suits, so the defence might be able to defeat this contract.

Declarer wins the first trick with ♠K and continues with two more rounds of spades. He's clearly aiming to discard a minor suit loser, so West forestalls this by ruffing with his small trump. Declarer overruffs and leads a trump to West's ♥A. Which minor suit should West lead?

Dummy's ♣Q means that West won't achieve anything by leading a club, so he switches to a diamond up to dummy's weakness. He chooses ♦7, second highest from a suit without an honour. Declarer tries ♦K, but East wins with ♦A and cashes ♦Q. He gets off lead safely with a third diamond and later scores the setting trick with ♣K.

If West had switched to a club at trick 5 declarer could have made the contract by winning with ♣A and leading another. East would be stuck on lead with his ♣K, forced to choose between allowing declarer to make his ♦K or conceding a ruff and discard in spades.

North	East	South	West
1♦	2♣ 92 3♥		4♠
5♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
	♥ AJT8		
	♦ AQ8543		
	♣ 6		
♠ AJ7			♠ QT8653
♥ 96			♥ 72
♦ T2			♦ 96
♣ KQT932			♣ A84
	♠ K4		
	♥ KQ543		
	♦ KJ7		
	♣ J75		

Board: 5 Dealer: North Lead: ♣K #230

East sees dummy come down with a distributional hand, but the defence might still take the 3 tricks necessary to defeat the contract. Which card should East play on West's opening lead of ♣K?

As often happens, the crucial decision for the defence comes at trick 1. It's most unlikely that the defence can win a trick in a red suit, so they need to find two tricks in spades. West would probably have led a spade from ♠AK, but he might have ♠AJ. To cater for this possibility East overtakes his partner's opening lead. Now he can play a spade through declarer's ♠K.

The defence thus take the first three tricks to defeat the contract.

East	South	West	North
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass		
	♠ QJT85		
	♥ A92		
	♦ A8		
	♣ J94		
♠ A732		♠ K94	
♥ KQ		♥ J86	
♦ QT7		♦ KJ9654	
♣ Q875		♣ A	
	♠ 6		
	♥ T7543		
	♦ 32		
	♣ KT632		

Board: 6 Dealer: East Lead: ♠Q #298

If West had responded 1♥ North would probably have overcalled 1♠, but he was silenced when West made that bid himself. North doesn't let the bidding put him off his natural lead, i.e. top of a 3+ card sequence.

Declarer wins with dummy's ♠K, South following suit with ♠6. Declarer continues with a diamond to South's ♦3 and his ♦Q. North plays low, but has to win the next diamond with ♦A. What should he lead to trick 4?

West's 1♠ response indicates that he holds the missing spades, i.e. ♠A73. East's remaining ♠94 gives the opponents more spades than North, but that player's strength in the suit means that he can set up three tricks by knocking out declarer's ♠A. North leads a high spade in order to prevent dummy from winning a cheap trick with ♠9.

South discards ♥3 and declarer wins with ♠A. Declarer next cashes dummy's remaining diamonds. North starts by discarding ♥9 followed by ♥2 (to signal his ♥A. In the meantime he's noticed that South discarded ♣6 followed by ♣2, thus confirming that he holds ♣K. North therefore discards his two low clubs and declarer's only remaining trick is ♣A. One down.