

Deceptive Declarer Plays

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

	♠ A 7 5		
	♥ A J 8		
	♦ J 5 3 2		
	♣ Q J 3		
♠ K Q 8 3 2	N	♠ J 10 9	
♥ 4 2	W ↑ E	♥ K Q 10 9 3	
♦ K 4	S	♦ 7 6	
♣ 9 7 6 5		♣ 8 4 2	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ 6 4		
N 1 3 1 - 2	♥ 7 6 5	13	
S 1 3 - - 2	♦ A Q 10 9 8	8 6	
E - - - 1 -	♣ A K 10	13	
W - - - 1 -			

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1NT	Pass	3NT
All pass			

East leads ♥ King.

Step 1: The only number that we, North, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (1 Spade, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond, and 3 in Clubs).

Step 3: Our extra three tricks will come from the Diamond suit, once we have knocked out the King of Diamonds..

Step 4: Not only can the defenders take enough tricks in the Heart suit to defeat us, but they could also attack the Spade suit, which is looking very vulnerable

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

If the Heart suit divides 5-2 it is essential that we duck the opening trick, as we will be finessing the Diamond suit into the 'Danger Hand'. This play of ducking with AJx is known as the 'Bath Coup'. Once we duck the opening lead, East cannot continue the Heart suit profitably.

The problem with this idea is that East will probably now attack our Spade suit, which is not well protected.

Is there anything that we can do, to persuade East to help us out?

Conclusion:

Look what happens when North plays the Jack of Hearts at trick 1.

Will East be fooled into thinking that North must be holding the Ace, Jack doubleton in the Heart suit?

If they are, then surely they will continue with another Heart?

If East continues with another Heart, then we are now home and dry, because we will now be taking the Diamond finesse into the 'Safe' hand.

Think Outside The Box

Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

	♠ Q 10 6 3 2																																
	♥ K 7																																
	♦ J 6 3																																
	♣ J 9 2																																
♠ 7 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>→</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	→	E		S		♠ A K 9																						
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♦ A K Q 4 2		♦ 10 9 8 5																															
♣ 6 3		♣ A Q 10 7																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																												
E	2	5	3	-	3																												
W	2	5	2	-	3																												
	♥ Q J 10 9 8	♥ Q J 10 9 8	9 17																														
	♦ 7	♦ 7	7																														
	♣ K 8 5 4	♣ K 8 5 4																															
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
		1NT	Pass																														
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass																														
3NT	All pass																																

South leads ♥Queen.

Step 1: The only number that we, East, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 9 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 1 Heart, 5 Diamonds and 1 in Clubs).

Step 3: We have 9 top tricks, what is the problem?

Step 4: We have 9 top tricks, so we are not expecting to lose the lead?

Step 5: Assuming Diamonds are not 2-2, how do we cash our 5 Diamond tricks?

Observations:

If Diamonds are 2-2, there is no problem, seeing that having cashed the Ace and King of Diamonds, we can cross to our 10 of Diamonds and we can play back our 9 of Diamonds to dummy's Queen.

What happens if the Diamonds are 3-1?

We could duck a Diamond to North, which is the 'Safe Hand' and take a Club finesse for our 9th trick?

But is there a 100% way of making this contract?

Conclusion:

We duck the first round of Hearts and we are forced to take the second round.

At least now, we know that South has no more than 4 Heart tricks in total.

We test the Diamonds by playing the Ace and King and we find the inevitable bad news that Diamonds are 3-1.

Now the 'Master Plan'. We play dummy's Heart (This is now the 3rd round of Hearts), and we *discard* one of our Diamonds.

The defence can only take a total of 4 tricks in Hearts, so when we get the lead back, we play a Diamond to the Queen and cash our 9 tricks.

Hold Up Play With KQxx

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

	♠ Q 6																																
	♥ 9 7 2																																
	♦ A J 7 5 2																																
	♣ 7 6 2																																
♠ K 7 5	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>↓</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	↓	E		S		♠ A 8 2																						
	N																																
W	↓	E																															
	S																																
♥ A Q 6		♥ K 10 8 4																															
♦ K Q 4 3		♦ 6																															
♣ Q 10 3		♣ A J 9 5 4																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																												
E	5	1	5	2	3																												
W	5	1	5	2	3																												
	♥ J 5 3	16	12																														
	♦ 10 9 8	5																															
	♣ K 8																																
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			Pass																														
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass																														
2♦	Pass	3NT	All pass																														

North leads ♦ 5.

Step 1: The only number that we, West, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 3 Hearts and 1 in Diamonds after the lead).

Step 3: Our extra three tricks will come from the Club suit, by knocking out the defender's King of Clubs; this will establish 4 extra Club tricks.

Step 4: Once our Diamond stopper has been knocked out, the defenders could cash four Diamond tricks plus the King of Clubs and defeat our contract.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

We are going to have to lose the lead.

We must make sure that when we lose the lead, we must maximise the chance that a defender's established suit cannot be reached by the player who has won the trick.

Conclusion:

We must treat our KQ holding in Diamonds as if it was an Ace.

We must use the 'Rule of 7'.

We have 4+1=5 Diamonds; We take the 5 away from 7, which leaves us with an answer of 2.

We must duck *two* times.

We wait until the third round of Diamonds before playing one of our top Diamonds,

Playing one of our top Diamonds prematurely will result in failure of our contract.

Generating Entries

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

	♠ K 9 8 3 2																																
	♥ 8 6 5																																
	♦ A 10 8 5																																
	♣ 2																																
♠ A J 10	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>←</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	←	E		S		♠ Q 7 6																						
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W	←	E																															
	S																																
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♦ K Q 9 4		♦ 6 2																															
♣ 9 8		♣ A Q J 10 7 6																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																												
E	3	-	1	1	2																												
W	4	1	1	2	2																												
	♥ Q J 10 7	♥ 17	♥ 9																														
	♦ J 7 3	♦ 7	♦ 7																														
	♣ K 5 4 3																																
West	North	East	South																														
1NT	Pass	3NT	All pass																														

North leads ♠3.

Step 1: The only number that we, West, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 5 *top* tricks (2 Hearts, 1 Club and 2 in Spades after the lead).

Step 3: It appears that our only hope of those 4 extra tricks is dummy's Club suit.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 5 tricks.

Step 5: As long as North has Kx or Kxx of Clubs, we can get to our Club suit, without any problems, but if South holds the King of Clubs, will our Club suit be stranded in dummy?

Observations:

If only we could 'Generate' an entry into dummy, then we do not mind if South holds the King of Clubs, because once we have knocked out South's King of Clubs that extra entry would give us access to all of our established Clubs.

Conclusion:

Before we consider playing to the first trick, we must resolve all of our issues that our *five* steps have raised.

North's 3 of Spades lead appears to be an attacking lead, so surely they must hold the King?

How about winning the first trick with the Ace of Spades, setting the Clubs up and we still have the Queen of Spades as an entry for our established Clubs?

Play High From Dummy to Block Defence

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ Q 10 4		
	♥ K Q 4 3 2		
	♦ A K 2		
	♣ K J		
♠ 6 2	N W ↑ E S	♠ A J 9 8 7	
♥ 10 8 6 5		♥ A J 9	
♦ 7 5 4		♦ 10 9 8	
♣ A 5 4 3		♣ 7 2	
♠ K 5 3		18	
♥ 7		4 10	
♦ Q J 6 3		8	
♣ Q 10 9 8 6			
West	North	East	South
	1♥	1♠	1NT
Pass	3NT	All pass	

West leads ♠6.

Step 1: The only number that we, South, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 5 *top* tricks (4 Diamonds, and 1 in Spades after the lead).

Step 3: Our extra four tricks will come from the Club suit, once we have knocked the Ace of Clubs out.

Step 4: We are very aware that East has probably 5 Spades, so we are under pressure.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

At first glance, after West leads what appears to be their doubleton, this appears to be a case of West being the 'Danger Hand' and as long as West does not get back on lead, we should be alright.

So all we have to do is 'Pray' that West does not get on lead?

Or is there some other strategy involved here?

Conclusion:

Look at the effect of us playing the Queen of Spades from dummy at trick 1.

East can win the trick with their Ace of Spades, but they cannot successfully continue the Spade suit.

In our own time, we can knock out the Ace of Clubs, knowing that our King of Spades will prevent the defenders taking enough defensive tricks.

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

Danger Hand

♠ 9 7 5 4
♥ K 2
♦ 7 5 4 2
♣ Q 10 9

♠ K Q 6
♥ 10 6 4
♦ J 8 6 3
♣ A 8 3



♠ A J 3
♥ Q J 9
♦ A Q 10 9
♣ K 5 2

	♣	♦	♥	♠	N			
N	-	-	-	-	-	♠ 10 8 2		
S	-	-	-	-	-	♥ A 8 7 5 3	5	
E	2	3	1	3	3	♦ K	10	17
W	2	3	1	3	3	♣ J 7 6 4	8	

West North East South
3NT All pass 1NT Pass

South leads ♥5.

Step 1: The only number that we, East, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 top tricks (3 Spades, 1 Diamond, and 2 Clubs).

Step 3: Seeing that North won the opening lead with their King of Hearts and returned the 2 of Hearts to South's Ace, we now have an extra Heart trick, but we are still 2 tricks short of our target of 9 tricks. Those extra two tricks will have to come from the Diamond suit.

Step 4: We can identify the South hand as the 'Danger Hand' as they have enough established Hearts to defeat our contract. If South also has the King of Diamonds we will not make our contract, unless...?

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations: We must do all we can to prevent South from gaining the lead.

Conclusion:

I know it is a bit of a 'Long Shot', but why shouldn't South be holding the Singleton King of Diamonds?

It cannot cost to lay down our Ace of Diamonds, attempting to drop South's Singleton King.

If it turns out that North held the King of Diamonds all this time, then we are still alright as North does not have a Heart left to play to their partner, meanwhile we have now established 2 extra Diamond tricks and we have made our contract.


By refusing the Diamond finesse and laying down our Ace of Diamonds, this increases our chances of making our game contract by at least 5%. (Every bit counts).

Deceptive Declarer Plays

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

	♠ K 10 8 6 2		
	♥ K J 7 3		
	♦ K 4		
	♣ 9 6		
♠ A Q 3		♠ 7 5	
♥ Q 8 5		♥ 9 6	
♦ A Q 7 3		♦ J 10 9 8 6	
♣ J 10 8		♣ A K Q 2	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ J 9 4	10	
N - - 2 2 -	♥ A 10 4 2	15 10	
S - - 2 2 -	♦ 5 2	5	
E 1 3 - - -	♣ 7 5 4 3		
W 3 3 - - 1			
West	North	East	South
			Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All pass

North leads ♠6.

Step 1: The only number that we, West, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 7 *top* tricks (1 Diamond, 4 Clubs and 2 in Spades after the lead).

Step 3: Our extra three tricks will come from the Diamond suit.

Step 4: The opening lead of the 6 of Spades has done us no harm, however, we can see that we are 'Wide Open' in the Heart suit.

Observations:

Once we have knocked out the King of Diamonds, we have an easy 9+ tricks, providing that the defenders do not switch to Hearts, when they are in with the King of Diamonds.

We are planning to take the Diamond finesse by running dummy's Jack of Diamonds, because if South is holding the King of Diamonds, we have nothing to worry about.

Assuming that our Diamond finesse is going to lose to North's King, is there anything that we can do to convince North not to switch to a Heart?

Conclusion:

We have to try and imagine this hand through the eyes of the defender, North.

If declarer wins South's Jack of Spades with their Queen and they then cross over to dummy and run the Jack of Diamonds, what will North be thinking when their King wins this trick?

Like all good defenders, they should be counting declarer's tricks. The fact that South could only play the Jack of Spades at trick 1, means that declarer must be holding the Ace and Queen of Spades, plus 4 Diamond tricks and 3 Club tricks. Declarer has made enough tricks from those three suits to make their contract. When a defender recognises this, '*Their Only Hope*', is to switch to a Heart and hope that their partner is holding the Ace of Hearts.

Look what happens when declarer wins the first trick with a very deceptive Ace of Spades.

North will come to only one conclusion, which is that their partner's Jack of Spades has forced out declarer's Ace of Spades and therefore South must be holding the Queen of Spades, so quite understandingly, North will continue with a low Spade to their partner's 'Known' Queen of Spades, so the magnificent deceptive play is for declarer to win the opening lead with their Ace of Spades, fooling North into thinking that their partner must be holding the Queen of Spades.

Generating Entries

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

	♠ 5 4 3																																
	♥ 7																																
	♦ A K 10 9 5 4																																
	♣ A 4 3																																
♠ Q J 10 9	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>←</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	←	E		S		♠ 8 7																						
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	4	4	-	4	1																												
S	4	4	1	4	3																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												
	♥ A J 3 2	9	4																														
	♦ Q	16																															
	♣ Q 8 5 2																																
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥																														
Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT																														
All pass																																	

West leads ♠ Queen.

Step 1: The only number that we, South, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 7 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 1 Heart, 3 Diamonds and 1 Club).

Step 3: Our best option for those extra two tricks will come from the Diamond suit.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 5 tricks.

Step 5: Our source of tricks from dummy's Diamond suit is looking good, however, there is only one entry into dummy and that is the Ace of Clubs.

Observations:

One option is to play the Queen of Diamonds at trick 2, go over to the Ace of Clubs and run the Diamonds, hoping that the Diamonds break 3-3 or hope that, when the Diamonds break 4-2, the Jack of Diamonds is a doubleton.

We do not want to get 'Bogged Down' with a 'Maths Lesson', but I can tell you that the Diamond suit will split 3-3 just 36% of the time and the Jack of Diamonds will be a doubleton 16% of the time, so we have a 52% chance with that line.

But maybe there is a better line?

Conclusion:

How about increasing our chances of being to run our Diamond tricks, albeit potentially sacrificing one of our Diamond tricks?

What happens if, at trick 2, we play our Queen of Diamonds, overtaking with our King of Diamonds.

We now play the Ace and 10 of Diamonds, knocking out the Jack, whilst we still have the Ace of Clubs to get to our established Diamonds.

We are now making our contract whenever Diamonds are 3-3 or *any* 4-2 Diamond break.

This elevates our chances of success to 84%.

Playing Suit Combinations

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

	♠ A J 10																																
	♥ A 9																																
	♦ A K 4 2																																
	♣ K Q 9 2																																
♠ 5 3 2	♠ 9 8 7 6																																
♥ Q 6	♥ J 8 4 2																																
♦ Q J 10 9	♦ 8 7 5																																
♣ 10 8 4 3	♣ 7 6																																
	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> N W ↑ E S </div>																																
	♠ K Q 4																																
	♥ K 10 7 5 3	21																															
	♦ 6 3	5 1																															
	♣ A J 5	13																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	7	5	6	6	6																												
S	7	5	6	6	6																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
	2NT	Pass	3♣																														
Pass	3NT	Pass	6NT																														
All pass																																	

East leads ♠9.

Step 1: The only number that we, North, have in our head is 12.

Step 2: We have 11 *top* tricks (3 Spades, 2 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and 4 in Clubs).

Step 3: There is only one suit that we can hope to get our extra 1 trick from and that is the Heart suit.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 2 tricks.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

We must generate an extra Heart trick, without losing 2 Heart tricks.

If Hearts break 3-3, we are 'Home and Dry'.

If Hearts break 4-2 are we always doomed?

Are there any 4-2 Heart holdings that will enable us to make an extra Heart trick, without losing 2 Heart tricks?

Conclusion:

The only 4-2 Heart break which we can benefit from is when West holds a doubleton honour.

To take advantage of this situation, we must lead a low heart towards the 9.

When the 9 of Heart loses, we lay down the Ace of Hearts and hope that West's honour drops, promoting our 10 of Hearts.

If West does not hold a doubleton honour, then all we can hope for is a 3-3 Heart break.

This play is also successful if West holds say, QJxx of Hearts.

The Avoidance Play

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

	♠ Q J 5 3																																
	♥ 8 2																																
	♦ Q 7																																
	♣ J 9 4 3 2																																
♠ A K 8 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>→</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	→	E		S		♠ 7 6																						
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W	→	E																															
	S																																
♥ 6 5 4		♥ A 10 9																															
♦ 9 5 4		♦ A K 6 3 2																															
♣ A 8 5		♣ K Q 7																															
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	♥ K Q J 7 3	11	16																														
	♦ J 10 8	7																															
	♣ 10 6																																
West	North	East	South																														
		1NT	Pass																														
3NT	All pass																																

South leads ♥King.

Step 1: The only number that we, East, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 8 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 1 Heart, 2 Diamonds and 3 in Clubs).

Step 3: We only require 1 more trick and that must come from the Diamond suit.

Step 4: The problem that we have is that in order to establish our extra Diamond trick, we must lose a Diamond trick.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

The first thing that we must do is apply the 'Rule of 7'.

Declarer Hearts + Dummy Hearts = 6.

7 Minus 6 = 1; We must hold up for *one* round of Hearts.

North peters in Hearts, which confirms our worst fear and that is that the Heart suit divides 5-2

We must keep South off lead.

Conclusion:

We enter dummy with a Spade and lead a low Diamond towards our Ace, King of Diamonds, when North plays their 7 of Diamonds, we win it with our Ace of Diamonds.

We now cross back to dummy to our Ace of Clubs and repeat the process of leading towards our King of Diamonds.

This time North plays the Queen of Diamonds and we play low.

We have successfully prevented South getting back on lead.

Communication Problems

Board 11

South Deals
None Vul

	♠ A 3 2																																
	♥ J 10 2																																
	♦ Q 7 6 5																																
	♣ 10 8 6																																
♠ 9 8 7	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>↓</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	↓	E		S		♠ Q J 10 6 5																						
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♥ 7 6 4		♥ A 9 8																															
♦ 8 4 3 2		♦ 10 9																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
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S	4	3	4	1	3																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												
	♥ K Q 5 3	0	14																														
	♦ A K J	-	19																														
	♣ Q J 7 3																																
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
	2♥	2♠	1♥																														
Pass			3NT																														
	All pass																																

West leads ♠9.

Step 1: The only number that we, South, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (2 Spades and 4 in Diamonds).

Step 3: All we have to do is knock out the Ace of Hearts, which will generate our extra 3 tricks.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 5 tricks.

Step 5: Houston....."We have a Problem".

Observations:

Against good defenders, who will only take their Ace of Hearts on the third round, it can be a 'Nightmare' trying to untangle our 9 tricks, which are there for the taking.

The problem is that we require an entry to our 4th Diamond in dummy, but we also require an entry to our 4th Heart in declarer's hand.

What we need to realise is that to be able to cash our Queen of Diamonds, we must first unblock the Ace, King and Jack of Diamonds in declarer's hand.

Once we have done that, the only entry back to declarer's hand will be the King of Spades to be able to get to our last Heart, so we need to preserve our King of Spades.

Conclusion:

Win the opening lead immediately in dummy with the Ace of Spades.

We now unblock the Diamonds, by playing off the Ace, King and Jack of Diamonds.


We now play to the 10 of Hearts and assuming that wins, it is now time to cash our Queen of Diamonds.

We now continue playing Hearts.

We still have declarer's King of Spades as an entry to our 4th Heart.

Generating Entries

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ A K 5 4																																
	♥ 2																																
	♦ K Q 9 4																																
	♣ A K 4 3																																
♠ Q J 10 9		♠ 6 3 2																															
♥ A 7 6 5		♥ K 9 8 3																															
♦ 10 7 5		♦ J 8																															
♣ 8 2		♣ Q J 10 9																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	4	4	2	2	3																												
S	4	4	2	2	3																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												
	♥ Q J 10 4	7	7																														
	♦ A 6 3 2	7	7																														
	♣ 7 6 5																																
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥																														
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT																														
All pass																																	

East leads ♣Queen.

Step 1: The only number that we, North, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 7 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 3 Diamonds and 2 in Clubs).

Step 3: If the Diamond suit breaks 3-2 (68% Chance), we will have an extra Diamond trick, which brings us up to 8 tricks.

Our 9th trick will be established in the Heart suit, once we have knocked out the Ace and King of Hearts.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders are threatening to take their desired 5 tricks and we should not duck the opening lead as we have 7 cards in Clubs between declarer and dummy.

Step 5: Our strategy derived from Step 3 involves getting to dummy on *two* occasions. The first occasion is to get to dummy to knock out the defender's second Heart and the second occasion is so that we can get to our winning Heart, which is our 9th trick.

Observations:

We require two entries to dummy.

The Diamond suit is the only suit that can give us our two entries to dummy.

Conclusion:

We must play the Diamond suit with great care to generate a second Diamond entry.

We play the King and Queen of Diamonds, followed by the nine of Diamonds to the Ace.

We can now 'Coolly' play North's 4 of Diamonds to South's 6 of Diamonds.

Murphy's Law (Safety Play)

Board 13

North Deals

Both Vul

	♠ J 6 2																																
	♥ 9 8 7 4																																
	♦ Q 9 7 6 3																																
	♣ 3																																
♠ Q 10 9	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>↑</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	↑	E		S		♠ A K 3																						
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	S																																
♥ K J 10		♥ A Q 5																															
♦ A K 8 5 4		♦ J 10 2																															
♣ 8 7		♣ A K 6 4																															
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N	-	-	-	-	-																												
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W	3	6	4	4	6																												
	♥ 6 3 2	♥ 3	♥ 3																														
	♦ —	♦ 3	♦ 3																														
	♣ Q J 10 9 5 2																																
West	North	East	South																														
	Pass	2NT	Pass																														
6NT	All pass																																

South leads ♣ Queen.

Step 1: The only number that we, East, have in our head is 12.

Step 2: We have 10 top tricks (3 Spades, 3 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and 2 in Clubs).

Step 3: There is only one suit that we can hope to get our extra 2 tricks from and that is the Diamond suit.

All we need to do is knock out the Queen of Diamonds and claim our contract?

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 2 tricks.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

This looks too good to be true?

All we have to do is knock out the Queen of Diamonds and claim our 4 Diamond tricks?

When we find ourselves saying the phrase, "This looks so easy", that is when we must stop and think what can go wrong.

On this hand, if Diamonds are 4-1, then nothing can go wrong.

So, we assume Diamonds are 5-0.

If South has the 5 Diamonds, then we are alright, as we can finesse for the 9 of Diamonds at some stage, by playing a Diamond towards the 8.

That just leaves one holding left to consider and that is when North is holding 5 Diamonds.

This is the worse holding that we could encounter, so we assume that North has 5 Diamonds to the Queen.

We have to work out how to play the Diamonds, when North has 5 of them.

Conclusion:

We play a small Diamond towards East's Jack twice.

Danger Hand

Board 14
East Deals
None Vul

	♠ 3 2																																
	♥ K J 8 3																																
	♦ A K 5																																
	♣ A J 7 4																																
♠ A Q 9 7 6 4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;"> N W → E S </div>	♠ 10 8																															
♥ 5 4 2		♥ Q 9 7 6																															
♦ 8 4		♦ 10 9 7 3																															
♣ 3 2		♣ K 9 6																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
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S	4	4	3	1	3																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												
	♥ A 10	6	5																														
	♦ Q J 6 2	13																															
	♣ Q 10 8 5																																
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
		Pass	1NT																														
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦																														
Pass	3NT	All pass																															

West leads ♠7.

Step 1: The only number that we, South, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 8 *top* tricks (2 Hearts, 4 Diamonds, 1 Club and 1 in Spades after the lead).

Step 3: Our extra one trick could come from a Club finesse or a Heart finesse that could be taken in either direction.

Step 4: Having won the first trick with our Jack of Spades, West is holding enough Spades to defeat our contract.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

We are left with just K x in Spades in the South hand.

This is a very vulnerable holding.

However, it is only a vulnerable holding if East obtains the lead.

We therefore call East the 'Danger Hand'.

If East obtains the lead, we are 'Doomed', however, if West obtains the lead we are 'Safe'.

Our strategy is therefore to establish our extra trick by losing to West, which we have designated the 'Safe' hand.

Conclusion:

Having won the opening lead with our Jack of Spades, we cross to dummy with a Diamond and lead a low Heart towards our ten of Hearts.

We do not mind if this loses as the lead is now with West, the 'Safe' hand.

Our Jack of Hearts has now been established for our 9th trick.

The Block Defence

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

	♠ K 8 3																																		
	♥ K Q 6 3																																		
	♦ A 5																																		
	♣ K 8 7 2																																		
♠ 6 4	♠ J 10 7 5 2																																		
♥ A 8	♥ 10 9 7 5 4																																		
♦ K J 8 6 2	♦ Q 4																																		
♣ J 9 4 3	♣ 10																																		
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																														
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S	4	2	3	2	4																														
E	-	-	-	-	-																														
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15																																			
9 3																																			
13																																			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																																
Pass	2♣	Pass	1NT																																
Pass	3NT	All pass	2♦																																

West leads ♦ 6.

Step 1: The only number that we, South, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 7 *top* tricks (3 Spades, 1 Diamond and 3 in Clubs).

Step 3: We only require 2 more tricks and that must come from the Heart suit, when we knock out the Ace of Hearts.

Step 4: The problem that we have is that the defenders could quite easily establish 4 Diamond tricks plus the Ace of Hearts.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

If the defender's Diamonds are breaking 4-3, we are not worried as the defenders can only take 3 Diamond tricks along with their Ace of Hearts.

It is when the defender's Diamonds break 5-2, that we could potentially be looking at 4 Diamond losers plus the Ace of Hearts.

However, when the defender's Diamonds are 5-2, East will most certainly be holding 'Honour Doubleton' in the Diamond suit?

According to the 'Rule of 7', seeing that we have 6 Diamonds between the declarer hand and the dummy hand, we should be ducking once, however, with dummy holding the Ace doubleton in the Diamond suit and declarer is holding 109xx, we must 'Overrule' the 'Rule of 7'.

Conclusion:

At trick 1, we must rise with the Ace of Diamonds from dummy.

East will now be holding a singleton honour in Diamonds and the Diamond suit of the defence has now been blocked, which means that, the defence will not be able to untangle their 4 Diamond tricks.

Suit Combinations + Danger Hand

Board 16

West Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ 8 7 6 3																																
	♥ J 10 9 8 7																																
	♦ 7 6 4																																
	♣ 7																																
♠ K J 9 4	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; text-align: center;"> N W ← E S </div>	♠ A 10 5																															
♥ K Q		♥ A 6 4																															
♦ K Q 10 9		♦ A J																															
♣ J 5 3		♣ A Q 9 6 2																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																												
E	6	6	5	6	6																												
W	6	6	5	6	6																												
	♥ 5 3 2	♥ 15	♥ 19																														
	♦ 8 5 3 2	♦ 5																															
	♣ K 10 8 4																																
West	North	East	South																														
1NT	Pass	6NT	All pass																														

North leads ♥ Jack.

Step 1: The only number that we, West, have in our head is 12.

Step 2: We have 10 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 3 Hearts, 4 Diamonds and 1 in Clubs).

Step 3: The Club suit is our best prospect to establish an extra 2 tricks.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 2 tricks.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

We focus on the fact that we only require 4 Club tricks and we can afford to lose one. If Clubs are 3-2, there are no issues, so we must assume that Clubs are going to be 4-1. One obvious thing that we must first do is cash the Ace of Clubs.

Conclusion:

Having cashed the Ace of Clubs, we play a low Club towards our Jack of Clubs. If South shows out, we can next play a Club to the 9 and we wrap up 4 Club tricks.

If South is the one with the 4 Clubs, they cannot play their King of Clubs on 'Thin Air', as this will give us our 4 Club tricks, so they must play low and our Jack of Clubs wins.

We have now made 2 Club tricks, so we now have 11 top tricks and we can still afford to lose 1.

We now just require one more trick.

We now switch our attention to the Spade suit, by playing a Spade to dummy's Ace and running the 10 of Spades, taking a finesse into the 'Safe Hand'.

Even if our Spade finesse loses, North cannot play back a Club.

Meanwhile we have set up our 12th trick via the Jack of Spades.

Finessing

Board 17
North Deals
None Vul

	♠ K 9 3																																
	♥ A J 10 5																																
	♦ A 3 2																																
	♣ A K 8																																
♠ Q 10 5 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>↑</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W	↑	E		S		♠ J 8																						
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♦ K 10 8		♦ J 9 7 6 4																															
♣ J 9		♣ Q 10 7 3																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	3	1	4	5	3																												
S	4	2	4	5	4																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												
	♥ Q 9 2	9	4																														
	♦ Q 5	8																															
	♣ 6 5 4 2																																
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
	1♥	Pass	1♠																														
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥																														
Pass	3NT	All pass																															

East leads ♦ 6.

Our initial analysis tells us that we must play the Queen of Diamonds from dummy, hoping that East has underled their King of Diamonds at trick 1, but unfortunately, West's King wins the trick and a Diamond is continued.

We can now action our 5 Step analysis.

Step 1: The only number that we, North, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 2 in Clubs).

Step 3: There is only one suit that we can hope to get our extra 3 tricks from and that is the Heart suit.

Step 4: Our Diamond suit is wide open, so we must make our extra 3 Heart tricks immediately and without losing the lead.

Step 5: We have a problem in that we have only one entry via dummy's Ace of Spades.

We need to be very careful on how we go about playing the Heart suit.

Observations:

We are required to make 4 Heart tricks.

Once we play a Spade to dummy's Ace, this will be the last time that we will be able to enter dummy.

Conclusion:

Play a Spade to dummy's Ace.

The 'Master Play' is to now lead the 9 of Hearts.

This enables us to take three Heart finesses, if required.

Count Our Tricks (Do Not Get Greedy)

Board 18

East Deals

N-S Vul

	♠ 8 7 3		
	♥ A 6 5		
	♦ Q J 3		
	♣ A Q 7 2		
♠ K 9 5 2	N W → E S	♠ Q J 10	
♥ J 8 7 4 3 2		♥ K	
♦ K 7		♦ 6 5 4	
♣ 10		♣ J 9 8 6 4 3	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ A 6 4	13	
N 1 4 - 1 3	♥ Q 10 9	7 7	
S 1 4 - 1 3	♦ A 10 9 8 2	13	
E - - 1 - -	♣ K 5		
W - - 1 - -			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	3NT	Pass	1NT
		All pass	

West leads ♥4.

Step 1: The only number that we, South, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (1 Spade, 1 Heart, 1 Diamond and 3 in Clubs).

Step 3: We can establish an extra 4 Diamond tricks, even if our Diamond finesse fails.

Step 4: The Heart lead has done us no harm, however the Spade suit situation looks a bit vulnerable?

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

The Heart lead has effectively given us an extra Heart trick, however our strategy evaluated in Step 3 does not rely on making any extra Heart tricks.

We must be alert to the danger of losing the first trick and the defenders start attacking our vulnerable Spade suit, before we have had a chance to establish our extra Diamond tricks.

We must stick to our plan and we must not get distracted.

Conclusion:

We must 'Refuse' this 'Generous' lead and we must rise with the Ace of Hearts and take a Diamond finesse into the 'Safe Hand'. This is the only winning play.

If we get 'Greedy' and play a low Heart at trick 1, although we now have 2 Heart tricks, East will switch to the Queen of Spades and our contract will fail, due to our greed.

Which Suit to Tackle First?

Board 19
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

	♠ Q 9 8 4 2		
	♥ 8 5 3		
	♦ 7 5		
	♣ K 7 2		
♠ A 7	N	♠ K 6 3	
♥ K 6 4	W ↓ E	♥ A 7 2	
♦ Q 10 6 2	S	♦ A J 9	
♣ A Q 9 6		♣ J 10 8 3	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ J 10 5	5	
N - - - -	♥ Q J 10 9	15 13	
S - - - -	♦ K 8 4 3	7	
E 4 4 3 1 4	♣ 5 4		
W 4 4 3 1 4			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All pass

North leads ♠4.

Step 1: The only number that we, West, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 2 Hearts, 1 Diamond and 1 in Clubs).

Step 3: We have two potential sources for our extra three tricks; Namely Diamonds and Clubs.
 If the Club finesse is wrong, we are going to need our extra tricks to come from both Clubs and Diamonds,

Step 4: The problem is that there is a danger that to establish our 9 tricks, we are going to have to lose the lead twice and North by then, will have their Spade suit established.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

The key is knowing which Minor suit to tackle first.

Once our Ace and King of Spades have been knocked out, North becomes the 'Danger Hand'.

We must therefore tackle the Diamond suit second as we know that by playing the Diamond suit, we can keep the 'Danger Hand,' North off lead.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the Ace of Spades.

We must now play the Club suit, driving out the King of Clubs.

We now subsequently duck the second round of Spades, cutting communications from North.

We can now take the Diamond finesse knowing that the 'Danger' hand can be kept off lead.

Note that we should not waste playing a Heart to dummy's Ace to take the Club finesse as this brings into play the possibility that the defenders will switch their attention to the Heart suit, which could result in 5 tricks for the defenders.

Preserving Entries

Board 20
West Deals
Both Vul

	♠ K J 9 8																																
	♥ Q 8																																
	♦ J 10 8 4																																
	♣ 5 4 3																																
♠ A Q 7 4 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: purple; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;">N W ← E S</div>	♠ 6 5																															
♥ K J 10		♥ A 7																															
♦ A K 6 5		♦ 7 3 2																															
♣ Q		♣ K J 10 9 8 2																															
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																												
E	5	3	2	3	5																												
W	5	4	2	3	5																												
	♥ 9 6 5 4 3 2	19	8																														
	♦ Q 9	6																															
	♣ A 7 6																																
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass																														
3NT	All pass																																

South leads ♥4.

Step 1: The only number that we, East, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 5 *top* tricks (1 Spade, 2 Hearts and 2 in Diamonds).

We could say that with the Heart lead, we have been presented with a third Heart trick, however, we would be most unwise to think along those lines.

Step 3: Our extra four tricks will come from the Club suit, once we have knocked the Ace of Clubs out.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 5 tricks.

Step 5: Remember, we do not touch a card from dummy until we have meticulously analysed all of our *five* steps and that includes step 5.

For once, the first four steps were easily resolved.

Step 5 is all about evaluating what actions we need to take to ensure that we can implement our strategy from Step 3.

Our strategy is to knock out the Ace of Clubs, so we can cash 5 Club tricks, but we need an entry to get to our magnificent established Club suit.

Observations:

At first glance, it appears that the 4 of Hearts lead from South has 'Gifted' us 3 Heart tricks, however, there are much more important things happening on this board, namely, our Ace of Hearts has only *one* role to play in life and that is to provide an entry to our Club suit *after* we have knocked out the defender's Ace of Clubs.

Conclusion:

After the 4 of Hearts lead from South, we must preserve our Ace of Hearts, so we must play dummy's King of Hearts at trick 1.

We now play the Queen of Clubs, overtaking with our King and continue our Club suit.

We still have our Ace of Hearts as an entry to our established Clubs.

Count Our Tricks

Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

<p>♠ 7 5 2 ♥ 10 9 8 5 ♦ Q 6 4 ♣ 7 3 2</p>	<p>♠ A 6 4 ♥ A Q ♦ 10 5 3 ♣ A K Q J 10</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 9 8 ♥ K 7 6 4 ♦ A 2 ♣ 9 8</p>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: fit-content; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>N W ↑ E S</p> </div>																														
<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 100%;"> <tr> <td></td> <td>♣</td> <td>♦</td> <td>♥</td> <td>♠</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>5</td> <td>5</td> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>5</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	N	N	5	5	2	1	4	S	5	4	1	1	4	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>♠ K 3 ♥ J 3 2 ♦ K J 9 8 7 ♣ 6 5 4</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">20 2 10 8</p>	
	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	5	5	2	1	4																												
S	5	4	1	1	4																												
E	-	-	-	-	-																												
W	-	-	-	-	-																												

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	2NT	Pass	3NT
All pass			

East leads ♠Q.

Step 1: The only number that we, North, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 8 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 1 Heart and 5 in Clubs).

Step 3: Our one extra trick will come from the Heart suit, by playing the Ace and Queen of Hearts, setting up our Jack of Hearts.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 5 tricks.

Step 5: The only definite way to get to our 9th trick, the Jack of Hearts, is via dummy's King of Spades.

Observations:

It may be tempting to play on the Diamond suit to get the one extra trick that we require, but that would involve some guessing.

Playing on the Heart suit 100% guarantees the one extra trick that we require, however we must make sure that, having established our 9th trick, the Jack of Hearts, that we can get to it.

Conclusion:

We must win the first trick in hand with our Ace of Spades, play our Ace and Queen of Hearts, establishing the Jack of Hearts for our 9th trick, which we can get to, via dummy's King of Spades.

Only once we have been through all 5 steps, do we play the 3 of Spades from dummy.

Counting the Hand

Board 22
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

	♠ A 6		
	♥ 10 3		
	♦ 9 7 5 4 2		
	♣ J 8 7 2		
♠ Q 4 2	N W → E S	♠ K J 3	
♥ K Q J		♥ A 9 8	
♦ K Q J		♦ A 10 8	
♣ A 10 9 3		♣ K Q 6 5	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ 10 9 8 7 5	5	
N - - - -	♥ 7 6 5 4 2	18 17	
S - - - -	♦ 6 3	0	
E 6 4 4 4 6	♣ 4		
W 6 4 4 4 6			
West	North	East	South
		1NT	Pass
6NT	All pass		

South leads ♠10.

Step 1: The only number that we, East, have in our head is 12.

Step 2: We have 9 *top* tricks (3 Hearts, 3 Diamonds and 3 in Clubs).

Step 3: We can establish an extra 2 Spade tricks, by knocking out the Ace of Spades.
 We can then attempt to make 4 Club tricks.

Step 4: There is no imminent danger that the defenders can take their desired 2 tricks.

Observations:

Once we have knocked out the Ace of Spades, we just have to make 4 Club tricks.

If Clubs are 3-2 (68% chance), then we can claim.

As per usual, we have to assume that the Clubs will not break 3-2.

Assuming Clubs are 4-1, we are still alright, as long as we know who holds the singleton Club, because we can take a finesse in Clubs either way.

Whenever we find ourselves having to make a critical decision like this, we should get into the habit of collecting as much evidence as possible before deciding what to do.

Conclusion:

Having knocked out the Ace of Spades, all we have to do is play out our 6 red tricks and our 3 Spade tricks.

We now have all the evidence that is required to make the contract *without* guessing who has the singleton Club.

When we play out our Spades and Hearts, North discards on the third round of both Spades and Hearts. This gives South a 5-5 holding in the Majors. Meanwhile, South discards on the third round of Diamonds. Therefore South has a 5-5-2-1 distribution with a singleton Club.

We therefore play a Club to the Ace and run the 10 of Clubs, knowing that North must hold the Jack of Clubs.

Finessing

Board 23
South Deals
Both Vul

	♠ J 10 9 8		
	♥ 9 7 6 3		
	♦ J 3		
	♣ Q 10 2		
♠ 6 5 3 2	N W ↓ E S	♠ A Q	
♥ A Q 10 4		♥ J 5 2	
♦ A K		♦ 7 6 5 4 2	
♣ A 8 5		♣ K 7 6	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ K 7 4	4	
N - - - -	♥ K 8	17 10	
S - - - -	♦ Q 10 9 8	9	
E 2 4 4 3 3	♣ J 9 4 3		
W 2 4 4 3 3			
West	North	East	South
			Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All pass

North leads ♠ Jack.

This is the very rare occasion that we can see straight away that our play at trick one is going to be the Queen of Spades from dummy. So, we are allowed to play the Queen of Spades, seeing that depending on whether our Queen wins or not will affect our 5 Step analysis.

South wins trick one with their King of Spades and continues the Spade suit. We can now do our 5 Step analysis.

Step 1: The only number that we, West, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (1 Spade, 1 Heart, 2 Diamonds and 2 in Clubs).

Step 3: There is only one suit that we can hope to get our extra 3 tricks from and that is the Heart suit.

Step 4: Our Spade suit is wide open, but it is not really relevant as we know that the only way we are going to make our contract is to make 4 Heart tricks and if we are to achieve that, we will not be losing the lead.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

We are required to make 4 Heart tricks and we need South to hold the King of Hearts. We ask ourselves, what are the Heart holdings that South must have to enable us to make 4 Heart tricks?

They are Singleton King, Kx or Kxx. If South has four to the King, we will not succeed.

If South has Kxx of Hearts, there will be no problem and we can lead dummy's Jack, but supposing the King is doubleton, what will happen when we lead the Jack? Well, South will simply cover and we will be forced to concede the 4th round of Hearts to North.

Conclusion:

We must not waste our Jack of Hearts; We must lead the 2 of Hearts and play the Queen and when that wins, return to dummy via the King of Clubs and this time lead the 5 of Hearts.

We will make 4 Heart tricks whenever, South has Kx or Kxx of Hearts.

Which Suit to Tackle First?

Board 24

West Deals

None Vul

	♠ A 10 7 4		
	♥ K J 3		
	♦ A 2		
	♣ J 10 6 5		
♠ Q 9 3	N W ← E S	♠ K 8 5	
♥ 9 8 5 4		♥ Q 10 7 6 2	
♦ 8 7 6		♦ K 10 9 5	
♣ A 3 2		♣ 4	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ J 6 2	13	
N 4 2 - 3 3	♥ A	6 8	
S 4 2 - 3 3	♦ Q J 4 3	13	
E - - 1 - -	♣ K Q 9 8 7		
W - - 1 - -			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All pass			

East leads ♥6.

Step 1: The only number that we, North, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 4 *top* tricks (1 Spade, 2 Hearts and 1 in Diamonds).

Step 3: We have two potential sources for our extra five tricks; Namely we can establish 4 more Club tricks and one more Diamond trick. The problem is that knocking out the Ace of Clubs will not bring us to our target of 9 tricks, so we are going to have to tackle both the Club and Diamond suits to establish our 9 tricks.

Step 4: We must choose very carefully the order that we should be losing our 2 tricks.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

After the Heart lead, West has become the immediate 'Danger Hand'.

We must make sure that we keep the 'Danger Hand' off lead for as long as possible.

Conclusion:

Having won the opening lead with the Ace of Hearts, we cannot risk playing the Club suit as there is a danger that the 'Danger Hand' will be on lead immediately.

We must lead the Queen of Diamonds at trick 2. Although this only establishes one trick, the key element of the play is that we avoid the 'Danger Hand' getting on lead.

When East wins with their King of Diamonds, they cannot successfully attack the Heart suit, so now, in our own time, we can knock out the Ace of Clubs and claim our 9 tricks.

Declarer Selects the Danger Hand

Board 25
North Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ J 6 4 3 2		
	♥ J 9		
	♦ Q J 7		
	♣ K 8 4		
♠ K 8	N	♠ A 9 5	
♥ 8 7 2	W ↑ E	♥ K Q 5	
♦ K 10 3	S	♦ A 8 4 2	
♣ A J 10 9 6		♣ Q 3 2	
♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ N	♠ Q 10 7	8	
N - - - -	♥ A 10 6 4 3	11 15	
S - - - -	♦ 9 6 5	6	
E 3 3 1 - 3	♣ 7 5		
W 3 3 1 - 3			
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	All pass		

South leads ♥4.

Step 1: The only number that we, East, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 2 Diamonds, 1 Club and 1 in Hearts after the lead).

Step 3: Our three extra tricks should come from the Club suit.

Step 4: The problem is that there is every chance that we are going to have to give up the lead, with a losing Club finesse, in order to establish those extra three Club tricks.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

If we are going to lose a Club trick, then we will lose that trick to North.

Therefore the solution is to make South the 'Danger Hand'.

Conclusion:

If we duck the first Heart trick by playing the 5 of Hearts, we have 'Selected' South to be the 'Danger Hand'.

We certainly do not mind South being the 'Danger Hand' as we can ensure that South will not get on lead.

Meanwhile, when North wins with their King of Clubs, we now have enough tricks to make our contract.

Hold Up Play

Board 26
East Deals
Both Vul

<p>♠ A K 6 ♥ A 10 8 ♦ K 9 3 ♣ Q J 9 6</p>	<p>♠ Q 5 2 ♥ K J 7 5 2 ♦ 10 8 2 ♣ 5 3</p>	<p>♠ 10 9 8 7 ♥ 4 3 ♦ A Q 5 ♣ K 10 8 7</p>	<p>♠ J 4 3 ♥ Q 9 6 ♦ J 7 6 4 ♣ A 4 2</p>																														
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	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																												
N	-	-	-	-	-																												
S	-	-	-	-	-																												
E	4	2	1	4	3																												
W	4	2	1	4	3																												
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
		Pass	Pass																														
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass																														
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass																														
3NT	All pass																																

North leads ♥5.

Step 1: The only number that we, West, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 1 Heart and 3 in Diamonds).

Step 3: Our extra three tricks will come from the Club suit, by knocking out the defender's Ace of Clubs, this will establish 3 extra Club tricks.

Step 4: Once our Ace of Hearts has been knocked out, the defenders could cash four Heart tricks plus the Ace of Clubs and defeat our contract.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

We are going to have to lose the lead.

We must make sure that when we lose the lead, we must maximise the chance that a defender's established suit cannot be reached by the player who has won the trick.

Conclusion:

Using the 'Rule of 7', dummy's Hearts + declarer's Hearts, equates to 2+3=5.

We now subtract our answer of 5 from 7, giving us 2, which means that we must duck 2 times.

In Hearts there are eight cards missing.

(a) If the Hearts are 4-4, North/South will make only four tricks; 3 Hearts and the Ace of Clubs.

(b) If the Hearts are 5-3, we must be careful to duck twice. South, holding the Ace of Clubs, will be unable to give their partner the lead. The hold-up will thus have exhausted the communications between the two defenders.

If the hand with the 5 card Heart suit, also has the Ace of Clubs, then the contract is unmakeable.

Declarer Selects the Danger Hand

Board 27
 South Deals
 None Vul

	♠ A 7 5																																
	♥ 8 7 2																																
	♦ A K 8 3																																
	♣ Q 9 3																																
♠ 9 4 2	N W ↓ E S	♠ Q J 6 3																															
♥ A 10 6 4 3		♥ J 9																															
♦ 7 6 5		♦ Q J 9 4																															
♣ K 2		♣ 7 6 4																															
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	♣ A J 10 8 5																																
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>																														
Pass	3NT	All pass	1NT																														

West leads ♥4.

Step 1: The only number that we, South, have in our head is 9.

Step 2: We have 6 *top* tricks (2 Spades, 2 Diamonds, 1 Club and 1 in Hearts after the lead).

Step 3: Our extra three tricks should come from the Club suit.

Step 4: The problem is that there is every chance that we are going to have to give up the lead, with a losing Club finesse, in order to establish those extra three Club tricks.

Step 5: There are no communication issues.

Observations:

If we are going to lose a Club trick, then we will lose that trick to West.

Therefore the solution is to make East the 'Danger Hand'.

Conclusion:

If we win the first Heart trick with the King of Hearts, we have 'Selected' East to be the 'Danger Hand'.

We certainly do not mind East being the 'Danger Hand' as we can ensure that East will not get on lead.

Meanwhile, when West wins with their King of Clubs, we now have enough tricks to make our contract.
