The Deletion Principle

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

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

North	South
2 NT	3 ♦
3 ♥	3 NT
Pass	

East leads ♠ King.

Initial Analysis:

We have 7 top tricks and we require an additional 2 tricks.

There is the obvious Club finesse, which, if successful, would give us those 2 additional tricks.

There is also the Heart suit, which, if the suit was to divide 3-3 or the ♥ Jack is a doubleton, this would also give us 2 extra tricks.

Calculations:

At the start of the hand, the chance of the Heart suit dividing evenly at 3-3 is a 36% chance and the chance of the Heart suit dividing unevenly at 4-2 is a 48% chance, however, when both defenders follow to two rounds of Hearts, both of these percentages rise as we have eliminated the possibilities of the Heart suit dividing 5-1 and 6-0.

A certain number of 4-2 divisions have also been eliminated, the ten 4-2 divisions that contain a doubleton ♥ Jack.
So, using the 'Deletion Principle' the even break in Hearts has now risen to 52.4%

Meanwhile, the Club finesse has remained static at 50%.

Conclusion:

We win the second round of Spades with our ♠ Ace and we can cash our ♥ Ace and ♥ King.
We now play a Club to dummy's ♣ Ace.
We now cash our ♥ Queen, when the ♥ Jack appears, we cash 2 more Hearts.

More Than One Plan

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

```
            ♠ 6 3 2
            ♥ Q 8 5
            ♦ Q 10 2
            ♣ J 10 8 7
  ♠ 7 5                    ♠ A K 4
  ♥ 3          N           ♥ A 10 9 7 2
  ♦ 8 6 5 4   W → E        ♦ A K 3
  ♣ A Q 5 4 3 2  S         ♣ K 6
            ♠ Q J 10 9 8
            ♥ K J 6 4
            ♦ J 9 7
            ♣ 9
```

West	East
	2 NT
3 NT	Pass

South leads ♠ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 8 top tricks, so we just require one additional trick.

We can get that one additional trick from the Club suit.

As a 'Backup Plan', if the Club suit divides badly, there is a possibility that the Diamond suit divides 3-3, which would provide us with our 9th trick.

Calculations:

If the Club suit divides 3-2, which is a 68% chance, then we have more than enough tricks. Failing that, we can hope that the Diamond suit divides 3-3, which is a 36% chance.

However, although it is called, our 'Backup Plan', we must action our 'Backup Plan' first.

If we play on the Club suit first and it fails, even when the Diamond suit divides 3-3, we will not be able to get to our winning Diamond in dummy.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♠ Ace and play 3 rounds of Diamonds.

When the Diamonds divide 3-3, we have our 9th trick waiting for us in dummy.

One of Two Finesses

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

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

```
        8
    10     4
        18
```

North	South
	1 ♥
2 ♥	4 ♥
Pass	

West leads ♦ King.

Initial Analysis:

We have 9 top tricks, so just one more trick is required.

We have two black suit finesses available plus we have a long Club suit in dummy.

Calculations:

To draw trumps and take the Club finesse followed by the Spade finesse is a 'One of Two Finesses' strategy, however, because we are finessing against two different defenders, this equates to a 74% chance that we will get our extra trick.

Trying to establish our 5th Club in dummy requires either a 3-3 or 4-2 division in the Club suit. The 3-3 break is a 36% chance and the 4-2 break is a 48% chance, so the total chance of success is 84%.

We should reject the 'One of Two Finesses' strategy (74% Chance), and instead use the 84% strategy, which is to establish dummy's 5th Club.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♦ Ace.
Play a Heart to the 9 of Hearts.
Play a Club to the ♣ Ace and then play the ♣ Queen.
When the defenders play a Spade, go up with the ♠ Ace.
Now ruff the 3rd round of Clubs with the ♥ Ace and play a Heart to the 10 of Hearts.
Ruff the 4th round of Clubs with the ♥ King and play a Heart to the ♥ Queen.
We can now cash our 8 of Clubs, which gives us 6 Heart tricks, 2 Club tricks, 1 Spade trick and 1 Diamond trick.

Restricted Choice

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 9 7
♥ A K Q
♦ 7 6 5
♣ 8 7 5 4

♠ K 6 4 3 2   ♠ A 10 8 5
♥ 4 3 2   ♥ 7 6 5
♦ A   ♦ K Q 10 8
♣ A K Q 6   ♣ J 10

N
W ← E
S

♠ Q
♥ J 10 9 8
♦ J 9 4 3 2
♣ 9 3 2

10
16   10
4

West	East
1 ♠	3 ♠
4 ♠	Pass

South leads ♥ Ace.

Initial Analysis:

After the defence cash their 3 top Hearts, our only other potential loser is going to be in Spades.

How do we play the trump suit?

Calculations:

If Spades are 2-2, we have zero Spade losers (40% Chance).

If Spades are 3-1, we will lose a Spade, unless South has a singleton Spade honour.

Conclusion:

We play our ♠ K and observe South playing their ♠ Queen.
According to the 'Restricted Choice' rule, South is twice as likely to have started with the singleton ♠ Queen than the alternative holding of the Queen, Jack doubleton Spade holding.
Consequently, we now play a winning Spade finesse, by playing a Spade to dummy's 10.

Plan Ahead

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

```
                    ♠ A J 6
                    ♥ A Q 5
                    ♦ A 9 5 3
                    ♣ A K J
      ♠ K 9 7 5 2        N        ♠ 10 8 4
      ♥ 6 4 2       W  ↑  E       ♥ J 10 9 8
      ♦ —                S        ♦ K 10 8 6
      ♣ 8 5 4 3 2                 ♣ 10 9
           23
          3   4
           10         ♠ Q 3
                      ♥ K 7 3
                      ♦ Q J 7 4 2
                      ♣ Q 7 6
```

North	South
2 ♣	2 ♦
2 NT	6 NT
Pass	

East leads ♥ Jack.

Initial Analysis:

We have a potential Spade loser and at least 1 potential Diamond loser.
A successful Spade finesse will remove our potential Spade loser.
A successful Diamond finesse, will remove our potential Diamond loser, but only if West holds precisely the doubleton ♦ King.

The worrying factor is that there are scenarios, if we were to lead the ♦ Queen, hoping not to lose any Diamond tricks, we could end up losing 2 Diamond tricks.

Calculations:

The only way we can avoid our Spade loser is with a successful finesse.

The big question is: How should we be playing the Diamond suit?

The answer to that question is: "It Depends".

If it turns out that we have a Spade loser, then our only hope is to find West with the doubleton ♦ King and we must therefore run the Queen of Diamonds.

However, if it turns out that we have zero Spade losers, we can afford the luxury of a 'Safety Play' in the Diamond suit, which guarantees that we can never lose more than 1 Diamond trick.

The only way to find out how to play the Diamond suit is to first find out how many Spade losers that we have.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with dummy's ♥ King and take an immediate Spade finesse.

When the ♠ Jack wins trick 2, we play our 'Safety Play' in the Diamond suit, which is to play a Diamond towards dummy's ♦ Jack. If East shows out, we can subsequently play a Diamond to our 9 and if West shows out, we can subsequently play a Diamond towards our ♦ Queen.
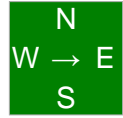
The Deletion Principle

♠ K Q J 3 2
♥ 7 6
♦ 9 8 6
♣ K 5 4

♠ A 10
♥ A K
♦ A K 7 3
♣ Q 9 6 3 2

```
        N
    W → E
        S
```

♠ 9 8
♥ Q 5 4 3 2
♦ 5 4 2
♣ A J 10

```
    9
20    7
    4
```

♠ 7 6 5 4
♥ J 10 9 8
♦ Q J 10
♣ 8 7

West	East
	Pass
2 NT	3 ♦
3 ♥	3 NT
Pass	

North leads ♠ King.

Initial Analysis:

We have 7 top tricks and we require an additional 2 tricks.

There is the obvious Club finesse, which, if successful, would give us those 2 additional tricks.

There is also the Heart suit, which, if the suit was to divide 3-3, would also give us 2 extra tricks.

Calculations:

At the start of the hand, the chance of the Heart suit dividing evenly at 3-3 is a 36% chance and the chance of the Heart suit dividing unevenly at 4-2 is a 48% chance, however, when both defenders follow to two rounds of Hearts, both of these percentages rise as we have eliminated the possibilities of the Heart suit dividing 5-1 and 6-0.

According to the 'Deletion Principle' they both rise proportionally to their original values.
So, although the even split (1-1), has risen, the uneven split (2-0), is still the favourite, which means that the even split of 1-1 will be less than 50% (42.3% Chance).

Meanwhile, the Club finesse has remained static at 50%.

Conclusion:

We win the second round of Spades with our ♠ Ace, and "Just for Fun", we can cash our ♥ Ace and ♥ King, however we are next going to take the Club finesse, by playing our Club towards dummy's ♣ Jack and when that wins, return to our hand and repeat the Club finesse.

Combining Our Chances

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

```
              ♠ 10 6 5
              ♥ J 10 9 8
              ♦ A J 9 8
              ♣ K 4

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

              ♠ Q J 8 2
        9     ♥ Q 6 4 3 2
     14   12  ♦ 7
        5     ♣ 6 5 3
```

West	East
1 NT	3 NT
Pass	

North leads ♥ Jack.

Initial Analysis:

We have just 5 top tricks and we require an additional 4 tricks.
There is the obvious Club finesse, which if successful, would give us those 4 additional tricks.
With some 'Guessing', the Diamond suit could also give us those 4 additional tricks.

Another idea is to try and 'Sneak' through one Diamond trick and having secured our 1 Diamond trick, we can now play the Club suit, knowing that we can afford to lose a Club trick.

It must be correct to play the Diamond suit first, because even if we 'Guess' wrong and we lead the wrong Diamond and the defence wins with their ♦ Ace, there is still a chance that we can drop a doubleton ♦ Jack and still make 4 Diamond tricks. As a last resort, we can still fallback on the Club finesse.

The big question is, do we play a Diamond to our King or a Diamond to the Queen?

Calculations:

The Club finesse is going to be our 'Last Resort', so we will leave that until last.
If there is a doubleton ♦ Jack, then we cannot go wrong.
If the Diamonds divide 3-2, it is a complete 'Guess' how we play the Diamond suit.
If the Diamonds are 4-1 and a defender is holding AJxx of Diamonds and that defender is South, there is nothing we can do with the Diamonds, because if we lead a Diamond from the East hand, South will know that it is ok to rise with the ♦ Ace and clear the Heart suit, because South is in control of the Diamond suit.
If North is the defender holding AJxx in the Diamond suit, they cannot rise with their Ace, because the finesse of their Jack will show up on the next round of Diamonds, so for that reason, the percentage play is to lead a Diamond through North.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♥ King and lead a Spade to our ♠ Ace.
We now lead a small Diamond towards dummy's ♦ Queen. When the ♦ Queen wins, we play on the Club suit. If North rises with their ♦ Ace in front of our ♦ Queen, we will make 4 Diamond tricks.

Which Line To Take?

```
                        ♠ A K 10 3 2
                        ♥ A J 10 9 8
                        ♦ Q
                        ♣ A 4
        ♠ 8                         ♠ Q 7 6
        ♥ 6 3 2           N         ♥ K 7 4
        ♦ 9 8 6 5      W ← E        ♦ J 10
        ♣ K 6 5 3 2       S         ♣ J 10 9 8 7
                        ♠ J 9 5 4
              18        ♥ Q 5
           3     7      ♦ A K 7 4 3 2
              12        ♣ Q
```

North	South
1 ♠	2 ♦
3 ♥	3 ♠
4 NT	5 ♣
5 ♦	5 ♠
6 ♠	Pass

East leads ♣ Jack.

Initial Analysis:

Potentially we have a Spade loser and potentially we have a Heart loser.
If we play the Ace and King of Spades, the Queen may drop and we make our contract.

If it turns out that we have a Spade loser, then there is a chance that the Diamond suit will generate us enough discards to eliminate all of our Heart losers.
If Diamonds divide 3-3, we have five discards to more than eliminate our losing Hearts.
Even if Diamonds divide 4-2, we have four discards, which we can use to eliminate our losing Hearts.

Calculations:

The chances of Diamonds dividing 3-3 or 4-2 is extremely high (84%).
The problem is that when Diamonds divide 4-2 (A 48% Chance), we require 2 entries into dummy and we only have one, which is when we ruff our Club.
Can we find a second entry into dummy to establish our Diamonds?

If we reject the idea of trying to drop a doubleton ♠ Queen (Only a 40% Chance), we have a second Spade entry, if we play towards dummy's Spade suit twice.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with ♣ Ace and we lay down the ♠ Ace and ♦ Queen.
We play a Spade to dummy's ♠ Jack and at some stage, we will play a Spade to dummy's 9 and set up dummy's Diamonds and we still have a Club ruff to enter to our established Diamond suit.
We discard our 4 losing Hearts on our 4 established winning Diamonds.

One of Two Finesses

Board 9
North Deals
E-W Vul

	♠ A 7 2	
	♥ A 7 5	
	♦ A Q 10 8 2	
	♣ A Q	

♠ Q 10 8 6 5 4 3   ♠ K
♥ 6 4 2   ♥ Q J 10 9 8
♦ J 6   ♦ K 5 4
♣ 10   ♣ J 9 8 2

```
        N
      W ↑ E
        S
```

	♠ J 9	
	♥ K 3	
	♦ 9 7 3	
	♣ K 7 6 5 4 3	

```
     20
   3   10
     7
```

North	South
2 NT	3 NT
Pass	

East leads ♥ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 7 top tricks.

Prospects look good as all we require is for the Club suit to divide 3-2.

Another source of extra tricks on this hand is the Diamond suit, as we have a 'One of Two Finesses' strategy available.

Calculations:

Clubs to divide 3-2 is a 68% chance and this will give us an extra 3 tricks.
Leading Diamonds twice from the South hand gives us a 76% chance of an extra 3 tricks.

Maybe we can use both strategies?

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♥ Ace.
Play the ♣ Ace and then play the ♣ Queen and overtake the ♣ Queen with the ♣ King.
If both defenders follow to the 2nd round of Clubs, we know that the Club suit divides 3-2, so we can play a third round of Clubs, knowing that we still have the ♥ King as an entry to our Clubs, so we would end up making 5 Club tricks, 1 Spade trick, 2 Heart tricks and 1 Diamond trick.

However, when the Club suit does not divide kindly, we are in the perfect position to use our backup plan of taking 2 finesses in the Diamond suit, to make 2 Club tricks, 4 Diamond tricks, 2 Heart tricks and 1 Spade trick.

One of Two Finesses

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

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

```
      9
   6     21
      4
```

West	East
	2 NT
3 ♣	3 NT
Pass	

West leads ♥ 6.

Initial Analysis:

After the Heart lead, we have just 6 top tricks.

The good news is that a successful Club OR Diamond finesse will give us our 3 extra tricks.

Which finesse do we take first or can we take both finesses?

Calculations:

If we could take both finesses our chance of successfully making our extra 3 tricks is 74%. (Finessing against two different defenders).

The problem is that if we take the Club finesse first and North wins, the defence will quickly take their 5 tricks and defeat our contract.

We must take the Diamond finesse first, because if this loses our vulnerable J 5 of Hearts holding is protected.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♥ King.
Play a Club to the ♣ Ace and run the 9 of Diamonds, carefully playing the 8 of Diamonds from the East hand.
Now run the Jack of Diamonds again carefully playing the 10 of Diamonds, so that we stay in dummy, so that we can repeat the Diamond finesse for the third time.

We end up making our 9 tricks via 3 Spades, 1 Heart, 4 Diamonds and 1 Club.

Once in a Lifetime

Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

```
                    ♠ 10 8 7
                    ♥ Q J
                    ♦ A 5 4 3 2
                    ♣ 9 6 2
        ♠ 9 5              N            ♠ 2
        ♥ A 4 3 2     W  ↓  E           ♥ K 10 9 8 6
        ♦ K 7 6          S              ♦ J 10 9 8
        ♣ K Q J 10                      ♣ 8 7 3
              7         ♠ A K Q J 6 4 3
           13    4      ♥ 7 5
              16        ♦ Q
                        ♣ A 5 4
```

North	South
	1 ♠
2 ♠	4 ♠
Pass	

West leads ♣ King.

Initial Analysis:

It appears that we have 2 Heart losers and 2 Club losers.

The only suit that we could potentially set up, is dummy's Diamond suit, when the Diamond suit divides 4-3 (62% Chance), but that is going to require 3 entries outside of the Diamond suit.

Our only hope is that dummy's Spades provide us with those 3 required entries.

Calculations:

For the 9 of Spades to be a singleton, the Spades are required to divide 2-1 (78% Chance).

It is a 1 in 3 chance that the singleton will be the 9 of Spades (26% Chance).

It is a 50% chance that West is holding the 9 of Spades.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with our ♣ Ace and play our Diamond to dummy's ♦ Ace and ruff the 2 of Diamonds with our ♠ Ace.
We now play a Spade to dummy's 7 of Spades.
When that wins, we ruff what is the 3rd round of Diamonds with our ♠ King.
We now play our Spade to dummy's 10 of Spades and ruff the 4th round of Diamonds with our ♠ Queen.
We now play a Spade to dummy's 8 of Spade to reach our established 5 of Diamonds.

We now fill out our 'Lotto Ticket'.

Which Line To Take?

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

```
                    ♠ 5 4 3 2
                    ♥ 2
                    ♦ Q 4 3 2
                    ♣ K Q J 5
   ♠ K Q J                        ♠ 10 9 8 7
   ♥ 10 9 8 7 6 5       N         ♥ A 4 3
   ♦ J               W ← E        ♦ A K 10
   ♣ A 10 9            S          ♣ 8 7 6
                    ♠ A 6
        8           ♥ K Q J
     11   11        ♦ 9 8 7 6 5
        10          ♣ 4 3 2
```

West	East
1 ♥	1 ♠
2 ♥	4 ♥
Pass	

North leads ♣ King.

Initial Analysis:

1 Spade loser; 2 Club losers, but 1 Club loser can be discarded on dummy's ♦ King.

We also have 1 or 2 Heart losers.

If Hearts divide 2-2 (40% Chance), we only have 3 losers, in total.
If Hearts divide 3-1 or 4-0 (60% Chance), we have 4 losers in total.

Calculations:

Hearts are more likely to divide 3-1 than 2-2, so we need to eliminate another Club loser by taking the Diamond finesse at trick 2. (50% Chance).

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with ♣ Ace.
Run the ♦ Jack.
Play a Heart to dummy's ♥ Ace.
Cash dummy's ♦ Ace and ♦ King, discarding our 2 losing Clubs.
Continue drawing trumps.

We make our contract by losing just 2 Hearts and 1 Spade.

Plan Ahead

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

```
              ♠ 8 4
              ♥ 4 3 2
              ♦ A 10 6 3
              ♣ Q 8 5 4
♠ K Q J 9 5        N        ♠ 7 6 3
♥ 8 7 6 5      W  ↑  E      ♥ K J 10 9
♦ 8 7 5           S         ♦ K 4
♣ 10                        ♣ J 9 7 6
         6
       6   8
         20
              ♠ A 10 2
              ♥ A Q
              ♦ Q J 9 2
              ♣ A K 3 2
```

North	South
Pass	2 NT
3 ♣	3 NT
Pass	

West leads ♠ King.

Initial Analysis:

We have 6 top tricks and therefore we require 3 additional tricks.

A successful Diamond finesse will certainly produce those 3 additional tricks.

If we hold back on taking our ♠ Ace until the 3rd round, we can probably afford to lose the Diamond finesse as there will be no entry into the West hand and we can probably get our 9th trick from an expected favourable Club division and we even have a Heart finesse as a last resort, but we must plan ahead.

Calculations:

Using the 'Rule of 7' (See previous notes on declarer play), we must hold up 2 rounds of Spades, cutting off West from all their tricks.

When we take a losing Diamond finesse and East comes back the ♥ Jack, do we take the Heart finesse or do we rely on the Club suit dividing 3-2 for our 9th trick?

The Heart finesse is a 50% chance and the Clubs dividing 3-2 is a 68% chance.

If we had planned ahead, we would not be faced with this dilemma.

Conclusion:

We duck the first 2 rounds of Spades and win trick 3 with the ♠ Ace.
Planning ahead, we know that if the Diamond finesse was to lose and East returns the inevitable Heart, we would have the dilemma of not knowing whether to take the Heart finesse or trust that the Clubs suit will divide 3-2.
Why don't we solve that future dilemma at trick 4, by immediately playing our ♣ Ace and our ♣ King at tricks 4 and 5?
When we observe that the Clubs divide 4-1, we know that our only hope of making our 9 tricks, when East plays their ♥ Jack, is to take a successful Heart finesse for our 9th trick.

Which Line To Take?

Board 14
East Deals
None Vul

```
                    ♠ 5 4
                    ♥ K Q 7 3
                    ♦ 8 7 6 5 3
                    ♣ 8 7
      ♠ Q 7              N          ♠ A J 10 9 8 3 2
      ♥ A J 10 6 5    W → E         ♥ 4
      ♦ A J              S          ♦ K Q
      ♣ K 6 5 4                     ♣ A 3 2
              5       ♠ K 6
          15    14    ♥ 9 8 2
              6       ♦ 10 9 4 2
                      ♣ Q J 10 9
```

West	East
	1 ♠
2 ♥	3 ♠
4 NT	5 ♥
6 ♠	Pass

South leads ♣ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

1 Club loser and potentially, 1 Spade loser.

A successful Spade finesse would more or less eliminate our Spade loser.
If we could establish our 5th Heart in dummy, we could use it to discard our losing Club.

Calculations:

A successful Spade finesse is 50%, however, if North held Kxxx in Spades, we would still lose a Spade trick.
To establish our 5th Heart in dummy, we require Hearts to divide 4-3, which is 62%.

To establish our 5th Heart in dummy, we require 3 entries outside of the Heart suit.

The ♣ King is our first entry, the ♦ Ace is our second entry.
Where is our 3rd entry? It is in Spades.

We must reject the 50% Spade finesse and instead go for the 62% chance of the Heart suit dividing 4-3.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with ♣ Ace.
Play a Heart to the ♥ Ace and ruff the 5 of Hearts with the ♠ Jack.
Play a Spade to dummy's 7 of Spades, when this loses, get back to dummy, with the ♣ King.
Ruff the 3rd round of Hearts with a high Spade.
Return to dummy with the ♠ Queen.
Ruff the 4th round of Hearts.
We still have the ♦ Ace in dummy to get to our established ♥ Jack, which we use to discard our losing Club.

One of Two Finesses

Board 15
South Deals
N-S Vul

```
              ♠ J 9 3 2
              ♥ Q J 10 9
              ♦ J 9
              ♣ K 5 4
  ♠ A K Q 4                    ♠ 8 5
  ♥ A 7 3         N            ♥ 6 5 4
  ♦ K 6        W  ↓  E         ♦ A Q 8 7 2
  ♣ A 8 3 2       S            ♣ J 10 9
              ♠ 10 7 6
       8      ♥ K 8 2
    20   7    ♦ 10 5 4 3
       5      ♣ Q 7 6
```

West	East
2 NT	3 ♣
3 NT	Pass

North leads ♥ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 8 top tricks and surely with a combined 27 count, we can find 1 extra trick?

If Diamonds divide 3-3, we have our 9th trick.

The Club pattern looks promising, if we could get to dummy twice.

Calculations:

Diamonds dividing 3-3 is only a 36% chance as it is not the mostly likely division, when we are missing 6 cards. (The 4-2 break is more likely at 48%).

If we could get to dummy to lead Clubs twice, there is a 76% chance that we will make 3 tricks in Clubs, by using the 'One of Two Finesses' strategy, but how are we going to get to dummy twice?

Conclusion:

We duck a couple of rounds of Hearts and take the third round with the ♥ Ace.
Now play a Diamond to the ♦ Queen.
Run the ♣ Jack and when North wins this and cashes their Heart, discard our small Spade and win their Spade continuation with the ♠ Ace,
Now lead the ♦ King and overtake it with dummy's ♦ Ace.
Now run the 10 of Clubs and subsequently the 9 of Clubs.

We end up making 3 Spade tricks, 1 Heart trick, 2 Diamond tricks and 3 Club tricks.

More Than One Plan

Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul

```
            ♠ 8 7 6 5
            ♥ A K 7 2
            ♦ Q 3
            ♣ A Q 10
  ♠ A 9 2          N          ♠ K Q J 10
  ♥ Q 8 5 4    W ← E          ♥ J 10 9 3
  ♦ J 9 8 6       S           ♦ 2
  ♣ J 8                       ♣ 9 4 3 2
            ♠ 4 3
     15     ♥ 6
    8  7    ♦ A K 10 7 5 4
     10     ♣ K 7 6 5
```

North	South
1 NT	3 NT
Pass	

West leads ♠ King.

Initial Analysis:

We have 8 top tricks and therefore require just 1 more additional trick.

We have 3 plans:

Plan Tom: Hope for an additional trick in the Diamond suit, when the Diamonds divide 3-2.

Plan Dick: Hope for a 3-3 division in the Club suit.

Plan Harry: Hope for a singleton or doubleton ♣ Jack to be held by one of the defenders.

Calculations:

Plan Tom is certainly our best hope as Diamonds will divide 3-2 68% of the time.

Plan Dick will succeed 36% of the time, when the Clubs divide 3-3.

Plan Harry requires a singleton or doubleton ♣ Jack, which will occur 18.4% of the time.

We can try all 3 of these plans, providing we try them in the correct order.

Conclusion:

We let the defenders cash their first 4 Spade tricks.
It is very important that we do *not* discard any Clubs from dummy, otherwise plan Dick and Plan Harry will have no chance of success; we must discard 2 Diamonds from dummy.

We must now cash the ♣ Ace and ♣ Queen and when we observe the ♣ Jack from West, we cash our 10 of Clubs.

We now have 4 Club tricks, 2 Heart tricks and 3 Diamond tricks.

More Than One Plan

Board 17
North Deals
None Vul

```
              ♠ 9 7 4 3
              ♥ J 8 4
              ♦ 8 4
              ♣ K Q 9 6
♠ K 6                        ♠ A 5
♥ 9 6 5 2        N           ♥ A Q 7
♦ K J 10 3    W ↑ E          ♦ A Q 6 5
♣ 8 5 3         S            ♣ A J 4 2
              ♠ Q J 10 8 2
        6     ♥ K 10 3
     7    21  ♦ 9 7 2
        6     ♣ 10 7
```

West	East
	2 NT
3 ♣	3 NT
Pass	

South leads ♠ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 8 top tricks and therefore we require just 1 more additional trick.

We have lost Plan Harry for the moment, but we still have 2 plans.

Plan Tom: Hope for an additional trick in the Heart suit, when North holds the ♥ King.

Plan Dick: Hope for an additional trick in the Club suit, when North holds both ♣ King and ♣ Queen.

Calculations:

Obviously, 'Plan Tom' has a much better chance of success than 'Plan Dick' as a simple finesse (Plan Tom), is a 50% chance whereas hoping for North to hold both Club honours (Plan Dick), is only a 24% chance.

However, if we execute both plans in the correct order, we can attempt both plans.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♠ King.
We play a Club to the ♣ Jack, when this wins, we have our 9 tricks.
If the Club finesse had lost, we would subsequently have tried the Heart finesse.

Playing the Heart finesse before the Club finesse is a losing play.

Combining Our Chances

Board 18
East Deals
N-S Vul

```
              ♠ J 10 9 8
              ♥ K 8 4 2
              ♦ 10 9 5
              ♣ 6 4
   ♠ Q 7 6 4      N        ♠ A K 5
   ♥ 5 3      W → E        ♥ A 6
   ♦ K 8 6 3      S        ♦ A J 7 2
   ♣ K 5 2                 ♣ A J 8 3
              ♠ 3 2
              ♥ Q J 10 9 7
              ♦ Q 4
              ♣ Q 10 9 7
```

West	East
	2 NT
3 ♣	3 NT
Pass	

South leads ♥ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 8 top tricks, so just one more trick is required.

If the Spade suit divides 3-3, we have our 9th trick.
If the Club finesse is successful we have our 9th trick.
If the Diamond finesse is successful, we have our 9th trick.
If the Queen of Clubs is doubleton, we have our 9th trick.
If the Queen of Diamonds is doubleton, we have our 9th trick.

How can we combine all these chances, without losing a trick?

Calculations:

We can perform the following tests, without losing the lead.
We can test the Spade suit for dividing 3-3 (36% chance).
We can test the Club suit for the ♣ Queen being a doubleton (16% chance).
We can test the Diamond suit for the ♦ Queen being a doubleton (27% chance).

We can finesse for the Queen in either Minor suit (50% chance), but we risk losing the lead.

We must play the minor suit that offers us the best chance of dropping a doubleton Queen and then we take the finesse in the other minor suit.

Conclusion:

We win the 2nd trick with the ♥ Ace.
Play 3 rounds of Spades.
Play the ♦ King and ♦ Ace.
When the ♦ Queen drops, we make our contract.
If the ♦ Queen had not dropped, then we would have taken the Club finesse.

One of Two Finesses

Board 19
South Deals
E-W Vul

```
                    ♠ Q 6 5 3
                    ♥ 9 4
                    ♦ 5 4 2
                    ♣ A 7 5 2
     ♠ A 4 2              N              ♠ K 8 7
     ♥ Q 3 2          W   ↓   E          ♥ 10 7 6 5
     ♦ Q J 10 9 3         S              ♦ 8 7 6
     ♣ 10 3                              ♣ J 9 4
                    ♠ J 10 9
          6         ♥ A K J 8
       9     4      ♦ A K
          21        ♣ K Q 8 6
```

North	South
	2 NT
3 ♣	3 ♦
3 ♥	3 NT
Pass	

West leads ♦ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 7 top tricks and there is every chance that the Club suit will give us our 8th trick.
We can certainly knock out the Ace and King of Spades, which will give us our 9 tricks, but do we have enough time to do this?
The most likely Diamond division is 5-3, so by the time we have knocked out the Ace and King of Spades, the defence would have taken their 5 tricks.

We need a better plan.
We can take the Heart finesse, which is a 50% chance.

However, nicely disguised within the Heart suit is our 76% chance finesse pattern.

Calculations:

If we are able to lead Hearts twice from the North hand, we will make our extra trick, providing East has either the Queen or 10 of Hearts. This gives rise to a 76% chance of success.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with ♦ Ace.
Play the ♣ King and ♣ Queen.

Lead the 8 of Clubs to dummy's ♣ Ace and run the 9 of Hearts.
When we regain the lead, if necessary, lead our 6 of Clubs to dummy's 7 of Clubs and take another Heart finesse.

More Than One Plan

Board 20
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ Q J 10 9 6
♥ K 7 6
♦ 3
♣ J 10 9 3

♠ A K
♥ A 9 2
♦ 7 6 5 2
♣ A K Q 4

N
W ← E
S

♠ 5 4 3
♥ Q 8
♦ A K 8 4
♣ 7 6 5 2

♠ 8 7 2
♥ J 10 5 4 3
♦ Q J 10 9
♣ 8

7
20   9
4

West	East
2 NT	3 NT
Pass	

North leads ♠ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 8 top tricks and therefore require just 1 more additional trick.

We have 3 plans:

Plan Tom: Hope for an additional trick in the Club suit, when the Clubs divide 3-2.

Plan Dick: Hope for an additional trick in the Diamond suit, when the Diamonds divide 3-2.

Plan Harry: Play a Heart towards dummy's Queen and hope that North holds the King of Hearts.

Calculations:

Plans Tom and Dick are a 68% chance and Plan Harry is a 50% chance, however, the percentages are irrelevant as we can action all 3 plans, but only if we action them in a precise order.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♠ Ace.
We must play the ♦ Ace and ♦ King first, when we have no luck with that suit, we return to our ♣ Ace and lead towards the ♥ Queen. This plan works.
If it had not worked, we would have then tried the Club suit for our additional trick.

Cashing our Club tricks too early or ducking a Diamond, will lead to trouble, later in the hand.

Combining Our Chances

Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 10 9 8
♥ Q J 10 9 8
♦ K Q
♣ A Q 10

```
         N
      W  ↑  E
         S
```

♠ 4 3 2   ♠ K Q J 5
♥ K 3   ♥ 2
♦ A 4 3 2   ♦ 7 6 5
♣ K 5 4 3   ♣ J 8 7 6 2

♠ A 7 6
♥ A 7 6 5 4
♦ J 10 9 8
♣ 9

```
      14
   10    7
      9
```

North	South
1 ♥	4 ♥
Pass	

East leads ♠ King.

Initial Analysis:

After the ♠ King lead, we appear to have 2 Spades to lose and the ♦ Ace to lose.
The only other potential loser that we have is the ♥ King.

We can eliminate our potential Heart loser by taking a successful Heart finesse.
We could take a Club finesse, which, if successful, would allow us to discard one of our Spade losers.

Calculations:

We can take the Club finesse, which is a 50% chance and if the finesse wins, then we can discard one of our Spade losers.
We can cross over to the Ace of Clubs and take the Heart finesse, which is also a 50% chance.

We can lay down our Ace of Hearts and try to drop a singleton ♥ King, which is a 26% chance.

If we immediately take one of the finesses, we are 'Putting All Our Eggs in One Basket', because if the finesse loses, the defence will quickly take their 4 tricks.

We can increase our chances of success by combining our strategy of trying to drop the singleton ♥ King with the taking of the Club finesse.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with the ♠ Ace.
Lay down the ♥ Ace and if this fails to drop the singleton ♥ King, we take the Club finesse.

More Than One Plan

Board 22
East Deals
E-W Vul

```
                    ♠ J 10 9 8
                    ♥ K J
                    ♦ 10 4
                    ♣ K Q 8 7 6
      ♠ K 7 5              N           ♠ Q 3 2
      ♥ A 8 7 4 3     W  →  E          ♥ 6 5 2
      ♦ Q 7 6 3           S            ♦ K 9 8
      ♣ 9                               ♣ J 10 3 2
                    ♠ A 6 4
         10         ♥ Q 10 9
       9    6       ♦ A J 5 2
         15         ♣ A 5 4
```

North	South
	1 NT
2 ♣	2 ♦
3 NT	Pass

West leads ♥ Four.

Initial Analysis:

After the initial Heart lead, we have 6 top tricks and most likely a 7th in the Heart suit.

We require 2 additional tricks.

The Club suit can most certainly provide us with those 2 additional tricks.

The Spade suit can also provide us with those 2 additional tricks.

Is there a way that we can utilise both of these plans?

Calculations:

If the Club suit divides 3-2, which is a 68% chance, then we have enough tricks.

If East has at least one Spade honour, then we should have enough tricks.

However, for the Spade strategy to work, we require 2 entries in dummy to lead the Spades twice through East and probably a third to reach our established last Spade in dummy.

We have 2 Club entries and we find ourselves winning the first trick in dummy with the ♥ Jack.

We must use this early entry to dummy wisely.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with dummy's ♥ Jack and run the ♠ Jack.
When West cashes Ace and another Heart, lead the ♣ Ace and then a Club to dummy's ♣ Queen.
Now run the 10 of Spades, cash the ♠ Ace and enter dummy via the ♣ King and cash dummy's last Spade.

We make 3 Club tricks, 2 Heart tricks, 3 Spades tricks and the Ace of Diamonds for 9 tricks.

Which Line To Take

Board 23
South Deals
Both Vul

```
              ♠ A 6 4
              ♥ 6
              ♦ 6 5 3 2
              ♣ K 8 7 5 2
  ♠ 9 7 5          N          ♠ Q J 10 8
  ♥ Q 8 5 4    W  ↓  E        ♥ J 10 9
  ♦ Q J 10 9       S          ♦ 8 7
  ♣ J 4                       ♣ Q 10 9 6
              ♠ K 3 2
              ♥ A K 7 3 2
              ♦ A K 4
              ♣ A 3
```

	North	South
		2 NT
	3 ♣	3 ♥
	3 NT	Pass

West leads ♦ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 4 Aces and 4 Kings, so we have 8 top tricks.
What is our best chance to make our 9th trick?

If Clubs break 3-3, we will have our 9th trick.
If Diamonds break 3-3, we will have our 9th trick.
If Hearts break 4-3, we will have our 9th trick.
Clubs dividing 4-2 will be of no use to us as there are not enough entries to dummy.

Calculations:

When we are missing 6 cards in a suit, the 3-3 division is not the most likely. (36%).
When we are missing 7 cards in a suit, the 4-3 division is the most likely. (62%).
So we must play on the Heart suit to develop our 9th trick.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with ♦ Ace.
We now lead the 2 of Hearts.
When we regain the lead, we continue playing the Heart suit, to establish the 7 of Hearts for our 9th trick.

We make our contract with 2 Spade tricks, 3 Heart tricks, 2 Diamond tricks and 2 Club tricks.
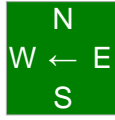
The Deletion Principle

Board 24
West Deals
None Vul

```
                        ♠ Q J 10 9
                        ♥ 3 2
                        ♦ 10 8 6
                        ♣ 6 5 4 3
        ♠ A 5              ┌─────────┐        ♠ K 4 3 2
        ♥ A K              │    N    │        ♥ 7 6 5 4
        ♦ A J 5 4 3 2      │  W ← E  │        ♦ K
        ♣ J 9 2            │    S    │        ♣ K 10 8 7
                           └─────────┘
                 3                            
              17   9       ♠ 8 7 6
                 11        ♥ Q J 10 9 8
                           ♦ Q 9 7
                           ♣ A Q
```

West	East
1 ♦	1 ♥
3 ♦	3 NT
Pass	

South leads ♥ Queen.

Initial Analysis:

We have 6 top tricks and we therefore require an additional 3 tricks.

We can finesse for the ♣ Queen, which if successful, would give us those 3 additional tricks.
There is also the Diamond suit, which if it divides 3-3 or a defender holds the ♦ Queen doubleton, would also provide us with enough tricks.

Calculations:

At the start of the hand, the chance of the Diamond suit dividing evenly at 3-3 is a 36% chance and the chance of the Diamond suit dividing unevenly at 4-2 is a 48% chance, however, when both defenders follow to two rounds of Diamonds, both of these percentages rise as we have eliminated the possibilities of the Diamond suit dividing 5-1 and 6-0.

A certain number of 4-2 divisions have also been eliminated, the ten 4-2 divisions that contain a doubleton ♦ Queen.
So, using the 'Deletion Principle' the even break in Diamonds (1-1), has now risen to 52.4%

Meanwhile, the finesse for the ♣ Queen has remained static at 50%.

Conclusion:

We win the opening lead with our ♥ Ace and we can cash our ♦ King and get back into dummy with our ♠ Ace.
We now cash our ♦ Ace.
Note that at this stage it is still not too late to run dummy's ♣ Jack and finesse for the ♣ Queen, however, even though the ♦ Queen has not appeared the probability of the Diamond suit now breaking 1-1 is higher then the finesse for the ♣ Queen, so we play another Diamond and we use our ♥ King as an entry to all of our Diamond winners.