

#1 Dir: North
Vul: Neither

North
S. AKQ865
H. AK
D. J82
C. 105

West
S. 1072
H. J86
D. 104
C. J7632

East
S. 4
H. Q109432
D. AK9
C. A94

South
S. J93
H. 75
D. Q7653
C. KQ8

North	East	South	West
1S	2H	2S	Pass
4S	All Pass		

Opening lead: DA (A from AKx at trick one)

Bidding Commentary: East has an engaging overcall, but not engaging enough to double and then bid hearts. Doubling and then bidding a suit normally shows a five card suit with 17-18 HCP. Doubling with a six card suit can be done with a point less but partner assumes a five card suit. A double followed by a jump in a suit tends to show a six card suit along with 18+ HCP, but the East hand is not nearly strong enough. The bottom line is that most hands containing six card suits overcall rather than double.

Defensive Commentary: West starts a high-low in diamonds and East cashes the king and gives West a ruff. The Club Ace defeats the contract one trick. Not so fast - East has overcalled hearts, remember? What does East think West is going to return after ruffing? Right, a heart. Goodbye Club Ace. Declarer can pitch two clubs on the established diamonds after drawing trump.

East should cash the ace of clubs **before** giving West a diamond ruff. Why take chances? The defender (East) who can see the winning defense should make the winning defense. Amen.

From Eddie Kantar's "Thinking Bridge"

#2 Dlr: South
Vul: N-S

North
S. QJ5
H. 65
D. 10983
C. 7632

West
S. 92
H. AK92
D. AKQJ
C. J84

East
S. 763
H. QJ10874
D. 4
C. K109

South
S. AK1084
H. 3
D. 7652
C. AQ5

South	West	North	East
1S	Dbl.	Pass	3H
Pass	4H	All Pass	

Opening lead: Spade Ace (A from AK)

Bidding Commentary: The key bid is East's leap to 3H. Why 3H and not 2H? When responding to a takeout double with a long suit, particularly a long major suit, the hand should be upgraded. A six card suit is worth 3-4 extra points. Three if the hand has no side suit singleton-four if it does. This hand has a side suit singleton and should be upgraded to a ten point responding hand. Responding to a takeout double in a major suit with 9-11 revalued points is worth a jump response. West has an easy raise to game.

Defensive Commentary: When partner leads the ace from an apparent AK combination, third hand, holding QJ(x)(x) normally signals with the queen promising the jack (or a singleton.) In either case it is safe for the opening leader to underlead the king as North has promised to take the second trick in the suit. Here, it is clear for South to lead a low spade at trick two as he wants a club return before the onslaught of diamonds begins. This neat defensive signal allows the defense to take the first four tricks.

Defensive Commentary #2. When partner leads the ace showing AK(x)(x) and third hand has Qx, third hand plays low - unless the jack is in the dummy. If it is, then and only then, is third hand allowed to play the Q from Qx; an often asked question.

#3 Dlr: North
Vul: N-S

	North	
	S. QJ4	
	H. AJ864	
	D. A32	
	C. 109	
West		East
S. K6		S. A982
H. Q1073		H. 5
D. 954		D. KJ106
C. AQJ7		C. K854
	South	
	S. 10753	
	H. K92	
	D. Q87	
	C. 632	

North	East	South	West
1H	Dbl.	Pass	2NT
All Pass			

Opening lead: H6

Bidding Commentary: East has a minimum takeout double, but ideal distribution. South, flat as a pancake and vulnerable to boot, is not quite strong enough to raise to 2H. West's jump to 2NT shows 10-12 HCP and is not forcing. East passes with the speed of summer lightning.

Defensive Commentary: South rises with the HK and returns the H9, the higher of two remaining cards. West covers with the H10, North wins the jack and shifts to a club, not playing the ace and a heart (key non-play). North knows from the return of the H9 that South remains with the guarded queen. North must hope that South can get in to lead another heart (if he has one!) If South has no outside entry, the contract cannot be defeated.

Play Commentary: If North shifts to the C10 at trick three, West does best to cash four clubs and force some discards. There are too many variations to discuss, but forcing discards on touchy hands, if it doesn't compromise entry problems, is usually a good way to start. Opponents hate to make discard after discard, don't you?

#4 Dir: North
Vul: N-S

			North	
			S. AK10954	
			H. 3	
			D. J9	
			C. J965	
	West			East
	S. QJ			S. 862
	H. A109542			H. KJ7
	D. K5			D. A64
	C. K73			C. A842
			South	
			S. 73	
			H. Q86	
			D. Q108732	
			C. Q10	
North	East	South	West	
2S	Pass	Pass	3H	
Pass	4H	All Pass		

Opening lead: SA

Bidding Commentary: East has neither the strength nor the distribution, mainly the distribution, to dbl. 2S, but is strong enough to raise 3H to 4H.

Defensive Commentary: North starts with three rounds of spades, West ruffing. South KNOWS that West started with only two spades so should not use a trump! There is no pressing need for North to attack either minor suit.

Play Commentary: Declarer has lost two spades, must lose a club, so the problem is picking up hearts for no losers. With no bidding as a guide, the normal play with 9 cards missing the queen is the ace-king. However, there has been bidding. North is known to have 6 spades and 7 other cards known as 'vacant spaces'. South has two spades so 11 vacant spaces. Who do you think is more likely to have the queen, the hand with 7 vacant spaces or the one with 11? Right. Declarer plays South for the HQ, leads a heart to the king and runs the jack. Length attracts shortness, shortness attracts length.

Defensive Commentary: If at any time the HJ is led, South should not cover. One only covers an honor with an honor when promotion is possible. In this case it is impossible. North is marked with a singleton or doubleton heart and South has no promotable spot cards.

#5 Dlr. North
Vul- N-S

	North	
	S. Q86	
	H. K43	
	D. AK103	
	C. AQJ	
West		East
S. AKJ94		S. 1032
H. 6		H. AQ
D. J982		D. 754
C. 1098		C. 76543
	South	
	S. 75	
	H. J1098752	
	D. Q6	
	C. K2	

North	East	South	West
1D	Pass	1H	Pass
2NT	Pass	4H	

Opening lead: SA (A from AK at trick one)

Bidding Commentary: North's rebid of 2NT shows 18-19 points and a balanced hand. Even with only 6 High Card Points, with a 7-card suit, South should bid game and jumps to 4H.

Defensive Commentary: East 'sees' four defensive tricks if West can be coaxed to cash the SK. If East plays a low spade at trick one, West is apt to switch to a club trying to build up a trick in that suit before the SQ can be established for a club discard. East can see that a minor suit shift could be disastrous. It is up to East to take charge and play the S10 at trick one "faking" a doubleton. No matter. Once West can be 'tricked' into cashing the SK, the hand is defeated.

Every so often third hand should encourage partner to continue the suit that has been led even though third hand has worthless cards in the suit. Why? Because third hand can see that if partner continues the suit, the contract will be defeated but if he shifts disaster could ensue. Yes, little white lies are a part of this game too.

#6 Dir: North
Vul: Neither

	North	
	S. A94	
	H. 64	
	D. AKQ64	
	C. Q86	
West		East
S. 8753		S. J62
H. AKJ		H. 983
D. 873		D. 95
C. K73		C. A9542
	South	
	S. KQ10	
	H. Q10752	
	D. J102	
	C. J10	

North	East	South	West
1NT	Pass	2D	Pass
2H	Pass	3NT	All Pass

Opening lead: C4

Bidding Commentary: South transfers to hearts then rebids 3NT showing 9/10-14 HCP along with five hearts, balanced. The presence of four tens must be worth at least one extra point! North, holding a doubleton heart, passes. With three hearts opener usually converts to 4H. However, opener may opt to pass 3NT with a 4-3-3-3 pattern holding stoppers in the other three suits.

Defensive Commentary: West plays the Club King at trick one (denying the queen) which holds. If West woodenly returns the C7 (higher of two remaining cards), East's correct play is to duck. By ducking, East preserves communication for the defense. If West can get in soon, a total of four club tricks can be taken. Even though ducking is the right play, it doesn't work here. North races off nine tricks: 5 diamonds, 3 spades and a club. But the real culprit is West. Before returning a club, West should play the HK, inferring the AKJ. Now East should win the CA and return a heart allowing the defenders to take the first five tricks.

The best defenders are the most thoughtful ones. When they can 'see' the best defense, they are supposed to let partner in on the secret.

When third hand plays high (CK), third hand denies the card directly beneath the one played (CQ).

When returning partner's suit with two cards remaining, return the higher, but with three cards remaining, return the lowest.

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