

1	<p>♠ AK ♥ A95 ♦ AJ5 ♣ AQ1062</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> <p>♠ 10732 ♥ Q873 ♦ Q432 ♣ 8</p>	N		E	W				S		<p>Dealer: North Both Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South		2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
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	<p>♠ Q98 ♥ K106 ♦ K106 ♣ J973</p>																											
	<p>♠ J654 ♥ J42 ♦ 987 ♣ K54</p>																											
No. 10672			Opening Lead: ♥ 3																									

Illustrates:
 Opening 2C
 Shape Balanced
 Third Hand
 Finesse
 Suit Combinations

Bidding Commentary

An artificial 2♣ opening followed by a 2NT rebid shows 23-24 HCP and is not forcing. The North hand has 22 high card points but should be evaluated at 23/24 points by virtue of having a five card suit headed by three honors. South correctly raises to 3NT bypassing Stayman with a 4-3-3-3 pattern.

Lead Commentary

In general it is safer to lead from a major rather than a minor suit with relatively equal length and strength; minor suits are often concealed during the bidding, but major suits seldom are. Hearts are stronger than spades, so a heart is the preferred choice.

Play Commentary

With this heart combination, declarer plays low from dummy hoping East has led from the Q10xx or the K10xx. If so, West has to play a high honor to prevent North from taking a trick with the 9. Once West plays a high honor, dummy's jack is a likely second trick.

Defensive Commentary

When dummy plays low at trick one, West plays the ♥10. When third hand has a higher and a lower honor than dummy, the lower honor is inserted.

Play Commentary No 2

North needs 5 club tricks. No problem if the suit divides 3-2, but what if they are 4-1? When playing a 5-3 (or a 4-3) fit, the AK, AQ, or KQ along with the 10 or 9 in

the hand with the greater length (the long hand), facing Axx, Kxx or Qxx in the short hand, begin with a high honor from the long hand. Then cross to the remaining honor doubleton in the short hand. If second hand shows out, you will be in the proper hand to take the marked finesse.

Opening Two of a Suit

2	<p>♠ A Q J ♥ 9 7 6 5 ♦ 10 5 ♣ 10 8 6 5</p>	<p>♠ 6 2 ♥ A K Q J 4 ♦ A K J 3 2 ♣ 4</p>	<p>Dealer: East Neither Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South			2♥	Pass	2 NT	Pass	3♦	Pass	5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass
West	North	East	South																
		2♥	Pass																
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5♦	Pass	Pass	Pass																
No. 11021	<p>♠ K 5 4 ♥ 2 ♦ Q 9 8 7 6 ♣ 9 7 3 2</p> <table style="margin: 0 auto; border: 1px solid black; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <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> <p>♠ 10 9 8 7 3 ♥ 10 8 3 ♦ 4 ♣ A K Q J</p>		N		W		E		S		Opening Lead: ♣ A								
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Illustrates:

- Opening Acol 2
- Defending
- Signalling
- Switching

Bidding Commentary.

Opening 2♥ shows 8 playing tricks in an unbalanced hand. The 2NT response is a negative denying 8HCP. When opener rebids in diamonds West suddenly has a good hand, and should jump to 5♦.

Defence commentary.

When South leads the ♣A North desperately wants partner to shift to a spade. North should therefore signal with the ♣5. South can read this as the lowest and therefore asking for a switch. After looking at dummy South should lead a spade, which defeats the contract.

Play commentary.

If South fails to switch declarer ruffs the second club. After drawing trumps dummy's spades can be thrown on the hearts. Then declarer can cross ruff to 12 tricks

3 ♠ A5 ♥ 762 ♦ QJ97 ♣ Q954 ♠ KQJ432 ♥ AK43 ♦ K ♣ AK	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N		E	W				S		Dealer: South Neither Vulnerable <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left;">South</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	West	North	East	South				2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass	
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Pass	Pass	Pass																																	
No. 11026		Opening Lead: ♠ Q																																	

Illustrates:

Opening 2C
Trump Lead

Bidding Commentary:

South has 23 points with a very strong spade suit, and a singleton K, which may be useless. But most players would still open 2♣. A response of 2♦ is the standard negative: it denies 8 points or an ace and king.

Note: Amongst very experienced players there are many different variations in how to respond to 2♣. Some play 2♦ as a waiting response with no strength requirement. Some play that an original response of 2♥ is a 'double negative' and a 2♦ response is a game force. Others show points or controls directly in response to 2♣. Help! But most keep it simple and play that 2♦ denies a good 8 points.

Partner to a 2♣ opening rarely has a good hand but this one is truly awful. However responder is duty bound to keep bidding until game has been reached. Here the omens are not good, but North should do the best they can to steer the partnership to the best possible.

Opener's rebid of 2♠ shows an unbalanced hand with at least 5 spades. North must now find another bid! Without a 3 card fit or some useful scattered points for 2NT the best compromise is 3♣. South now shows their second suit.

North must now choose between hearts and spades, and bid at the lowest possible level. South now bids 4♠ and hopes that dummy is better than it might be.

Note: The singleton ♦K may not be worth 3 points, and it would not be wrong to re-evaluate this hand downwards, and open 2♠. Then the bidding should stop at 3♠, which is safe.

Defence Commentary

West has a near 3 card sequence in an unbid suit and should lead the ♦Q. East had better play the ♦A at trick one! When East scans this dummy, East should see that the only value of this god-forsaken dummy is heart shortness with a few trump over there that can be used to trump hearts. Since East has strong hearts, he does best to shift to a trump to protect those hearts. West wins the ♠A. West should follow East's defense and return a trump. This is the only defense that defeats the contract. South can no longer ruff even one heart in dummy and has to lose two hearts and two aces. When dummy's only value is side suit shortness, lead trump!

Note: A bad result on one hand is not a justification for freezing up and passing when holding a very bad hand. When partner has the good fortune to be able to open 2♣, you must co-operate. Even here declarer will succeed unless the opponents find the perfect defence!

4	♠ 6 ♥ J 10 5 3 ♦ A 9 4 3 ♣ A K 6 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	Dealer: West NS Vulnerable West North East South 2♠ Pass 4♠ Pass Pass Pass
	N		E				
W	S						
♠ A K Q J 7 2 ♥ A K 8 ♦ 5 2 ♣ Q 2	♠ 10 4 3 ♥ Q 2 ♦ K Q 8 7 6 ♣ J 7 5						
No. 11019	♠ 9 8 5 ♥ 9 7 6 4 ♦ J 10 ♣ 10 9 8 3		Opening Lead: ♣ A				

Illustrates:

Fast Arrival
Opening Acol 2

Rotated 11019

Bidding Commentary

West has 8 playing tricks: 6 in spades and 2 in hearts, so opens 2♠. An Acol 2 bid is forcing for one round - partner must respond. It shows a hand with lots of shape and high cards which is not quite strong enough to open with a game-forcing 2♣.

What should East do? They have 8 points and know that the partnership has at least an 8 card fit in spades. So it is clear that the partnership should be in game. But what about a slam?

East's points are mainly in Quacks, Queens and Jacks. Moreover they do not have a first round control in any suit. They should discourage partner from contemplating a slam, and bid 4♠.

By jumping to game as quickly as possible they send a specific message. It is: Partner I think this is our limit. This is a frequently used concept; it is called the "Principle of Fast Arrival"

Note: with the same points but a better hand East should bid 3♠. Here the message is "Partner we have a fit and game points, even if you are minimum. Moreover I have some controls (A/K/shortage) So I am leaving bidding space if you want to explore a slam".

Defence Commentary

North has a stand out lead, the ♠A. This lead promises the K. South has a hand with no clear prospects of taking a trick. However it would be wrong to automatically play the ♠3. With a strong partner this would suggest a change of suit. And South does not want to discourage partner from

playing the K. The suggested play is ♠10. This suggests that the 9 is held, and that it best to continue with the K.

Play Commentary

Declarer has to lose three tricks, 2 in clubs and 1 in diamonds, but can take the rest. For safety Declarer should pull trumps before playing the side suits.

5

<p>♠ 9 8 5 ♥ Q 9 7 6 ♦ K J 10 5 ♣ J 10</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		<p>♠ A K Q J 7 2 ♥ A K 8 ♦ Q 2 ♣ Q 2</p>	<p>♠ 6 ♥ J 10 5 3 ♦ A 9 4 3 ♣ A K 6 4</p>
N												
W	E											
	S											
		<p>♠ 10 4 3 ♥ 4 2 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ 9 8 7 5 3</p>										

Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	2 ♠	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

No. 11020

Opening Lead: ♣ A

Illustrates:

Opening Acol 2

Bidding Commentary

North has a strong unbalanced hand with 8 playing tricks: 6 in spades and 2 in hearts, so opens 2♠. This is forcing for one round - partner must respond. It shows a hand with lots of shape and high cards which is not quite strong enough to open with a game-forcing 2♣. 2NT is an artificial negative bid showing 0-7 points.

When North can only rebid 3♠ South has no obligation to bid on and should pass.

Defence Commentary

East has an easy lead of the ♣A. With 5 clubs in dummy it is clear that trumping will soon start but West should encourage continuation by playing the ♣J.

When the ♠Q drops under the ♠K East should pause for thought. The best chance for tricks appears to be in diamonds and East should lead the ♦3, hoping that partner can win with the K and lead back the J trapping declarers Q.

Note: In mid game the lead of a small card suggests strength in the suit and asks partner to return the suit if they can. Here the suit is led despite holding the unprotected ace, something one would not do on the opening lead!

Play Commentary

As soon as declarer gains the lead they should pull two rounds of trumps before cashing the AK of hearts. The potentially losing heart can then be ruffed in dummy before pulling the outstanding trumps.

6 ♠ AKQJ72 ♥ AK8 ♦ 52 ♣ AK	♠ 6 ♥ QJ105 ♦ A943 ♣ 7642	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ 1043 ♥ 32 ♦ KQ876 ♣ QJ5	Dealer: East NS Vulnerable																	
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W	S																								
♠ 985 ♥ 9764 ♦ J10 ♣ 10983	<table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;">West</td> <td style="width: 25%;">North</td> <td style="width: 25%;">East</td> <td style="width: 25%;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	2♣	Pass	Pass	Pass	3♠	Pass	3♦	Pass	6♠	Pass	4♠	Pass			Pass	Pass	Opening Lead: ♥ Q			
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2♣	Pass	Pass	Pass																						
3♠	Pass	3♦	Pass																						
6♠	Pass	4♠	Pass																						
		Pass	Pass																						

No. 11025

Illustrates:

Opening 2C
Slam

Bidding Commentary

2♣ is game forcing, showing 23points/10 tricks in hand. East has 8 points and good quality diamond suit. The suit has two of the top three honours and is a potentially suitable suit for a slam. East should therefore make the positive bid of 3♦. This is the lowest possible bid in diamonds as 2♦ is an artificial bid that denies the cards and points that would be useful to make a slam.

Note: West has a wonderful hand but with a major flaw. The opponents could take the first two tricks in diamonds.

A positive bid in diamonds is the best possible news for West. Assuming that partner has two of the top three honours they must have a suit headed by AK or AQ or KQ. So West is now very hopeful of slam in spades. West should now bid 3♠ to show an unbalanced hand with at least 5 spades. East with 3 spades now knows that the partnership has at least an 8 card fit, and bids 4♠. This confirms that the hand is to be played in spades.

West can now bid 6♠ with fair confidence: at worst the slam will depend on a successful finesse and being able to get rid of the third heart.

Note 1. In a strong and experienced partnership West's rebid would be 4♠, a jump in spades. This shows a solid suit at least 6 long.

Note 2: This is a rare case where a slam in a suit can be bid without using cue bids or Blackwood.

Note 3: West could only bid the slam if confident that when partner made a positive bid in a suit they were promising a high

quality suit. Specifically possessing 2 of the top 3 honours. This is a sensible agreement to negotiate with a regular partner. Without it this slam would be almost impossible to bid.

Defensive Commentary

North has a very powerful hand with a three card sequence in an unbid suit. Partner is unlikely to have more than 2 points but might conceivably have the ♥K. They should therefore lead the ♥Q.

Play Commentary

Declarer can count 12 tricks.

6 spades
2 hearts
1 diamond
3 clubs

There is a certain loser in diamonds and a possible loser in hearts.

West could plan to ruff a heart after taking two rounds of trumps. Alternatively draw trumps, cash the AK of clubs, small towards the KQ of diamonds. The opponents will take their ♦A but the third heart can be discarded on the ♠Q.

The latter is the safest.

7	♠ A 7 6 ♥ J 9 5 4 ♦ 10 6 5 2 ♣ 7 6	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	♠ J 2 ♥ A K 2 ♦ A K 8 7 ♣ A K Q 5	Dealer: East EW Vulnerable															
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West	North	East	South																				
		2 ♣	Pass																				
2 ♦	Pass	2 NT	Pass																				
3 ♠	Pass	3 NT	Pass																				
Pass	Pass																						

No. 11013

Illustrates:

Opening 2C
Shape Balanced

Bidding Commentary

East has over 23 points and starts with 2♣, the strongest bid available. It is artificial and forcing, indeed it is game forcing unless the auction starts 2♣ 2♦ 2NT. 2♦ is a negative response, showing 0-7 points (or maybe up to nine points in queens and jacks). 2NT shows 23-24 points. 3♠ is forcing. Exactly what it shows depends on partnership agreement. A casual player will promise no more than a decent 4 card suit. A strong recommendation is to agree that it shows a good suit: at least 5 cards and at least 2 of the top three honours. With only two spades East settles for 3NT.

Defence Commentary

South has a 4 card sequence in clubs, an unbid suit, so leads ♣J. East wins and should try to set up clubs. With the ace sitting over dummy's club suit in an entryless dummy North must decide when to play the ♠A. Ideally this is when declarer has /will play their last card in the suit.

On the bidding West showed a 5 card suit and East declined to choose it as a trump suit. So East is denying holding 3 spades. But the subsequent NT bid promises a balanced hand, which requires at least 2 cards in each suit. So East appears to have exactly 2 spades.

North should therefore take the ♠A on the second round of that suit. Declarer will then be unable to gain access to the established clubs.

Play Commentary

As soon as declarer gets the lead they should try and set up spades, starting with the J. Good opponents will play the ♠A on the second round of clubs. This stops

declarer running clubs, and the contract will fail despite the combined 29 points.

8

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N		E							
W		S							

Dealer: West
NS Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
2 ♠	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

No. 11024

Opening Lead: ♥ J

Illustrates:

Opening Acol 2

Bidding Commentary

West has a classic hand for an Acol 2 opening. An unbalanced hand that could get to game with a contribution of less than 6 points from partner, but not strong enough to game force with 2♣. So West opens 2♠.

East has 8 points and a good quality 5 card diamond suit. The suit has two of the top three honours and is a potentially suitable suit for a slam. East should therefore make the positive bid of 3♦.

Unless East holds an almost perfect 10 points with ♦AK and ♣K there is not a slam, so West should be content to sign off in 4♠.

Defensive Commentary

North has a suit headed by the J 10 in an unbid suit so should lead the ♥J.

The defence can take 3 tricks, but cannot defeat the contract.

Play Commentary

The opponents may take three tricks before West can gain the lead (1 diamond & 2 clubs). But then declarer has the next 10 tricks.