

1	<p>♠ K Q 3 ♥ 7 6 ♦ A K Q 3 ♣ A K 4 3</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ J 10 9 8 ♥ K J ♦ J 8 7 5 ♣ Q 7 5</p>	<p>Dealer: North Neither Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr> <td>West</td> <td>North</td> <td>East</td> <td>South</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>2 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South		2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
	N																								
W		E																							
	S																								
West	North	East	South																						
	2 NT	Pass	3 NT																						
Pass	Pass	Pass																							
	<p>♠ 7 4 2 ♥ Q 10 9 8 4 ♦ 10 4 ♣ J 10 9</p>																								
	<p>♠ A 6 5 ♥ A 5 3 2 ♦ 9 6 2 ♣ 8 6 2</p>																								
No. 10665				Opening Lead: ♠ J																					

Illustrates:

- Opening 2 NT
- Shape Balanced
- Opening Lead
- Suit Breaks

Bidding Commentary:

Responder has 8 points and a very flat hand. There is no prospect of a slam so responder wants to be in game. With a 4333 shape there is no ruffing potential, so best is to bid 3NT

Lead Commentary:

East has a 4 card sequence in an unbid suit headed by the J, and easy choice of lead.

Play Commentary:

Declarer can see 9 immediate tricks. At rubber or teams play it is best to take the tricks, claim the contract, and get onto the next deal. At pairs there is a possibility of making an extra trick if either minor breaks 33.

To take this option it is important to test each minor before playing of top cards in the other suits. Played this way there is 10th trick in clubs.

<p>2</p> <p>♠ K 9 7 3 2 ♥ J 9 6 4 ♦ 9 ♣ A 3 2</p>	<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		<p>♠ A Q J ♥ A 3 ♦ A K 3 2 ♣ Q 10 9 8</p> <p>♠ 10 8 ♥ K 10 8 5 2 ♦ J 8 7 6 ♣ K 4</p> <p>♠ 6 5 4 ♥ Q 7 ♦ Q 10 5 4 ♣ J 7 6 5</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>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;">Opening Lead: ♥ 5</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
	N		E																									
W																												
	S																											
West	North	East	South																									
		Pass	Pass																									
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 NT																									
Pass	Pass	Pass																										
No. 10998																												

Illustrates:

- Opening 2 NT
- Shape Balanced
- Suit Combinations

Bidding Commentary:

North's 2NT opening typically shows 20-22 HCP, however some play 20-21, others 19-20. Know your range and know their range. In any case, 5HCP facing a 2NT opening is enough to push to game. Remember, you don't have to play it, partner does.

Lead Commentary:

4th best; however, with Q109xx, K109xx, or A109xx, the 'standard' lead is the 10, not 4th best.

Note: Some play 'jack denies and 9 or 10 implies'. Using this method, the lead of the 9 shows a suit topped by the A109, K109, Q109, and exceptionally, is a top card. The lead of the 10 shows a suit headed by the AJ10, KJ10 as well as top of a sequence. The lead of the J is top of a sequence and denies a higher honor.

Be familiar with your opponents' lead conventions. If you don't understand you are entitled to ask!

Play Commentary:

With this heart combination the queen must be played from dummy. It is far and away declarer's best chance for two heart tricks. Had declarer A10x of hearts, then a low heart from dummy ensures two heart tricks.

Play Commentary 2:

After the queen holds (phew!), declarer has four diamonds tricks to go along with two hearts and a spade. Declarer must develop two more tricks. Declarer can easily develop two extra club tricks, BUT playing on clubs means letting the opponents in twice. If the opponents get in twice they can knock out the ♥A and then cash at least three

hearts and two clubs. Declarer does not have time to mess with the clubs. Declarer must go with the spade finesse. A spade is led to the queen at trick two and when that holds, declarer plays the ♦ ace-king and a diamond to the ten followed by a repeat of the spade finesse. Nine big ones!

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

No. 10997

Illustrates:

- Opening 2 NT
- Shape Balanced
- Slam
- Stayman
- Setting Up

Bidding Commentary:

6NT is a normal contract with 33 HCP between two balanced hands. Notice that 6NT has 11 top tricks, but 6D is cold. It's not easy to uncover a 4-4 minor suit fit after a 1NT or 2NT opening bid.

Lead Commentary:

Leading against 6NT is not like leading against 3NT. When the opponents land in 3NT, they figure to have about 25-26 HCP. Here West has 6 HCP so if 3NT is the final contract, East figures to have about 8-9 HCP, hopefully with a spade honor or two. However, when the opponents land in 6NT, figure them for about 33 HCP. In this case West can figure East for about one point! A spade lead is no longer attractive. When leading against 6NT holding most or all of the missing high card strength and lacking a perfect sequence, lead passively. In this case the ♣J stands out.

Play Commentary:

With 11 top tricks, declarer has two chances for an extra trick: hearts 3-3, or the spade finesse. In order to test both, declarer attacks hearts the longer combined suit first. A heart is ducked at trick two, a technique that allows declarer to retain control of the suit. Declarer wins the likely club return, runs the diamonds and tests the hearts. If hearts are 3-3, there are 12 tricks. If not, there is always the spade finesse to fall back on.

With Axx facing Kxxx, Axxx facing Kxx, or xxx facing AKxx, the normal way to develop three tricks in the suit is to duck the first round followed by cashing the high

honor from the short side (first two examples) and then over to the other honor. If the suit does not break 3-3, declarer retains the lead and is still in control.

<p>4</p>	<p>♠ J 10 7 3 ♥ 7 ♦ 10 6 3 2 ♣ A 9 8 5</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">S</td> </tr> </table>	N	E	W	S	<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ K 10 6 5 ♦ K J 5 4 ♣ 4 3 2</p>	<p>Dealer: West Neither Vulnerable</p>										
	N		E															
W	S																	
<p>♠ A Q ♥ A J 4 3 2 ♦ A Q 9 ♣ K 7 6</p>	<p>♠ K 6 5 4 2 ♥ Q 9 8 ♦ 8 7 ♣ Q J 10</p>	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">West</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">North</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">East</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">South</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">2 NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">3 ♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">3 ♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4 ♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass		
West	North	East	South															
2 NT	Pass	3 ♣	Pass															
3 ♥	Pass	4 ♥	Pass															
Pass	Pass																	
<p>No. 11209</p>				<p>Opening Lead: ♠ J</p>														

Illustrates:

Bidding Commentary:

It is usually right to open 2NT with a balanced 20-22 count, five card major notwithstanding. The opening lead should come up to, rather than through, a hand this strong. Furthermore, if West opens 1♥ and hears a likely 1NT response the correct rebid is 3NT. Now the strong hand will be the dummy. Not good. Seeing the strong hand on the table makes defense ever so much easier.

Lead Commentary:

At a trump contract, a suit headed by two adjacent honors is considered enough of a sequence to justify leading the top honor. However, at notrump, THREE adjacent honors (J109), or the third card missing by one (J108) is considered a sequence and the top honor is led. When the third card is missing by more than one place (J1073), lead fourth best.

Further Lead Commentary:

When partner leads a jack against a suit contract, third hand assumes a suit headed by the J10, or shortness if the ten is visible. It also might be from the KJ10(x) (playing standard leads), but rarely, if ever, from a suit headed by the AJ10(x). One seldom underleads aces at suit contracts to begin with and never smack into the strong hand. Please.

Play Commentary:

After the lead Declarer is looking at 8 immediate winners. Another trick must be developed.

West, missing the ♣Q, is looking at a vulnerable club holding - if South gets in. South is a danger hand. On the bright side, West is looking at a fourth diamond upon which a club can be discarded. A

finesse in hearts can be taken in either direction. To avoid an accident (South getting in with the ♥Q), West crosses to the ♥K and leads a heart to the jack (finessing through the danger hand). Even if North wins the queen, the ♠K is safe from immediate attack. As it happens, the finesse works and 11 tricks are taken. "8 ever, 9 never" does not apply when there is a danger hand. Keeping the danger hand off lead takes precedence.

5	<p>♠ A 8 7 ♥ AK 4 2 ♦ AK 7 6 ♣ K 5</p>	<p>♠ Q J 10 9 5 4 ♥ J 10 5 3 ♦ Q 2 ♣ 4</p>	<p>Dealer: North Neither Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <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 NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	West	North	East	South		2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass	
West	North	East	South												
	2 NT	Pass	3 NT												
Pass	Pass	Pass													
No. 11008	<p>♠ 6 ♥ Q 9 6 ♦ J 10 9 5 ♣ A 8 7 3 2</p>	<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">N</td><td></td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="padding: 2px;">W</td><td style="padding: 2px;">E</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="padding: 2px;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>	N			W	E			S		<p>♠ K 3 2 ♥ 8 7 ♦ 8 4 3 ♣ Q J 10 9 6</p>			
N															
W	E														
	S														
			Opening Lead: ♠ Q												

Illustrates:
 Opening 2 NT
 Entries
 Planning

Bidding Commentary

With 21 HCP and a balanced 4432 shape North has an easy decision; open 2NT. Partner, South has a very nice hand. 6 HCP when added to the minimum of 20 promised by opener means that the partnership has at least 26 HCP, but is some distance short of having the shape, values or control cards to contemplate a slam. So South just bids 3NT.

Lead Commentary

East has a four card sequence headed by an honour, so should lead the ♠Q.

Play Commentary

Declarer should make a plan before touching a card!

Defence Commentary

Dummy has a wonderful suit and the defender holding the A must try and use it to prevent declarer running the suit. In this case declarer starts with the ♠K as an entry.

If North errs by using the ♠K before the ♣A has been played West must not play it until they can be sure that declarer has run out of clubs. In these circumstances the holder of the ace must count that suit very carefully! In this case West can see 10 cards and when partner shows out on the second round of the suit can calculate that declarer has none left. This is the optimum time to play the ace.

South has the AK in three suits (6 tricks) and can make an additional 4 tricks in clubs once the ♣A has been driven out. However if declarer plays the ♠K the opponents should duck it. Then declarer needs an entry to dummy in another suit. So it is very

important to win the first trick in hand with the ♠A.

After winning the opening lead Declarer should lead clubs until the ace has been played. Declarer can then win any card that is led and make 10 tricks.

<p>6</p> <p>♠ A 10 8 3 2 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 10 9 7 3 2 ♣ 9</p> <p>♠ J 9 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ AKQ ♣ QJ876</p> <p>♠ K Q 6 ♥ Q J 10 9 2 ♦ 5 4 ♣ 10 3 2</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		<p>♠ 7 5 4 ♥ AK3 ♦ J 8 6 ♣ AK54</p>	<p>Dealer: West Neither Vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"></td> <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>1 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>3 ♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4 ♣</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>		West	North	East	South		1 ♣	Pass	3 ♣	Pass		3 ♥	Pass	4 ♣	Pass		Pass	Pass		
		N																														
W		E																														
	S																															
	West	North	East	South																												
	1 ♣	Pass	3 ♣	Pass																												
	3 ♥	Pass	4 ♣	Pass																												
	Pass	Pass																														
<p>No. 10999</p>			<p>Opening Lead: ♥ 3</p>																													

Illustrates:

- Opening 2 NT
- Shape Balanced
- Discard
- Signalling
- Planning

more devious route. He makes a negative discard in a suit(s) he doesn't want led. At trick one South discards the ♠2. When West leads a second heart to drive out the ace, South discards the ♦2. Now maybe, just maybe, North will come to the party and shift to a spade upon winning the ♥A.

Bidding Commentary:

In general it is a losing policy to use Stayman with a 4-3-3-3 hand pattern:
 (1) Opener's rebid gives away his distribution,
 (2) Third hand has a chance to double the artificial Stayman response for the lead,
 (3) Even if a 4-4 fit is uncovered, it is not clear that the hand will play better in a trump contract though it usually does - unless opener has the same 4-3-3-3 distribution.

At notrump, in particular, tend to make negative discards in suits you don't want led, keeping all your goodies in the suit you do want led. Keep winners - discards losers! Finally, if you can only make one discard, discard negatively in a suit partner might be thinking of leading, not from one partner wasn't going to lead in a million years.

Lead Commentary:

Normal. As sure as death and taxes, South knows a heart lead is coming but must keep a stiff upper lip.
 Note 1: at a no trump contract it is fine to underlead an ace. However whilst it is often a good lead from a five card suit it is best avoided from Axxx.
 Note 2: When the opponents have confidently bid to 3NT without revealing a major suit holding it is usually best to lead a major. Here the standard lead from the 632 of spades would be ♠3, second highest. This would encourage partner to lead it back, not something that you want.

Play Commentary

After the opening lead declarer can figure out that North started with a 5 card heart suit headed by the A.

Planning. Declarer can see 6 certain tricks in the minors. When added to winning the first trick that totals 7, so 2 more required.

Once the ♥A has been driven out there are 2 extra tricks available. The problem is what happens in spades.

Declarer has no option but to play on hearts and hope that the ♥A is with South.

It is also worth planning what to do if North gains the lead and plays a spade. The three critical cards are the ♠AKJ. Its a 50:50 chance that the J is with North so play the 10 and hope to knock out the A or K.

Defensive Commentary:

If South can get North to lead a spade, four spade tricks are available. However, if South discards an encouraging spade, he is discarding a trick!

Note: As the cards lie the contract will fail if North leads a spade. However the probability of South holding all three of the critical cards was very low. Nothing wrong with the bidding and the contract only fails against perfect defence.

Defensive Commentary 2:

When a defender wants (needs) partner to lead a particular suit, but cannot safely discard from that suit, he must embark on a