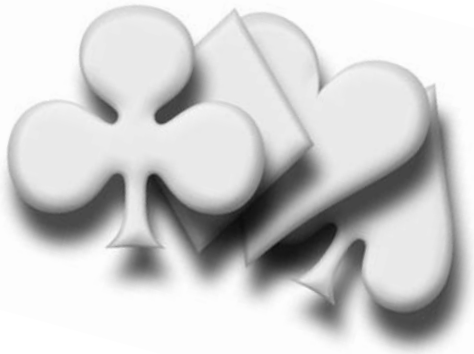
INTRODUCTION



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INTRODUCTION

Overview

More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century is the second course on conventions in the ACBL Bridge Series. It follows the eight lessons presented in the *Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century* student text and teacher manual.

The two courses taken together cover conventions and treatments that players are likely to encounter in competitive bridge games. The eight lessons in the first course *(Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century)* focus on topics usually covered on the front half of the SAYC (Standard American Yellow Card) convention card — opening bids and responses at the one level and the two level. The eight lessons in this course *(More Commonly Used Conventions in the 21st Century)* focus on topics usually found on the back half of the SAYC convention card — competitive and defensive actions. There is some crossover. Opening preemptive bids are covered in the first course, although they are located on the back half of the convention card. The two-over-one forcing approach is left to the end of the second course, since it is outside the "standard" ACBL conventions.

The material in both courses relates closely to the conventions and treatments in the Standard ACBL (American) Yellow Card system — SAYC — which is a starting point for many partnerships, including those on the Internet. By the end of the second course on conventions, the students should feel comfortable playing in competitive events in which SAYC is used.

It may seem to some students that there are not a lot of "conventions" being covered. Make them aware that it's just as important to have strong partnership agreements (*i.e.*, how to handle a reverse). Teachers should be aware that treatments vary from area to area and should focus on presenting what is being used at the local clubs. This material focuses more on the quality of the partnership agreements than on the quantity of agreements.

The course material consists of three parts:

- Student Text
- Teacher Manual
- Sample Deals

The student text has all the material covered in the course and some additional topics. It's meant as a reference book for the students, so that they don't need to take notes during the class — although it might be a participant's learning style to write notes. It is divided into eight chapters which correspond to the lessons in the teacher mannual. Material outside the scope of the course (additional conventions/treatments) is included in the Appendix. There are sample exercises at the end of each chapter. The exercises can be used for the students to complete at home when reviewing the material. You may want to have the students complete some exercises during the class if they need additional practice.

The teacher manual has material to help the teacher successfully conduct the lesson series. There is specific information for each lesson, with an overview of the topics to be covered at the beginning and suggestions on tailoring the material to the experience level of the class. The manual includes a step-by-step example of how to present each topic. Although this is written exactly as the teacher might speak to the class, it is intended as a guideline to make sure that the concepts are introduced and presented in an appropriate order. The teacher may adapt the material, so that it is suitable for the needs of those in a particular class.

There are four sample deals at the end of each lesson. They are constructed as a review of some of the concepts introduced in the lesson and to provide some new ideas on play and defense. The deals are of varying complexity, so the teacher should adjust the discussion to the level of the class.

The discussion of each deal is the same in the teacher manual and the textbook. It should be used by the teacher as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students.

Students

Although the material is primarily designed for students who have come up through the ACBL Bridge Series courses and are starting to play competitive bridge, it should appeal to players from various backgrounds. There may be experienced duplicate players who want to be more familiar with certain conventions or social players who would like an introduction to some of the conventions used in competitive bridge.

The players should be familiar with the basics of bridge — bidding, play and defense. However, it isn't necessary for the students to have come from a duplicate bridge background. The material does not require any familiarity with duplicate procedures such as alerts. Regular duplicate players will be familiar with convention cards, alerts, bidding boxes and so forth. Social players are unlikely to be familiar with these aspects of the game. The backgrounds of the students may affect which material you include.

For discussions of the sample deals, use the concept of making a plan for the play and counting winners and losers. If students aren't used to this, you may need to include some discussion of these concepts or refer the students to the ACBL *Play of the Hand in the 21st Century* course.

Teaching Principles

The lessons are designed to incorporate basic educational concepts. It's part of the teacher's role to see that these principles are followed.

- **Maximum student involvement.** The students should be involved in every step of the learning process. They take an active role with the teacher as a guide.
- **Spiral approach to the curriculum.** Basic concepts are introduced one at a time as needed, and the same concepts are reintroduced at a later stage in the course and expanded upon.
- **A simple approach.** When the students can grasp a concept, however small, they feel a measure of success and achievement, and their confidence grows. They start to enjoy the learning experience and are then ready for more.

Lesson Format

The course consists of eight lessons, approximately two hours in length. There are two parts to each lesson:

- Introduction of the various conventions and treatments being covered.
- Four practice deals.

Spend approximately one hour introducing the bidding concepts and one hour on the play.

The lessons are meant to be given in a seminar style, with as much discussion as possible among the students themselves. None of the ideas introduced is the last word on the subject. There are many possible variations, and the key is to be flexible and open-minded.

At the start of the lesson, each table will need a deck of cards, sorted into suits, and a table guide-card. During the first part of the lesson, the students construct hands on the table. This allows them to focus on each hand under discussion and to manipulate the cards so that they "own" the hand. This technique may require a little practice at first, but the students should quickly get used to it. Make sure that the students keep the cards neatly on the table, so that only the hand under discussion is visible. Hands are placed dummy style in front of each player, with high cards at the edge of the table.

Make sure that all of the students associate with the hand in question, although it is placed in front of a specific player. Generally, the hands are placed in the North or South position. This is just for consistency and convenience. You might want to make up signs for "Opener" and "Responder," so that the students can place them above the respective hands.

During the lesson, you may skip various examples or lose track of where you are in the material. The complete hands are shown at every point in the manual, so you can quickly have the students gather up all of the cards and construct the appropriate hand(s) from scratch. You should occasionally read out the full hand to make sure everyone has it correctly laid out. With the constant changes to the hand, it's easy for a table to get out of sync, especially when there are two hands displayed.

While the students are playing the hands, avoid giving mini lessons on bidding, play or defense. Let the students bid and play the hands as they see fit. It's important to stay away from the tables. Don't watch or allow "helpers" to kibitz. During the discussion following the hands, you may go through the recommended auction and the suggested play and defense in the recommended contract.

Some of the deals are designed to illustrate the point of the hand best if all tables are playing the same contract. On these deals, have the students bid and then stop when the auction is over. Review the bidding and get everyone to the same contract before letting them play out the cards

On some deals, you will be instructed to allow the students to bid and play before any discussion. Then have the students turn all four hands up "dummy style" in front of each player. If some tables finish early, let them quietly discuss the deal while the others are still playing. Don't let the play go on too long. Depending on the experience level, give the students about seven minutes to play the deal. At the end of the allotted time, have everyone, even those who aren't finished, put the hands face up on the table, so that the discussion can begin. If the students didn't finish, tell them they will get more out of the lesson by turning the cards face up and participating in the discussion.

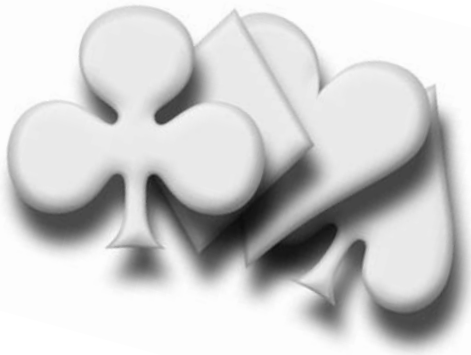
Keep the discussion on track. Left to their own devices, the students may reach some unusual contracts and find some unusual plays and defenses. Focus on the suggested auction and the recommended contract. Tailor the discussion to the level of the class. Skip over the more complex variations with a basic group, but spend more time on them with an experienced group. In each lesson, there are one or two deals which should provide a lively discussion for more experienced players.

Summary

The lesson series should leave your students with a desire to continue their involvement in the game. They should feel that conventions are an interesting aspect of bridge that opens up new avenues to explore, even if their personal choice is not to use all of them.

LESSON 1

The Negative Double



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

The Negative Double

Negative doubles are an integral part of an effective five-card major system. Competitive duplicate students are probably playing them to some extent. It is doubtful whether social players are using the convention or have even heard of it. This course material is written based on 13-point opening bids with 25 points required for game. If you are advocating 12-point opening bids, please make the necessary adjustments to the response ranges, making sure the players bid game with 25 points.

This lesson covers the use of the negative double by responder when there is an overcall of partner's one-of-a-suit bid. The students should already be familiar with the takeout double, so the concept of responder's takeout double should come fairly easily. Most students are much less familiar with the penalty double.

This is the first of two lessons about doubles. Some of the concepts introduced in this lesson, such as a reopening double by opener, will be discussed further in the next lesson. Doubles are a complex subject, so it's important to leave the students with a confident feeling about this particular convention.

Bidding

The original negative double — introduced as the "Sputnik" double by Al Roth and Tobias Stone — applied in only one situation: after a 1♠ overcall of partner's minor-suit opening bid. The concept has been expanded over time until it has become one of the most commonly used and misused conventions.

During the lesson, it's important to emphasize the flexibility of the double and the necessity for firm partnership agreements to avoid confusion in the many situations that can arise.

Here are the topics covered:

The Negative Double

This introduces the concept of the negative double as showing support for the *two* unbid suits when partner opens one of a suit and there is an overcall in a suit by the next opponent. The double is used when responder can't (or doesn't wish to) make a suitable natural bid.

It should be stressed that the double should always promise four-card support for an unbid major. Support for an unbid minor isn't necessary, provided responder has another bid available if opener rebids the unbid minor suit.

When negative doubles are used, there is an impact on the meaning of responder's other bids. A suit bid tends to show a five-card or longer suit, since the negative double is basically used to look for 4–4 fits. This subtle point doesn't need to be emphasized with less experienced students while introducing the negative double.

Although the negative double is initially introduced as showing only enough strength to compete, there is no real upper limit to the strength. Examples of this are given, but the students may struggle a little with understanding why the negative double should be used when responder does have enough strength to bid a suit. The distinction between four-card suits and longer suits is a subtle one, since responder often bids a four-card suit when there is no interference.

It's important to discuss the level through which negative double*s* apply. The assumed *standard* these days is through 2♠, although many players use it through much higher levels. Ultimately, it's a matter of partnership agreement.

It's also important to make sure the students understand that the negative double applies only after a one-level, suit, opening bid and an overcall in a suit. There are other possible agreements, but they aren't standard.

Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

The basic concept for opener's rebid is fairly straightforward. Opener assumes responder has support for both unbid suits and enough strength to compete. With a minimum-opening bid, opener makes a rebid at the cheapest available level. With a medium-strength hand, opener jumps a level. With a maximum-strength hand, opener gets the partnership to game.

The examples are kept quite straightforward. Complex situations in which opener must bid a three-card suit or make a cuebid are avoided.

Responder's Rebid after Making a Negative Double

Responder's continuation after using a negative double is kept fairly simple. With a minimum hand, responder usually passes opener's rebid, unless responder has made an off-center negative double without support for a minor suit. With a medium-strength hand, responder takes a second bid to invite opener to game. With an opening bid, responder gets the partnership to game.

Doubling for Penalty when Playing Negative Doubles

The students may find the concepts involved in making a penalty double quite challenging. It requires cooperation from both partners. The idea of a reopening double by opener — especially on minimum values — may be new. There is more discussion of this type of call in the following lesson, if the students are having difficulty distinguishing between takeout and penalty doubles.

Play & Defense

The deals are all examples of the negative double in action. Since the bidding concepts may be new, the emphasis is on the auction and getting to the appropriate contract. It will be difficult to control the actual final contract when the students find themselves in a competitive situation. Be sure to review the bidding carefully and to discuss the play and defense, only after everyone is assumed to be in the appropriate final contract.

The deals in this lesson do include some challenging play concepts, although these can be sidestepped with an inexperienced group:

- Handling suit combinations.
- Trump management.
- Uppercut.

The first deal contains a challenging suit combination. The basic principle involved for declarer is to "only lead a high card if you can afford to have it covered." The same combination also includes some scope for the defense. Unless the class is quite experienced in card play, it is recommended that you avoid this part of the discussion.

The second deal gives the defense some scope in trying to get an overruff. This gives declarer a challenging play problem. The deal looks a little easier than it is, and declarer can easily fall into communication problems. You might need to emphasize that the concept of "high card from the short side first" applies only when taking *sure* tricks or promoting winners. When the tricks aren't so sure, declarer may have to be very careful about entries.

The third deal won't require much discussion about the play, if the auction goes as intended. The defenders should be able to get a penalty of at least 800 points, even though perfect defense might net them 1400. More likely, North–South will simply get to 3NT, missing the opportunity to collect a larger score.

On the fourth deal, it will probably be challenging enough for North–South to reach the correct contract. If they do, there is an opportunity for the defense to get an uppercut and defeat the contract. It isn't easy to do, however, so any discussion of this should be reserved for more experienced students who claim the opponents always get all of the cards.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This is the first lesson that focuses on competitive bidding. It is also the first of two lessons on doubles. While all of the students will be familiar with competition, they also are likely to be uncomfortable with it. The objective here is to provide some additional tools for them to use.

You might start the lesson like this:

> "In the next few lessons, the focus will be on tools that can be used in competitive situations. When one side makes a takeout double or an overcall, the auction becomes more complex. Some options are taken away while new options become available.
>
> "For the next two lessons, we'll look at doubles. The double was originally introduced to increase the penalty for overbidding — in effect, to cut down on competition. Students soon realized, however, that the double is a very versatile call, since it doesn't take up any bidding room. In today's game, the double is used in many situations by both sides. There are all sorts of conventional applications of the double, and we'll look at one of the most useful."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

The Negative Double

Introduction

"The takeout double is one of the earliest conventions introduced to the game of bridge. The use of the takeout double, when the opponents open the bidding in a suit, is so common that most of today's players don't even think of it as a convention.

"The concept of the takeout double is so useful that it can be applied in situations other than when the opponents open the bidding. We'll look at one way it can be used when your side opens the bidding.

"First let's look at deals where your side opens a minor suit."

Instructions

"Sort the cards into suits. Give each player one suit and construct the following hand in front of North.

"In spades: three low cards.
"In hearts: the king, the queen and two low cards.
"In diamonds: two low cards.
"In clubs: the queen, the jack and two low cards."

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ K Q x x
♦ x x
♣ Q J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double		

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of North.

"**Suppose your partner, South, opens the bidding 1♦. What is North planning to respond?** (1♥.) With 8 high-card points you plan to respond 1♥, looking for a major-suit fit.

"**Instead of passing, however, West overcalls 1♠. What are the possible choices for responder?** (Pass/1NT/Double.) The 1♠ overcall has created a challenge, since you can no longer respond 1♥.

- With only 8 high-card points, you don't have enough to bid a new suit at the two level, 2♣ or 2♥. A new suit at the two level promises 10 or more points and is forcing. If South holds a minimum-opening bid, the partnership is likely to get too high if you respond 2♣ or 2♥.

- A response of 1NT would show 6 to 10 points, but isn't a good choice with three low spades. If you are declarer in notrump, East will probably lead a spade (partner's suit), and West is likely to have a five-card or longer suit for the overcall. Even if South holds some strength in spades, such as the ♠K or ♠Q, South's high card will be trapped immediately. If South does have strength in spades, it would be better to play notrump with South as declarer, protecting the high cards.
- North could pass. North isn't forced to bid with 6 or more points once West intervenes. South will get another chance to bid with a strong opening hand. The disadvantage of passing, however, is that North–South might have difficulty competing in the auction. If East were to raise to 2♠, for example, South might not have enough to compete at the three level. When the auction comes back to North, it would be even more dangerous to say something at the three level.

"North would like to compete for the auction, since North–South must have at least half of the high-card strength — 12 + 8 = 20. However, North doesn't have a convenient bid to describe the hand using standard methods. It was for this type of situation that the negative double was invented. West's overcall has taken away some bidding room, but it does give North another option, the double.

"**A number of years ago, standard methods stated that the double of an opponent's overcall was for penalty. However, there were drawbacks to making a penalty double of a low-level overcall. What were the disadvantages?** (Infrequent/Warns the opponents.) There were several disadvantages:

- It's not too often that you have the right type of hand to make a penalty double of a low-level overcall. To defeat a contract of 1♠, for example, your side would need to take seven tricks — effectively making a 1♠ contract yourself.
- Even if your side can defeat the contract, it might not be enough to compensate for the score you would get for bidding and making a contract of your own.
- If you were to double 1♠ for penalty, the opponents would have an opportunity to find a better spot. You might chase them out of a contract they can't make into one that they can make.

"It makes practical sense to use responder's double of a low-level overcall as a form of takeout double rather than as a penalty double. In fact, today, the use of a double in this position is alertable. If the partnership agrees to use negative doubles, responder's double of an opponent's low-level overcall is for takeout, showing:

- Support for the unbid suits, and
- Enough strength to compete.

"On this hand, the negative double is ideal. North has support for both of the unbid suits, clubs and hearts. North also has enough strength to want to compete for the contract. Even if South has a minimum-opening bid, North–South should be able to make a partscore, if they can find a fit in one of the suits.

"The negative double gives you a useful tool in competitive situations. You'll still have to judge whether it's the best tool for the situation.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the queen.
"In clubs: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ Q x x x
♥ K Q x x
♦ x x
♣ J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♦	Double		

"**Suppose your partner, South, opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♦. What does North respond?** (Double/1♥.) Had West passed, you would have responded 1♥, bidding your four-card suits up the line. West's overcall doesn't prevent you from responding 1♥, but it gives you another option. You can make a negative double to show support for both of the unbid suits, hearts and spades.

"**What is the advantage of making a negative double instead of responding 1♥?** (Show two suits.) If you respond 1♥, South will know about your heart suit, but won't know about the spade suit. That won't be a problem if East passes. South can show a four-card spade suit and the fit will be found. If East raises to 2♦ — or 3♦ — a possible spade fit may get lost. South might not be strong enough to introduce spades at the two or three level, and you don't have enough strength to 'reverse' into spades at a high level. By making a negative double, you show both of your suits at the same time. If the partnership has a fit in either hearts or spades, South will know immediately. If there is no fit, South will have a description of your hand and can bid accordingly.

"**Suppose South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♠. What would North respond?** (1NT.) Although it would be nice to double to show support for hearts, you can't afford to make a negative double with this hand. You don't have support for diamonds. South will assume you have support for both hearts and diamonds and may choose to bid 2♦. That leaves you in an awkward position. A subsequent bid of 2NT would be invitational,

showing about 11 or 12 points. Since you have only 8 points, you may get the partnership too high.

"You have a reasonable alternative. 1NT lets South know you have 6 to 10 points and some strength in spades. The partnership still may find a heart fit if there is one, although there's no guarantee.

"**If South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♥, what is North's call?** (1♠/1NT.) The negative double isn't a good choice, since you don't have support for diamonds. You do have a couple of other options, however. You still can bid 1♠, showing a four-card or longer spade suit. That way, you won't miss an eight-card spade fit. You could bid 1NT, putting the emphasis on the heart stoppers and limiting your hand to 6 to 10 points. That's a good description of your hand, but you might miss an eight-card spade fit. There's no right answer. You have to use your judgment.

"**If South opens 1♦ and West overcalls 2♣, what is North's call?** (Double.) You don't have enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level, but the negative double works well. You can show support for both of the unbid suits and enough strength to want to compete for the contract."

Support for the Unbid Minors

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: add the king and a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ K Q x x
♦ K x x x
♣ J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double		

"**South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Double.) A perfect hand for the negative double — support for both unbid suits and enough strength to compete for the contract.

"**If South opens 1♦ and West overcalls 1♠, what does North call?** (Double.) Ideally, responder should have support for both unbid suits. However, responder can occasionally get away with not having support for a minor suit. Responder also must be prepared to bid something else if opener bids clubs.

"**If North makes a negative double and South bids clubs, what can North do?** (Bid diamonds.) If South bids hearts over the negative double, everything is fine. It won't matter that responder doesn't have support for clubs. If South bids clubs, responder can give preference back to opener's first bid suit, diamonds, at the same level. The partnership won't get into any trouble.

"One caution. While it's okay to occasionally make a negative double without support for an unbid minor, it's never a good idea to do it without support for an unbid major. Opener could bid the major — perhaps even jump to game — and responder would not be able to correct the situation without getting the partnership too high."

Five-Card or Longer Suits

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the king and two low cards.
"In hearts: take away the king and the queen.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x x x
♥ x x
♦ K x x
♣ J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♥	1♠		

"**Suppose South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♥. What does North call?** (1♠.) Although you have support for both of the unbid suits, with a five-card or longer suit you should make your natural response, if you can. You have enough strength to bid a new suit at the one level, so you show your five-card suit by bidding 1♠.

"There are a couple of advantages to bidding 1♠ instead of making a negative double:

- If you double, partner will assume you have four spades and will only bid spades when holding a four-card suit. If partner has a three-card spade suit, the partnership will miss its eight-card fit.
- When you bid 1♠, partner will expect you to have at least a five-card suit because you didn't make a negative double. That's not a 100% certainty. You might not be able to make a negative double when holding four spades, because you don't have support for the unbid minor. That's usually the case.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In diamonds: add the ace and a low card.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x x
♣ J

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♥	2♦		

"**South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♥. What does North call?** (2♦.) With enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level, there's no need to use the negative double. You can show your suits naturally, bidding the longest suit first. If you start with a negative double, you'll tell partner about the four-card spade suit, but you will have a difficult time letting partner know about your excellent six-card diamond suit.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In hearts: add the queen, the jack and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the king and a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ Q J x x x
♦ A x x x
♣ J

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	2♥		

"**South opens 1♣ and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (2♥.) You have enough strength to bid your five-card suit at the two level, so make your natural response. You'll find your heart fit if partner has three-card or longer support.

"There are times, however, when you do have to make a negative double with a five-card or longer suit.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and a low card.
"In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ Q J x x x x
♦ x x
♣ J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double		

"**South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Double.) You would certainly like to show your heart suit, but West's overcall has made that difficult. You don't have enough strength to bid 2♥. That bid would be forcing and could easily get the partnership too high, especially if partner doesn't have much of a fit for hearts.

"You could pass and hope to show your hearts later, but you may not get a suitable opportunity. East might raise spades, and the level of bidding will start to get uncomfortable. The best solution is to make a negative double. South will assume that you have a four-card heart suit and support for diamonds as well.

"**Suppose you double and South bids 2♦. What does North call?** (2♥.) If South does bid diamonds, or rebids clubs, you can now bid 2♥. This tells South that you have a weak hand with a good five-card or longer heart suit. If you held enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level, you would have bid 2♥ right away.

"It's important that both partners understand what is going on in this type of sequence. It will allow you to get around some awkward bidding situations when the opponents interfere."

Strength Shown by a Negative Double

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king.
"In hearts: take away two low cards.
"In diamonds: add the queen and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ Q x x x x
♣ J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double		

"**South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. Does North make a negative double?** (Yes/No.) You do have support for both of the unbid suits, but the hand is of borderline strength. If you double, you are committing the partnership to the two level, if South chooses one of your suits or rebids clubs. If South rebids 1NT, you'll be at the one level, but you don't have a very good hand.

"You don't have to make a negative double when there is a danger of getting the partnership too high, but most players would take the risk with this hand. You would have responded 1♦ or 1♥ if West had passed. That action would be forcing, and partner might raise your suit to the two level. You'd be in the same position. In fact, there's an advantage to making a negative double. You get to show both of your suits at once. If West hadn't overcalled, you could have shown only one of your suits.

"**If South opened 1♠ and West overcalled 2♣, what does North call?** (Double/Pass.) Again, it's a close decision, but it's now or never. You have support for both of the unbid suits without enough to bid one of them at the two level. A negative double would be reasonable. It's an available tool, and you have to use judgment about when to use it.

"The negative double can be made with much stronger hands when it is the most convenient bid available. Partner will assume you have only enough strength to compete at the current level, but you can bid again after hearing opener's rebid.

"A general guideline is that a negative double of a one-level overcall promises at least 6 total points, while a negative double of a two-level overcall promises at least 8 total points.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away two low cards and add the king.
"In clubs: add the queen.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ K Q x x
♣ Q J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double		

"**South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Double.) You have enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level. If you bid one of your suits, however, partner will assume you have a five-card or longer suit, and you also might miss a fit in the other suit. It's best to start with a negative double.

"**Suppose you make a negative double and South rebids 2♥. What does North call?** (3♥.) Now that you've found a fit, you can show your extra strength by raising to the three level, inviting game. This shows 10 to 12 points.

"**What if South rebids 2♦?** (3♦.) You can raise to the three level, showing an invitational strength hand.

"**What if South rebids 2♣?** (3♣.) Raise partner's suit to show extra strength.

"**What if South rebids 1NT?** (2NT.) You can raise to 2NT, inviting partner to game. Partner doesn't have a fit for either of your suits.

"You can handle the auction, whatever partner rebids. You'll just take another bid to show that you have more than a minimum hand.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the queen and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ K Q x x
♣ Q J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double		

"**South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Double.) With 13 HCPs, you know the partnership is headed for game, but the first priority is to find a suitable fit. Start with a negative double.

"**If North doubles and South bids 2♥, what does North call?** (Bid 4♥.) Once you have found the heart fit, you can put the partnership in game.

"**What if South rebids 1NT?** (3NT.) Now you know that you don't have a heart fit. You can simply raise to 3NT.

"Similarly, if South bids diamonds or rebids clubs, you can get the partnership to the game level. As in any situation where a minor suit is involved, you might explore the possibility of playing in 3NT. If you want to make a forcing bid after hearing South's rebid, you can always cuebid the opponent's suit. That's the equivalent of saying, "I need more information before I can determine the best contract."

"**If South opens 1♦ and West overcalls 1♠, what does North call?** (Double.) The negative double is the best way to start. If you bid 2♥, you show a five-card or longer suit. By doubling, you bring hearts into the picture and will find a 4–4 fit, if there is one. If partner rebids something other than hearts, you'll drive the partnership to the game level in diamonds or notrump.

"**If South opens 1♠ and West overcalls 2♣, what does North call?** (Double.) The negative double works well again. You get to show both of your suits. If you have a fit, you can play game in that suit. If you don't have a fit, you can play in 3NT."

The Level through Which the Negative Double Applies

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1♣ and West jumps to 2♠. What does North call?** (Double.) Originally, the negative double was used only after a 1♠ overcall. As you have seen, it's a versatile bid. The standard agreement is that the negative double is used after any overcall up to and including 2♠ — *through 2♠*. Most partners would assume that limit if they simply agreed to play negative doubles.

"With that agreement, you are in a good position to double with this hand. You should be able to find a suitable fit, if there is one, and play in the appropriate game.

"**If South opens 1♣ and West jumps to 3♠, what does North call?** (Double.) With 13 HCPs, you have to do something, and you don't want to bid 3NT with nothing in spades. Double is the practical choice. Here, however, the double is for penalty, not for takeout, unless the partnership has some other agreement. If you play negative doubles through 2♠, the double of any overcall higher than 2♠ is for penalty.

"Making a penalty double isn't unreasonable. Opposite partner's opening bid, you should have more than enough combined strength to defeat the 3♠ contract. However, it feels a little uncomfortable. You might finish with a small penalty, when you could make game or slam in one of your suits.

"For this reason, some partnerships prefer to extend the level through which negative doubles apply. Some partnerships play negative doubles through 3♠, some through 4♦ and some even higher. If your partnership adopts the negative double convention, you'll have to decide on exactly when it applies. The standard agreement is after suit overcalls up to and including 2♠.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the king and add a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ Q J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
2♠	Double		

"**South opens the bidding 1♣, and West jumps to 2♠. What does North call?** (Double.) This is perfect for a negative double. With 10 HCPs you have enough to compete to the three level, and you can show support for both unbid suits.

"**Suppose South rebids 3♥ over your negative double. What does North call?** (Pass.) You've shown enough to compete at the three level, and if partner doesn't want to bid to the game level, the partnership is high enough.

"**Suppose South opens 1♣ and West jumps to 3♠. What does North call?** (Pass.) Unless you have an agreement to the contrary, a double of 3♠ would be for penalty. You could try that, but it's a little risky with nothing in spades. West might be able to make nine tricks. Bidding anything else is also risky. Your best option is to pass. West's preemptive overcall has been successful in making things difficult for you. Passing isn't the end of the world. Partner will still have another opportunity to say something with more than a minimum hand, so you may get another opportunity to bid.

"Even if your partnership agreement is that a double of 3♠ would be negative, you have a tough decision. It does give you a little better chance of landing on your feet, since you'll probably find an appropriate fit if there is one. However, you might get too high. Some players would risk a negative double. They'd reason, that if West has length and strength in spades, partner's high cards are likely to be in the other suits, and the hand should play well for your side. Still, it's taking a big chance. The conservative action would be to pass."

Negative or Penalty?

"One additional point. Even if you agree to play negative double*s* through some level such as 3♠, they only apply if partner opens one of a suit and the next player makes a natural overcall in a suit.

"**Suppose South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♠. What does North call?** (3♠.) Double would not be negative. It would be for penalty. There are three unbid suits, not two. A penalty double could work out, but a better choice is to cuebid 3♠. That takes the place of the Stayman convention in this situation."

Some partnerships do play a variation of negative double*s* in this situation, but that is not the standard agreement.

"**Suppose South opens 1♠ and West overcalls 1NT. What does North call?** (Double.) A double would be for penalty, not for takeout. There are three unbid suits, not two. A penalty double, however, would probably be the best choice. Your side has the majority of the strength.

"**Suppose South opens with a weak 2♠ bid and West overcalls 3♣. What does North call?** (Pass.) A double would be for penalty, not for takeout. Negative doubles apply only after suit opening bids at the one level. The weak two-bid has already limited and described partner's hand, so a negative double wouldn't be very practical. Since partner has shown a weak hand, you should pass and defend."

Summary

"If the partnership agrees to play negative doubles after an opening bid of one of a suit, responder's double of an opponent's natural suit overcall up to and including 2♠ — or higher if agreed — is for takeout. The double shows:

- Four-card or longer support for any unbid major and support for any unbid minor, unless responder has something else to bid if opener bids the unbid minor.
- Enough strength to compete at the given level. With extra strength, responder bids again after opener's rebid.

"With a five-card or longer suit, responder usually bids the suit with enough strength to introduce the suit at the required level."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — The Negative Double

What would East respond with each of the following hands after the auction starts?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♣	1♠	?	

1) ♠ 9 8 2
♥ Q J 6 5
♦ K Q 10 6
♣ 10 5

2) ♠ J 8
♥ K 10 8 4
♦ 7 3
♣ K J 8 5 2

3) ♠ K J 2
♥ 10 4 2
♦ A J 6 5
♣ 9 6 3

4) ♠ 9 5
♥ A Q J 8 3
♦ A Q 6 2
♣ 10 4

5) ♠ 7 4
♥ K J 10 8 7 6
♦ Q J 2
♣ 7 5

6) ♠ K J 10 8 7 3
♥ 7 3
♦ A 8 2
♣ 9 4

Exercise One *Answer* — The Negative Double

1) Double. With support for both unbid suits and enough strength to compete, this is an ideal hand for a negative double.
2) Double. Although East doesn't have support for diamonds, East can support clubs if West picks diamonds and not hearts.
3) 1NT. East doesn't have four-card support for hearts, but East does have another bid available to compete for the contract.
4) 2♥. There's no need for a negative double, since East has enough strength to bid a new suit at the two level.
5) Double. East doesn't have enough strength to bid 2♥ directly, but East would like to compete in that suit. West will assume that East's double shows support for both hearts and diamonds. If West doesn't bid hearts, East can bid them later to describe this type of hand — a competitive hand with a five-card or longer heart suit.
6) Pass. A double would be for takeout. East's best chance to get a good score is to pass and hope that West can reopen the bidding with a double. East will then pass for penalty.

Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

Introduction

"When partner makes a negative double, opener treats it at face value — enough strength to compete and support for the unbid suits, especially an unbid major."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

"Construct the following hand in front of South.
"In spades: the ace and two low cards.
"In hearts: the king and three low cards.
"In diamonds: the jack and a low card.
"In clubs: the king, the queen and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x x
♥ K x x x
♦ J x
♣ K Q x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♣.)

"**West overcalls 1♠. What would North do?** (Double.) North has enough to compete and has support for both unbid suits.

"**East passes. What does South call?** (2♥.) North's double is for takeout and shows hearts and diamonds. With four-card support for hearts, South puts the partnership in its eight-card fit. With a minimum-opening bid, South bids hearts at the cheapest available level.

"It may sound as though South has reversed — has bid a higher-ranking suit at the two level — but that isn't the case. It's really as though responder bid 1♥ over opener's 1♣ bid, and opener then raised to the two level with a minimum hand.

"**What would North do over 2♥?** (Pass.) Since South has shown a minimum, North would leave the partnership in its best partscore.

"**Suppose South opens 1♣, West overcalls 1♠, North doubles and East raises to 2♠. What does South call?** (Pass.) If East had passed, South would have to say something to take out the double — unless South wanted to defend for penalties. Once East bids, South is under no obligation to bid with a minimum opening and may pass. North has promised only enough to compete at the two level. If North has something extra, North still has another chance to bid.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away two low cards.
"In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ x x				1♣	♠ A x x
♥ A J x x	1♠	Double	Pass	2♣	♥ K x
♦ Q x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♦ J x
♣ J x x					♣ K Q x x x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♣.)

"**West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Double.)

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (2♣.) South knows North has hearts and diamonds, but doesn't have a fit for either suit. With an unbalanced hand, South rebids the club suit at the cheapest available level.

"**If West passes, what does North call?** (Pass.) North has described the hand with the negative double and has no reason to disturb partner's choice of contract.

"The final contract is the same one that would be reached without West's interference. South would open 1♣, North would respond 1♦ or 1♥, South would rebid 2♣ and North would pass.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In diamonds: add two low cards.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ x x				1♣	♠ A x
♥ A J x x	1♠	Double	Pass	2♦	♥ K x
♦ Q x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♦ J x x x
♣ J x x					♣ K Q x x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♣.)

"**West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.)

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (2♦.) North has shown support for both unbid suits, so South chooses diamonds. North won't always have support for the unbid minor but, if not, North will have something else to say. For now, South assumes that the partnership belongs in diamonds. 2♦ is the perfect spot for North–South.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the jack.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double	Pass	1NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A Q x x
♥ K x
♦ x x x
♣ K Q x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♣.)

"**West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.)

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (1NT.) Without a fit for either of partner's suits but with a balanced hand, South can rebid 1NT. Even with a reasonably strong holding in spades, South shouldn't pass and convert the takeout double into a penalty double when holding a minimum hand. It's unlikely that the partnership can defeat **1♠**, if North has only enough strength to compete.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the ace and a low card.
"In hearts: add the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: add the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ Q x x
♥ K Q x x
♦ x x
♣ A K Q x x

"**What is South's opening call?** (1♣.) With an unbalanced hand, South opens in the longest suit.

"**West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.)

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (3♥.) From North's negative double, South knows the partnership has a fit in hearts. With a medium-strength hand — 16 HCP plus 1 for the five-card suit — South should bid more than 2♥. South jumps to 3♥ as an invitational bid.

"The auction is similar to the way it would have gone if South opened 1♣ and North responded 1♥. South would jump to 3♥ to show a medium-strength opening bid. The only difference is that South will be the declarer instead of North.

"**What does North do after South's jump to 3♥?** (Pass/4♥.) Without much extra strength for the negative double, North should probably pass. It's a borderline decision. North might push on to 4♥. North would have the same decision to make if there hadn't been any interference and the auction had gone 1♣–1♥–3♥. On the actual combined hands, 3♥ is high enough.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the queen and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	Double	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ K Q x x
♦ x x
♣ A K Q x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♣.)

"**West overcalls 1♠, North doubles and East passes. What does South rebid?** (4♥.) With a maximum-strength hand —18 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit —South should take the partnership right to game in the known eight-card heart fit. That's the same rebid South would have made if West hadn't interfered and North had responded 1♥.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the jack, add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: add the king.

"Change the South hand.
"In diamonds: add the king and a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace and the king.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A x x x
♦ Q x x
♣ K J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
2♠	Double	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ K Q x x
♦ K x x x
♣ Q x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♦.)

"**West jumps to 2♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) With 10 HCPs, North has enough to compete at the three level. If the partnership is playing negative doubles through at least 2♠, North can double for takeout.

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (3♥.) With a minimum-opening bid, South puts the partnership in its eight-card fit at the cheapest available level. That's the three level.

"**After West passes, what does North do?** (Pass.) North has shown enough to compete at the three level, but South has bid only 3♥. South has a minimum-opening bid, so the partnership should be high enough. North passes. Unless there is a lucky lie of the cards, North–South should lose one spade, two diamonds and one club — taking exactly nine tricks.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card, add the jack.

"Change the South hand.
"In diamonds: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ Q x x
♣ K J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
2♠	Double	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ K Q x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♦.) With an unbalanced hand, South opens the longest suit.

"**West jumps to 2♠. What is North's call?** (Double.)

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (4♥.) South has a medium-strength hand —16 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit. With more than a minimum, South should jump to show the extra strength. A bid of 3♥ would show a minimum-opening bid. The jump actually takes the partnership to game, 4♥. That should be fine. North has shown enough to compete at the three level, and South has something extra. The partnership belongs in game.

"Let's try a slightly different scenario.

"**Suppose South opens 1♦ and West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) North has more than enough to compete at the two level, but a negative double is the best way to start to describe the hand. North can show the extra strength later.

"**Over North's double, East raises to 2♠. What is South's call?** (3♥.) East's bid means that South is no longer forced to bid. However, North has shown enough to compete at the two level, and South has something extra for the opening bid. South can afford to compete to 3♥. South is still assuming North has only enough to compete at the two level — 6 to 10 points.

"**West passes South's 3♥ bid. What call does North make?** (4♥.) Now North gets a chance to show extra strength. North promised only enough to compete at the two level. South has shown something extra by going to the three level. North has more strength than promised so far, so North can take the partnership to 4♥.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the king and the jack.
"In hearts: take away the king and the queen.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ Q x x
♣ K J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
2♠	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A K J x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♦.)

"**West jumps to 2♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) North makes a negative double, willing to compete to the three level.

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (Pass/2NT/3♦.) South has several choices and will have to exercise some judgment:

- South could rebid diamonds, but North hasn't promised any support in that suit.
- Since North has promised something in hearts and clubs, South might bid notrump. It's a bit of a toss-up whether to make a slight underbid of 2NT, showing a minimum-strength opening bid, or a slight overbid of 3NT.
- Although North's double is for takeout, South may pass and convert it into a penalty double. That isn't a common occurrence, but it would be reasonable on this hand. South is looking at three likely spade tricks and one or two diamond tricks. North must have some strength to be willing to compete at the three level. The vulnerability may play a part in South's decision as to whether there is more to be gained by passing than bidding."

Summary

"When partner makes a negative double:

- With a minimum-strength hand, choose a rebid at the cheapest available level. If the opponent on your right competes after the negative double, you may pass.
- With a medium-strength hand, jump a level. If the opponent on your right competes after the negative double, you should do something other than pass.
- With a maximum-strength hand, make sure the partnership gets to game.

"Opener rarely passes to convert responder's takeout double into a penalty double unless holding considerable strength in the opponent's suit."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

What does West call with each of the following hands after the auction begins?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	2♦	Double	Pass
?			

1) ♠ A Q J 8 5
♥ 10 8 4 3
♦ A J 5
♣ 3

2) ♠ A 10 8 6 3
♥ A 7
♦ 6 4
♣ K Q 8 3

3) ♠ A K 10 9 8 6
♥ Q 4
♦ K 7 2
♣ 10 5

4) ♠ K Q 9 7 5
♥ J 5
♦ A Q 8
♣ Q 9 3

5) ♠ A K 7 5 4
♥ K Q 9 6
♦ J 3
♣ K 5

6) ♠ A K 8 6 2
♥ 4
♦ K Q J 9 7
♣ 6 3

Exercise Two *Answer* — Opener's Rebid after a Negative Double

1) 2♥. East has indicated support for hearts and clubs. With a minimum-strength opening, West puts the partnership in its eight-card heart fit at the cheapest available level.

2) 3♣. East has indicated support for hearts and clubs. West puts the partnership in its club fit.

3) 2♠. With no fit for either hearts or clubs, West rebids the six-card major suit.

4) 2NT. West doesn't have a fit for either hearts or clubs, but does have a balanced hand with strength in the opponent's suit. Bidding notrump at the cheapest available level shows a minimum-strength balanced hand.

5) 3♥. East's negative double promises four hearts, so East–West have a fit. With a medium-strength hand, West jumps a level to invite East to bid game with a little extra. A rebid of 2♥ would show a minimum-strength hand.

6) Pass. West wouldn't usually convert East's takeout (negative) double into a penalty double, but this would be the exception.

Responder's Rebid after a Negative Double

Introduction

"We've already seen some examples of responder's rebid after making a negative double. Let's go through a few more examples."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add the queen.
"In diamonds: take away the queen.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the king and the jack.
"In clubs: add the queen and a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ x x
♣ K J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ Q x x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♦.)

"**West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) North has just enough to compete, and a negative double allows North to describe the hand nicely.

"**After East passes, what is South's rebid?** (2♣.) With a minimum-strength opening, South bids clubs at the cheapest available level.

"**After West passes, what is North's call?** (Pass.) With a minimum for the negative double, North passes opener's minimum rebid. The partnership stops in partscore in its best fit.

"Change the North hand.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ x x
♣ A K J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ Q x x x

"**South opens 1♦, and West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) With 11 HCPs, North has enough to bid a new suit at the two level, but the negative double tells partner about both the clubs and the hearts. It is preferable for North to double than to bid 2♣. If East were to raise spades, the heart suit might get lost.

"**After East passes, what is South's rebid?** (2♣.) South shows the second suit.

"**After West passes, what does North do next?** (3♣.) With more than a minimum response, North takes another bid by raising to 3♣, inviting partner to game.

"**After East passes, what does South do?** (Pass.) South doesn't have much extra and settles for partscore by passing the invitation.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: add two low cards.
"In clubs: take away the king and the jack.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ x x x x
♣ A x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A K
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ Q x x x

"**South opens 1♦, and West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) North has enough to compete, but not enough to bid a new suit at the two level. North could raise to 2♦, but that would make it difficult to find a heart fit if South holds four hearts. South may not have enough strength to introduce the heart suit after North's minimum raise. The best way to avoid missing a heart fit is to start with a negative double.

"**After North's double, East passes. What is South's rebid?** (2♣.) South assumes partner has support for both hearts and clubs and chooses to put the partnership in its club fit.

"**After West passes, what does North do?** (2♦.) Since North doesn't have the promised club support, North gives preference back to partner's first-bid suit, diamonds.

"**After East passes, what does South say?** (Pass.) North's simple preference back to opener's first suit doesn't promise anything extra, so South passes, leaving the partnership in partscore.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J x
♦ x x x x
♣ A x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	P/3N
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ Q x x x

"**South opens 1♦, and West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) A negative double is North's best choice. With 11 HCPs, North could make a limit raise to 3♦, but that would risk missing a heart fit. North has enough to bid a new suit at the two level, but a response of 2♥ would promise a five-card suit. Partner might raise with three-card support, and the partnership would be in a seven-card fit. North can start with a double to show four-card support for hearts, planning to show the extra strength on the rebid.

"**East passes. What is South's rebid?** (2♣.) South assumes partner has support for hearts and clubs, but only enough to compete at the two level.

"**West passes. What does North do now?** (3♦.) The partnership doesn't have a fit in hearts, and North can't leave partner to play in clubs without the promised support. North can put South back in diamonds, but a bid of 2♦ would be simple preference, showing a minimum hand. With an invitational-strength hand, North can give a *jump preference* to 3♦, showing diamond support and inviting partner to game.

"**After East passes, what does South do now?** (Pass/3NT/4♦.) South has several options. With a minimum-opening bid, the conservative choice is to pass, declining the invitation. South could try 4♦, throwing the ball back into North's court, but it is unlikely that the partnership can make an 11-trick game. The aggressive choice is to bid 3NT, hoping to take nine tricks.

"Looking at the combined hands, 3♦ is certainly a reasonable contract. 3NT might make if the missing diamonds divide 2–2 and the heart finesse works, but that requires a lot of luck.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away two low cards and add the queen.
"In clubs: add the jack.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J x
♦ Q x x
♣ A J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ Q x x x

"**South opens 1♦, and West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) North has 14 HCPs and knows the partnership belongs in game. The first priority, however, is to find a fit. Since a response of 2♥ would promise a five-card suit, North starts with a negative double, planning to show the extra strength later.

"**South rebids 2♣, after East passes. West passes, and the bidding comes back to North. Now what?** (2♠.) North has discovered that the partnership doesn't have an eight-card heart fit, but still isn't certain what the best game contract would be. With no strength in spades, North doesn't want to bid notrump, but North needs to find a forcing bid. A jump to 3♦ would be invitational, so the only choice left is to cuebid the opponent's suit, 2♠. Cuebidding the opponent's suit is forcing to game and gives North a chance to hear another bid from South before deciding what to do.

"**If North cuebids 2♠ and East passes, what does South do next?** (2NT.) South has already shown diamonds and clubs. With a semi-balanced hand and some strength in spades, South can bid 2NT.

"**After West passes, what does North say?** (3NT.) North now knows that partner has something in spades and can put the partnership in game in notrump. That's the best contract on the combined hands.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add three low cards.
"In diamonds: take away the queen.
"In clubs: take away the jack.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ Q J x x x x
♦ x x
♣ A x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ Q x x x

"**South opens** 1♦**, and West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Double.) North doesn't have enough to bid 2♥. North could pass and hope to get an opportunity to show the hearts later, but might not get an opportunity. Instead, North can start with a negative double.

"**East passes. What does South do?** (2♣.) South assumes that North has hearts and clubs and gives preference to clubs.

"**West passes. What does North do now?** (2♥.) North can bid hearts. This shows a five-card or longer heart suit without enough strength to bid 2♥ directly over 1♠.

"**After East passes, what does South do?** (Pass.) Since North has shown five or more hearts but only enough strength to compete, South should pass and leave the partnership in partscore. North could have only five hearts, but South doesn't have a better contract to suggest. On the actual hands, 2♥ is the best spot."

Summary

"If opener makes a minimum rebid in response to your negative double:

- With nothing extra for the negative double:
  - Pass if the partnership has found a fit.
  - Give simple preference to opener's first suit with support for that suit.
  - Bid a new suit to show a five-card or longer suit with 10 or fewer points.
- With an invitational-strength hand of 11 or 12 points:
  - Raise opener's second suit with a fit.
  - Give jump preference to opener's first suit.
  - Bid 2NT.
- With 13 or more points, get the partnership to game. If uncertain about the best contract, cuebid the opponent's suit to get a further description of opener's hand."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Responder's Rebid after a Negative Double

What does East call with each of the following hands after the auction has started?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♣	1♠	Double	Pass
2♥	Pass	?	

1) ♠ 8 4
♥ K J 8 3
♦ Q 10 7 5
♣ Q 9 2

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

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

Exercise Three *Answer* — Responder's Rebid after a Negative Double

1) Pass. East has already described this hand with the double. West's minimum rebid doesn't show interest in reaching a game contract.

2) 3♥. Although West is showing a minimum opening with the non-jump rebid, East has enough to invite partner to bid game. If the opponents didn't interfere, the auction might have started 1♣–1♥; 2♥–3♥.

3) 4♥. East has enough strength to put the partnership in game now that the heart fit has been uncovered.

Doubling for Penalty when Playing Negative Doubles

Introduction

"Occasionally there will be hands where responder would like to make a penalty double of an opponent's overcall. There is a way to handle that, but it takes cooperation from both partners. Let's see how it works."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the king, the queen and the jack.
"In hearts: take away the queen and the jack.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the ace and add a low card.
"In hearts: add the ace.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ K Q J x x x
♥ x x x x
♦ x x
♣ A

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A x x
♦ A K x x
♣ Q x x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♦.) With no five-card major, South opens a minor suit. With four cards in both minors, standard practice is to open 1♦.

"**West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Pass.) North would like to double the overcall for penalty, but a double would be negative — for takeout. A bid of 2♠ would be a cuebid, not a natural bid, and would commit the partnership to game. A notrump bid wouldn't describe the hand very well.

"North's best option is to pass for now. First, the auction isn't over. North may get another opportunity to make a call. Second, if the auction were to end in 1♠, North wouldn't be too unhappy defending that contract.

"**North passes and East passes. The auction comes back to South. What is South's call?** (Double.) If South passes, the auction is over. In this position, *opener should double with shortness in the opponent's suit*, even with nothing extra for the opening bid. This is a very important principle when playing negative doubles. Opener's reopening double is for takeout, not for penalty. If opener wants to defend against 1♠, opener can simply pass.

"The reopening double is important for several reasons:

- Since responder cannot make a direct penalty double when the partnership is using negative double*s*, the reopening double allows the partnership to penalize an opponent's overcall.
- With both North and East passing, there is an inference that North–South hold at least half the combined strength. West made only a simple overcall, and East didn't have enough to raise.
- East's failure to raise West's overcall indicates that East probably doesn't have a fit for West's suit, increasing the odds that North has length and strength in West's suit.
- With shortness in the opponent's suit, a reopening double is fairly safe. If responder has length and strength in the opponent's suit, responder may choose to defend for penalty. If responder doesn't have length and strength in the opponent's suit, responder can take the double out, and the partnership should land in a reasonable fit.

"**If South does reopen with a double and West passes, what call does North make?** (Pass.) North gets an opportunity to show the true nature of the hand. North passes South's takeout double to convert it into a penalty double.

"By cooperating in this manner, the partnership is able to make a penalty double of an opponent's overcall when playing negative double*s*. Responder passes; opener reopens with a takeout double; responder passes to convert the double into a penalty double.

"There's actually an advantage in making a penalty double in this manner. If North–South were playing penalty doubles and not negative double*s*, North would make an immediate double of the 1♠ overcall. This would warn the opponents that they are in trouble. Either East or West could take some action, perhaps running to a better contract. In this auction, West doesn't know that 1♠ is a poor contract when South doubles, since South's double is for takeout, not penalty. It isn't until North passes that West knows the 1♠ bid is in trouble, but it's too late for West to act. If West has a two-suited hand, for example, it's too late to run to the second suit. East still has a chance to act, but may have nowhere to go.

"Let's see what happens, if North doesn't have a penalty double when South reopens with a double.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king and the queen.
"In hearts: take way two low cards.
"In diamonds: add a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace and add the king, the jack and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ J x x x
♥ x x
♦ x x x
♣ K J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A x x
♦ A K x x
♣ Q x x x

"**South opens 1♦, and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (Pass.) With only 5 HCPs, North has nothing to say after West's overcall.

"**Assuming East passes, what call does South make?** (Double.) With shortness in the overcalled suit, South makes a reopening takeout double.

"**If West passes, what does North call?** (2♣/2♦/1NT.) With nothing much in the opponent's suit, North certainly doesn't want to convert the takeout double into a penalty double. Since South has made a takeout double, North should probably bid 2♣. The partnership should have a fit in that suit. North also could simply return to opener's suit by bidding 2♦. 1NT is another possible choice, but North should be careful about bidding notrump when South has shown shortness in spades.

"So, the partnership should find a comfortable resting place in 2♣ after the reopening takeout double. 2♣ may or may not make, but it's a reasonable contract. North–South will probably not be allowed to play in 2♣, since East–West have the majority of strength. They will compete to at least the two level, and North–South can sit back and defend.

"**Suppose South opens 1♦, West overcalls 1♠, North passes and East raises to 2♠. What does South call?** (Pass.) South is no longer in the reopening seat if East bids. If South passes, the auction isn't over. North will get another chance to bid. In this situation, South would only make a takeout double with extra strength, since it's quite likely North doesn't have much when both East and West are bidding. We'll talk more about that in the next lesson.

"**Suppose South opens 1♦ and West jumps to 2♠. North and East both pass. What does South call?** (Double.) If the partnership is using negative double*s* through 2♠ or higher, South still should reopen with a double when short in the opponent's suit. North could easily have a penalty double of 2♠, especially when East passes West's overcall.

"It may feel uncomfortable to reopen with a double at a high level with a minimum-opening bid, but that's the way negative doubles work. North–South will probably reach 3♣, which is a little high, but reasonable. As mentioned earlier, since East–West actually hold the majority of strength on this hand, it's unlikely that East will pass West's overcall. If East bids, North–South will be off the hook.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the queen.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In clubs: take away the queen and a low card.

NORTH
♠ J x x x
♥ x x
♦ x x x
♣ K J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

SOUTH
♠ Q x x
♥ A x x x
♦ A K x x
♣ x x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♦.) South opens the longer minor suit.

"**West overcalls 1♠. What is North's call?** (Pass.) North doesn't have enough to bid after East's overcall.

"**East passes. What is South's call?** (Pass.) When South isn't short in the opponent's suit, there is no reason to reopen with a double. Unless South holds a very strong hand, South should pass and choose to defend. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- With length in the opponent's suit, opener's hand is unsuitable for a takeout double, since opener won't have support for all of the unbid suits.
- When opener holds length and/or strength in the overcalled suit, it becomes highly unlikely that responder has a penalty double. There aren't enough spades left in the deck.

"**Is South worried about missing a heart fit by passing?** (No.) If North held hearts, North would have made a negative double — unless North was too weak to compete.

"One additional point. South shouldn't bid a reopening 1NT. That would show a much stronger hand — a hand too strong for an opening bid of 1NT. Since responder is most likely to have a weak hand when opener has length in the opponent's suit, and since responder couldn't act directly over the overcall, opener should only bid again with extra strength — not with a minimum hand. The deal probably belongs to the opponents, and North–South will do best by defending.

"When short in the opponent's suit, opener doesn't always reopen with a double.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the queen and a low card.
"In hearts: add the jack and a low card.
"In diamonds: add a low card.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ J x x x
♥ x x
♦ x x x
♣ K J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ A J x x x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ x

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♥.) South opens in the longest suit.

"**West overcalls 1♠. North and East both pass. What is South's call?** (2♦.) Although South is short in spades, South should avoid a reopening double with a very unbalanced hand. Even if North does have a penalty double of spades, South's hand is unsuitable for defending. If North doesn't have a penalty double of spades, South doesn't want to hear North bid clubs. South doesn't want to sell out to 1♠, but wants to give partner a good description of the hand. South can do this by reopening with 2♦.

"**If South reopens with 2♦, what is North's call?** (2♥/Pass.) South's choice of a reopening bid warns North that South has a distributional hand. A notrump contract is unlikely to fare very well, so North should give preference to one of South's suits. North could pass 2♦ or give preference to partner's original suit, hearts. North knows the hearts will be as long as or longer than the diamonds."

Summary

"When you open the bidding at the one level in a suit and there is an overcall on your left followed by two passes, you should reopen the bidding with shortness in the opponent's suit when playing negative double*s*. Except with a very distributional hand, you should reopen with a double. This is a takeout double, but partner can now pass with length and strength in the opponent's suit to convert it into a penalty double.

"With length in the opponent's suit, opener should not reopen except with considerable extra strength or distribution."

➥ Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed.

Exercise Four — More about Negative Doubles

What does East call with each of the hands after these auctions?

	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	
1)	1♠	2♣	Double	Pass	♠ 9 6
	2♦	Pass	?		♥ A J 10 8 7 3
					♦ 9 5
					♣ Q 4 3
2)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ 9 4 3
	1♣	1♠	Double	Pass	♥ K J 8 3
	2♦	Pass	?		♦ 10 5
					♣ A J 6 5
3)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ Q 6 2
			1♥	3♣	♥ A Q 9 8 4
	Double	Pass	?		♦ A J 8 5
					♣ 5
4)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K Q 10 8 2
		Pass	1♠	2♦	♥ A J 7 4
	Pass	Pass	?		♦ 5
					♣ K 8 3
5)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ Q 3
		Pass	1♦	2♠	♥ 8 6
	Double	Pass	3♣	Pass	♦ K Q 8 6 3
	3♥	Pass	?		♣ A Q 9 7
6)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ A Q 7 3
			1NT	2♥	♥ 10 4
	Double	Pass	?		♦ K Q 9 4
					♣ K J 5
7)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K Q 8 6 3
			1♠	1NT	♥ A J 8 4
	Double	Pass	?		♦ 9 5
					♣ K 4
8)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ 4
			2♥	2♠	♥ K Q 10 8 7 6
	Double	Pass	?		♦ K 9 5
					♣ 8 7 5

Exercise Four *Answer* — More about Negative Doubles

1) 2♥. East made a negative double in order to compete, but wasn't strong enough to bid a new suit at the two level. Now East can finish describing this hand to partner (West).

2) 3♣. East's negative double showed support for both hearts and diamonds. Now that West has bid diamonds, rather than hearts, East needs to give preference to West's original suit.

3) Pass. Assuming the partnership has agreed to play negative doubles through the 2♠ level, West's double of the 3♣ overcall is for penalty. East has no reason to disturb the contract.

4) Double. With shortness in the opponent's suit, East should reopen with a double, even with a minimum-strength opening bid. It's quite possible West has length and strength in diamonds and wants to penalize the overcall. If that's the case, West will pass the reopening double. If not, West will bid something.

5) Pass. West's negative double presumedly showed support for both hearts and clubs. Now that East has picked clubs, West's correction to 3♥ shows a hand with a long heart suit that was too weak to bid 3♥ directly over the overcall. If that's the case, East shouldn't bid any more.

6) Pass. The standard agreement is that responder's double is for penalty after a 1NT opening bid. Negative doubles apply only after an opening bid of one of a suit.

7) Pass. The double of a notrump overcall is for penalty. It's not a negative double.

8) Pass. Negative doubles are only used after opening suit bids at the one level. West's double is for penalty. East has already described this hand with the weak two-bid.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 1*

Bid and Play — Deal 1: Support for the Unbid Suits

Guidelines for Teachers: This first deal contains a challenging suit combination. The basic principle involved for declarer is to "only lead a high card if you can afford to have it covered." The same combination also includes some scope for the defense. Unless the class is quite experienced in card play, it is recommended that you avoid this part of the discussion.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal that demonstrates the classic use of the negative double. Responder is happy to have that tool available on this hand. Let's see what happens."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North Vul: None	♠ A 9 3 ♥ Q 6 4 2 ♦ J 5 ♣ A Q 10 7	
♠ 7 4 ♥ 10 9 7 ♦ A Q 8 4 ♣ 6 5 4 2	N W E S	♠ K Q J 6 2 ♥ K 5 ♦ 10 7 2 ♣ K 9 3
	♠ 10 8 5 ♥ A J 8 3 ♦ K 9 6 3 ♣ J 8	

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	1♠	Double
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"North opens the bidding 1♣. With a good five-card suit, East overcalls 1♠. South has enough to compete over 1♠, but isn't strong enough to bid a new suit at the two level. A response of 1NT is unappealing with no strength in spades. South solves the dilemma by making a negative double.

"With two low cards in partner's suit, West can't raise partner's overcall, and 1NT is unattractive with only 6 points and no strength in clubs or hearts. West passes. Based on South's negative double, North now bids 2♥ to put the partnership in its eight-card fit and to show a minimum-strength hand at the same time. East has nothing more to say, and South doesn't have an invitational-strength hand, so the auction finishes in a contract of 2♥."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East is on lead and starts with the ♠K, top of a sequence."

Suggested Play

"Declarer, North, has two spade losers, a potential heart loser even if trumps divide 3–2, two diamond losers and one club loser. There are several possibilities for eliminating one or more of the losers.

"If West has the ♣K, North can hope to avoid a club loser by taking a successful finesse. North also can try to eliminate one of the diamond losers by leading toward dummy's ♦K, hoping East holds the ♦A. If both of these finesses lose — as they do on the actual lie of the cards — declarer will have to try to avoid losing a trump trick.

"The play in the heart suit is interesting, because declarer is missing the ♥K, the ♥10 and the ♥9. Declarer can hope that East holds the ♥K, but if declarer leads the ♥Q from dummy, East will *cover* with the ♥K — covering an honor with an honor. Declarer can win this trick with the ♥A and a second trick with the ♥J, but unless West started with exactly the doubleton ♥10 and ♥9, the defenders still will have a heart winner.

"Declarer's best play, after winning a trick with the ♠A, is to play a *low* heart and finesse dummy's ♥J. When this wins, declarer plays dummy's ♥A, hoping East started with a doubleton ♥K. On the actual deal, East's ♥K falls under the ♥A, and declarer can draw West's remaining trump with the ♥Q. Even though both the diamond and club finesses lose, North

still makes the contract — losing two spades, two diamonds and one club, but no hearts."

Suggested Defense

"It appears that the defenders can do little to defeat the contract if declarer handles the trump suit correctly. They will get two spade tricks, two diamond tricks and one club trick. If declarer leads the ♥Q from dummy, East should cover with the ♥K to promote a winner in West's hand.

"West actually has an opportunity to defeat the contract by giving declarer a losing option. If North correctly leads a low heart to dummy's ♥J, West should play the ♥9 (or ♥10). This is likely to create the illusion in declarer's mind that West started with a doubleton ♥10 and ♥9. Declarer might decide to come back to the North hand to lead the ♥Q, expecting that, after East covers with the king and the ace is played from dummy, the remaining high heart will appear from West's hand. Then declarer would be able to draw the remaining trump with dummy's ♥8 and avoid the loss of a heart trick in that manner.

"If West finds this clever play and declarer falls into the trap, this will become a memorable deal for the defenders."

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Looking for a Four-Card Major

Guidelines for Teachers: This second deal gives the defense some scope in trying to get an overruff. This gives declarer a challenging play problem. The deal looks a little easier than it is, and declarer can easily fall into communication problems. You might need to emphasize that the concept of "high card from the short side first" applies only when taking *sure* tricks or promoting winners. When the tricks aren't so sure, declarer may have to be very careful about entries.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal that demonstrates the use of the negative double to find the proper game contract."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	2♣
Double	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

"East opens the bidding, 1♦, and South overcalls 2♣. West has enough strength to put the partnership at the game level, but doesn't yet know where the partnership belongs. West can use a negative double to discover whether opener has a four-card major suit. When East shows the spade suit, West puts the partnership in the appropriate game contract."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South is on lead and could start with the ♣A, top of a broken sequence — or the ♣K, if the partnership leads the king from ace-king."

Suggested Play

"Declarer, East, starts with three diamond losers and three club losers. Two of the diamond losers can be discarded on the extra heart winners in dummy, and one of the club losers can be ruffed in the dummy.

"Declarer must be careful to avoid losing a trump trick. Although the trump suit appears to be solid, North's four-card trump holding can prove dangerous. Suppose South takes the ♣A, the ♣K and leads a third round of clubs. Since South overcalled in clubs, East must be careful to ruff this trick with a high trump, rather than a low trump. Otherwise, North will overruff.

"Having overcome this hurdle, declarer should now start drawing trumps by playing a spade to the ♠A and then a low spade back to dummy's remaining high trump. If the trumps divided 3–2, declarer could then draw the last trump and take the remaining winners to make the contract. When North turns up with four trumps, declarer must lead dummy's remaining low trump and take a finesse against North's ♠10. Declarer can then draw the last trump and take the winners.

"If declarer ruffs the third round of clubs with the ♠J and then plays the ♠K and a spade to the ♠Q, the contract is in trouble. Declarer can't immediately get back to dummy to take a spade finesse without blocking the heart suit. If declarer tries to take the heart winners before drawing the last trump, North will ruff the fourth round, and declarer will be left with two diamond losers. Declarer needs to play the spade suit carefully to avoid these complications."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders can make things difficult for declarer by starting with three rounds of clubs. North should encourage partner to continue leading clubs by making a high-low signal in the suit, the ♣10 followed by the ♣6. South should recognize that North has no clubs left after the first two rounds and lead another club, hoping that partner can overruff the dummy. If North held the ♠9 rather than the ♠2, this defense would be successful even if declarer ruffed with a high trump, since it would promote a trump trick in the North hand. Even on the actual lie of the cards, the third round of clubs creates a potential problem for declarer.

"It won't do South any good to switch to another suit after playing the two top clubs. Declarer can win in the East hand and ruff a club anyway. If South switches after the first round of clubs, the play gets more complicated, but declarer still can make the hand after discovering the bad trump break."

Bid and Play — Deal 3: Penalty Doubles and Negative Doubles

> **Guidelines for Teachers:** This third deal won't require much discussion about the play if the auction goes as intended. The defenders should be able to get a penalty of at least 800 points, even though perfect defense might net them 1400. More likely, North-South will simply get to 3NT, missing the opportunity to collect a larger score.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal that demonstrates how to use the penalty double when your partnership has agreed to play negative doubles. Let's see what happens."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
2♦	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"After South opens the bidding 1♥, West overcalls 2♦. North would like to double this for penalty, but a double at this point would be negative, for takeout. North has to pass. When East passes, the bidding comes back to

South. With shortness in diamonds, South should reopen with a double despite holding a minimum-strength hand. This allows for the possibility that North wants to penalize the opponent's contract, as in the actual layout. Otherwise, North can return to hearts or pick another contract. On this hand, North is happy to pass and convert the reopening double into a penalty double.

"East–West can't get out of trouble by playing S.O.S. redoubles (next lesson). Even if East redoubles, the partnership doesn't have a safe landing spot. East–West would probably wind up in worse trouble."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♥ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North should lead the singleton in South's suit, hoping to establish tricks in hearts, or to get ruffs or both."

Suggested Play

"This isn't a good deal for West, the declarer. West has one spade loser, two heart losers, four trump losers — due to the unfavorable split — and two club losers. There's not much declarer can do except hope to collect an extra trick or two.

"The defenders are likely to start by winning two high hearts and playing a third round for North to ruff. North may then lead the ♠A and another spade, which declarer can ruff. West should be aware from the auction that North has most of the missing trumps, so playing the ♦A and another diamond is unlikely to do much good. West should play a low diamond, letting North win the trick and putting North back on lead. If North leads another spade, declarer can ruff this and lead another low diamond. North wins but now has to lead a diamond or a club, which will help declarer. West may be able to take five or six tricks, not enough to make the contract."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders should have an easy time defeating the doubled contract of 2♦. It's mostly a question of whether they collect 500, 800 or 1100 points.

"After winning the first two tricks with the ♥A and the ♥K, South should lead the ♥9, a high heart, for partner to ruff. This is a suit preference signal for the higher-ranking of the two logical suits, spade and clubs. After ruffing this trick, North should switch to spades, rather than clubs. With complete confidence in partner, North could lead a low spade. Now South can win the trick and lead a diamond or a club through declarer's strength. In practice, North will probably lead the ♠A and another spade, which declarer will ruff. The defenders should get three more trump tricks and at least one club trick, for a penalty of 800 points. That's much more than the value of any game contract in their direction."

Bid and Play — Deal 4: Make the Best Bid Possible

> **Guidelines for Teachers:** On this fourth deal, it probably will be challenging enough for North-South to reach the correct contract. If they do, there is an opportunity for the defense to get an uppercut and defeat the contract. It isn't easy to do, however, so any discussion of this should be reserved for more experienced students who claim the opponents always get all of the cards.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal that demonstrates the classic use of the negative double. Responder is happy to have that tool available on this hand. Let's see what happens."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #1, Deal 4 — Dealer, South)

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♦	1♠	Double
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"With two four-card minors, North opens the higher-ranking, diamonds. East overcalls 1♠. That creates a challenge for South, who doesn't have enough to

bid a new suit at the two level. An immediate 2♥ would be forcing, and the partnership would likely get too high. Instead, South starts with a negative double, planning to bid hearts at the next opportunity.

"West might venture 1NT, but is more likely to pass opposite a one-level overcall. North, expecting partner to have support for both unbid suits, bids 2♣. Being vulnerable and not hearing any support from partner, East has done enough.

"South now bids 2♥. This shows a five-card or longer heart suit with too little strength to freely bid 2♥ on the previous round. North can pass, leaving the partnership in its best contract."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♥ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West is on lead and would start with the ♠Q, top of the doubleton in partner's suit."

Suggested Play

"South has three immediate spade losers and two top heart losers. With no losers in diamonds or clubs, South's only concern is avoiding a third trump loser. To minimize that possibility, South should plan to lead trumps from dummy at every opportunity after gaining the lead. As discussed below, even that might not be good enough."

Suggested Defense

"Excellent defense will defeat the 2♥ contract. When West leads the ♠Q, East can play an encouraging ♠10. West leads another spade, and East takes the ♠K and the ♠A. West will discard a low club or a low diamond.

"If East leads a fourth round of spades, declarer could discard a loser from one hand and ruff in the other — a *ruff and a sluff*. On this deal, however, East doesn't have anything to lose by leading another spade. Looking at dummy, East can see that the defenders are unlikely to get any tricks in diamonds or clubs, so the only hope is the trump suit. By leading another spade, East might be able to *promote* an extra trump winner for the defense.

"If East leads a fourth round of spades, the defense isn't over. Declarer is aware that West is out of spades and will ruff with the ♥10 (or the ♥J or the ♥Q) to prevent West from ruffing with the ♥9. If West *overruffs* with the ♥K, declarer will win the race. Whatever suit West returns, declarer can win in dummy and lead a trump. If East wins the ♥A and leads another spade, declarer can ruff high with the ♥J and draw the defender's remaining

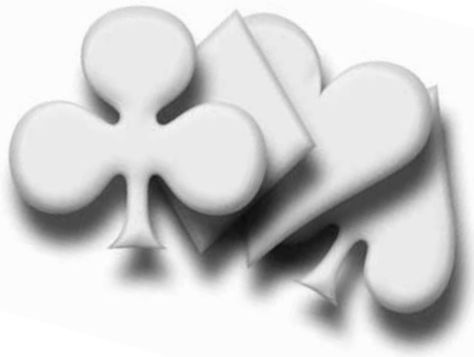
trump with the ♥Q.

"Instead, West must *discard* a club or a diamond when declarer ruffs with the ♥10, resisting the temptation to overruff with the ♥K. There's no harm in discarding, since the ♥K will always take a trick later. Declarer can cross to dummy and lead a heart, but East could win the ♥A and lead a fifth round of spades. Again, if declarer ruffs high with the ♥J, West must discard again and resist the temptation to overruff. Now West's ♥K and the ♥9 will take two tricks, since the only high heart declarer has left is the ♥Q.

"Even if East ducks the first heart led from dummy, declarer will have to play the ♥J to force out West's ♥K. Declarer wins West's return in dummy and leads a second round of hearts, which East wins with the ♥A. Again, East leads the last spade. With only the ♥Q left, declarer doesn't have a winning option. If declarer ruffs low, West overruffs with the ♥9. If declarer ruffs with the ♥Q, West's ♥9 is promoted into a trick."

LESSON 2

Other Doubles



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

Other Doubles

The discussion on the use of the double continues. The double is used for a wide variety of purposes and covers the whole spectrum from straight takeout doubles to pure penalty doubles. The fact that many doubles lie somewhere in between is typically a source of confusion for students. A bidding misunderstanding over the meaning of a double can have major consequences.

The purpose of this lesson is to put the students more at ease with the use of the double, while making them aware that there is a whole world of possibilities.

Bidding

This lesson doesn't cover all of the uses of the double. The focus is primarily on differentiating situations where the double is clearly meant as a takeout double and those where it is clearly meant for penalty. As a general guideline, most low-level doubles are treated as takeout — with a few clear-cut exceptions.

This lesson doesn't cover some of the more conventional uses of the double, such as responsive doubles or support doubles. Most of the students will be unfamiliar or uncomfortable with concepts such as balancing doubles, lead-directing doubles and the use of the redouble.

Here are the topics covered:

Doubles That Are Primarily for Takeout

This section reviews the classic takeout double, which should be familiar to the students. The modern style is that doubles of opening bids up to and including 4♦ are for takeout. Doubles of 4♠ or higher are for penalty. A double of 4♥ is on the borderline — partner can take it out or leave it in.

This section also looks at more extended uses of the takeout double — by opener, by responder, by the overcaller and in balancing situations. The students should understand that the double is clearly intended as takeout in all of these situations.

Cooperative, Competitive and Optional Doubles

No attempt is made to distinguish among the terms "cooperative," "competitive" and "optional." The concept that some doubles lie halfway between takeout and penalty is introduced. In these situations, the doubler shows additional strength for the actions taken so far and asks partner to make an "intelligent" decision on whether to bid higher or pass and defend.

An important principle is the defensive potential of card combinations that lie "under" or "over" an opponent. Examples of this principle are introduced, but the students may find it a challenging concept.

Doubles That Are Primarily for Penalty

This section covers the situations where a double is clearly meant for penalty. Some of these are straightforward, but many require the students to listen closely to the auction and make appropriate inferences. The concept of doubling an artificial (conventional) bid is introduced. This is discussed further in the following section.

Lead-Directing Double

There is some overlap with the idea of doubling an opponent's artificial (conventional) bid, but this section takes the idea further and presents the concept of a Lightner double, a topic which is unlikely to be familiar to the students. Again, the concept is to listen carefully to the auction and use the available information to interpret the meaning of partner's double.

The Redouble

Most students are unfamiliar with the standard use of the redouble after partner's opening bid is doubled for takeout. This section covers how both responder and opener should handle the situation. It also ties into the use of the Truscott 2NT.

The S.O.S. Redouble

The use of the redouble as an escape mechanism when the partnership is in trouble isn't very common. It is part of standard bidding, however, and the students should be aware of the concept, so that there isn't a misunderstanding when playing with an unfamiliar partner. Redoubled contracts are usually expensive for one side or the other.

Play & Defense

The sample deals for this lesson focus on the bidding concepts that have already been introduced, and they don't present any challenging play concepts. It is difficult to ensure that the auction will proceed exactly as planned. In competitive bidding situations, either side might declare the contract. In partscore situations, the play and defense can become quite complex. The deals are designed so that declarer should make the contract if the bidding goes as intended.

On the first deal, East–West should reach a partscore in diamonds. Declarer should fall into taking at least nine tricks and probably ten. If North–South compete to the three level or higher, East–West should have an easy time defeating the contract.

On the second deal, North–South need to balance to get a reasonable result. If East–West are left to play in 2♥, they should make that contract. North–South can take at least eight tricks and likely nine in a spade contract. Once North–South reach 2♠, they should get a plus score, whether by playing the contract or defending if East–West push any higher.

The play on the third deal is very straightforward. The success or defeat of the game contract hinges on the opening lead, which will be determined from the auction.

The final contract on the fourth deal is unclear. If North–South don't handle the redouble correctly, they will probably play in 3NT, and declarer should have no difficulty taking at least nine tricks. If East–West declare the contract, it should be relatively easy for the defenders to limit declarer to three or four tricks, extracting a large penalty if the auction goes as intended.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The previous lesson covered the negative double, a form of takeout double. The use of the double for something other than penalty has mushroomed in recent years. Unfortunately, that has led to a lot of confusion. There are many situations in which disagreements arise even among experts. This lesson will try to clarify some of the more common situations, although there still will be lots of room for discussion.

You might start the lesson like this:

> "The double is a versatile bid that can be put to many uses other than as a pure penalty double. The art of using the double for more than one purpose, however, is for both partners to clearly understand what the double means in each bidding situation.
>
> "When you double an opponent's contract at some point during the auction, partner needs to know whether the double is strictly for penalty, strictly for takeout or something in between. Experienced partnerships usually have a number of agreements to cover the majority of situations. Even so, there are often misunderstandings. This lesson will look at some common, and not so common, situations involving a double and the guidelines the partnership can use to avoid a mix-up."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Doubles That Are Primarily for Takeout

Introduction

"The takeout double is one of the game's oldest conventions. It predates the modern game, coming from the days of auction bridge. It is a conventional use of the double that is part of the fibre of today's competitive bidding and should be familiar to most students. Its use is commonly extended into a number of situations, and we'll look at some of these."

Instructions

"Sort the cards into suits. Give each player one suit and set up the following hand for North.

"In spades: two low cards.
"In hearts: the ace, the jack and two low cards.
"In diamonds: the ace, the jack and two low cards.
"In clubs: the king and two low cards."

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ A J x x
♣ K x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Double		

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up "dummy style" in front of North.

The Classic Takeout Double

"**If you were the dealer, what would you bid?** (1♦.) With a balanced hand too weak to open 1NT, you would start with the longer minor suit, 1♦.

"**Suppose, instead, West deals and opens the bidding 1♠. What would North call?** (Double.) With an opening bid, you would like to compete for the contract. The best way to do this is to make a takeout double. A direct takeout double shows:

- The values for at least an opening bid.
- Support for the unbid suits.

"**What is the value of this hand when making a takeout double?** (14 points.) When making a takeout double, you assume that you will be the dummy, since partner will be picking the suit and will become declarer. Under that assumption, value your hand using dummy points:

- 5 points for a void.
- 3 points for a singleton.
- 1 point for a doubleton.

"On that basis, this hand is worth 14 points: 13 HCPs plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton.

"**Suppose North doubles 1♠, East passes and South advances to 2♣. If West passes, what does North call?** (Pass.) Although you would have preferred partner to pick hearts or diamonds, you can't afford to bid again with a minimum-strength hand. You forced South to say something, and South could have no points at all.

"To emphasize this, leave the North hand as it is and construct a hand in front of South.

"In spades: the queen and two low cards.
"In hearts: two low cards.
"In diamonds: three low cards.
"In clubs: the queen and four low cards.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ A J x x
♣ K x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Double	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ Q x x
♥ x x
♦ x x x
♣ Q x x x x

"If these are the combined hands, the partnership is already more than high enough in 2♣, even though South has 4 HCPs and a five-card suit. South could have even less, so North must be very careful not to bid the same cards twice. North already promised an opening bid with the initial takeout double. It is up to South to take some stronger action with interest in reaching game.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: take away two low cards and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ A J x x
♣ K x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Double	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ Q x x
♥ Q x x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q x x

"**Suppose West opens the bidding 1♠. What would North call?** (Double.) North would make a takeout double.

"**If East passes, what call would South make?** (3♥.) First South has to decide which suit to bid. South has a choice of clubs or hearts. In such a situation, preference is usually given to the major suit, even if the minor suit is stronger. There are a couple of reasons:

- If the partnership can make a game, it is more likely to be in a major suit than in a minor suit, since the minor suit requires one more trick.
- The takeout doubler should have four-card support for an unbid major, but might have only three-card support — or worse — for an unbid minor.

"Having chosen the suit, South must then choose the level. Since South would have advanced to 2♥ with no points at all, South needs to jump to show some interest in game, 9 to 11 (12) points. With 12 (13) or more points, South should get the partnership to game, since North promises at least an opening bid. South should jump to 3♥, an invitational bid. It's similar to raising a 1♥ opening to 3♥ as a limit raise.

"**What should North's next call be if South responds 3♥?** (Pass.) With a minimum for the takeout double, North should decline the invitation by passing. 3♥ is high enough for the partnership.

"**Suppose that instead of opening 1♠, West opens 1♥. What would North call?** (Pass.) North doesn't have support for spades, the unbid major, so North shouldn't make a takeout double. It's likely to get the partnership into trouble. Without a good five-card suit to overcall, North should pass. When the opponents open the bidding, you don't have to enter the auction just because you have an opening bid. If your hand is unsuitable for a takeout double or an overcall, it's best to keep quiet and await developments. You may get a chance to come back into the auction later — as we'll discuss shortly.

"**Let's change the scenario again. Suppose West opens the bidding with a weak 2♠ bid rather than 1♠. What would North call?** (Pass/Double.) A double by North would still be a takeout double. The general agreement is that an immediate double of an opponent's opening bid in a suit is for takeout through 4♦. A double of an opening bid of 4♠ or higher is for penalty. A double of 4♥ is the borderline. Partner can take it out or leave it in. In other words, the doubler should have support for the unbid suits if partner bids, but enough high-card strength to defeat the contract if partner chooses to pass. These are guidelines. Some partnerships choose to play that a double of an opponent's opening bid can be for takeout through 4♠.

"Having said that, the requirements for making a takeout double increase as the level increases. North's strength is borderline for a takeout double. With only 14 points, North is committing the partnership to compete at the three level. If South has nothing, the partnership could get into a lot of trouble. Even when South has some values, a takeout double by North on a minimum hand may lead to a poor result.

"**Look at the situation from South's point of view. If North does make a takeout double of 2♠, what call should South make?** (4♥/3♥.) With 10 HCPs, South also has a borderline decision and might jump to 4♥. South will assume that North has more than a minimum takeout double to commit the partnership to the three level. Since South has more than could be expected, South may take the partnership to the game level. That would likely lead to a minus result on the combined hands.

"South might take a more conservative view, judging that the ♠Q is unlikely to be of much value, and the partnership might stop in 3♥. Even that contract is in some danger. As you can see, competition, especially at high levels, is always challenging. Both partners have judgment decisions to make, and it's easy to get too high or stop too low.

"The increase in strength requirements for a takeout double as the level increases isn't clear-cut. If the major suit situation were reversed — West opens 2♥ and North holds support for spades — a double on minimal values is a little safer. South would be able to respond 2♠, keeping the partnership at the two level. Even if South jumped to 3♠ with an invitational hand, the partnership would be one level lower. When judging whether to make a takeout double, you need to look carefully at each situation, taking a number of factors into account. Vulnerability, for example, also will affect the risk/reward factor in making a decision.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In clubs: add a low card.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the queen and add the king.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ A J x x
♦ A J x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♠	Double	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ Q x x
♥ K x x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q x x

"**West opens 2♠. What would North do?** (Double.) With a singleton spade, this is a much better hand for a takeout double. North's hand is now worth 16 points — 13 HCPs plus 3 dummy points for the singleton.

"**What call would South make?** (4♥.) With 11 HCPs and a doubleton, South should definitely take the partnership to the game level, when North is willing to make a takeout double of 2♠.

"As a general guideline, the partner with the appropriate shape should generally take the aggressive action in competitive situations. If North passed the opening 2♠ bid and East also passed, it would be difficult for South to bring the partnership into the auction. South has length in the opponent's suit and no support for diamonds. So, if North doesn't take any action, the partnership will miss a good game contract.

"**Suppose West opens the bidding 3♠. What would North call?** (Double.) The opening bid at the three level increases the risk again. However, North has the right shape and should probably take the aggressive position of making a takeout double. If North doesn't, the partnership will likely miss a game contract, since South is unlikely to take any action. Of course, the takeout double could work poorly if South holds a very weak hand, but that is what competition is all about.

"**Suppose West were to open 4♠. What should North call?** (Pass.) A double of 4♠ or higher is for penalty, not for takeout. North doesn't have enough to be sure of defeating 4♠ and should probably pass.

"Turn the South cards face down and focus on the North hand.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ A J x x
♦ A J x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	Pass
2♠	Double		

"**Suppose East is the dealer and opens 1♠. South passes and West raises to 2♠. What does North call?** (Double.) A double by North is for takeout. It is North's first opportunity to bid, and the opponents are still at the partscore level.

"**Suppose East opens 1♠ and West responds 1NT. What call does North make?** (Double.) A double is for takeout of spades, the only suit bid by the opponents. As will be discussed later, the double of an *opening* notrump bid is for penalty. However, the double of a 1NT response is for takeout in opener's suit.

"**If East opens 1♠ and West responds 2NT, what call does North make?** (Pass/Double.) A double would be for takeout in spades. Whether North should double with this hand depends on the meaning of the 2NT response. If it's a natural bid, showing a balanced hand of invitational strength or game-going strength, it would be unwise for North to come into the auction. Partner probably has nothing. If West's 2NT response is artificial, showing a fit for spades, a takeout double of spades is more reasonable. It would be quite risky with this hand, but there's more likelihood that North–South will find a suitable fit once East–West have announced a nine-card or longer spade fit."

If the class questions this last statement, you could have them lay out a full deal in which North–South have a five-four spade fit. They will discover that East–West will always have an eight-card fit in at least one of the other suits. There isn't enough room left for North–South to hold six cards in each of the other suits.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South passes and West responds 1♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) Double is still for takeout when it is made at your first opportunity and partner has not bid, even if the opponents have bid two suits. In this situation, the double is takeout for the *two* unbid suits, hearts and clubs.

"**Now let's suppose East opens the bidding 1♠, and both South and West pass. What call does North make?** (Double.) North's double in this situation is still for takeout, as it would be in the direct position — if West had opened 1♠. There's a slight difference in that North is in the passout position. North has the option of passing the hand out in 1♠ instead of competing. That's a little different from making a double in a 'live' auction — when the opponents will be able to keep the auction going if you pass."

The Balancing Double

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ J x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	Pass
Pass	Double		

"**Would this hand be suitable for a takeout double if West opens the bidding 1♠?** (No.) You can count 9 HCPs plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton spade, but that isn't enough for a direct takeout double. Partner would assume you have the values for an opening bid, and the partnership would likely get too high.

"**Now, suppose East opens the bidding 1♠ and this is followed by two passes. Is there any difference when you are in the passout seat?** (Yes.) In the passout position, it is common practice to make a takeout double with a hand that you would not make a takeout double on in the direct position. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- If you pass in the direct position, partner still has a chance to act, and you will likely get another opportunity to bid later in the auction. If you pass in the passout position, the opponents have automatically won the auction.
- There is an inference that partner holds some strength. East didn't open with a strong two-bid, and West doesn't have enough to respond. Your partnership is likely to hold at least half the total strength. Partner might even hold the values for an opening bid or more, but have a hand that is unsuitable for a direct overcall or takeout double.

"A double in this position is sometimes referred to as a balancing double. Despite your meager high-card strength, you are assuming that the overall strength is approximately balanced between the two partnerships. That being the case, you don't want to let the opponents choose the trump suit if you have a better option.

"Defending 1♠ with this hand is not particularly appealing. Your side can quite likely make a partscore if you can find a suitable trump fit. Making a takeout double gives you the best chance of finding an acceptable trump suit.

"Let's see what would happen if you do make a takeout double.

"Turn the South cards face up.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ J x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ Q x x
♥ K x x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q x x

"**If North doubles in the balancing position, what call will South make?** (3♥/2♥.) South has no way of knowing that North doesn't have a full takeout double. North could have the previous hand with a singleton spade and the ♦A. With 11 HCPs, South will probably make an invitational bid by jumping to 3♥. North, naturally, will reject the invitation.

"North–South might be a trick too high in 3♥, but it might make. Even down one won't be a horrible result, since East–West would likely make the 1♠ contract if left to play there. In fact, they would probably take at least eight tricks.

"The general guideline is that actions in the balancing position can be made with about a king — 3 points — fewer than in the direct position. Keeping this in mind, South might be a little more conservative opposite North's balancing double. South might judge to bid only 2♥. This works well on the actual hand, but could lead to a missed game if North held a stronger hand. The partnership has to use good judgment in such situations.

"In some auctions, partner can tell when the takeout double has been made with less than an opening bid.

"**Suppose North is the dealer and passes initially. East opens 1♦, South passes and West responds 1♠. What call might North make?** (Double.) As a passed hand, North still can make a takeout double. Such an action is risky since the opponents may hold most of the strength, but aggressive players might take a chance, especially when non vulnerable.

"**If North does double and East passes, what should South bid?** (2♥.) Since North passed originally, it's very unlikely that the partnership can make a game contract. So, South should proceed cautiously. Despite the 11 HCPs, South should bid only 2♥. South should appreciate North's effort to get the partnership into the auction and not undo the good work by getting the partnership too high.

"Let's consider a more complex situation.

"**Suppose West is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♠. What call should North make?** (Pass.) North doesn't have enough for an immediate takeout double.

"**North passes, East raises to 2♠ and South and West both pass. Now what does North call?** (Double.) This is similar to the earlier auction in which East opened 1♠ and South and West passed. North is in the balancing position. If North passes, the auction is over and East–West will play a partscore in their trump fit. North should stretch to take some action for a couple of reasons:

- Although North doesn't have much, there is a strong inference that South holds some values. East had only enough to raise to the two level, and West showed a minimum opening bid by passing the response. East–West have fewer than 25 combined points — perhaps as few as 18 or 19 points. North–South should have approximately half the overall strength.
- East–West have found a fit, so it's quite likely that North–South will have a fit in one of the other suits.

"In this situation, North should compete for the contract by making a balancing takeout double with a suitable hand.

"**What should South bid if North makes a balancing double?** (3♥.) Since North passed over the initial 1♠ opening, South knows that North doesn't have a standard takeout double and can proceed cautiously, bidding only 3♥.

"That should be a reasonable spot for North–South on the combined hands. If 3♥ doesn't make, East–West can probably make at least 2♠. In addition, by competing to 3♥, North–South might push the opponents to 3♠, a contract they might be able to defeat.

"One caution. The partnership needs to be very clear on the ground rules for a double in this situation. The opponents have stopped in a partscore *and* have found a fit. Most partnerships would treat North's double as takeout. There are similar-sounding auctions, however, where North's double would be for penalty, not for takeout. The important principle to keep in mind is that low level doubles are usually for takeout *if the opponents have found a fit*. If the opponents haven't found a fit, North's delayed double would be for penalty. We'll look at such situations a little later."

Responder's Takeout (Negative) Double

"Let's move on to another topic. Leave the North hand face up, but pick up the South cards and sort them back into suits.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A J x x
♦ J x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double		

"So far, we have only looked at takeout doubles when the opponents have opened the bidding. There are other possible uses of the takeout double.

"**Suppose partner, South, opens the bidding 1♦ and West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) This is the classic situation for a negative double. This is a form of takeout double for the unbid suits. So, responder can make a takeout double."

Opener's Takeout Double

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the king.
"In diamonds: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the queen.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ A K J x
♦ A J x x
♣ K Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♠	Pass
2♠	Double		

"**What would be North's opening bid?** (1♦.) With no five-card major, you would open in a minor suit. With four cards in both minors, common practice is to open 1♦.

"**If East overcalls 1♠, South passes, and West raises to 2♠, what does North call?** (Double.) Even though South didn't bid after the 1♠ overcall, you have enough strength that the contract still might belong to your side. You can show the extra strength by doubling. Since the opponents have found a fit, your double is for takeout, not penalty. South already knows about your diamonds, so you are showing support for the unbid suits, hearts and clubs. If partner doesn't have length in either of those suits, partner can return to your first–bid suit, diamonds. Your side should have a fit somewhere.

"Even if the opponents haven't found a fit, opener's double is for takeout if responder hasn't bid or doubled.

"**Suppose North opens 1♦, East passes, South passes and West bids 1♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) Despite South's pass, you still want to compete for the contract. Your double is for takeout, asking South to choose one of the unbid suits or to support your first-bid suit.

"**Similarly, what call would North make if North opened 1♦, East overcalled 1♠, and both South and West passed?** (Double.) You would reopen the bidding with a takeout double.

"**Does North need this much strength to make a reopening double if East overcalls 1♠ and South and West pass?** (No.) If the partnership uses negative doubles, you should always reopen with a double in this situation if you have shortness in the opponent's suit and some support for the other suits. As discussed in the previous lesson, even though your double is for takeout, it allows South to convert it to a penalty double by passing with length and strength in the opponent's suit.

"Responder's immediate double of the 1♠ overcall would be for takeout not for penalty — a negative double. If South wants to make a penalty double of the overcall, South must pass and wait for you to make a reopening double."

Ovecaller's Takeout Double

"You also can make a takeout double after you have intervened in the opponents' auction.

"**Suppose West opens the bidding 1♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) This would be a classic takeout double.

"**East raises to 2♠, South passes and West passes. What call does North make?** (Double.) With extra strength for the original double, you can double again. Since the opponents have found a fit, this is still a takeout double. You're just telling South you don't want to sell out to 2♠. Even though South didn't have enough to bid over the raise to 2♠, it's still possible the hand belongs to your side.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the ace and a low card.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and the jack.
"In clubs: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ A x x
♥ A K J x x
♦ x x
♣ K x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	1♥	2♦	Pass
Pass	Double		

"**Suppose West opens 1♦ and you overcall 1♥. East raises to 2♦. South and West both pass. What call does North make?** (Double.) You have a good hand for the overcall. South didn't have enough length or strength to support hearts, but it's still possible the contract belongs to your side. To compete, you can double. This is for takeout, since the opponents are at a low level and have found a fit.

"South should have a good picture of your hand from the auction. Your overcall showed at least a five-card heart suit. Your subsequent double shows some support for the unbid suits. South won't expect four-card support for the unbid suits, since you chose to overcall rather than double at your first opportunity. So, South will take this into account when deciding what call to make.

"South can bid spades or clubs with a five-card or longer suit or a reasonable four-card suit. With a poor holding in both spades and clubs, South can go back to your overcalled suit, hearts. Of course, South has other options, such as bidding notrump or converting your takeout double into a penalty double with length and strength in diamonds."

Summary

"The takeout double is a very versatile bid. It often is used when the opponents have opened the bidding in a suit and your partner has not made a bid. A double below the game level is for takeout, but also can be used through 4♠ by partnership agreement.

"The takeout double also can be used later in the auction, if the opponents have found a fit and stopped at a low level. In the balancing position, a takeout double can be made with about a king less than in the direct position.

"Responder may make a takeout (negative) double when an opponent overcalls partner's opening bid.

"A player may make a takeout double after initially intervening with a takeout double or an overcall."

Cooperative, Competitive, and Optional Doubles

Introduction

"When partner makes a takeout double, you should do as partner requests — take the double out by bidding something. If you pass, you are converting partner's double into a penalty double. To take such an action, you should have considerable length and strength in the opponents' suit, since partner hasn't promised much in the way of defensive tricks.

"You can count on one or two tricks from partner's high-card strength, but partner has specifically shown shortness in the opponents' suit. Unless you have length and strength in the opponents' trump suit, they might make their contract, even if your side has the majority of the strength. The ruffing power of the trump suit may negate your high cards.

"Some doubles, however, fall somewhere between takeout and penalty. As mentioned earlier, the double of an opponent's 4♥ opening bid is one such example. Partner can choose whether to pass for penalty or take the double out.

"Such a double is sometimes referred to as cooperative, competitive or optional. The distinction is beyond the scope of this lesson, but we'll look at some common examples."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the ace.
"In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A K J x x
♦ x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
Pass	1♥	1♠	Pass
2♠	Double		

Cooperative Doubles in Action

"**South is the dealer and opens 1♦. West passes. What does North respond?** (1♥.)

"**East overcalls 1♠. South passes and West raises to 2♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) You have 11 HCPs plus 1 length point for the five-card suit. Since South has opened the bidding, it looks as though the contract belongs to your side. However, the opponents' interference has made things awkward. If you pass, South will be unaware that you hold more than a minimum response, and the opponents may well buy the contract in 2♠. On the other hand, you have no clear-cut bid.

- South hasn't raised your hearts, so you may not have a fit in that suit.
- You don't want to bid notrump without strength in the opponents' suit.
- You don't have support for South's suit.
- To show your second suit, you'd have to bid at the three level. This is forcing and might get the partnership too high, if South doesn't have a fit for either of your suits.

"In such a situation, the most flexible call you can make is to double. Since the opponents are at a low level and have found a fit, the double isn't strictly for penalty. You can't be expected to hold much length and strength in the opponents' suit.

"On the other hand, the double shows more strength than you previously promised with the 1♥ response. Your side should have the majority of strength. You haven't yet found a fit, so the double does leave open the possibility of defending for penalty, if South doesn't have a better option.

"South has many options:

- South could belatedly show support for your suit. That would likely be three-card support with a minimum hand, since South didn't raise immediately.
- South could rebid diamonds with a six-card suit or a strong five-card suit. With a minimum opening bid, South might have chosen to pass rather than rebid the suit after East's interference.
- South could bid clubs with four or more cards in that suit, looking for a fit.
- South could bid notrump with some strength in the opponents' suit.
- South could pass and defend for penalty with some length and strength in the opponents' suit.

"The situation would be similar if West jumped to 3♠ or to 4♠ instead of raising to 2♠. A double by North wouldn't be a strict penalty double, since North is unlikely to hold much in spades when the opponents compete to the three or four level. On the other hand, North is showing enough strength that the partnership should be able to defeat the contract if South chooses to pass.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ A K J x
♦ x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
1♠	Double	2♠	Pass
Pass	Double		

"**South opens the bidding 1♦ and West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) This is the situation for a negative double, showing support for the unbid suits.

"**East raises to 2♠. South and West both pass. What call does North make?** (Double.) You have too much to sell out to the opponents' 2♠ contract, but the best contract for your side is unclear. Double again. Your second double carries the message that you have extra strength. Since your initial double was for take-out, South won't interpret the second double as a pure penalty double. Instead, it is cooperative. With a fit for one of your suits, South can take the double out. With no fit, South might choose to defend for penalty."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — More about Doubling

What call would East make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as indicated?

1)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ Q J 9 6
	1NT	2♠	?		♥ 10 5
					♦ A J 8 4
					♣ J 10 3
2)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ J 9 4
	2♦	2♠	?		♥ K Q 7 3
					♦ 8 5
					♣ K J 9 2
3)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ 9 5 3
	1♥	1♠	2♦	2♠	♥ 10 7
	Pass	Pass	?		♦ A K J 8 5
					♣ K 8 4
4)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ 7 3
		4♣	?		♥ K Q 7 4
					♦ A 8 5 2
					♣ A J 9
5)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ Q 8 5
				1♣	♥ K 8 3
	Pass	Pass	?		♦ A 8 5 2
					♣ K Q 10

Exercise One *Answer* — More about Doubling

1) Double (Penalty). Opposite West's 1NT opening bid, East should be able to extract a large penalty. After West opens 1NT, a double of an overcall is for penalty.

2) Pass. A double would be for penalty after West's weak two-bid is overcalled. Double would not be negative in this situation.

3) Double (Cooperative). Since the opponents have found a fit, East's double isn't primarily for penalty. It shows enough strength to compete further for the auction. Double is flexible, since there isn't another bid that would be more descriptive at this point.

4) Pass. A double would be for takeout, not penalty. With a low doubleton in spades, this is not the right shape for a takeout double. East hopes West will reopen with a double.

5) 1NT. In the balancing seat, when you reopen with 1NT it shows approximately 11–15 HCP and a balanced hand, with at least one stopper in the opponent's suit.

Deciding Whether to Bid or Defend

"If partner makes a cooperative double, you must choose whether to bid or defend.

"**What factors might affect your decision?** (Level/Vulnerability/Position.) One important factor is the level. At a low level, the opponents don't need to take much more than half the tricks in their choice of trump suit to be successful. Even if you can defeat their contract by one trick, the score may not compensate for the contract your side could make.

"The situation changes as the level increases. The higher the level, the fewer tricks you need to defeat their contract. Defending for penalty becomes more appealing when the opponents are at the four level or higher, than when they are in a low-level partscore.

"Another factor is the vulnerability. This affects the rewards for bidding or defending. When your side is vulnerable, there is more to gain by bidding if you can make a game or slam. When their side is vulnerable, there is more to gain by defending if you can defeat the contract. At equal vulnerability, you will have to exercise your judgment.

"Another important factor is position.

"Take all of the cards and sort them into suits. Take the heart suit and put the heart king, jack and nine in front of West.

WEST
♥ K J 9

"Suppose the opponents reach a heart contract and this is your holding in the trump suit.

"**What are your prospects on defense with this holding?** (Depends.) It isn't clear. Assuming partner doesn't have any help in the heart suit, you might take two tricks, one trick or no tricks. It all depends on how the opponents' high cards are situated.

"Let's first suppose that the opponent on your right, South, has shown length and strength in the suit — perhaps by opening the bidding 1♥. Give South the ace, the queen, the ten and two low hearts. Give North three low hearts and East the remaining hearts.

NORTH
♥ x x x

WEST
♥ K J 9

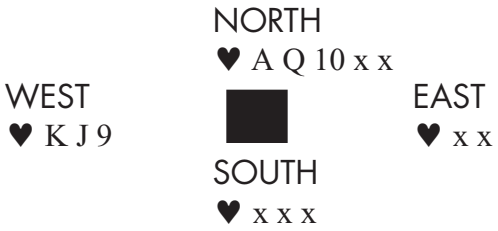


EAST
♥ x x

SOUTH
♥ A Q 10 x x

"If this is the layout, West will get two tricks in the heart suit. West is sitting *over* — behind or to the left — of the opponent with the length and strength in the heart suit.

"Exchange the North and South hearts.



"If this is the layout, West may not take any tricks in the heart suit, provided there are enough entries to the South hand for declarer to take two finesses. West is sitting *under* — before or to the right of — the opponent with the length and strength in hearts.

"Of course, sometimes the opponents' honor cards will be split between the two hands or it may be difficult to judge which opponent holds the high cards in the trump suit. The general idea, however, is that you would rather defend in the first situation — when your cards are favorably placed over the strength — than in the second situation — when your cards are unfavorably placed. Usually, you will have some indication from the auction."

Summary

"In some auctions, you can double to show more strength than promised by your previous bidding. If the opponents have found a fit, you can't be expected to hold too much length or strength in the opponents' suit, so the double is cooperative, rather than strictly for takeout or penalty.

"The higher the level, the more frequently the partnership can choose to defend rather than bid after a cooperative double. On close decisions, you may have to use your judgment as to whether the lie of the cards favors defending or bidding."

Doubles that are Primarily for Penalty

Introduction

"A double that isn't for takeout and isn't cooperative is meant for penalty. Partner isn't expected to take the double out, unless partner has exceptional distribution or strength.

"A low-level penalty double is dangerous, since the opponents will usually get a game bonus if the contract is made. So, a penalty double is usually made when the opponents are at the game level or higher. Nonetheless, there are some low-level doubles that are commonly recognized as being for penalty. It's important that both members of the partnership have the same understanding."

Instructions

"Construct a hand in front of North.
"In spades: a low card.
"In hearts: the queen, the jack, the ten and two low cards.
"In diamonds, the ace and three low cards.
"In clubs: the ace, the queen and a low card.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ A x x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	Double		

"**West is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♥. What call does North make?** (Pass.) An immediate double would be for takeout. Without spade support, that would not work well. Since you don't have a good suit to overcall, pass and await developments.

"**East raises to 2♥, South passes and West bids 4♥. What call does North make?** (Double.) A double at this point is clearly for penalty. If you wanted to make a takeout double, you would have doubled at your first opportunity. The opponents appear to have overreached themselves and, with the help of the unlucky trump break, you should be able to collect a substantial penalty.

"This penalty double is clear-cut and carries very little risk. Even though you are warning the opponents about the danger, it's unlikely that the warning will be of much help to declarer. Even if declarer does find some incredible way to make the contract, the cost is not too severe. The opponents' trick score would be doubled, and they would get a 50-point bonus.

"Let's consider a different scenario.

"**Suppose West opens 1♥ and North passes, hoping for good things later in the auction. East responds 1NT, South passes and West rebids**

2♥. What call does North make? (Pass/Double.) First, it's important to know what a double means at this point. This sounds similar to an earlier auction in which you made a balancing double for takeout. That isn't the case here. A double would definitely be for penalty. Although the opponents are probably about to stop in a low-level partscore, there are several reasons why this is a penalty double:

- You had an opportunity to make a takeout double on the first round of the auction and didn't.
- You aren't in the balancing position. If you pass, both East and South will have an opportunity to keep the auction going.
- The opponents have not found a fit. East didn't support West's heart suit. East could have no hearts at all.
- You are sitting over the heart bidder. Your cards should be well-placed for defense.

"Having clarified that a double would be for penalty in this situation, you must next decide whether to double. A double of a low-level contract can be quite dangerous:

- Declarer needs to take fewer tricks, and a slight slip by the defense or a lucky lie of the cards may allow declarer to make the contract.
- If the doubled partscore does make, there is a large price to pay. The doubled trick score may be enough to give the opponents a game bonus in addition to the 50-point bonus for making a doubled contract.
- The double will warn declarer that the cards lie unfavorably, and declarer may plan the play accordingly, perhaps saving a trick or two that might otherwise have been lost through a different line of play.
- Knowing that the current contract could be in trouble, the opponents might run to a better spot — perhaps even one that makes.

"The decision is close. Despite these warnings, aggressive players might make a penalty double with this hand, especially in a duplicate game. At rubber bridge scoring or in a team game, most players would keep quiet, being happy with a small plus score if the contract goes down.

"Of course, there are other factors to consider. If the opponents are vulnerable, doubling becomes more attractive since the rewards are greater if you defeat the contract. If declarer is an expert, you might want to be more cautious than if declarer is less experienced. Good declarers sometimes have a way of making your 'sure' defensive tricks disappear into thin air. Also, there is the danger that South might misunderstand the double. Although you 'know' it is for penalty, South may not be sure. On this deal, South has at least five or six spades since neither opponent bid the suit. You don't want to double and hear South bid spades.

"Let's try some other scenarios.

"**Suppose South opens 1NT and West overcalls 2♥. What call does North make?** (Double.) When the opponents intervene over a 1NT opening bid, a double is for penalty, unless the partnership has some special conventional agreement. It is not negative. The negative double only applies if partner opens in a suit at the one level. With this hand, you should make a penalty double of the 2♥ overcall. With the help of South's 15 to 17 points, you should be able to defeat the contract more than enough tricks to compensate for any game you can make.

"There is a possibility that the opponents might run to spades, but South might be able to double that suit for penalty. If not, you can get the partnership to some suitable contract, forewarned about the lie of the cards from the opponents' bidding.

"**Suppose South opens a weak 2♠ and West overcalls 3♥. What call does North make?** (Double.) Since South has already made a full descriptive bid with the weak two-bid, a double of the opponent's overcall is for penalty. It is not negative. The negative double only applies after an opening suit bid at the one level. The situation would be similar if partner opened 3♠ and West overcalled 4♥. Double would be for penalty.

"There's a slight danger of doubling when partner is known to hold a weak hand. The double, however, doesn't give declarer much information that isn't already available from the auction. One of the benefits of a preemptive opening bid is that the opponents occasionally misjudge the situation and bid on dubious values. You have to be prepared to penalize them when they do.

"**Suppose South opens 1♠ and West overcalls 1NT. What call does North make?** (Double.) Double of a 1NT overcall is for penalty, not for takeout. The negative double only applies after partner opens one of a suit and the next opponent overcalls in a suit, not in notrump. With South's opening bid and your strength in the other suits, West is very unlikely to make 1NT, and it doesn't look as though the opponents will have a better spot to run to.

"**Suppose South opens 1♠ and West overcalls 2♥. What call does North make?** (Pass.) Careful. This is a situation in which the negative double applies if that is your agreement. A double would be for takeout, not for penalty. You want to make a penalty double of 2♥, and the way to do that is by passing. If the opponents keep bidding, you will get to double at a higher level. If East passes, South is expected to reopen the bidding with a takeout double with shortness in the opponent's suit. That will surely be the case here, since you and West must hold most of the heart suit. You will then pass to convert South's takeout double into a penalty double.

"**Suppose South opens 1♠ and West jumps to 3♥. What call does North make?** (Double/Pass.) Careful. Whether you pass or double depends on your agreement about the level of negative doubles. If you play the negative

double through 2♠, you can double. Doubles of overcalls higher than 2♠ will be for penalty. If, however, you play the negative double through 3♠ or higher, you can't double for penalty. You would have to pass and wait for South to make a reopening double.

"**Now let's suppose North is the opening bidder. What call would North make?** (1♥.)

"**East passes and South makes a limit raise to 3♥. West intervenes with a 4♣ overcall. What call does North make?** (Double/4♥.) You have a choice. Knowing you have at least a nine-card fit, you could simply bid game in 4♥, which you would expect to make. Or, you could double West in 4♣. This would be a penalty double. You have already found a fit, so there is no reason to use a takeout double in this situation.

"Whether you double or bid on to game might depend on the vulnerability. If the opponents are vulnerable and you are not, for example, the penalty double is likely to result in a bigger score than bidding 4♥. If you are vulnerable and the opponents are not, you may not be able to defeat 4♣ enough tricks to compensate for your vulnerable game bonus. You'll have to use your judgment. The important thing to know is that you do have a penalty double available.

"**Suppose you open 1♥, East passes and South responds 1♠. West now overcalls 2♦. What call does North make?** (Pass.) Without a special conventional agreement, a double by you would be for penalty at this point."

Some partnerships use the support double in this situation, but that is beyond the scope of the lesson. If any of the students ask about this, you can refer them to the Appendix in the textbook.

"Since South hasn't promised much strength with the 1♠ response, a penalty double might be a bit premature. You don't have enough overall strength or a strong enough holding in diamonds to expect to defeat 2♦. It would be better to pass for now. If that's the end of the auction, defending 2♦ undoubled should be fine. If West goes down a trick or two, you should be pleased enough since your side would have made a partscore at best.

"You still may get to defend for penalty. Suppose you pass, East passes and South doubles. Partner's double is cooperative, showing extra strength. With this knowledge, you might now choose to pass and defend for penalty, since your other options aren't much better.

"Suppose East opens the bidding 1♥, South doubles and West bids 2♥. What call does North make? (Pass/3NT.) It looks like North would really like to make a penalty double in this case. However, more modern bidding treats a double in this scenario as takeout for the other suits and not penalty. This takeout double has an official name – the responsive double. It is pretty easy to remember because there is an opening bid and partner takes some action and the responder raises the opener's original bid. Here are some examples of responsive doubles.

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	YOU
1♣	Double	2♣	Double (responsive)
1♦	1♥	2♦	Double (responsive)

"Again, the scenario when responsive doubles apply is when there has been a 'bid – action – raise' to you. Notice the action by partner can be a takeout double or an overcall. Let's look at one more auction.

EAST	SOUTH	WEST	YOU
1♥	Double	2♥	Double

"This example gets a bit more tricky. As you know, South's double offers support for the unbid suits – particularly spades. If you had spades, wouldn't you just bid spades over West's 2♥ call? Hopefully, yes. Therefore, your double in this instance says, "I would like to compete but I don't have spades with you, please pick a minor."

"Back to the primary example, North can bid 3NT and have a good chance at making the contract. If North wants to make a penalty double, North must pass and hope that South reopens the bidding with a double that North can convert to penalty. This requires a lot of trust between partners. North's decision whether to pass or bid 3NT could also be affected by the vulnerability of both sides.

"Suppose East opens 1♥, South overcalls 1♠ and West bids 2♥. What call does North make? (Pass/Double/2NT.) Again, this is a situation where a double by North is a responsive double. North has a number of options from which to choose. Aggressive players would probably not pass. They can tell from the bidding that partner is void in hearts – the question is where to play. Competitive bidding offers many challenges, and it is best to discuss with your partner how your partnership would like to bid in this scenario.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the ace.
"In hearts: take away the jack.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ Q 10 x x
♦ A x x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Double		

"**Suppose West opens the bidding 1♠. What call does North make?** (Double/1NT.) You could make a takeout double, since you have an opening bid and support for the unbid suits. Or, you could overcall 1NT to show a balanced hand similar to an opening 1NT bid. Since the opponents are likely to lead spades if your side declares the contract, the takeout double might be preferable.

"**Suppose, instead, West opens 1NT. What call does North make?** (Pass/Double.) A double of an opening notrump bid is for penalty, not for takeout. That makes sense for several reasons:

- Unless you have a perfectly balanced hand, you won't have support for all of the unbid suits.
- If you do have a balanced hand, you probably don't want to suggest a suit contract.
- The 1NT opening makes it likely that the opponents have the balance of strength. It is risky to compete, unless you have a good suit or can find a suitable trump fit.

"A double of 1NT, therefore, shows a hand at least as strong as the opponent's hand. Unless partner has a very unbalanced hand, partner is expected to leave the double in for penalty.

"**Would it be a good idea for North to make a penalty double of 1NT?** (No.) As a general guideline, it isn't a good idea to make a penalty double of 1NT with scattered values and no clear-cut lead, even when you hold 16 or more points. Although your high cards are likely to be favorably placed since they are sitting *over* declarer's high cards, you won't have an easy time defending if the remaining points are equally split between the two sides. You have to lead *into* declarer's strength, perhaps giving away a trick. Each time you regain the lead, you will be faced with the same problem. The tricks are likely to go back and forth, and declarer will often come out with seven or more tricks, making the contract.

"Also, your penalty double might push the opponents to a better spot. They might even be able to play in a contract that they couldn't reach if you didn't double. For example, some partnerships play that their conventional bids are "off" after a double of 1NT. This means responder could bid 2♣ as a natural sign-off bid rather than the Stayman convention.

"If you want to make a penalty double of a 1NT opening bid, it's usually best to have a good suit to lead that will produce a lot of tricks.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add the king and the jack.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and a low card.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ K Q J 10 x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1NT	Double		

"**What call would North make if West opened the bidding 1NT?** (Double.) This is a much better hand for a penalty double, even though you still have only 16 HCPs. You have a clear-cut opening lead, and you can see that you should easily be able to defeat 1NT once you have driven out the ♥A to establish five winners in that suit.

"In addition, if the opponents run to some other contract, you will have the option of bidding your heart suit if you want to compete further."

Summary

"In summary, a double is for penalty when it isn't a takeout double or a cooperative double. This usually applies when:

- The opponents are at the game level or higher; or
- One partner has already made an accurate description of both the strength and distribution of the hand, for example, after partner has made an opening notrump bid, an opening weak two-bid, an opening three-bid, a takeout double or an overcall.
- The opponents open the bidding with a natural notrump bid."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Yet More Doubles

What call would West make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as indicated?

1) ♠ 7 2
♥ J 8 3
♦ Q 10 8 4 3
♣ J 7 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Double	Pass
?			

2) ♠ A J 8 3
♥ 10 7 2
♦ K 8 4 3
♣ 9 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Double	2♥
?			

3) ♠ J 7
♥ A 6 3
♦ J 6 2
♣ Q 9 7 6 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
?			

4) ♠ J 9 7 4
♥ Q 6
♦ 8 6 2
♣ J 10 7 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	3♥	Double	Pass
?			

5) ♠ K 8 5
♥ Q 9 6 3
♦ 10 4 2
♣ K 9 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Double	2♠
?			

Exercise Two *Answer* — Yet More Doubles

1) Pass. East's double is for penalty. West has more than East could expect, so West's hand should be useful on defense.

2) Pass. East's double of the opponent's conventional Stayman response to 1NT shows length and strength in clubs. It is a suggestion that West lead a club against the opponents' final contract if South is declarer.

3) 3♣. The opponents have found a fit, so East is making a balancing double. West takes it out into the best suit. East should have at least three-card support for clubs, but doesn't have the strength for an immediate takeout double.

4) 3♠. East's double is for takeout, not penalty. The opponents have found a fit, and the double shows a strong opening bid with support for the unbid suits. West hopes that East will have four-card support for spades. With only three-card support, East should have extra strength to compensate.

5) 3♥. East's double of the 1NT response is a takeout double of spades. With 8 high-card points and a fit for East's likely four-card heart suit, West enters the auction.

The Lead-Directing Double

Introduction

"The double is such a versatile bid that it can sometimes be used to help the partnership on defense. This is easiest to see with some examples."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the king, the queen and the jack.
"In clubs: add the jack and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ 10 x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass
2♣	Double		

"**You hold this hand and East, on your left, opens 1NT. South passes and West bids 2♣, the Stayman convention. What call does North make?** (Double.) West's 2♣ bid is totally artificial (conventional). The opponents obviously have no intention of playing with clubs as the trump suit, so it won't do much good to double the 2♣ bid for penalty. Nonetheless, the 2♣ response makes it awkward for you to show your club suit. You could overcall 3♣, but that may get the partnership too high, especially in light of the 1NT opening on your left.

"The standard agreement is that a double of an opponent's artificial-suit bid is *lead-directing*. It shows strength in that suit and asks partner to lead the suit if your side is defending. The double isn't for penalty, although you should have enough length in the suit to defeat the contract if the opponents do choose to play in that suit — unusual, but it's been known to happen.

"You have enough length and strength in clubs to suggest that suit as the best opening lead for your side. If you were to keep quiet and the opponents were to reach 3NT, South would be unlikely to lead a club since that is probably South's shortest suit. You wouldn't be too happy if South led a suit other than clubs, so you can let South know that by doubling the artificial bid.

"Although this type of double is for lead-directing purposes, it can sometimes help the partnership compete. South now knows that you have some length and strength in clubs. With a good fit for clubs, South might decide to enter the auction. With a poor fit, South will keep quiet and wait to make the opening lead.

"Of course, a lead-directing double gives information to the opponents as well as partner. You'll have to judge whether such an action has more to gain than to lose.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add the king and the queen.
"In clubs: take away the ace and the queen.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ K Q 10 x x
♦ x x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♥	Double		

"Suppose East is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♠. South passes, and West jumps to 3♠. This isn't a good time for you to enter the auction. You pass, and East bids 4NT, the Blackwood convention. Partner passes, and East responds 5♥, showing two aces.

"**What call does North make?**(Double.) Having found a spade fit, the opponents aren't going to play in hearts, so it doesn't make much sense to double for penalty. However, you would like South to lead a heart, especially if the opponents reach a slam. Any other lead is unlikely to do much good for your side. Time to make a lead-directing double.

"Your double could help the opponents judge whether or not to bid a slam. If you pass, however, the opponents might bid and make a slam, which could be defeated if South knew enough to lead a heart. You'll have to decide.

"With an experienced partner, you would almost guarantee a non-heart lead if you passed at this point. Since you didn't double the heart bid when you had a chance, partner might draw the inference that your strength is in clubs or diamonds. With nothing else to go on, partner would probably pick one of those suits.

"Let's try a different auction.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ K Q 10 x x
♦ x x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	Pass
2♥			

"**East opens 1NT, South passes and West responds 2♥. The opponents are using Jacoby transfer bids, so the 2♥ response actually shows five or more spades. What call does North make?** (Pass/Double.) Since the 2♥ response is artificial (conventional), you could make a lead-directing double at this point. You'll have to judge whether that is a wise thing to do. The opponents could easily have all the missing points and might even have an eight-card heart fit. Even with a six- or seven-card fit, they may choose to play in 2♥ doubled — perhaps after redoubling. A double could work out well, but is a risky venture. It's probably best to pass.

"Let's consider another scenario.
"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the jack.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ K Q J 10 x
♦ x x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
3NT	Double		

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♣, South passes and West responds 1♥. What call does North make?** (Pass.) A double would be for takeout, showing the two unbid suits, diamonds and spades. That isn't what you want to do. It isn't usually a good idea to try to play in the suit bid by the opponents. In fact, a bid of 2♥ at this point is likely to carry a completely different meaning, which will be discussed in a later lesson. So, the best choice is to pass for now.

"**East rebids 1NT, and West raises this to 3NT. If North passes, what is likely to happen?** (South will lead a diamond or a spade against 3NT.) The 3NT bid will end the auction, and South will be on lead. South is unlikely to lead one of the opponents' suits and, with nothing better to go on, will probably lead a spade or a diamond.

"After any lead except a heart, defeating 3NT will be difficult. Once the ♠A has been driven out, you won't have an entry even if you can establish some heart tricks.

"**What suit would North like South to lead?** (Hearts.) You'd really like South to lead a heart. If West has only a four-card heart suit, you can establish four heart winners while you still have the ♠A as an entry.

"Fortunately, that's exactly what a double asks for in this situation. An out-of-the-blue double in a situation like this isn't very practical as a takeout double. If the opponents have enough combined strength to freely bid to a game contract, a penalty double is also uncommon. The standard agreement, therefore, is that such a double calls for an unusual lead — with the first priority being dummy's first-bid suit if it hasn't been bid more than once.

"Of course, partner will have to be on the same wavelength if you use this type of lead-directing double. If partner doesn't lead a heart, the result could be quite unpleasant — perhaps two or three overtricks. It could be even worse if the opponents choose to redouble.

"An experienced partnership will use this form of lead-directing double in many other situations — some of which will severely test the nerves of both partners. For example, suppose the opponents' bidding is less informative.

"**East opens 1NT, and West raises to 3NT. What call does North make?** (Double/Pass.) There is no first-bid suit by dummy to ask for. If you pass, however, South is unlikely to lead a heart. A double at this point is still lead-directing, but carries the message, 'I can defeat the contract if you can find the right lead!' What it suggests is that South shouldn't make the normal lead of fourth from the longest and strongest.

"Whether or not South will find a heart lead remains to be seen, but the double probably gives you the best chance. South is more likely to choose a major suit than a minor suit, since the opponents haven't looked for a major-suit fit. Partner also will tend to pick a shorter suit without any high cards in it, since that suit is most likely to be where your length and strength lie.

"Such tactics aren't for the fainthearted. The general guideline for a lead-directing double of the opponents' 3NT contract is that it asks for one of the following leads in order of priority:

- The lead of the suit bid by the opening leader. In other words, if partner opened or overcalled a suit, you are asking for partner to lead that suit, even if you haven't shown support for it.
- The lead of the suit bid by the doubler. In other words, if you have bid a suit, you are asking partner to lead your suit, even though the opponents have bid notrump.
- The lead of dummy's first-bid suit, if it has not been rebid.
- An unusual lead, as in the last example.

"A lead-directing double is sometimes referred to as a Lightner double. This is an expansion of the original idea developed by Theodore Lightner in the early days of contract bridge. Lightner felt that if the opponents voluntarily bid to a slam contract, it was unlikely that they would be defeated by more than one trick, so there's little to be gained from a straight penalty double. It is better to use the double to conventionally ask for an unusual lead. That is usually a side suit bid by the opponents.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: take away all five cards.
"In diamonds: add four low cards.

NORTH
♠ A x x
♥ —
♦ x x x x x x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	6♠	Pass
Pass	Double		

"Suppose West opens the bidding 1♥, you pass and East responds 1♠. West jumps to 3♠, and East takes the partnership to 6♠, perhaps checking for aces along the way.

"South is on lead. With nothing to go on, South will likely lead a club or a diamond, one of the unbid suits. It's usually not a good idea to lead a suit that has been bid by the opponents. However, you would really like South to lead a heart. You'll then get a ruff and the ♠A to defeat the contract. If South doesn't lead a heart, declarer will probably be able to drive out your ♠A and draw trumps before taking any heart winners.

"**What call does North make?** (Double.) Your best chance is to make a Lightner double, asking for an unusual lead. Hopefully, South will be looking at a lot of hearts and can guess that you are void. There's no guarantee, but at least you have made South aware of the possibility.

"It would be a tougher decision if you didn't hold the ♠A. Experienced players would probably still double, hoping that their partner held a trick somewhere, and the contract would be defeated with the unusual ruff. There's no guarantee, however, and such tactics aren't for the conservative player."

Summary

"Without specific agreements to the contrary, a double of an opponent's artificial suit bid is lead-directing when the opponents are likely to buy the contract. An out-of-the blue double of the opponents' game or slam contract usually asks for an unusual lead — provided the doubler isn't on lead!"

➥ "Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Lead-directing Doubles

What opening lead would East make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as shown?

1)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♥‡
Double	2♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

♠ J 10 9 4
♥ 9 4
♦ Q J 8 7 5
♣ 8 3
‡*Jacoby transfer*

2)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	3NT
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ 6
♥ J 8 5 3
♦ Q J 8 3
♣ 10 9 6 2

3)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♥
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ J 10 9 5
♥ 6 4
♦ 10 8 7 5 2
♣ 9 3

4)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♥	1♠	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Double	Pass	Pass	Pass

♠ K J 8 5 3
♥ K 7
♦ Q J 10 8 3
♣ 5

5)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♥
Pass	5NT	Pass	6♣
Pass	6♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

♠ K 5
♥ 10 8 7
♦ 8 7 3 2
♣ 9 5 4 3

Exercise Three *Answer* — Lead-directing Doubles

1) ♥9. West's double of the conventional 2♥ transfer bid asks East to lead a heart.

2) ♠6. West has made a lead-directing double of the opponents' 3NT contract, asking for an unusual lead. It looks as though West has a long and strong spade suit.

3) A diamond. West's Lightner double asks for an unusual lead. In this situation, it usually calls for the lead of dummy's first bid suit. West is likely to be void in diamonds and hoping to get a ruff to go along with a trick in another suit.

4) ♠5. West's unusual double asks East to lead a spade, even though West didn't support spades. West figures to have a doubleton ace or queen in East's suit, not enough to support, but enough to help out.

5) A diamond. There is no clear-cut opening lead. The only clue is that West had opportunities to double the conventional 5♥ response and the conventional 6♣ response to Blackwood. West didn't double either of those bids, so perhaps West's strength is in diamonds.

The Redouble

Introduction

"The redouble is one of the most infrequently used bids. It was originally used after an opponent doubled you for penalty and you thought you could make your contract. Redoubling increased the ante. It is still used that way, but it can be used in other ways as well. The most common situation is after partner's opening suit bid at the one level has been doubled for takeout."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the jack.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away three low cards and add the king.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the queen.

NORTH
♠ A J x x
♥ x
♦ K x x x
♣ Q J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Double	Redouble		

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1♥ and West passes. What would North respond?** (1♠.) You would look for a fit by showing your spade suit. Unless a fit can be found or partner has a little extra strength, you may stop in a partscore rather than get to game.

"**Now suppose South's opening 1♥ bid is doubled for takeout by West. Has anything changed?** (No/Yes.) In one sense, nothing has changed, since the double hasn't taken up any room in the auction. North still could respond 1♠, and the partnership could continue to bid as normal. Some partnerships do exactly that — ignore the double completely.

"The takeout double, on the other hand, has given you some information and opened up new possibilities:

- Since South has an opening bid and West's double promises an opening bid, you now know where most of the high cards are located. There's not much left for East.
- West's double has told you something about the distribution. Typically, West will be short in hearts and have length in spades, diamonds and clubs. It's quite possible, therefore, that your side doesn't have a good fit in any suit.

- Instead of simply bidding to your side's best contract, you have the option of defending, now that West has brought the opponents into the auction. Since your side appears to have the majority of the strength, you might be able to double the opponents' contract and collect a sizeable penalty.
- The double has given you an additional call, the redouble.

"When partner's opening suit bid is doubled for takeout, the traditional meaning of the redouble is to send the message, 'I have 10 or more HCPs, so the deal belongs to our side.' Responder's hand will typically fall into one of the following categories:

- A hand with which responder is interested in doubling the opponents for penalty. Responder plans to make a penalty double at the next opportunity if appropriate. If not, the partnership may play in a notrump contract.
- A hand with 10 or more HCPs and a good suit. Responder plans to show the suit at the next opportunity.
- A hand with 10 or more HCPs and support for opener's suit. Responder plans to show support at the next opportunity.

"Successful use of the redouble requires cooperation from opener. Since responder can have a variety of hands, opener should give responder an opportunity to describe the type of hand. Opener should bid only with unusual distribution or to cooperate with partner by doubling the opponents for penalty.

"To see this more clearly, leave the North hand on the table and construct a hand in front of South.

"In spades: three low cards.
"In hearts: the ace, the king and three low cards.
"In diamonds: the queen and two low cards.
"In clubs: the ace and a low card.

NORTH
♠ A J x x
♥ x
♦ K x x x
♣ Q J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Double	Redouble	2♣	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A K x x x
♦ Q x x
♣ A x

"**What would be South's opening bid?** (1♥.)

"**West doubles. What does North call?** (Redouble.) With 11 HCPs, North starts with a redouble.

"**Since North has only a singleton heart, is there any danger that everyone might pass at this point?** (Not really.) It's possible, but unlikely. Even if East passes, West is unlikely to pass. Since West is short in hearts, West won't want to defend 1♥ redoubled, which would give North–South a game bonus if it makes. Also, North–South have the majority of the strength. If 1♥ redoubled is the final contract, South should be able to take at least seven tricks — and redoubled overtricks are worth a lot.

"**Suppose East bids 2♣ after North's redouble. What should South call?** (Pass.) Without a normal opening bid, South should simply pass to wait and see what type of hand North holds.

"**South passes and West passes. What does North call?** (Double.) With shortness in partner's suit, length in the opponents' suit and enough strength to take at least three or four tricks, North should double for penalty. Combined with South's opening bid, the partnership should be able to get a large penalty. Even a small penalty might be enough, since it isn't a sure thing that North–South can make a game contract.

"**East passes North's double. What does South call?** (Pass.) With a normal opening bid, South has no reason to override partner's decision to defend for penalty.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the ace and a low card.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: add the ace.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ x x
♦ A K x x x
♣ Q J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Double	Redouble	1♠	Pass
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦

"**South opens 1♥ and West doubles. What call does North make?** (Redouble.) With 11 HCPs, North starts with a redouble.

"**East bids 1♠. What does South call?** (Pass.) South doesn't quite have enough in spades to cooperate by doubling for penalty, so South passes and waits to hear what North has to say.

"**South and West pass. What call does North make?** (2♦.) North doesn't have enough length or strength in spades to double for penalty, so North bids the diamond suit. If the opponents had bid diamonds or clubs, North could double for penalty.

"**East passes North's 2♦ bid. What does South call?** (3♦.) Since North has shown 10 *or more* points, North's 2♦ bid is *forcing*. The situation is the same as if West had passed South's opening 1♥ bid and North had responded 2♦. A new suit by responder is forcing. With support for diamonds, South can raise to the three level and the auction will continue from there. With nothing extra for the redouble, North will probably pass, and the partnership will settle in their best contract, just as if West had not interfered.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ J x				1♥	♠ x x x
♥ x x x	Double	Redouble	1♠	Pass	♥ A K x x x
♦ A K x x	Pass	2♥			♦ Q x x
♣ Q J x x					♣ A x

"**South opens 1♥ and West doubles. What call does North make?** (Redouble.) With 11 HCPs, North starts with a redouble.

"**East bids 1♠, South passes and West passes. What call does North make?** (2♥.) North doesn't want to double 1♠ for penalty. Instead, North shows heart support. Although North has 11 HCPs, there's no need to jump to 3♥. The redouble already promised 10 or more points. North doesn't have much extra. After a redouble, a jump to 3♥ would be forcing."

When Responder Doesn't Redouble

"The use of the redouble after a takeout double is complex and it might seem easier to simply ignore the double and bid as if the opponent passed. The real benefit of using the redouble, however, is the effect it has when responder doesn't redouble!

"Since responder can redouble with 10 or more HCPs, if responder doesn't redouble, opener can assume responder has fewer than 10 points. A new suit by responder at the one level is still treated as forcing, but a new suit at the two level is not forcing. It merely shows a five-card or longer suit with fewer than 10 points."

If one of the students asks why a new suit at the one level is forcing, since a new suit at the two level is not forcing, you may have to skirt around the issue since it is a little complex. You can say that there are some types of hands with 10 or more points that are awkward to describe if you can't start with a natural bid at the one level. Leave it at that.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the ace.
"In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ x x
♦ K x x
♣ Q J x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Double	2♣		

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A K x x x
♦ Q x x
♣ A x

"**South opens 1♥ and West doubles. What call does North make?** (2♣.) North can afford to show the club suit by bidding 2♣. Since North could redouble and then bid clubs with 10 or more HCPs, the 2♣ bid shows a reasonable suit but fewer than 10 points. South can pass, and the partnership has reached its best spot.

"If the partnership doesn't use the redouble, North will have difficulty showing the club suit without getting the partnership too high.

"Change the North hand
"In hearts: add the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the king.
"In clubs: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ Q x x x
♦ x x
♣ J x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Double	3♥		

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A K x x x
♦ Q x x
♣ A x

"**South opens 1♥ and West doubles. What call does North make?** (3♥/2♥/Pass.) With only 4 HCPs, North could pass, but that makes it easy for East–West to find their best spot. North might raise to 2♥ to take some bidding room away from the opponents, but it won't be too difficult for East to enter the bidding with a little something.

"The modern style is to jump to 3♥ with the North hand, as a weak preemptive bid. North knows the partnership has at least a nine-card fit, so it will be difficult for the opponents to double 3♥ and get a large penalty, even if South holds a minimum opening bid. If South does have a minimum, opening bid, East–West can probably make a game contract — or at least a partscore. The more hearts North–South hold, the worse their prospects on defense. By jumping to 3♥, North takes a lot of bidding room away from the opponents, and they may misjudge the situation, bidding too much or too little.

"How does South know that North doesn't have a limit raise with 11 or 12 points? Because North could redouble with 10 or more HCPs. The redouble plays a part, even though it isn't used. It affects the meaning of North's responses. Most partnerships treat the jump raise of opener's suit as a weak bid after the takeout double."

2NT as a Limit Raise (Jordan)

This topic was discussed previously, but it is a good time to review this convention.

"Although responder can redouble with 10 or more HCPs and a four-card or longer fit with opener's suit, this can sometimes lead to an awkward situation.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away two low cards and add the queen.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ Q x x x
♦ A x x
♣ Q J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Double	2NT		

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A K x x x
♦ Q x x
♣ A x

"Suppose South opens the bidding 1♥, West doubles and North redoubles. North has 10 HCPs and plans to show heart support on the next round of bidding. Unfortunately, the opponents find their fit and get in the way.

"**After North's redouble, East jumps to 2♠. South passes and West raises to 3♠. What does North do now?** (Pass/4♥/Double.) North is in an awkward position. North doesn't have the right type of hand to double 3♠ for penalty. North doesn't have enough to put the partnership into a game contract of 4♥. Having shown 10 or more points, North could pass and leave the decision to South, but South doesn't know that North has such excellent support for hearts. North's redouble covers a wide range of hand types.

"Because of this danger, most partnerships conventionally use a jump to 2NT by responder to show a limit raise or better in opener's suit. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The 2NT response isn't needed to show a strong balanced hand. Responder always could start with a redouble and then double the opponents in their contract or bid notrump with a hand unsuitable for a penalty double.
- The partnership doesn't need to use 2NT as the Jacoby 2NT convention after a takeout double. The primary purpose of Jacoby 2NT is to explore slam possibilities. Slam is very unlikely if one of the opponents has enough strength to make a takeout double.
- The 2NT bid allows responder to describe the hand right away. If the opponents bid, opener will be in a good position to decide what to do.
- The 2NT bid takes away some bidding room from the opponents, making it difficult for them to find their best spot.

- The jump raise of opener's suit can be used as a preemptive bid — as discussed earlier.

"Let's see how this convention might be put to use on this hand.

"**South opens the bidding 1♥ and West doubles. What call does North make?** (2NT.) With the values for a limit raise in opener's suit, North uses the artificial (conventional) 2NT response.

"**If East passes, what does South call?** (3♥.) With a minimum opening bid, South puts the partnership in 3♥, essentially declining North's invitation. It's similar to the situation in which opener bids 1♥ and responder makes a limit raise to 3♥. With a minimum, opener would pass, and the partnership would rest in 3♥.

"**If South bids 3♥ and West passes, what does North call?** (Pass.) South has rejected the invitation, so North should settle for a partscore in hearts. The 2NT response shows a limit raise *or better*. With 25 or more combined points, North would take the partnership to 4♥, even though South bid only 3♥.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, West doubles, North bids 2NT and East bids 3♠. What does South call now?** (Pass.) South knows the partnership doesn't have enough for game if North has only a limit raise in hearts, so South can comfortably pass and choose to defend.

"**If East bids 3♠ and both South and West pass, what does North call?** (Pass.) North has described the hand with the 2NT response. South has rejected the invitation by passing 3♠, so North should accept this decision and pass as well."

Summary

"When partner's opening suit bid is doubled for takeout, the usual partnership agreements are:

- A redouble shows 10 or more points and interest in doubling the opponents for penalty. Responder usually won't have a fit with opener's suit.
- A new suit at the one level shows 6 or more points. This is forcing, but opener knows that responder is unlikely to have 10 or more points.
- A new suit at the two level shows a five-card or longer suit, but is non forcing, since responder could have redoubled and then bid the suit with a strong hand.
- A jump raise of opener's suit to the three level shows four-card or longer support but a weak hand.
- A jump to 2NT shows four-card or longer support for opener's suit and 10 or more points."

S.O.S. Redoubles

Introduction

"In addition to the standard situations in which the redouble is used, many partnerships put the redouble to conventional use when the partnership has been doubled for penalties in a low-level contract. The redouble sends the message, 'Partner, please rescue us from this doubled contract!' This is referred to as an S.O.S. redouble."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away all four cards.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and add four low cards.
"In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ —
♦ x x x x x x
♣ Q J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	2♥
Pass	Pass	Double	Pass
Pass	Redouble	Pass	3♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A K x x x
♦ Q x x
♣ A x

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♠. What call does South make?** (2♥/Pass.) South doesn't have a great hand for an overcall at the two level. Some players might pass, but most would probably overcall 2♥.

"**Suppose South does overcall 2♥ and West passes. What call does North make?** (Pass.) North doesn't like the 2♥ contract, but bidding would just get the partnership into worse trouble, since a new-suit bid would be forcing.

"**North passes and East doubles. South passes and so does West. What is going on?** East–West are playing negative doubles, and it sounds as though West has a penalty double of the 2♥ overcall. West passed initially and waited for East to reopen the bidding with a takeout double. When East did double, West converted it into a penalty double by passing.

"**What does North do now?** (Redouble/3♦/Pass.) North could pass and leave partner to play in the 2♥ doubled contract. This is unlikely to lead to a good result, however. The partnership may have a better contract. North could bid 3♦, hoping that will be a better spot, but that could make matters worse if South has a singleton or void in diamonds.

"Instead, North can redouble. There's not much to be gained by using the redouble in this situation to say, 'We're going to make the contract.' If 2♥ doubled is going to make, that should be a good enough score, so North could pass rather than redouble. Instead, the redouble can be used as a rescue call saying, 'Get us out of here!'

"**If North does make an S.O.S. redouble, what should South do?** (Bid 3♦.) Having been warned that 2♥ is a terrible contract, South should pick one of the unbid suits. With more cards in diamonds than clubs, South can bid 3♦.

"3♦ may not make, but it will be much less expensive than going down in 2♥ doubled. The opponents may not even double the 3♦ contract. They may decide it's better to bid a contract of their own."

Summary

"The S.O.S. redouble is rare, but it's important that the partnership be on the same wavelength. A misunderstanding about the meaning of a redouble can be quite expensive."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Four — All about Redoubles

What call does West make with each of the following hands, after the auction goes as indicated?

1) ♠ 6
♥ A Q 7 3
♦ K Q 9 8 4
♣ 10 6 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1♠	Double
?			

2) ♠ J 7 2
♥ 6 4
♦ K J 10 9 7 3
♣ Q 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	Double
?			

3) ♠ K J 8 3
♥ 8 7
♦ A K 9 6 2
♣ Q 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Double	Redbl	1♥
?			

4) ♠ 9
♥ K 8 3
♦ A Q J 8 4
♣ K 7 4 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Double	2♠	Pass
?			

5) ♠ J 9 8 7 3
♥ 9 7 2
♦ 2
♣ Q 10 8 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	Double
Pass	Pass	Redbl	Pass
?			

Exercise Four *Answer* — All about Redoubles

1) Redouble. With 11 high-card points but no fit for East's suit, West starts with a redouble. If the opponents bid hearts or diamonds, West can double for penalty. If they bid clubs, West shows the diamond suit, unless East doubles first.

2) 2♦. This would be forcing without the interference. Over the takeout double, showing the diamond suit doesn't promise much strength. With 10 or more high-card points, West could redouble first and then bid diamonds.

3) Pass. East's redouble says the hand belongs to East–West, but it covers several possibilities. West wants to see what East plans to do next. East might want to double the opponents in 1♥ for penalty. If not, West will be well-placed to decide what to do after hearing East's next bid.

4) Pass. After the takeout double, the standard partnership agreement is that a jump in a new suit is weak, not strong. East probably has a good six-card or longer spade suit with very little outside. West should not get the partnership any higher.

5) 1♠. East's redouble is for rescue, an S.O.S. redouble. East would pass to play with diamonds as trump. West bids the longest suit and hopes to get the partnership out of trouble. East should have at least three-card support for spades.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 2*

Bid and Play — Deal 1: Opener Makes A Takeout Double

Guidelines for Teachers: There are no challenging play concepts in this group of Bid and Play deals. If the bidding goes as intended, declarer should make the contract. On the first deal, East-West should reach a partscore in diamonds. Declarer should fall into taking at least nine tricks and probably ten. If North-South compete to the three level or higher in spades, East-West should have an easy time defeating the contract.

Introduction

"In competitive auctions, anything can happen. Let's play a deal that shows how opener can make a takeout double to get partner to bid and then let's see what happens."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. When you reach a final contract, play the hand."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #2, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North Vul: None	♠ Q J 6 2 ♥ Q 9 7 3 ♦ 10 4 ♣ K 7 5	
♠ 9 5 4 ♥ 8 5 ♦ J 9 7 5 2 ♣ J 9 8	N W E S	♠ 8 ♥ A K 10 4 2 ♦ K Q 8 ♣ A Q 6 3
	♠ A K 10 7 3 ♥ J 6 ♦ A 6 3 ♣ 10 4 2	

Suggested Bidding

Most tables will end with West as declarer in 3♦, but some may allow North-South to play a contract in spades. Let the tables play the deal in whatever contract they come to.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1♥	1♠
Pass	2♠	Double	Pass
3♦	Pass	Pass	Pass

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

"After North passes, East opens 1♥. South has a good five-card suit and overcalls 1♠. With only 2 high-card points and no support for partner's suit, West passes. North has enough to raise partner's overcall to the two level. This serves a dual purpose. If South has a strong overcall, the partnership can compete for the contract and may belong in game. If South has a light overcall, North's raise will make it more difficult for East–West to find their best spot.

"East has a strong hand — 18 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit. Even though West didn't bid after the 1♠ overcall, it's still possible that the hand belongs to East–West. East can compete with a double. Since the opponents have found a fit and are still at a low level, the double is for takeout, not penalty. East has already shown the five-card heart suit. The double shows support for the unbid suits, diamonds and clubs. It's a more flexible choice than bidding 3♣, which would keep diamonds out of the picture.

"South doesn't have enough to go to the three level after a single raise from partner. Now West must bid something. Since East has promised support for diamonds, West bids diamonds at the three level, even with a weak five-card suit.

"North might consider competing to the three level with a maximum raise and four-card support, but will probably pass. If North passes, East, who has already shown a strong hand with the opening bid and the subsequent double, passes also. Since West hasn't shown any strength, the partnership is probably high enough. The auction will end with West as declarer in a diamond partscore."

After the hand has been played, find out what contracts were played and discuss their merits.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North is on lead against 3♦ and starts with the ♠Q, top of touching honors in partner's suit."

Suggested Play

"In 3♦, West has three spade losers, one diamond loser and one club loser. Unless the defenders lead diamonds right away, West should be able to ruff at least one of the spade losers in dummy. If the defenders never switch to trumps, West might get to ruff two spade losers in the dummy. Declarer hopes not to lose a trick to the ♦10, but will likely be okay, since North's ♦10 is doubleton.

"Declarer also may be able to avoid a club loser by establishing an extra heart winner in dummy on which to discard a club. Since North has the ♣K, declarer won't have a club loser. With the lack of entries to the West hand, this may not be easy, but it is possible. Suppose the defenders take

a spade winner and then lead the ♦A and another diamond to prevent declarer from ruffing two spade losers in dummy. Declarer wins the second diamond in dummy, plays the ♥A and ♥K and ruffs a heart. Declarer ruffs a spade loser in dummy, then ruffs another heart. Declarer draws the defenders' remaining trump and then takes the club finesse. Either a club loser or a spade loser can be discarded on dummy's heart winner. Declarer loses only three tricks."

Suggested Defense

"Declarer is likely to take 10 tricks in a diamond contract. There isn't much the defenders can do to prevent this, unless North finds an initial diamond lead. That will prevent declarer from ruffing any spade losers. Declarer still can take nine tricks by establishing an extra winner in hearts on which to discard one of the losers.

"If North–South compete to 3♠, East–West should defeat that contract. East–West should get two heart tricks, one diamond trick and two club tricks."

Bid and Play — Deal 2: The Balancing Double

Guidelines for Teachers: In competitive bidding situations, either side may declare the contract. North–South need to balance to get a reasonable result. If East–West are left to play in 2♥, they should make that contract. North–South can take at least eight tricks and likely nine in a spade contract. Once North–South reach 2♠, they should get a plus score, whether by playing the contract or defending if East–West push any higher.

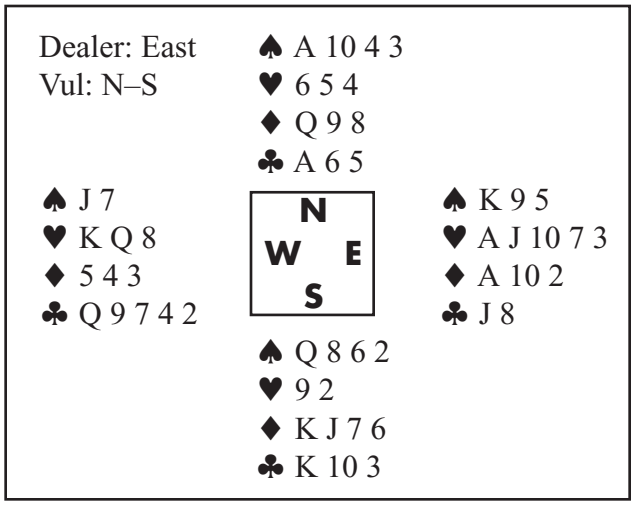
Introduction

"Let's play a deal that demonstrates how the balancing double can keep the auction going when the opponents appear to be stopping at a low level. Let's see what happens."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #2, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. North must bid 2♠ following a reopening or balancing double to demonstrate the point of the lesson.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Double
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"East opens the bidding 1♥. With only 9 HCPs, South doesn't have enough to compete directly with a takeout double. North would expect a better hand, and the partnership might get too high. After South passes, West raises to 2♥ with three-card support and 8 HCPs.

"With a balanced 10 points, North has no reason to enter the auction at this point. North passes and East, with a minimum-strength opening bid, also passes. The auction comes back to South, who is in the *balancing,* or *re-opening*, position. South has the option of passing and letting East–West buy the contract for 2♥, or making a call that will keep the auction going.

"Although South has only 9 HCPs, there is a strong inference that North–South have about half of the total strength on this deal. West has shown 6 to 10 points* with the raise to the two level, and East has shown a minimum-strength opening bid by passing the raise. North is marked with about 10 points. With support for all of the unbid suits, South can compete for the contract by making a takeout double. South's double is for takeout, since the opponents have found a fit and are at a low level.

"When South doubles and West passes, North can bid 2♠. Although North has 10 HCPs, there's no need to jump. South didn't make a takeout double on the first round of bidding, so North can conclude that partner doesn't have a full opening bid with support for the unbid suits. South is competing for a partscore. North's 2♠ bid will end the auction."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East leads and doesn't have an attractive choice of opening leads. A trump lead and the ♣J, hoping to get a ruff in that suit, are possiblilties. East will probably choose the ♥A, however, looking to take tricks in the suit that East–West have bid and raised."

Suggested Play

"Even if the missing spades divide 3–2, North has two potential spade losers. North also has three heart losers, one diamond loser and one club loser. North can hope to avoid losing more than one trump trick by leading toward the ♠Q, hoping East holds the ♠K. One of the heart losers could be ruffed in the dummy. Another possibility is to try to establish an extra diamond winner on which to discard the club loser. That will work if the missing diamonds are divided 3–3 or the ♦10 falls.

* Based on the partnership agreement that opener may have a 12-point hand.

"Whatever North chooses to do should work. The defenders' trumps are divided 3–2 with East holding the ♠K. Declarer can eventually ruff a heart loser in dummy. Declarer also will get to discard the club loser on South's fourth diamond, provided the defenders don't lead clubs early on. Only four tricks are lost, one spade, two hearts and one diamond."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders cannot prevent declarer from taking at least eight tricks. By leading clubs early on, the defenders may be able to establish a club winner, or East may be able to get a club ruff. If they take their heart tricks early, however, West won't be able to regain the lead. West needs to play a third round of clubs before declarer can drive out East's ♦A and establish an extra diamond winner.

"East–West might do better to compete to 3♥. That contract will likely be defeated one trick. The defenders can get one spade trick, two diamonds and two clubs, if they are careful. Down one in 3♥ would be less than the value of the opponents' 2♠ contract.

"The important point is for North–South to get a plus score, either by playing in 2♠ or by pushing East–West to 3♥. If North–South let East–West play in 2♥, East is likely to make that contract."

Bid and Play — Deal 3: The Lead-Directing Double

Guidelines for Teachers: The play on this deal is very straightforward. The success or defeat of the game contract hinges on the opening lead, which will be determined from the auction.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal that shows how a double can be used by the defending side to get a lead that has a good chance of defeating the contract. Let's see what happens."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #2, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. Make sure all tables understand the use of the double as lead-directing.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	Double	Pass
Pass	Pass		

"With a balanced hand and 13 HCPs, South opens the bidding 1♦. West passes and North responds 1♠, looking for a major-suit fit. East has a nice hand, but a double at this point would be for takeout, asking West to choose clubs or hearts as a trump suit. So, East passes. South rebids 1NT to show a minimum-strength balanced hand. With 13 HCPs, North raises to game in notrump.

"At this point, East should make a lead-directing double. East knows that with nothing better to go on, West is likely to lead one of the unbid suits. East would like West to lead a spade, dummy's first-bid suit. To alert West to make an unusual lead, East doubles. North–South have nothing further to say, so the double should end the auction."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West's natural lead is the ♥J, top of a sequence in one of the unbid suits. East's double, however, should steer West away from making the normal lead. Since neither East nor West has bid a suit during the auction, the standard interpretation of East's unusual double is a request to lead dummy's first-bid suit. West should lead a spade."

Suggested Play

"Declarer has seven sure tricks, three in hearts and four in clubs. If West doesn't lead a spade, South should plan to establish extra tricks in the diamond suit.

"Declarer will make the contract if West leads something other than a spade on opening lead. Suppose West leads a heart. Declarer wins and leads a diamond to drive out East's ♦A. East can take three top spade tricks, but dummy's ♠J will prevent the defenders from taking any more tricks.

"If West leads a spade, declarer has no chance to make the contract. Declarer can try a low spade from dummy, hoping West holds the ♠10, but that doesn't work."

Suggested Defense

"Everything depends on the opening lead. If West leads a spade, the defenders set the contract. If West leads anything else, declarer will take nine tricks.

"The opportunity to make a lead-directing double doesn't arise often, but when it does, the partnership should use it. East should recognize that a spade lead will defeat the contract. Either the ♠J will be in dummy and be trapped, or it will be in one of the other two hands and fall under the top three spade honors. Declarer is unlikely to hold four spades, since South didn't raise North's suit during the auction. The only way to get West to lead North's suit is to double and hope West recognizes the situation.

"Holding the ♦A, East can visualize exactly how the spade lead will result in the defeat of the contract. Doubling would be more difficult if East held only the four spade tricks and did not hold the ♦A. Nonetheless, East should probably double anyway, hoping West can come up with a trick somewhere after the spade lead. If not …"

Bid and Play — Deal 4: Doubling for Penalty

> **Guidelines for Teachers:** The final contract on this deal is unclear. If North-South don't handle the redouble correctly, they will probably play in 3NT, and declarer should have no difficulty taking at least nine tricks. If North-South allow East-West to win the contract, North-South should easily limit declarer to three or four tricks, extracting a large penalty if the auction goes as intended.

Introduction

"In a competitive auction, anyone can become declarer. Let's see what happens when a redouble puts the non-doubling side into a position of having no good place to play the hand."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. When you reach a final contract, play out the hand."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #2, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)

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

Suggested Bidding

At most tables, East will become declarer in a doubled contract. Let them play the hand out and then review how the bidding should have gone.

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the bidding, the play and the defense.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	Double	Redouble
Pass	Pass	2♣	Double
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"After West passes, North opens the bidding 1♠. With an opening bid and support for all of the unbid suits, East makes a takeout double.

"With 12 HCPs and no good fit with North's suit, South starts with a redouble. This announces that the partnership holds the balance of power. West has no preference for any of the unbid suits and passes. It would not be a good idea for West to bid 1NT with such a weak hand and the knowledge that partner is short in hearts.

"With a normal opening bid and a hand suitable for defending, North passes rather than bid a second suit. North waits to hear more about the nature of South's redouble. Getting no preference from partner, East bids 2♣, the cheapest available suit. With good defense against clubs, South makes a penalty double. West has nowhere to go and passes. North passes also, respecting partner's decision.

"East might try to find a better spot, but to no avail. South will double 2♥ for penalty. North will double 2♦ for penalty. East–West have no safe landing spot."

Suggested Opening Lead

"If South is on lead against 2♣ doubled, South should start with the ♣K. It's generally a good idea to lead trumps against a low-level contract that has been doubled for penalty. The trump lead prevents declarer from taking tricks by ruffing with low trump cards."

Suggested Play

"If East is declarer in a doubled partscore, taking more than the three aces will be difficult. Unless the defenders slip up, there's not much possibility for a fourth trick. East might get a trick with the ♥J, but that is still down four."

Suggested Defense

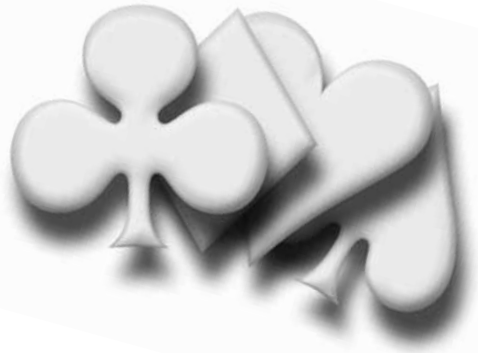
"North–South should have little difficulty collecting a penalty of at least 800 points (down three doubled and vulnerable). They might get 1100 or even 1400 with perfect defense.

"North–South can make 3NT, but that is not nearly as good a result as defeating the opponents three or more tricks in a vulnerable, doubled contract. To get themselves in a position to collect a substantial penalty after East intervenes, they need to understand the mechanics of the redouble. Otherwise, East–West might escape.

"East's takeout double is quite reasonable. East might be cautious once West passes initially, but most players would take a chance on a takeout double with the East cards. Unfortunately, it leads to a poor result on this deal."

LESSON 3

Overcalls



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

Overcalls

This is the first of two lessons covering overcalls. The main focus is on natural overcalls and responses, although the concept of two-suited overcalls is introduced at the end of the lesson and will be carried over into the next lesson.

Bidding

It is assumed that the students are familiar with the general concept of simple overcalls. The lesson looks at the modern trend toward a wide range of strength for a simple overcall with preemptive jump raises by the advancer — partner of the overcaller. The recommended ACBL style is that new-suit responses are not forcing. This results in extensive use of the cuebid by the advancer. The modern style of weak jump overcalls is also recommended.

Here are the topics covered:

Simple Overcalls in a Suit

Since the other competitive action, the takeout double, shows an opening bid or better, many players tend to treat the overcall in a similar fashion. The overcall actually covers a much wider range and depends on factors such as suit quality, level and vulnerability. In addition, not every hand with 13 or more points is suitable for an overcall.

Responding to an Overcall

Most players are used to responding to an overcall in a fashion similar to responding to an opening bid. The "standard" approach recommended here is to use weak preemptive jump raises and to treat a new suit as non forcing. This requires that the cuebid be used both with a fit and with a hand strong enough to make a forcing bid in a new suit.

Rebids by the Overcaller

This section covers the overcaller's rebid, primarily after the advancer has cuebid in response to the overcall.

Jump Overcalls in a Suit

The style recommended in this section is that of weak jump overcalls. Higher level preemptive jump overcalls are also discussed.

Overcalling a 1NT Opening — Landy

This section discusses the danger of overcalling with a moderate one-suited hand after an opponent's 1NT opening bid. It introduces the Landy convention, one of the most straightforward two-suited overcall conventions.

Handling the Opponents' Overcalls

The students should already be familiar with negative doubles from an earlier lesson. This section discusses using an immediate cuebid of the suit overcalled by responder to show a limit raise or better in opener's suit.

Play & Defense

Since the deals involve competitive actions, a variety of contracts are likely. After everyone has bid the deals, direct them to the appropriate contract. Review the bidding, let them play each deal then discuss the play and defense.

The deals in this lesson include interesting examples of discarding a loser on a loser. This is an important concept and should be worthwhile discussing with most classes.

The first deal has many possible variations in the play and the suggested contract can even be defeated with double-dummy defense. It should not be necessary, however, to go through all of the variations. Essentially, East–West will make 2♠ while North–South can make 4♦. The real emphasis is on the auction — to see the effect of a preemptive jump overcall. Each player will have decisions to make in the auction, so there is likely to be considerable diversity in the actual contracts that are reached. You can keep the discussion fairly simple by restricting it to the likely result in a contract of 2♠ — eight tricks.

The play of the second deal is worth discussing. If North–South get higher than 2♠, the defenders should defeat the contract. Even a contract of 2♠ is in danger unless declarer uses the loser on a loser concept. Walk through this with the class, since most of the students should be able to understand the basic idea.

The third deal also involves some complex variations since the deal will be declared from the short trump side if the auction goes as planned. In discussing the play, the emphasis should be on the importance of establishing side suits while retaining control. Most students will tend to go for ruffing a loser early instead of considering the long range plan.

The fourth deal involves another example of a loser on a loser play if the bidding and defense go as planned. This should be an effective continuation of the discussion generated from the second deal.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This is the third of four lessons focusing on competitive auctions. While overcalls may seem more straightforward than takeout doubles, they are far more common and come in a wide variety of forms — the simple overcall, the jump overcall and the two-suited overcall, for example. The modern style is to compete very aggressively, especially at matchpoint scoring. While the students should be familiar with overcalls, they are likely to be less familiar with effectively responding to overcalls.

You might start the lesson like this:

> "In the previous two lessons, we started discussing competitive situations, with the emphasis on how the double can be used by both sides. In these next two lessons, we'll be looking at overcalls.
>
> "When an opponent opens the bidding, your side is put at a disadvantage. The opponent's bid takes away some of the bidding room, which can make it more challenging for you to describe your hand. For example, you may no longer be able to start the auction at the one level. In addition, the opponents have already exchanged some information, making it more dangerous for you to enter the auction. Responder knows something about opener's hand and may be able to double an overcall for penalty. As the overcaller, you don't yet know anything about your partner's hand.
>
> "Nonetheless, the overcall can be an effective tool, both for getting your side into the auction and for keeping the opponents from their best contract. It comes in a variety of guises. Let's start with the most straightforward."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Simple Overcalls in a Suit

Introduction

"When the opponents open the bidding, the most natural way to enter the auction is to make an overcall in a suit at the cheapest available level — a simple overcall. The overcall has several advantages:

- It tells partner something about your hand.
- It gives your side a chance to buy the contract.
- It may help push the opponents into the wrong contract.
- It may get your side off to the best lead on defense.

"For an overcall to work effectively, partner must know what to expect. Let's look at some of the parameters for a simple overcall."

Instructions

Ideally, you should have the cards on each table sorted into suits before the class starts.

"The cards are sorted into suits. Give each player one suit and set up the following hand for South.

"In spades: the king and a low card.
"In hearts: the ace, the queen, the jack, the ten and a low card.
"In diamonds: the king and three low cards.
"In clubs: two low cards."

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of South.

"**If South is the dealer, what would South open?** (1♥.) With 13 HCPs plus 1 length point for the five-card suit, you have a sound opening bid of 1♥.

"**Suppose, instead, East deals and opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥.) East's opening bid doesn't prevent you from making the same bid you would have made if East had passed. Making an overcall on this hand is the appropriate competitive tool, since it provides all of the advantages you might expect. You describe your hand, in a manner similar to opening the bidding 1♥. Your side may be able to buy the contract. If you can't buy the contract, your bid may interfere with the opponents' auction or might get the partnership off to the best opening lead. You would certainly like North to lead a heart if, for example, West became declarer in a notrump contract.

"**Would it make any difference if South were vulnerable?** (No.) With a sound hand for an overcall — a good suit and approximately the values for an opening bid — vulnerability doesn't really enter the picture. It's similar to opening the bidding. Vulnerability isn't a factor unless the decision is borderline.

"**What if East's opening bid is 1♠? What call would South make? (2♥.)** Most players would still overcall with this hand. However, you can see one difference between an opening bid and an overcall. The opponent's opening bid may force you to make your overcall at the two level — or higher if the opponent opens at the two level or higher. With a good suit and a good hand, that isn't much of a problem, but it does increase the risk. Vulnerability, for example, will become a bigger factor when faced with a borderline decision. A simple overcall at the two level promises an opening hand.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace.
"In clubs: add the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Pass

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ Q J 10 x
♦ K x x x
♣ A x x

"**If South is the dealer, what would South open?** (1♦.) With 13 HCPs but no five-card major, you would open the longer minor, 1♦.

"**What if East is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♣? What does South call?** (Pass.) When the opponents open the bidding in a suit, there are two competitive actions you can take: a takeout double or an overcall. If your hand isn't suitable for one of these actions, the only option left is to pass.

"**Is this hand suitable for a takeout double?** (No.) You don't have support for one of the unbid suits, spades. You should have at least three-card support for an unbid major and, preferably, four-card support. You can sometimes get away without support for an unbid suit, but only if you have enough extra strength to compensate. You have only 13 HCPs, so you aren't strong enough to offset the lack of spade support.

"**Is this hand suitable for an overcall?** (No.) You generally need a good five-card suit or longer to make an overcall. This is to counteract the danger of coming into the auction once the opponents have opened the bidding. With only a four-card suit, the risk of being doubled for penalty increases. Neither the heart suit nor the diamond suit is suitable for an overcall. Besides, you don't particularly want to suggest an opening lead to partner. With something in all four suits, you should be happy to let partner choose what to lead."

If any of the students suggest overcalling 1NT, you can point out that a direct 1NT overcall shows the same values as an opening bid of 1NT, perhaps a little stronger — 15 to 18 HCP. Partner will make a call based on that assumption.

"Passing doesn't end the auction. You may get a chance to bid later. If you do act later, partner will have the inference that your hand was unsuitable for an immediate overcall or takeout double. When the opponents open the bidding, you don't have to bid just because you hold 13 or more points.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x

"**If you, South, were the dealer, would you open the bidding?** (No.) There are only 9 HCPs plus 1 for the five-card suit. Partner would expect you to hold more if you opened the bidding in first or second position. As dealer, you would pass with this hand.

"**Suppose East deals and opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥/Pass.) An overcall doesn't promise the values for an opening bid. Overcalling is a matter of judgment. You have to weigh the risk of getting your side into trouble against the potential gain from competing for the contract.

"You only have a moderate heart suit, but it would still be reasonable to suggest it as a trump suit, and you would like partner to lead a heart with no better choice. Overcalling might also prevent the opponents from having a smooth auction.

"Most players would overcall 1♥ with this hand if not vulnerable. If your side is vulnerable, the risk of overcalling is greater, but the majority of players would still elect to overcall with this hand. With a low heart in place of the ♥10, you might choose to pass rather than overcall. That's how close the decision is.

"**Suppose East opens 1♠ instead of 1♣. Would South overcall?** (No.) Now you would have to introduce your suit at the two level. That is a lot more dangerous and increases the chance of being doubled. Most players would not overcall with this hand, even when non vulnerable. If vulnerable, most players wouldn't even consider overcalling.

"As a general guideline:

- You need a good suit and about 8 or more HCPs to make a simple overcall at the one level.
- You need a very good suit and at least the values for an opening bid to make a simple overcall at the two level.
- With a borderline decision, check the vulnerability. You can afford to be more aggressive when non vulnerable, especially if the opponents are vulnerable.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away two low cards and add the ace.
"In clubs: add a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ A Q J 10
♦ K x x x
♣ x x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♦. What call does South make?** (1♥.) An overcall generally shows a five-card suit or longer. Here, however, the hearts are strong enough to be treated as a five-card suit. You would certainly prefer a heart lead to something else. You are only at the one level. It's unlikely anything too bad will happen. Partner will expect you to have five or more hearts, but you can always say you had one of your diamonds mixed in with your hearts!

"Your only other option is to pass. You don't want to make a takeout double of 1♦ without support for spades and with weak support for clubs.

"**Suppose East opens 1♠ instead of 1♦. Now what call does South make?** (Double.) Now a takeout double would be your best option. You don't want to overcall a four-card suit at the two level. You have four-card support for hearts and diamonds, and you also have some support for clubs if partner chooses that suit.

"Change the South hand.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the king.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1NT

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ A Q J 10
♦ K x x x
♣ K x x

"**What call would South make if East opened 1♦?** (1NT.) An overcall of 1NT shows at least the same strength as an opening 1NT bid. Since the opponents have opened the bidding, it is preferable if the hand is a little stronger — to reduce the risk of being doubled for penalty. Most partnerships use a range of a very good 15 HCP — with lots of 10's and 9's — to 18 HCP. You should also have some strength in the opponent's suit, since that suit is the one most likely to be led. You could overcall 1NT if East opened 1♣, 1♦ or 1♥.

"**What would you call if East opened 1♠?** (Double/1NT.) You have a choice of actions. You could still overcall 1NT, which would describe your shape and strength. You could make a takeout double, putting the emphasis on your support for the unbid suits. You might be persuaded to make a takeout double due to the fact that East probably has at least a five-card spade suit, which West is likely to lead.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add the king.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Double

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ A K Q J 10
♦ K x x x
♣ K x

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make?** (Double.) You could overcall 1♥, but as you saw earlier, a one-level overcall could be made on as few as 8 points. If you have too wide a range for your simple overcalls, partner will never know whether to bid or pass.

"Some partnerships resolve this issue by using a jump overcall — jumping to 2♥ over 1♣ — to show a hand too strong for a simple overcall. As will be discussed later, that isn't the most popular style today. Even if the partnership does play strong jump overcalls, a jump to 2♥ would tend to show a six-card or longer suit.

"The common solution to this challenge is to start with a takeout double. A takeout double is supposed to show support for all of the unbid suits. You can make an exception, however, when you are strong enough to bid again, if partner bids a suit for which you don't have support.

"Start with a double of 1♣. If partner bids 1♠, you can now bid 2♥. Doubling and then bidding your suit shows a hand too strong for a simple overcall — 18 or more total points. Partner still could pass with a very weak hand, but should feel confident about bidding with some help.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the king.
"In clubs: add the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Double

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ A Q J 10
♦ K x x x
♣ A K x

"**What would South call if East opened 1♣?** (Double.) With 20 HCPs, you are too strong to overcall 1NT. While some partnerships might use a jump overcall to 2NT to show this type of hand, that isn't the common practice. Instead, start with a takeout double, even though you don't have support for spades.

"**Suppose North responds 1♠ and the auction comes back to South. Now what call does South make?** (1NT.) By bidding 1NT at this point, you are showing a balanced hand too strong to overcall 1NT — 19 to 21 points. You don't have to bid any more to send this message. Don't forget, the more you have, the less partner is likely to have — especially when the opponents have opened the bidding.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the king and add a low card.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace and the king and add two low cards.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x x

"**What would South call if East opened 1♣?** (1♥.) Now we are back to a typical simple overcall at the one level."

Summary

"Here are the simple rules for overcalls:

- A simple overcall tends to show a good five-card suit or longer and 8 to 16 HCP (10 to 17 total points).
- With a borderline hand, keep an eye on the vulnerability.
- At the two level or higher, the overcall generally shows at least the equivalent of an opening bid.
- With 15 to 18 HCP, a balanced hand, and some strength in the opponent's suit, start with an overcall of 1NT.
- With 18 or more total points — a hand too strong for a simple overcall — start with a takeout double. You can describe your hand on your rebid by bidding a new suit or notrump."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — Simple Overcall in a Suit

East–West are non-vulnerable. What would East call with the following hands in the given auction? Would East make the same call if East–West were vulnerable?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♦	?	

1) ♠ A K J 9 2
♥ 7 3
♦ 10 8 4
♣ K 8 2

2) ♠ Q 8
♥ A 8 2
♦ Q 7 3
♣ Q J 7 6 3

3) ♠ 7 2
♥ K J 9 8 2
♦ K 10 5
♣ J 7 3

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

5) ♠ A K 3
♥ A K Q 9 2
♦ 7 4
♣ K 8 4

6) ♠ K Q 9 7 3
♥ 5
♦ 3
♣ A Q J 9 7 5

Exercise One *Answer* — Simple Overcall in a Suit

1) Non-vul: 1♠. East has a good five-card suit and enough strength to make a one-level overcall.

   Vul: 1♠. Although East might not open the bidding with this hand, it's worth a one-level overcall even if East–West are vulnerable.

2) Non-vul: Pass. The club suit isn't good enough to risk a two-level overcall.

   Vul: Pass. If the club suit is not good enough to overcall non-vulnerable, overcalling would be even riskier when vulnerable.

3) Non-vul: 1♥ or Pass. This is the minimum for a one-level overcall. The suit is reasonable and so East might risk entering the auction. If West would expect a better hand, it may be safer to pass.

   Vul: Pass. The stakes increase when vulnerable. To overcall with this hand, even at the one level, would be extremely risky.

4) Non-vul: 1♥. This four-card suit feels like a five-card suit, so it's reasonable to overcall with this hand. East wants West to lead a heart if they defend.

   Vul: 1♥. With a good suit, the risk of being doubled decreases. The ♦K figures to be favorably placed to take a trick, so it's worth risking an overcall on this hand when vulnerable.

5) Non-vul: Double. This hand is too strong for a one-level overcall. East starts with a takeout double, planning to bid hearts next. This series of calls shows a hand too strong for a simple overcall.

   Vul: Double. The vulnerability isn't a factor with a hand like this.

6) Non-vul: 2♣. East starts with the longer suit and plans to bid, and perhaps rebid, the spades at the next opportunity. West will know that the clubs are longer than the spades and can select the best trump suit accordingly.

   Vul: 2♣. The vulnerability has no effect on the choice of calls with this hand.

Advancing After a Simple Overcall

Introduction

"To distinguish the partner of the overcaller from the partner of the opening bidder, the overcaller's partner will be called the advancer. An opening bid typically covers a range of about 13 to 21 points. A simple overcall covers a range of about 8 to 17 total points. As a result, you can't treat an overcall in exactly the same fashion as an opening bid. The advancer needs slightly different methods than the responder."

Instructions

"Leave the South hand as it is and construct a hand in front of the North player.
"In spades: the king, the queen and two low cards.
"In hearts: three low cards.
"In diamonds: the queen and a low card.
"In clubs: the jack and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ K Q x x
♥ x x x
♦ Q x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x x

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♣. What call would South make?** (1♥.) With a good five-card suit, South makes a simple overcall at the one level.

"**South overcalls 1♥ and West passes. What call does North, the advancer, make?** (2♥.) With three-card support for the overcalled suit and 8 HCPs, North raises.

"**Since South only made a simple overcall and game is unlikely, why would North bother raising?** (To compete.) Although game is unlikely, the advancer should still raise with support and some values. The objective is not so much to reach game (although that will occasionally happen when the overcaller has a very good hand and a good fit is found) but to further the competition. If North passes, it will be easier for East–West to continue bidding and perhaps find their best spot. North's raise is an attempt to buy the contract if the hand belongs to North–South or to prevent East–West from buying the contract cheaply if the deal belongs to the opponents.

"There is no need for the advancer to stretch to respond with a minimum hand of about 6 or 7 points. You usually respond with as few as 6 points when partner opens the bidding in a suit, since opener's upper limit is 20 or 21 points. Because the overcall is limited to 16 or 17 points and could be made on as few as 8 or 9 points, a simple raise tends to show 8 or 9 points instead of 6 to 9 points.

"Like the overcall, responding is a judgment call. If your side is vulnerable, partner is likely to have a good suit and a good hand to venture into the bidding, so you might want to raise with a fit and as few as 6 or 7 points.

"**What would South call if North raises to 2♥ and East passes?** (Pass.) With nothing much extra for the overcall, South would stop in 2♥.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the king.

NORTH
♠ K Q x x
♥ K x x
♦ Q x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x x

"**East opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥.) South overcalls 1♥.

"**West passes. What call does North make?** (2♣.) With 11 HCPs plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton diamond, North would have enough to invite game opposite an opening bid. There are two disadvantages, however, to getting the partnership to 3♥ opposite an overcall:

- If the overcall was based on minimum values, the partnership might get too high.
- Without a specific partnership agreement to the contrary, a new suit by the advancer is not forcing. If North were to bid 1♠, intending to show heart support later, South might pass, and the heart fit would be missed.

"On the plus side, the opponent's opening bid has made one call available as a forcing call: a cuebid of the opponent's suit. The cuebid is forcing and shows interest in reaching game. The cuebid can cover a wide variety of hands for advancer, but one possibility is three-card or longer support for the overcaller's suit and game invitational values. Let's see how it works.

"**If North cuebids 2♣ in response to the 1♥ overcall and East passes, what call does South make?** (2♥.) With a minimum for the overcall — less than an opening bid — South can simply rebid the overcalled suit at the cheapest available level.

"**After South rebids 2♥, what call does North make?** (Pass.) Having shown interest in reaching game, North can pass when South shows nothing extra.

"**Looking at the combined hands, how many tricks are North–South likely to take in 2♥?** (Eight.) South has one spade loser, two diamond losers and three club losers. A diamond loser can be ruffed in the North hand, so North–South should make exactly 2♥. The cuebid allowed North to show game interest without getting the partnership too high.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the queen and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ A K x x
♥ K x x
♦ Q x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x x

"Now North has an opening bid. East, however, is the dealer and opens 1♣. South overcalls 1♥, and West passes.

"**What is North's first call?** (2♣.) With an opening bid and support for partner's suit, North starts with a cuebid.

"**If East passes, what does South rebid?** (2♥.) South shows a minimum overcall by rebidding 2♥.

"**After West passes, what does North call next?** (3♥/Pass.) North could give up on game and pass at this point but, with an opening bid, can make one more try by raising to 3♥.

"**If North does raise to 3♥, what call will South make?** (Pass.) South has a borderline decision but will likely pass the invitation. Nine tricks is the limit.

"**Suppose the auction begins the same way. East opens 1♣, South overcalls 1♥, West passes and North cuebids 2♣. East now bids 3♣. What call does South make?** (Pass.) East's bid has relieved South of the obligation to bid in response to the cuebid. With a minimum overcall, South can pass. When the bidding comes back to North, North can still bid 3♥ to show support. South can pass, and the partnership still reaches its best spot.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king and add the jack.

"Change the South hand.
"In diamonds: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ A J x x
♥ K x x
♦ Q x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ A K x x
♣ x x

"**East opens 1♣. What does South bid?** (1♥.) An overcall of 1♥ is the best descriptive bid for South.

"**West passes. What call does North make?** (2♣.) With interest in reaching a game, North starts with a cuebid of 2♣.

"**East passes. What call does South make?** (2♦.) South can't be sure exactly what North has in mind but, with more than a minimum overcall, can now show the second suit, 2♦. When the advancer cuebids, only a minimum rebid in the overcaller's original suit can be passed.

"**After West passes, what does North call over South's 2♦ bid?** (2♥.) North can show heart support. North has already shown at least game interest, so there's no need to jump.

"**After hearing North's bid, what call does South make?** (4♥.) With a good hand for the overcall and partner showing interest in reaching game along with some heart support, South can take the partnership right to game. North–South should be able to make 4♥, losing only one spade and two club tricks. The diamond loser can be ruffed in dummy.

"**Suppose East opened 1♠ instead of 1♣. What call would South make?** (2♥.) South has a good enough suit and a strong enough hand to make an overcall at the two level.

"**If West passed, what call would North make?** (2♠.) With support for partner's overcalled suit and interest in reaching game, North can start with a cuebid of 2♠. A raise to 3♥ would show only 8 or 9 points.

"**If East passed, what call would South make?** (3♦.) With more than a minimum overcall, South can introduce the second suit.

"**After West passes, what call does North make?** (3♥.) Having started with a cuebid, North now can show the heart support.

"**After East passes, what call does South make?** (4♥.) Now that South knows partner has game interest and heart support, South can bid game.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In hearts: add a low card.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the ace.

NORTH
♠ A J x
♥ K x x x
♦ Q x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

"**East opens the bidding 1♣, South overcalls 1♥ and West passes. What call does North make?** (2♣.) The cuebid can be used with three-card support or four-card or longer support. With game interest, North starts with 2♣."

Some partnerships use a jump cuebid — to 3♣ — to show four-card support and the strength for a limit raise, but this is a conventional approach that requires partnership agreement.

"**After East passes, what call does South make?** (2♥.) With a minimum overcall, South simply rebids 2♥.

"**What call does North make after West passes?** (Pass.) North has expressed some interest in game but received no encouragement from South. North can pass and leave the partnership in a safe partscore.

"**How will North–South fare in 2♥?** (Eight tricks.) South will likely lose two spade tricks, one diamond trick and two club tricks — making exactly 2♥. If North had jumped to 3♥, the partnership would be too high."

Note: In a competitive auction, there would be nothing wrong with getting to 3♥. East–West can probably make nine tricks in diamonds. Some partnerships might use the jump cuebid to 3♣ to conventionally show North's hand — but that isn't standard practice.

"With the cuebid available to show a fit and interest in reaching game, the advancer doesn't need to jump to the three level to show a limit raise with four-card support. That frees up the jump raise for other purposes.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the ace.
"In diamonds: take away the queen and add a low card.
"In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ K x x x
♦ x x
♣ J x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	3♥		

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

"**East opens 1♣, and South overcalls 1♥. If West passes, what call does North make?** (3♥/2♥/Pass.) With only 5 HCPs, game is very unlikely, so North might consider passing. North also might consider raising to 2♥ to show support. A better choice, however, is an immediate jump to 3♥. Since North could cuebid 2♣ with game interest, a jump raise by the advancer is weak and preemptive, not a limit raise. It shows four-card or longer support and a weak hand.

"**Can North–South make 3♥?** (No.) South has two spade losers, three diamond losers and two club losers. Even if East holds the ♦A and South ruffs both a diamond and a spade loser in dummy, 3♥ will still be defeated.

"**What would be the purpose of North's jump to 3♥?** (Preemptive.) The jump to 3♥ will make it much more difficult for East–West to find their best spot. Even if East–West do find their best contract, South may be able to make a profitable sacrifice, knowing about North's weakness and support for hearts.

"**Without interference from North–South, what contract might East–West reach?** (4♠.) East–West have an eight-card spade fit and a minimum of 25 points. 15 HCPs are missing and East–West might have some distributional values. East–West should be able to take at least 10 tricks in spades — perhaps even make a slam!"

If the students doubt this, have them randomly deal the East–West cards and see how East–West would fare in a spade contract.

"**Suppose East opens 1♣, South overcalls 1♥ and West bids 1♠. What call should North make?** (3♥.) Again, a preemptive jump raise of partner's overcall is a bid that will make it difficult for East–West to judge whether they belong in partscore, game or slam — or, perhaps, defending against a heart contract.

"**How would South know that North's jump to 3♥ is weak and preemptive, not invitational?** (North didn't cuebid.) With interest in reaching a game contract, North would start with a cuebid. In this auction, North would have a choice of cuebidding 2♣ or 2♠. If West had bid 2♣ instead of 1♠, North could cuebid 3♣ to show interest in getting to game.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ K x x x x
♦ x
♣ J x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
1♠	4♥		

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♣, South overcalls 1♥ and West bids 1♠. What call does North make?** (4♥/3♥.) North could make a preemptive jump to 3♥, but with five-card support, the standard tactic is to make a preemptive jump all the way to game, 4♥. This takes a level of bidding away from the opponents.

"North's action might be tempered by the vulnerability. When vulnerable against non vulnerable opponents, North might take a more cautious action of raising to only 2♥ or 3♥. When non vulnerable, North should probably go all out, especially if East–West are vulnerable. Any penalty North–South suffer is likely to be less than the value of the opponent's contract.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: Add the king, the queen and a low card.
"In hearts: take away the king and two low cards.
"In diamonds: add a low card.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ K Q J x x
♥ x x
♦ x x
♣ J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	1♠	Pass	Pass/2♠
Pass	Pass		

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♦. What call does South make?** (1♥.) South wants to get into the auction and show a good five-card heart suit.

"**If West passes, what call does North make?** (1♠.) Without support for partner's suit, the advancer has a number of choices. North can simply pass. The overcall isn't forcing and has an upper limit of about 17 points. Even with 8 or 9 points, the advancer could pass rather than look for a better spot. The advancer also can suggest another suit as trump. A new suit by the advancer is not forcing unless the partnership has an agreement to the contrary. Since the overcaller is showing a good five-card suit or longer, the advancer should have a good five-card or longer suit to suggest that suit as trump.

"The advancer could bid 1♠ instead of passing. The advancer would certainly prefer spades to hearts as the trump suit.

"**If North does bid 1♠ and East passes, what call does South make?** (Pass/2♠.) Since the advancer's new suit bid isn't forcing, South can pass with a minimum overcall. South has quite a good hand for spades and could raise to 2♠. If East bids, South should definitely raise to 2♠ to compete for the contract.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the queen and a low card.
"In clubs: add the ace and the king.

NORTH
♠ K J x
♥ x x
♦ x x
♣ A K J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

"**East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥ and West passes. What call does North make?** (3♣.) North has an opening bid without support for partner's suit. North could bid 2♣, but that isn't very encouraging. A jump in a new suit by the advancer is invitational, showing a good six-card or longer suit and 11 to 13 points. North jumps to 3♣, leaving the next decision to South.

"**If North does jump to 3♣ and East passes, what call will South make?** (Pass.) With less than an opening bid for the overcall, South should probably pass, declining the invitation.

"Change the South hand.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the queen.

NORTH
♠ K J x
♥ x x
♦ x x
♣ A K J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A Q J 10 x
♦ K x x
♣ Q x

"**The auction starts the same way: 1♦ by East, 1♥ by South, pass by West and 3♣ by North. What call does South make if East passes?** (3NT/3♦.) Holding an opening bid, South can accept North's invitation, perhaps by bidding 3NT. South does show strength in diamonds. 3NT is a reasonable contract for North–South. It might require a little luck, such as a successful heart finesse.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the ace and a low card.
"In clubs: take away two low cards.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the queen and add a low card.

NORTH
♠ A K J x x
♥ x x
♦ x x
♣ A K J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A J 10 x x
♦ K x x
♣ Q x

"**East opens 1♦. What call does South make?** (1♥.) South has enough strength and a good enough suit to overcall 1♥.

"**West passes the 1♥ overcall. What call does North make?** (2♦.) North has a strong enough hand to want to be in game, even if South has a minimum overcall. Unfortunately, a new suit bid of 1♠ would not be forcing. Even a jump to 2♠ would be invitational. Instead, North must start with a cuebid of 2♦. That's not so bad. It shows interest in reaching game and doesn't necessarily show support for hearts.

"**East passes. What call does South make?** (2♥.) With nothing extra for the overcall, South can simply rebid the heart suit. Initially, South assumes partner's cuebid is showing a good hand with support for hearts.

"**West passes. What call does North make?** (2♠.) Now North can show the real purpose of the cuebid — to show a strong hand with five or more spades. The 2♠ bid is forcing, since North could have bid 1♠ or jumped to 2♠ over the 1♥ overcall, if North wanted to make a non-forcing call.

"**After East passes, what call does South make?** (3♠.) Since North is showing at least a five-card spade suit, South raises to show support.

"**After West passes, what call does North make?** (4♠.) Having found a suitable fit, North can settle for game. South has not shown much more than a minimum overcall, so slam is unlikely. The partnership reaches a good game contract.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king and a low card.
"In diamonds: add the queen and a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace and the jack and add two low cards.

NORTH
♠ A J x
♥ x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	1NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A J 10 x x
♦ K x x
♣ Q x

"**East opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥.) The hand is worth a one-level overcall.

"**West passes. What call does North make?** (1NT.) North has 10 HCPs, but doesn't have three-card support for hearts. A new suit bid would not be forcing, so North's best choice is 1NT. A bid of 1NT by the advancer is slightly stronger than a 1NT response to an opening bid, because the overcaller could have a weaker hand. The usual range is 8 to 11 points, rather than 6 to 10.

"**East passes. What call does South make?** (Pass.) Since North hasn't shown support for hearts and South doesn't have much extra for the overcall, South should pass. 1NT is the best spot on the combined hands.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card and add the queen.
"In diamonds: take away a low card and add the jack.

"Change the South hand.
"In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

NORTH
♠ A Q J
♥ x x
♦ Q J x x
♣ K x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A J 10 x x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

"**East opens 1♣. Would South overcall?** (Maybe.) The decision is borderline, but many players would overcall 1♥, especially if non vulnerable.

"**Assuming South overcalls 1♥ and West passes, what call does North make?** North has an opening bid, but there is no guarantee of game opposite a simple overcall. A new suit would not be forcing. North's best choice is probably a jump to 2NT. A bid of 2NT by the advancer is not forcing and shows 12 to 15 points. With a stronger hand, North could start with a cuebid and then bid notrump.

"**If North bids 2NT and East passes, what call does South make?** (Pass.) The partnership is likely to be high enough — if not too high. With no better contract to suggest, South can pass."

Summary

"With support for partner's overcalled suit, the advancer can:

- Make a single raise of a one-level overcall with three-card or longer support and 8 or 9 points.
- Make a single raise of a two-level overcall with 8 or 9 points.
- Make a preemptive jump raise with four-card support and a weak hand, 5 to 8 points.
- Jump to game, either with the intention of making the contract or as a weak preemptive bid with five-card or longer support.
- Start with a cuebid of the opponent's suit with 9 or more points and four-card support or 10 or more points and three-card support.
    - The advancer's cuebid is forcing for one round and shows interest in reaching game, if partner has more than a minimum overcall.
    - If the overcaller makes a minimum rebid of the overcalled suit, the advancer can pass with 9 to 11 points, raise with 12 to 14 points and bid game or cuebid again with 15 or more points.

"Without support for the overcalled suit, the advancer can:

- Make a non-forcing bid in a new five-card or longer suit.
- Make an invitational jump in a good six-card or longer suit with 11 to 13 points.
- Bid 1NT with 8 to 11 points and some strength in the opponent's suit.
- Bid 2NT with 12 to 15 points and some strength in the opponent's suit.
- Bid 3NT with 16 or more points and some strength in the opponent's suit.
- Cuebid the opponent's suit and then bid a new suit to make a forcing bid.

"If partner overcalls at the two level, the advancer can be a little more aggressive, since the overcaller should have a hand worth at least an opening bid."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Advancing After a Simple Overcall

What would West call with each of the following hands after this auction?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	1♥	Pass
?			

1) ♠ 6 3
♥ J 7 4
♦ K 9 8 5 3
♣ A 8 3

2) ♠ 7 2
♥ K 9 7 3
♦ Q 10 7 6 2
♣ 9 5

3) ♠ K 10
♥ K J 8
♦ A 8 7 5
♣ 10 8 3 2

4) ♠ K Q 10 8 5
♥ 6 2
♦ A 8 7 3
♣ 8 7

5) ♠ Q 3 2
♥ A 8
♦ A K Q 7 5
♣ 6 5 4

6) ♠ Q 8 4
♥ J 6
♦ A J 10 3
♣ K Q 10 3

Exercise Two *Answer* — Advancing After a Simple Overcall

1) 2♥. East could have a very good hand for the overcall. Raising keeps alive the possibility of reaching game. If East has a minimum hand for the overcall, East–West may not make 2♥, but West's raise might make it more difficult for the opponents to find their best spot.

2) 3♥. A jump raise of East's overcall is weak and preemptive, showing four-card support and a weak hand. With a limit raise or better, West would start by cuebidding 2♣, the opponent's suit.

3) 2♣. The cuebid of North's suit followed by a raise of East's suit shows the strength for a limit raise. The hand is too strong to raise to 2♥, and an immediate jump to 3♥ would show a weak hand. East might pass a new-suit bid, and East–West would miss the heart fit.

4) 1♠. Without enough support to raise East right away, West bids a new (good) suit. This bid is not forcing, and East can pass with a minimum overcall. If East has a good hand, however, the partnership can find its best spot.

5) 2♣. Playing standard methods, a response of 2♦ would not be forcing. West starts with a cuebid, planning to show the diamond suit at the next opportunity. This style can be awkward on a hand like this one. Some partnerships prefer to treat a new suit response to an overcall as a forcing bid, which would work better on this hand.

6) 2NT. West shows a balanced hand with 12 to 15 points and strength in North's suit. It isn't forcing in response to an overcall. East can pass with a minimum overcall. With a hand worth an opening bid or better, East can bid game.

Rebids by the Overcaller

Introduction

"Most of the advancer's bids are non forcing — raises, a new suit, a jump in a new suit, notrump bids — so the overcaller doesn't need to bid again except with additional strength or distribution. The only forcing bid the advancer can make is a cuebid of the opponent's suit."

Instructions

"Remove the North hand and leave the South hand as it is.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x x
♥ A J 10 x x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

"**North–South are non vulnerable. If East opens 1♦, what call does South make?** (1♥.) A decent five-card heart suit and 8 high-card points is enough to overcall at the one level.

"**West passes, North bids 2♣ and East passes. What is South's rebid?** (Pass.) The advancer's new suit response is not forcing. With a minimum overcall, pass and hope to make a small partscore. There's no need to rebid the hearts. You've already shown a five-card suit with the overcall. Partner could have raised immediately with three-card or longer support, or partner could have started with a cuebid of 2♦. Partner probably has only one or two hearts, but should have a good five- or six-card club suit. Partner could have passed 1♥ with a poor five-card club suit and no fit.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥, West passes, North bids 3♣ and East passes. What call does South make?** (Pass.) The advancer's jump in a new suit is invitational. With a minimum, pass and hope for the best.

"**Suppose you overcall East's 1♦ opening with 1♥, West passes and North responds 2NT. What call does South make after East passes?** (Pass.) The advancer's jump to 2NT is invitational, showing 12 to 15 points. The partnership is high enough already.

"**Suppose you overcall East's 1♦ opening with 1♥, West passes and North jumps to 3♥. East bids 3♠. What call does South make?** (Pass.) The advancer's jump raise is weak and preemptive, showing four-card support and not much else. Your side has already done enough to interfere with the opponents' auction. The opponents may misjudge the situation and bid too much or too little — or get to the wrong strain.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥, West passes and North bids 2♦. What does South do after East passes?** (2♥.) The advancer's cuebid is forcing, and you must make a call if East passes. With a minimum overcall, simply rebid your suit.

"**What if South rebids 2♥, West passes and North raises to 3♥? What does South call after East passes?** (Pass.) Partner is showing a very good hand in support of hearts — at least the values for an opening bid. The cuebid followed by a raise, however, is only invitational. With nothing extra, the partnership is probably high enough.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥, West passes, North cuebids 2♦ and East says double? What call does South make?** (Pass.) East's double of partner's overcall relieves you from the obligation of making a bid. You can pass to show a minimum overcall. The advancer won't leave the partnership in 2♦ doubled. Most likely, partner will return to 2♥, unless partner has something extra for the cuebid."

Some partnerships would play that a rebid of 2♥ by the overcaller would not promise any extra values. While this is a reasonable agreement, standard practice is to use the pass to show a minimum.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South overcalls 1♥, West passes and North cuebids 2♦. East passes, and South rebids 2♥ to show a minimum overcall. West passes, North bids 2♠ and East passes. What call does South make?** (Bid 3♠.) The advancer's cuebid followed by a new-suit bid is forcing. The advancer has no other way to show a very strong hand with spades. If the advancer had bid 1♠ after your overcall, it would not be forcing. Even a jump to 2♠ in response to the overcall would only be invitational. So, despite your minimum, you have to say something. Since partner will have at least a five-card spade suit, you can show support by raising to the three level — leaving the next decision to North.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In diamonds: add the queen.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A J 10 x x
♦ K Q x x
♣ x x

"**East opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥.) An overcall of 1♥ is still the best description of the hand.

"**West passes, North cuebids 2♣ and East passes. What call does South make?** (2♦.) Although you don't have much extra for the overcall, there's no harm in showing your second suit. It might help partner decide whether it is worth trying for a game contract. It's also possible that partner has a good hand without a fit for hearts, in which case diamonds might be the best trump suit for your side.

"**West passes, North bids 2♥ and East passes. What call does South make? (Pass**.) You've already described the hand nicely, and partner's preference back to hearts is not forcing. You've both had your say, and partscore in hearts sounds like the limit of the hand.

"Change the South hand.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: add the king.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A J 10 x x
♦ K Q x
♣ K x x

"**East opens 1♦. What call does South make?** (1♥.) This hand has the values for an opening bid, but is still best described by starting with a one-level overcall in hearts.

"**West passes, North cuebids 2♦ and East passes. What call does South make?** (2NT.) With a good hand for the overcall, you don't want to make a minimum rebid of 2♥, because the advancer might pass. With some strength in East's suit, you can describe the hand by rebidding 2NT, suggesting notrump as a possible contract.

"**Suppose North bids 3♥ after your 2NT rebid? What does South call after East passes?** (Pass/4♥/3NT.) Tough decision. You've shown a sound overcall with the 2NT rebid, but the advancer hasn't bid game in notrump or hearts. It sounds as though partner has support for hearts but only invitational values — 10 or 11 points. The conservative action would be to pass. The more aggressive action would be to bid game in hearts or, perhaps, notrump — if you're willing to take a chance on spades."

Depending on the experience level of the students, you may want to elaborate on this last point:

"The vulnerability and form of scoring might affect your decision. Most partnerships tend to bid more aggressively in this situation when vulnerable and playing in a team format, or at rubber bridge. Non vulnerable, or playing in a matchpoint pairs event, it is usually best to take the more conservative approach to make certain of getting a plus score.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add the king.
"In diamonds: take away the king.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♥

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A K J 10 x x
♦ Q x
♣ K x x

"**East opens 1♦. What call does South make?** (1♥.) Unless the partnership uses intermediate jump overcalls (a subject which will be discussed shortly), you would start with a simple overcall of 1♥. The one-level overcall covers a wide range of hands.

"**West passes and North responds 2♦. East passes. What call does South make?** (3♥.) Since you have more than a minimum overcall, you don't want to rebid 2♥. Since that would show a minimum, the advancer might pass. To show a very good overcall, you can jump to 3♥, leaving the final decision to North.

"**Suppose that East opens the bidding 1♠. What would South call?** (2♥.) A simple overcall will suffice, but it has to be at the two level over the 1♠ opening bid.

"**West passes and North bids 2♠. East passes. What call does South make?** (4♥/3♥.) It's a judgment call. If you feel you have a better than average hand for your overcall, you should jump to 4♥. If you feel that this is fairly minimal for a two-level overcall, you may rebid 3♥ and leave the final call to North. All you know is that North has enough to be interested in reaching game after your overcall."

Summary

"After you have made a simple overcall, most of the advancer's bids are non forcing, including a new suit, a jump in a new suit and notrump bids. You do not need to bid again, unless you have more than a minimum or extra distribution. When the advancer makes a cuebid, however, you have to bid again, unless the player on your right bids:

- With a minimum for the overcall, simply rebid your suit at the cheapest available level or show a second suit that is lower-ranking than your first suit.
- With more than a minimum, show the extra values by rebidding in notrump or jumping in your own suit. A rebid in a new suit doesn't promise any extra values but is forcing for one round, so you will have an opportunity to show the extra strength later."

Note: Local practices vary in this area. Try to teach your students to use the partnership agreements they will encounter when playing in local club games.

Jump Overcalls in a Suit

Introduction

"An overcall, one level higher than necessary, is a jump overcall. This bid is commonly used to show a good six-card or longer suit, but there are various possible agreements about the strength shown by the jump overcall:

- One possibility is to play strong jump overcalls, showing a hand of 17 or more points.
- A second possibility is to play intermediate jump overcalls, showing a hand of 11 to 16 points.
- A third possibility is to play weak jump overcalls, showing a hand similar to a weak two-bid of fewer than 12 (13) total points.

"The weak, or preemptive, jump overcall is the most popular style these days and that is the method we will assume the partnership is using."

Instructions

"Change the South hand.
"In diamonds: take away the queen and add a low card.
"In clubs: take away the king and add a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2♥

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A K J 10 x x
♦ x x
♣ x x x

"**East is the dealer and opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (2♥.) You have enough to make a simple overcall of 1♥. That would accomplish two of the objectives of making an overcall: it would let partner know you are interested in competing for the contract, and it would tell partner what suit you would like led if your side defends.

"A simple overcall of 1♥, however, doesn't accomplish the objective of interfering with the opponents' auction. It takes away virtually no bidding room, since West was unlikely to be bidding 1♥. It also provides West with additional options:

- Passing with a borderline hand. West doesn't have to stretch to bid, since East will get another bid in the auction.
- Making a negative double.
- Cuebidding 2♥. We'll discuss the use of that bid a little later.

"To accomplish another objective of overcalling — making the auction more difficult for the opponents — South can make use of the preemptive jump overcall and jump to 2♥. This has the advantage of taking an entire level of bidding away from the opponents. West can't bid 1♠, 1NT, 2♣ or 2♦. West might not have enough strength to make a negative double at the two level or to cuebid at the three level. If West does pass, East can't be sure whether West has some values or nothing at all.

"Another advantage of the preemptive jump overcall is that it is very descriptive. Partner will know that you have a good six-card or longer suit, but not much defensive strength outside of your suit. That should help partner decide whether to compete to a higher level.

"**If East had passed, what would South open the bidding with?** (2♥.) A preemptive jump overcall is similar to a weak two-bid. One difference is that the opponents have already opened the bidding — East already knows something about West's hand. As compensation, East's opening bid makes it likely that the hand belongs to the opponents. There is more to gain in preventing the opponents from having a smooth auction.

"**If East does open the bidding 1♣, does the vulnerability affect South's decision whether or not to make a jump overcall?** (Yes/No.) As with opening a weak preemptive bid, vulnerability is a factor:

- At favorable vulnerability — when the opponents are vulnerable and your side is non vulnerable — you can be very aggressive.
- At equal vulnerability — when both sides are non vulnerable or both sides are vulnerable — you can be reasonably aggressive.
- At unfavorable vulnerability — when your side is vulnerable and the opponents are non vulnerable — you should be more cautious.

"Having said that, most players would make a preemptive jump overcall with this hand at any vulnerability. The suit is very good — you are likely to take five or six tricks with hearts as the trump suit — and you have no outside strength. At unfavorable vulnerability, you could take the conservative approach of overcalling 1♥, but there's more to gain than to lose by putting maximum pressure on the opponents with a preemptive jump overcall. If you occasionally get doubled and go for 1100, hope for an understanding partner!

"**Would it make any difference if East opens 1♦ instead of 1♣?** (No.) You would still make a preemptive jump overcall of 2♥.

"**What if East's opening bid is 1♠? What does South call?** (Pass/2♥/3♥.) Now you can no longer make a preemptive jump overcall at the two level. You would have to bid 3♥ to make a preemptive jump overcall. You might risk that call at favorable vulnerability, but not at unfavorable vulnerability. It might seem that there is nothing wrong with making a simple overcall of 2♥. After all, you were willing to bid 2♥ after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening. The disadvantage is that the simple overcall is less descriptive than the jump overcall. Partner is likely to expect a stronger hand for a two-level overcall and may misjudge the situation. It's a matter of partnership style, but you should probably pass if you aren't willing to risk jumping to 3♥.

"**Suppose West is the dealer and opens 1♣. North passes, and East responds 1♦. Now what does South call?** (2♥.) You can make a preemptive jump overcall after both opponents have bid. Again, you could overcall 1♥, but a jump to 2♥ is likely to be both more effective and more descriptive.

"**Suppose West is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♦. North and East pass. Now what does South call?** (1♥.) In the balancing position, there is no real need for preemptive action, since you have the option of passing. The standard agreement is that a jump to 2♥ in this position would be an intermediate jump overcall, showing a good hand with a six-card or longer heart suit and inviting North to bid game.

"Most players would balance with a simple overcall of 1♥. Since North passed over the 1♦ opening bid and you have little defense outside the heart suit, there is some danger that a balancing bid could backfire. West might have a strong hand, and the opponents might get to a better contract — perhaps game. Since East passed, however, the presumption is that your partner is likely to have some of the outstanding strength with a hand unsuitable for an overcall or a takeout double. It would be timid to pass and defend 1♦. It's even possible that your side can make game.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	3♥

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ A K J 10 x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♦. What call would South make?** (3♥.) With a good seven-card suit, you can afford to make a double jump overcall. This is also a preemptive bid. It is similar to an opening three-level preempt.

"At unfavorable vulnerability, you might choose to overcall only 2♥. This is still a preemptive jump overcall, but might be safer than a jump to 3♥. You can use your judgment. If you would open the bidding 3♥ at unfavorable vulnerability, then you should probably make the same bid when East opens the bidding.

"**Suppose East opens 1♠. What is South's call?** (3♥.) You would still jump to 3♥. This would be a jump overcall rather than a double jump overcall, but it would send the same message to partner — a weak hand with a good seven-card heart suit.

"As you can see, the level to which you jump depends on a number of factors — the length and quality of your suit, the opponent's opening bid and the vulnerability. Like a preemptive opening bid, you are weighing risk against potential gain.

"**If East opens with a weak 2♦ bid, what call would South make?** (2♥.) Although you have the values for a preemptive jump overcall, you should not jump to 3♥. The standard agreement is that you do not preempt over a preempt. A bid of 3♥ shows a very good hand — too strong for an overcall of 2♥. Instead, settle for a simple overcall of 2♥. Partner might expect a little more outside strength, but the length in hearts should be adequate compensation.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the ace.
"In hearts: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♥

SOUTH
♠ A x x
♥ A K J 10 x x
♦ x
♣ x x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♦. What call would South make?** (1♥.) Although you have a good six-card heart suit, don't make a preemptive jump overcall with a good hand. You won't be painting an accurate description for your partner. Instead, settle for a simple overcall of 1♥."

Summary

"When the opponents have opened the bidding, a jump overcall is weak and preemptive.

- A jump to the two level typically shows a good six-card suit, similar to an opening weak two-bid.
- A jump to the three level typically shows a good seven-card suit, similar to an opening three-level preemptive bid.

"The jump overcall is both obstructive and descriptive. If your partner makes a preemptive jump overcall, you should respond in the same manner as if partner had opened a weak two-bid or three-bid."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Jump Overcalls in a Suit

What call would East make with each of the following hands after this auction?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♥	?	

1) ♠ K Q J 9 7 6
♥ 7
♦ 10 9 7 3
♣ 6 4

2) ♠ A Q J 8 7 3
♥ K 8 2
♦ A 4
♣ 7 3

3) ♠ K Q 10 9 7 6 3
♥ 8
♦ 7
♣ 9 6 5 2

Exercise Three *Answer* — Jump Overcalls in a Suit

1) 2♠. With a good six-card suit and little else, this is a good hand for a weak jump overcall. The weak jump overcall is similar to an opening weak two-bid. East makes the auction difficult for the opponents, while describing the hand to West.

2) 1♠. This hand is too strong for a weak jump overcall. East makes a simple overcall at the one level. If the partnership used intermediate jump overcalls, rather than weak jump overcalls, this hand would qualify as a 2♠ bid.

3) 3♠. With a good seven-card suit and a weak hand, East makes a preemptive jump overcall at the three level. This is similar to an opening 3♠ bid. Most players would take the same action whether vulnerable or non-vulnerable. Jumping to only 2♠ wouldn't be unreasonable, however, if East–West were vulnerable against non vulnerable.

Overcalling a 1NT Opening Bid — Landy

Introduction

"Overcalls occur most frequently when an opponent has opened the bidding in a suit. There's no reason, however, that you can't make an overcall when an opponent opens 1NT. There are, however, some additional considerations."

Instructions

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the jack and a low card.
"In hearts: take away the king and a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	2♣

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ A J 10 x
♦ x
♣ x x x

"**If East opened the bidding 1♣, what call would South make?** (1♠/Pass.) With no support for diamonds, the hand is unsuitable for a takeout double. Your spade suit isn't perfect, but most players would probably risk a one-level overcall of 1♠. If your side doesn't belong in spades, there's the possibility of finding a safe landing spot in hearts.

"**Now, suppose East opens 1NT. Discuss with the others at your table the advantages and disadvantages of overcalling.**"

Give the students a couple of minutes to discuss the pros and cons of overcalling a 1NT.

"There are some disadvantages to overcalling a 1NT opening bid:

- You would have to introduce the spades at the two level.
- East has shown a strong hand of 15 to 17 HCP with at least some length in spades.
- West is well-positioned to make a penalty double of your overcall when appropriate. West knows a lot about East's hand.
- If you are in trouble in spades, you would have to go to the three level to play in hearts. Since North doesn't know about your hearts, you may be getting deeper into trouble.

"There are some advantages to overcalling a 1NT opening bid:

- Despite East's opening bid, your side still may be able to compete for the contract. It's even possible that your side can make a game if you can find a good fit.
- If you do become the declarer, you will have the advantage of knowing a lot about East's hand in terms of both high cards and distribution. This should help you during the play.

- Without interference, the opponents will often bid accurately to their best contract. Most partnerships are very familiar with their responses and rebids after a 1NT opening bid. By overcalling, you may make it more difficult for the opponents to find their best spot.

"Because of the added danger when entering the auction after an opening bid of 1NT, you should usually overcall with either:

- A good one-suited hand. This offers some protection against being doubled. Even if you are doubled, the penalty may be less than the opponents could make in their own contract.
- A two-suited hand. This also offers some protection since you are likely to have a fit in at least one of the two suits, making it difficult for the opponents to double for penalty.

"Using natural overcalls, you can't show a two-suited hand with a single bid. So, most partnerships use some form of conventional interference over an opponent's 1NT opening bid that let's them come into the auction relatively safely with most one-suited and two-suited hands.

"One of the simplest conventions was developed by Alvin Landy, the CEO for the ACBL throughout most of the 50's and 60's. Using the Landy convention, an overcall of 2♣ is conventional (artificial) and shows both major suits. All other overcalls are natural. This allows you to show any single-suited hand at the two level except clubs and the most valuable two-suited hand — since you can compete most effectively when you have hearts and spades. It's also an easy convention to remember since it is similar in nature to the Stayman convention.

"**If the partnership is using the Landy convention, what call would South make if East opened 1NT?** (2♣.) By bidding 2♣, you get to show both hearts and spades, letting partner choose the best fit. Ideally, you would like to have at least five cards in each suit but, even with only four-card support for hearts, using Landy is safer than putting all of your eggs into one basket with a 2♠ overcall.

"Notice that partner can choose a major at the two level. You won't have to get to the three level to find a fit in hearts.

"**Suppose it is West who opens 1NT and both North and East pass. What call does South make?** (2♣.) You can use Landy in the balancing position as well as directly over a 1NT opening bid.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add the queen and a low card.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	2♣

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**What call would South make if East opens the bidding** 1NT? (2♣.) This hand is ideal for the Landy convention. If partner has three cards in either major suit, you will have an eight-card fit. You don't need a strong hand to come in over an opponent's 1NT opening if you have good distribution. It's unlikely that your side can make a game contract when an opponent has opened 1NT. The objective is to either make a small partscore or interfere with the opponents' auction. Some players would still overcall if the ♥Q were a low heart.

"Leave the South hand as it is and construct a hand in front of North.
"In spades: a low card.
"In hearts: the king and two low cards
"In diamonds: the ace, the jack and three low cards.
"In clubs: the queen and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ K x x
♦ A J x x x
♣ Q x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1NT	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**East opens 1NT. What call does South make?** (2♣.) South shows both majors with the conventional (artificial) 2♣ overcall.

"**West passes. What call does North make?** (2♥.) North prefers hearts to spades, so North bids 2♥. There isn't much point in bidding 2♦. With support for hearts and spades, South is unlikely to have a fit for diamonds. If North–South appear to be struggling to find a fit, it's more likely that East–West might choose to double for penalty. If North bids a confident 2♥, it's less likely that North–South will get doubled, even if the partnership is in a 4–3 fit.

"Even though North has 10 high-card points, North should not be stretching to reach game without an exceptional fit. North should keep in mind that the main objective of coming into the auction over the opponent's 1NT bid is to compete for the contract and interfere with the opponents' auction — not to reach game.

"**If East passes North's 2♥ bid, what call does South make?** (Pass.) South has done enough with the 2♣ call and should be very cautious about bidding any more. South has forced North to pick a major suit and North might not have even three-card support.

"**How will North–South fare in a 2♥ contract?** (Seven or eight tricks.) North will be declarer. Playing the contract from the short side — the hand with the fewer trumps — can be an advantage. East–West know from the auction that South holds hearts and spades, but they don't have any idea what North's hand looks like.

"Unless East leads the ♥A and another heart early, North will usually take eight tricks by ruffing two of South's spade losers. Even if the defenders do lead trumps, North should take at least seven tricks.

"Down one is unlikely to be a poor result for North–South. After all, East–West have the balance of strength — 22 HCPs. The overcall may gain in other ways. East–West may have difficulty determining their best spot and get too high. If East does play in a notrump contract, South will know that North prefers hearts to spades and can lead a heart instead of a spade.

"**What might happen if North–South were not using the Landy convention?** (2♠ contract or worse.) If South doesn't come into the auction, East–West will probably play in 1NT, a contract they may well make — especially if South chooses to lead a spade rather than a heart. If South overcalls 2♠, North probably won't want to risk getting any higher. The partnership will play in its 5–1 fit, going down at least two tricks. If they are doubled in 2♠, they would have to run to the three level to find their heart fit and would now be too high.

"It's easy to say that perhaps South should overcall 2♥ instead of 2♠, but that wouldn't work well if North's hearts and spades were reversed."

Summary

"The Landy convention is only one of many possibilities for entering the auction after an opponent opens 1NT. You can find additional possibilities in the Appendix of the textbook. Some are much more complex, and you should always discuss any convention thoroughly with your partner before trying it out. The Landy convention does, however, show some of the advantages of using conventional methods to reduce the risk when coming into the auction. We'll look at that more in the next lesson."

Handling an Opponent's Overcall

Introduction

"When an opponent overcalls your partner's opening bid, you've already seen one conventional method for dealing with interference — the negative double. If you want to double for penalty, you have to pass and wait for partner to reopen with a takeout double. Let's look at another possibility when partner's opening bid is overcalled."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the ace.
"In clubs: take away two low cards and add the ace.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the jack and a low card.
"In diamonds: add the queen.
"In clubs: add the king.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ K x x x
♦ J x x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ Q x
♣ K x x

"**South is the dealer. What would South call?** (1♥.) 12 high-card points plus a five-card heart suit — a 1♥ opening bid.

"**If West passes, what would North respond?** (3♥.) With 10 HCPs plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton spade, North can make a limit raise of 3♥, showing four-card support and 10 or 11 points.

"**If East passes, what would South call?** (Pass.) With a minimum-opening bid, South would reject the invitation and pass.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 1♠. What does North call?** (2♠/3♥.) The partnership could continue to use limit raises in this situation, and North could jump to 3♥. That doesn't take full advantage of the bidding room that is available. It's true that West's overcall has taken away some bidding room, but it also has made available a cuebid of 2♠. Most partnerships use the cuebid of the opponent's suit to show a fit with partner and the strength for a limit raise or better. North would cuebid 2♠ to show support for hearts and to invite opener to bid game.

"**If North cuebids 2♠ and East passes, what does South bid?** (3♥.) With a minimum opening bid, South simply returns to the agreed suit, 3♥. Effectively, South is turning down North's invitation.

"**If West passes, what does North call now?** (Pass.) Having shown a limit raise in hearts and hearing that South does not want to bid game, North passes. The partnership stops in 3♥, exactly as if North had made a limit raise.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 2♦. What does North bid?** (3♦.) North can do the same thing — cuebid the opponent's suit to show strength for at least a limit raise. The 3♦ bid says nothing about diamonds, only that North has a fit for hearts and enough to invite game.

"**What would South call if East passes the 3♦ cuebid?** (3♥.) With a minimum, South would go back to the agreed suit at the cheapest available level.

"**What would North call if West passes?** (Pass.) As before, North would accept South's decision to stop in partscore.

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1♥, West overcalls 1♠ and North cuebids 2♠. East now bids 3♠. What does South call?** (Pass.) Since South doesn't have enough to bid game opposite a limit raise, South would pass.

"**South passes East's raise to 3♠, West passes and the auction comes back to North. What does North call?** (Pass/Double.) Since South wasn't willing to go beyond 3♥ and North has nothing extra, North should pass and choose to defend 3♠. If North is aggressive — and is a good defender — North might choose to double the opponents' contract, but there's no guarantee that North–South can defeat 3♠.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ K x x x
♦ J x x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	2♠	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A x x
♥ A Q J 10 x x
♦ Q x
♣ K x

"**What would South open the bidding?** (1♥.)

"**Suppose West overcalls 1♠. What call would North make?** (2♠.) North shows the strength for a limit raise by cuebidding 2♠.

"**If East passes, what call does South make?** (4♥.) South has enough to accept a game invitation and jumps to 4♥. South can't bid 3♥, because that shows a minimum hand, and North will pass. It's as though the auction went 1♥–3♥–4♥ without any interference.

"The auction would be similar if South opened the bidding 1♥ and West overcalled 2♦. North could cuebid 3♦, and South would jump to 4♥, accepting the invitation.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the jack and add the ace.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace.
"In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ K x x x
♦ A x x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	2♠	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A x x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ Q x
♣ K x x

"**What would South open?** (1♥.)

"**If West overcalls 1♠, what call would North make?** (2♠.) A cuebid shows the strength for a limit raise or better.

"**If East passes, what call does South make?** (3♥.) South assumes that North has only the strength for a limit raise. With a minimum opening bid, South rejects the invitation by bidding 3♥.

"**After West passes, what call does North make?** (4♥.) North shows a hand strong enough for game by raising to 4♥.

"**When East passes, what call does South make?** (Pass.) South now knows that North has support for hearts and enough strength to raise to game.

"If the partnership uses the Jacoby 2NT to show a forcing raise of opener's major, the standard agreement is that this convention is off in competition — when West doubles or overcalls. A bid of 2NT after an overcall becomes a natural, invitational bid. The cuebid, therefore, takes the place of both the limit raise and the forcing raise.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥ and West makes a preemptive jump overcall of 2♠. What does North call?** (3♠.) North again can make use of the cuebid to show a fit with opener. Since the partnership is forced to the game level, North obviously has enough for a game contract. With only enough for a limit raise, North would simply bid 3♥ and leave the final decision to South.

"What is the advantage of using the cuebid as a limit raise or better? It frees up the immediate jump raise for other purposes.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and add two low cards.
"In clubs: take away the ace and the queen and add a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ K x x x
♦ x x x x x
♣ x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A x x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ Q x
♣ K x x

"**South opens the bidding 1♥ and West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make?** (3♥/2♥/Pass.) Holding only 3 high-card points, it might seem that North should be happy that West has come into the auction. North could sit back quietly and let East–West play the hand. In competitive bridge, however, the exact opposite is true. With four-card support for partner and a weak hand, North wants to make the maximum effort to make East–West uncomfortable. Even a raise to 2♥ would be considered timid by many players. Instead, North should jump to 3♥!

"A jump raise to 3♥ is weak and preemptive in competition. It isn't a limit raise. With a limit raise or better, North would start with a cuebid of 2♠. The jump to 3♥ shows four-card support and a weak hand. It is meant as an obstructive bid, not a constructive bid.

"If North were to bid only 2♥, East would have an easy time. With support for spades, East could raise to 2♠ to compete, jump to 3♠, cuebid 3♥ or jump to 4♠. Whatever the East–West methods, East would get to describe the hand accurately, and West would know what to do.

"If North jumps to 3♥, East doesn't have as many options. East might have only enough to raise to 2♠ and have to pass — keeping West in the dark about the spade fit. East might stretch a bit to bid 3♠, but how does West know whether East is stretching or would have jumped to 3♠ or cuebid 3♥ if North had not interfered. West may misjudge the situation and bid too much or too little. Taking away an extra level of bidding from the opponents may be very effective.

"**Suppose North jumps to 3♥, after the 1♠ overcall, and East bids 3♠. What call does South make?** (Pass.) Since North didn't cuebid, South knows the jump to 3♥ is weak, not strong. South should pass, since North's bid has already done its damage. East–West may stop in partscore or bid game, but that is beyond South's control. South will hope that West guesses incorrectly. With a more suitable playing hand, South might further North's preemptive action or sacrifice if the opponents do bid game. North's bid has given South enough information to make a good choice.

"**Is there danger in jumping to 3♥ with the North hand?** (Yes/No.) There is always danger in overbidding. It's a question of risk versus gain. You have to keep an eye on the vulnerability, but the better the fit with partner's suit and the more distributional the hand, the safer it is to preempt.

"**How would North–South fare in a contract of 3♥?** (Down one or two.) South will have to lose one spade trick; the other spade loser can be ruffed in dummy. South has to lose a heart trick and two diamond tricks. South

figures to lose one or two club tricks, depending on the location of the ♣A. South might even lose three club tricks, if it isn't possible to arrange to ruff a club in dummy. So, South is likely to go down one or two tricks.

"**How would East–West fare in a spade contract?** (Likely take 10 tricks.) East–West can probably make a game in spades. They lose the ♠A, but only have to lose one heart trick if their hearts are divided exactly 2–2. They might lose a trick to the ♦Q, but may not. Since South opened the bidding, declarer will probably guess where the ♦Q is located. South may or may not get a trick with the ♣K, depending on which opponent holds the ♣A. On a lucky day, East–West might make a slam in spades!

"North's 3♥ bid, therefore, has more to gain than lose. Even if North–South are doubled, East–West will usually make at least a game on these cards. Better still, East–West may miss bidding their game or overreach and get too high.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In hearts: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ K x x x x
♦ x x x x x
♣ x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	4♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ A x x
♥ Q J 10 x x
♦ Q x
♣ K x x

"**South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make?** (4♥/3♥.) Depending on the vulnerability, North might jump all the way to 4♥. If vulnerable against non vulnerable, North may make a conservative jump to 3♥.

"**How does South know that North is bidding on weakness rather than strength?** (No cuebid.) With a strong hand, North would have started with a cuebid — showing a limit raise or better."

Summary

"Using the cuebid to show a limit raise or better, when partner's opening bid has been overcalled, allows the partnership to use preemptive jump raises in competition."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Four — Handling an Opponent's Overcall

What call would East make with each of the following hands after this auction?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♠	2♥	?	

1) ♠ K 8 7
♥ 10 8 4 3
♦ A 9 8 5
♣ 9 2

2) ♠ Q 10 7 3
♥ J 8
♦ K Q 9 7
♣ K 8 2

3) ♠ K 9 7 4
♥ 10 7
♦ 5 2
♣ Q J 8 3 2

4) ♠ A J 8 4
♥ 9 3
♦ A K 4
♣ Q 7 6 2

5) ♠ Q J 9 7 4
♥ 3
♦ Q 10 8 6 4
♣ 10 3

6) ♠ 10 7
♥ 9 6 5
♦ A J 9 3
♣ K Q 8 5

Exercise Four *Answer* — Handling an Opponent's Overcall

1) 2♠. The opponent's overcall doesn't prevent East from showing support for spades.

2) Cuebid 3♥. A jump to 3♠ would be preemptive after North's overcall. A cuebid shows support for West's spades and the strength for at least a limit raise. It isn't forcing to game. If West rebids 3♠, showing a minimum, East can pass.

3) 3♠. The jump to 3♠ is a weak, preemptive action after an opponent's overcall. It shows a weak hand with four-card support.

4) Cuebid 3♥. The cuebid of the opponent's suit shows a limit raise or better. On this hand, East will continue to game even if West rebids only 3♠. An immediate jump to 4♠ would be preemptive, and a slam might be missed if West has a good hand.

5) 4♠. This is a weak, preemptive raise, and the same bid would apply if North hadn't overcalled.

6) Double. This is a negative double, showing support for the unbid suits and enough strength to compete for the contract.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 3*

Bid and Play — Deal 1: When in Doubt, Pass

Guidelines for Teachers: On this first deal, East–West will make 2♠ while North–South can make 4♦. The real emphasis is on the auction – to see the effect of a preemptive jump overcall. Each player will have decisions to make in the auction, so there is likely to be considerable diversity in the actual contracts that are reached.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal where we see the preemptive jump overcall in action."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North
Vul: None

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. To keep the discussion fairly simple, restrict the final contract to the likely result of 2♠ where eight tricks can be made.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	2♠	Pass (?)
Pass	Pass (?)		

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

"North starts the bidding in the longest suit. With a good six-card spade suit and a weak hand, East makes a preemptive jump overcall of 2♠.

"East's 2♠ bid makes the auction difficult for the opponents. South doesn't have enough to bid 4♦ and, with only three-card support for hearts, the hand is unsuitable for a negative double. South might try 2NT, but that's a little much with only 8 HCPs and a dubious spade stopper. South's best choice is to pass, hoping to get to show some values later in the auction.

"Although West holds an opening bid, East has described a weak hand that is only useful with spades as the trump suit. West passes. The partnership is probably high enough already.

"North has a difficult choice of calls when the auction comes back around. With only a doubleton heart, North's hand is unsuitable for a reopening double, and the ♠K is of dubious value. North should probably pass and choose to defend.

"In an experienced partnership, North might be able to reopen with an "unusual" 2NT, looking for a minor-suit fit. In most partnerships, however, this bid would be interpreted as natural and could give South a misleading picture of North's strength.

"If East's 2♠ bid does buy the contract, East–West will have effectively "stolen" the contract. North–South can take ten tricks in diamonds."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♠ by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South is on lead against 2♠ and would start with the ♣8, top of the doubleton in partner's suit."

Suggested Play

There are many possible variations in the play. Even the suggested contract of 2♠ can be defeated with double-dummy play. Limit your discussion.

"East has two potential spade losers, one heart loser, one diamond loser and two club losers. East could hope that South has either the ♣A or the ♣Q, but the auction and South's opening lead make that seem unlikely. If the defenders don't switch to diamonds soon enough, East may be able to discard the diamond loser on an extra winner in dummy.

"East's best chance to avoid two spade losers is to take repeated finesses through North. That should work if North has the ♠K or the ♠Q, or both. Dummy has one entry with the ♦A, and declarer can create a second entry in the heart suit."

Suggested Defense

"Perfect defense will defeat 2♠. Suppose South leads a club. The ♣J is played from dummy, and North wins the ♣Q. North, hoping to get a ruff, can lead a heart. South, taking the inference that East isn't likely to have a four-card heart suit for the 2♠ bid, (which would give North a singleton heart), can let declarer win this trick. If declarer now takes a spade finesse, losing to South's ♠Q, South can play the ♥A and another heart to give North a ruff with the ♠K. North can now switch to a diamond to knock out dummy's ♦A before East is able to discard the diamond loser. The defenders will take six tricks.

"That defense, however, is double dummy, and it won't be found even by many experienced defenders. It is more likely that North will win the first trick with the ♣Q, play the ♣A and lead a third round of clubs. Declarer can now make the contract in a couple of ways. Declarer can discard the diamond loser on the third round of clubs, letting South ruff. On gaining the lead, declarer can simply play the ♠A and another spade. Declarer loses two clubs, two spade tricks and the ♥A. East also could ruff the third round of clubs with the ♠8. Whether or not South overruffs, declarer can make eight tricks.

"In summary, 2♠ is a good spot for East–West. If North–South do manage to find their diamond fit, the only losers are one spade, one heart and one diamond, since the club finesse is successful. In fact, if East–West don't lead hearts soon enough, the heart loser might disappear.

"The play is interesting if North–South reach a notrump contract. If South is declarer and West leads a spade, declarer should play North's ♠K on the first trick — or duck the first trick completely — to prevent East from establishing the spade suit and keeping a spade entry. East–West can counter this play by leading hearts to establish enough winners in that suit before the ♦A is knocked out. If North is declarer in a notrump contract, East will have to lead a heart right away to prevent declarer from taking at least nine tricks."

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Cuebids Get the Message Across

Guidelines for Teachers: On this second deal, the bidding is pretty straightforward. North-South should win the contract at 2♠. If they bid higher, the defenders will probably defeat the contract. Explain the basic play concept of putting a loser on a loser to the group. Even a contract of 2♠ is in jeopardy unless declarer uses the loser on a loser play.

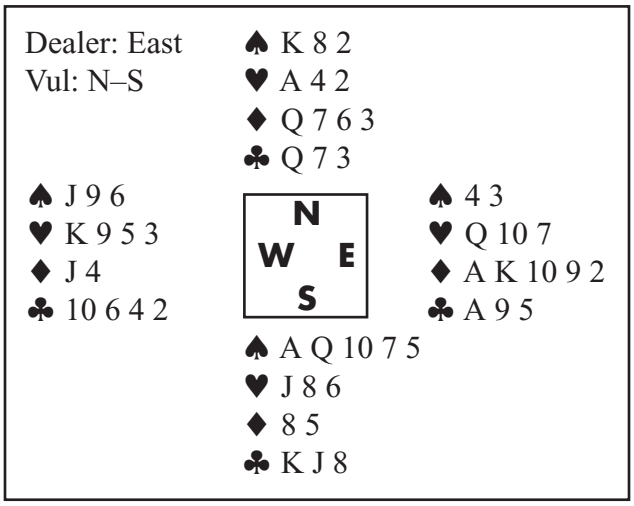
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the cuebid can be used to best describe the advancer's hand."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. The main point of the hand is the loser on a loser play concept, so get all of your students to the point where the contract is 2♠, before you let them play out the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	1♠
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"East opens the bidding 1♦. South overcalls 1♠ to show a good five-card suit. West doesn't have enough to make a negative double and passes. North

has too much for a simple raise to 2♠, but a jump to 3♠ would be preemptive and show four-card support — and 3♠ might get the partnership too high if South has a minimum overcall. Instead, North cuebids 2♦, showing an interest in reaching game. After East passes, South rebids 2♠ to show a minimum hand for the overcall with no interest in getting to game. North has no reason to overrule partner's decision and, having shown support with the cuebid, passes to leave the partnership in a partscore.

"Without the use of the cuebid, there's a reasonable chance that North–South would get too high on this hand. The cuebid allows North to try for game without getting beyond the two level when South has less than an opening bid."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West is on lead and would probably start with the ♦J, top of a doubleton in partner's suit."

Suggested Play

"The 2♠ contract will be in jeopardy unless declarer uses the loser on a loser play.

"Declarer has two heart losers, two diamond losers and one club loser. To make the contract, declarer must avoid losing a trump trick. That won't be a problem if the suit is divided 3–2 and South can gain the lead to draw trumps, but there is a complication. After winning two diamond tricks, East may lead a third round of diamonds. If South ruffs with a low trump, West can overruff. If South ruffs with a high trump, the ♠A or ♠Q, the defenders will eventually take a trick with the ♠J.

"South might try ruffing the third round of diamonds with the ♠10, hoping West doesn't have the ♠J, but that doesn't work. On the surface, it seems that South must lose a trump trick, if East plays another winning diamond after winning the first two tricks. South still has two heart losers and one club loser — and that's one too many.

"**There is a way to make the contract.** Suppose West wins the first trick with the ♦J and continues with a second diamond, which East wins with the ♦9. East now leads the ♦K. Since ruffing either high or low won't work, South shouldn't ruff at all! Instead, South should discard a heart. South planned on two heart losers anyway, and this is as good a time as

any. If East continues by leading the ♦A, again South can't win by ruffing either high or low. So, South discards another heart. In effect, South has exchanged the two heart losers for two extra diamond losers.

"The advantage of discarding the heart losers is that South can now avoid a trump loser. If East leads anything except another diamond, South can draw trumps after gaining the lead. If East leads a fifth round of diamonds, South can discard a club and West is helpless. If West doesn't ruff, declarer wins the trick by ruffing in dummy and can then draw trumps. If West ruffs, declarer overruffs in the dummy and can draw West's two remaining trumps. All declarer loses are four diamond tricks and the ♣A.

"The tactic of throwing a loser on a losing trick is referred to as discarding a loser on a loser. South doesn't mind losing two extra diamond tricks while discarding hearts, since the two heart tricks would have been lost anyway. By exchanging the losers, however, declarer avoids the loss of a trump trick."

Suggested Defense

"As we have discussed, the best defense is for East to continue leading diamond winners. If declarer ruffs, West can overruff and the contract is defeated. The defenders will eventually take two heart tricks and a club trick to go along with the two diamond tricks and the trump trick.

"If South does discard two hearts on the third and fourth rounds of diamonds, East's best defense is to lead a fifth round of diamonds — perhaps after taking the ♣A somewhere along the way. West can ruff the fifth round of diamonds with the ♠9, forcing declarer to overruff with dummy's ♠K to win the trick. Declarer can escape without a trump loser at this point by playing the ♠A and ♠Q, but doesn't know for certain that the remaining trump divide 2–2. Declarer might decide to finesse the ♠10, hoping East started with the ♠J. West will get an unexpected trick with the ♠J to defeat the contract."

Bid and Play — Deal 3: Using Landy with Two-Suited Hands

> **Guidelines for Teachers:** This deal involves some complex variations. The contract will be 2♥ played from the short trump side, if the auction goes as planned using Landy.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal where Landy is the perfect bid to describe the overcaller's hand."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. Using Landy, the bidding is pretty simple. Make sure everyone gets to 2♥ before you let them play out the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
Pass	1NT	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

"After two passes, North opens the bidding 1NT. East would like to compete, but it is dangerous to enter the auction over 1NT. If East picks the wrong suit, the partnership might get into trouble if West doesn't have a fit. Having a two-suited hand provides some safety, since partner is likely to have a fit for at least one of the suits. If East–West use the Landy convention, East can overcall 2♣, showing both major suits.

"South doesn't have enough to say anything over East's intervention. South's clubs aren't strong enough to double the conventional bid for penalty. West's diamonds aren't good enough to suggest that suit as trump. East has shown both major suits and could be very short in diamonds. Since East has asked West to pick a major, West should bid 2♥, which will probably end the auction."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North has a difficult choice of opening leads. Knowing West prefers hearts to spades, North might choose to lead a trump, trying to prevent West from ruffing spades. North might lead a low heart, in case South holds some help in the suit. On regaining the lead, North will be in a position to play the ♥A and another heart."

Suggested Play

The emphasis on this hand should be on the importance of establishing side suits while retaining control. Most students will go for ruffing a loser early rather than look at the long range plan.

"If North does lead a low heart at trick one, West needs to plan the play carefully. From West's perspective, there are only six winners: four hearts, the ♠A and the ♦A. West might consider ruffing club losers in the dummy, but the defenders will regain the lead and play two more rounds of trumps. A better plan is to try to establish the diamond suit.

"Declarer wins the first heart in dummy (East) and leads the ♦J. If South plays a low diamond, declarer can take a finesse, losing to North's ♦K. If North then leads the ♥A and another heart, declarer can win again in dummy and lead the ♦9, overtaking with the ♦10 to repeat the finesse. With the favorable lie of the diamonds, this will give declarer four diamond tricks. Combined with four tricks from the heart suit and the ♠A, declarer will make the contract with an overtrick. If South covers the ♦J with the ♦Q, West can win the ♦A and then drive out North's ♦K. If North leads more hearts, declarer can win in the West hand and take the diamond winners. Again, declarer takes at least nine tricks.

"Declarer should avoid being too eager to ruff any of East's spades. The defenders could then prevent West from getting four tricks from the diamond suit, because of entry problems."

Suggested Defense

"If declarer does go about establishing tricks in the diamond suit, there isn't much the defenders can do. If declarer does ruff a spade in the West hand, the defenders can hold declarer to eight tricks. The defenders can lead trumps to prevent declarer from ruffing a second spade. If South covers the ♦J when it is led from dummy, West won't have enough entries to get four tricks from the suit. Declarer still will be able to establish a trick with dummy's fifth spade as a trick and take eight tricks.

"East–West do well to get into the auction, since they can take at least eight tricks with hearts as trumps. If East passes 1NT and that ends the auction, East will have to guess to lead a heart and not a spade. If East leads a spade against 1NT, declarer can make the contract.

"If East overcalls 2♠, the auction will probably end there. East can be defeated in that contract, losing three spade tricks, one heart, one diamond and one club."

Bid and Play — Deal 4: Dealing with Interference

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal demonstrates another example of a loser on a loser play, if the bidding and play go as planned.

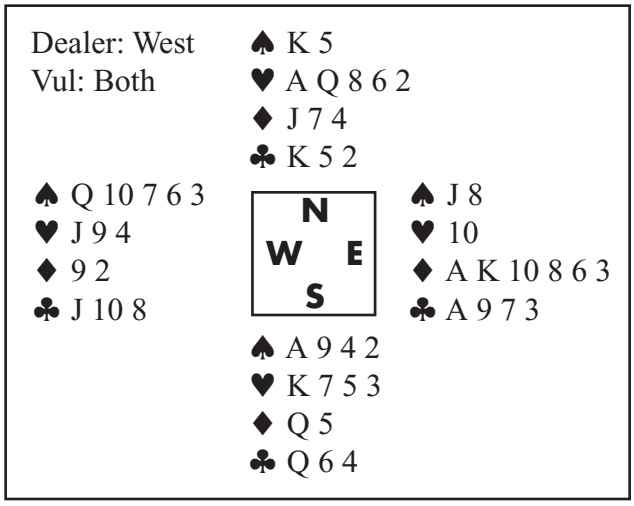
Introduction

"Let's play another deal where a loser on a loser can be a valuable tool in making the contract. But first, let's see how the responder uses a cuebid to describe the hand."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #3, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. Since the emphasis on this hand should be the loser on a loser play, make sure everyone gets to a contract of 3♥ before you let them play out the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♥	2♦	3♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"North opens 1♥, and East has enough to overcall 2♦. If East had passed, South would have made a limit raise to 3♥. After the interference, the usual agreement is that a jump raise is weak and preemptive. To show the strength for a limit raise or better, South starts with a cuebid of 3♦.

"West passes, and the auction comes back to North. With a minimum opening bid, North returns to 3♥, rejecting South's invitation.

"East has already described the hand with the overcall and, with no support from West, bidding any more would be dangerous. South also should pass. South has only enough strength for a limit raise, and North has declined the invitation by rebidding 3♥. South's pass should end the auction."

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"Against 3♥, East would lead the ♦A, top of touching honors — or the ♦K, if the partnership leads the king from this combination."

Suggested Play

Again, remember the emphasis is on the loser on a loser play, a continuation of the discussion you started on the second deal.

"Assuming the missing hearts aren't divided 4–0, there are no heart losers, three diamond losers and two club losers. After the opening lead, declarer can establish a winner in the diamond suit. Given East's overcall, however, there is some danger that West will be able to ruff declarer's diamond winner.

"Suppose East plays the ♦A, the ♦K and a third round of diamonds. If declarer ruffs low, West may overruff. There are still two potential club losers, so the contract might be defeated. Declarer could ruff the third round of diamonds with the ♥K, but that might promote a trump winner for the defenders, unless the missing hearts are divided 2–2.

"Declarer's best play is to discard a club from dummy on the third round of diamonds. West can ruff, but declarer avoids losing two club tricks. The third round of clubs can be ruffed in dummy after trumps have been drawn. Declarer loses two diamond tricks, a ruff and one club trick."

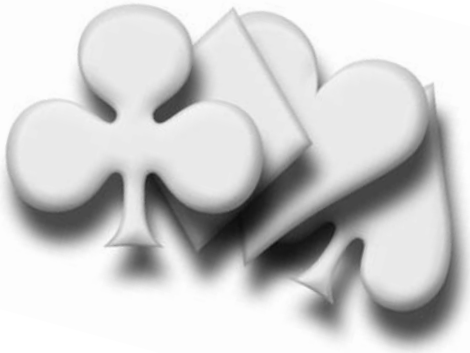
Suggested Defense

"On the lead of the ♦A, West should play the ♦9 as an encouraging signal. East can continue with the ♦K and a third round of diamonds. As noted above, if declarer ruffs with dummy's ♥K, West will eventually get a trick with the ♥J.

"If declarer ruffs with a low heart, West can overruff. Now the defenders must be careful to get both of their club tricks. If West leads back the ♣J, for example, and declarer plays a low club, East must avoid the temptation to play the ♣A. That would give declarer two club tricks with the ♣K and ♣Q. Instead, East should play low, letting dummy's ♣Q win the trick. Now declarer's ♣K is trapped, and the defense will eventually get two club tricks, defeating the contract."

LESSON 4

Two–Suited Overcalls



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

Two-Suited Overcalls

This lesson continues the discussion of overcalls. The focus is on conventional methods for showing two-suited hands: the Michaels cuebid and the *unusual notrump.*

Bidding

First, there are examples to show how the classic use of the direct cuebid — to show a very strong hand — can be replaced by starting with a takeout double. The standard version of Michaels — to show both major suits — and the extended version — to show the other major and an unspecified minor — are introduced. Some additional applications of the Michaels cuebid are discussed, but the leaping Michaels variation is left to the Appendix in the textbook.

Another form of two-suited overcall, the unusual notrump, is also introduced. The modern-day version — a jump to 2NT shows the two lower unbid suits, not just the minor suits — is presented, along with some variations on the use of the unusual notrump.

No specialized defense to two-suited overcalls is discussed. There is a section on unusual over unusual in the Appendix of the textbook if the subject is raised.

Here are the topics covered:

Direct Cuebid

This section briefly covers the classic use of the direct cuebid to show a hand that would have started with a strong two-bid, if the right-hand opponent had passed. Such hands are rare. The modern style is to handle them by starting with a takeout double and following with a cuebid, if necessary.

Michaels Cuebid

The original form of Michaels — the direct cuebid of opener's minor suit to show both majors — and the extended form — the direct cuebid of a major to show the other major suit and a minor — are introduced. The most popular variation is discussed. It's assumed that the cuebid promises at least five cards in each suit and shows a relatively weak hand. This allows the advancer to act accordingly — taking preemptive action with a weak hand, but a good fit. Michaels also can be used with a very strong hand, where the cuebidder plans to bid again, even if the advancer stops at a low level. Five–five hands, of opening-bid strength or better, are typically handled by overcalling the higher-ranking suit, planning to show the second suit if the opportunity arises.

Advancing After a Michaels Cuebid

The advancer assumes the Michaels cuebid shows a relatively weak, distributional hand and acts accordingly. When the overcall has shown an unspecified minor suit, the advancer needs a way to ask which minor suit is held, typically 2NT. Emphasis is placed on the advancer's ability to assess the combined fit when partner shows a two-suited hand. Most students are unaware of the relative safety of bidding to a high level with a good fit — either your side will make the contract or their side should be able to make something.

Other Uses of Michaels

This section discusses how Michaels is used in competitive auctions, both from the overcaller's point of view and the advancer's point of view.

The Unusual Notrump

Both the original version of the unusual notrump — a jump overcall of 2NT to show both minor suits — and the modern variation — using 2NT to show the two lowest-ranking unbid suits — are discussed. The convention is typically used in a manner similar to the Michaels convention — to describe either a weak or very-strong distributional hand with at least five cards in each of the two suits.

Advancing After the Unusual Notrump

The advancer bids after an unusual notrump in a manner similar to the Michaels cuebid. The primary intent is to disrupt the opponents' auction, although the unusual notrump will sometimes lead to a good contract that might not be reached through standard methods. The emphasis is on the advancer's judgment, given the nature of the hand promised by the unusual notrump overcall.

Other Uses of the Unusual Notrump

Once the principle of the unusual notrump is understood, the convention can be applied in a number of situations. Just how creative one can be with the unusual notrump depends on the experience of the partnership.

Play & Defense

The deals are all examples of the Michaels cuebid and the unusual notrump in action. With most competitive deals, it is unlikely all of the auctions will go exactly as planned. Nonetheless, at the end of each deal, you can walk the students through the intended bidding and play.

Because of the bidding concepts in this lesson, most of the deals will be played from the short side. Declarer will need to focus on establishing dummy's suits instead of trying to eliminate all of the losers in declarer's hand. This change in perspective is an important concept to get across. The deals focus on:

- Trump management
- Suit establishment
- Handling suit combinations

Counting

The first deal is a partscore contract with many possible variations. It will be best to take the students through only one possible line of play that will allow declarer to take eight tricks. The important concept to stress is that declarer should establish dummy's side suit when dummy also holds the length in trumps.

The second deal requires a careful sequence of plays to avoid losing control. Again, the concept is to establish dummy's side suit, making good use of the trump suit for ruffs and entries throughout the process. Don't go through too many variations. Walk through the line of play that will bring declarer ten tricks.

The third deal involves careful handling of a suit combination when taking a finesse. You can emphasize the concept of not leading a high card unless you can afford to have it covered. A second concept is to review the auction for clues to the location of missing cards. Most declarers are likely to guess the deal correctly without giving much thought to the auction — but that won't be the case on the following deal. So, this is a good opportunity to get the students to start thinking about the location of the missing high cards.

The fourth deal involves dropping an offside king when missing three cards in the suit. The only way to do this — which goes against the odds if the suit is played in isolation — is to pay attention to the bidding. Counting the missing high-card points is a difficult concept, but most of the students should be able to follow the logic on this deal — once it is explained.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The previous lesson covered the typical use of the overcall — as a natural bid to show a one-suited hand. The concept of using a conventional (artificial) bid to show a two-suited hand was introduced with the Landy convention. This lesson takes that idea further, with two commonly used conventions that describe two-suited hands.

You might start the lesson like this:

> "A competitive auction can make it challenging for your side to exchange information, but there are advantages to entering the auction after the opponents have opened the bidding. For example, the takeout double lets you show three suits at once!
>
> "In this lesson, we'll look at a couple of conventional bids that allow you to show two suits at once. That's a lot safer than putting all of your eggs in one basket with a simple overcall showing a single suit. When you can show two suits, you are twice as likely to find a fit with partner. That reduces the risk that the opponents will be able to double for penalty."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Direct Cuebid

Introduction

"When the opponents open the bidding in a suit, you rarely want to play with that suit as trump. If an opponent opens 1♥, for example, it's unlikely that you want to bid 2♥ to suggest playing with hearts as the trump suit for your side. Instead, an immediate overcall in the opponent's suit is called a direct cuebid and is usually assigned a conventional meaning.

"Since an opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦ can be made on a three-card suit — or even fewer cards in some bidding systems — some partnerships do play that a direct overcall in opener's minor suit is a natural bid. That's the exception, however, and most partnerships treat a direct overcall in the opponent's suit as artificial, whether the opening bid is a major suit or a minor suit.

"Traditionally, the direct cuebid was used to show a very strong hand — the type of hand that you would have opened with a strong two-bid, if there had not been an opening bid in front of you."

Instructions

"Sort the cards into suits. Construct the following hand in front of South.

"In spades: the ace, the king, the queen and three low cards.
"In hearts: the ace, the king and two low cards.
"In diamonds: two low cards.
"In clubs: the ace."

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2♣

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x x x
♥ A K x x
♦ x x
♣ A

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of South.

"**If South were the dealer, what would South open?** (2♣) You would start with a strong conventional (artificial) 2♣ bid.

"**Suppose the player on your right is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make?** (2♣/Double.) This hand is too strong to overcall 1♠ because partner might pass, and you are likely to make game even if partner has very little. You don't want to jump right to 4♠, however, since that doesn't leave the partnership any room to explore for the best contract — partner might have a singleton spade and six hearts, for example.

"Traditionally, you could show this hand with a direct cuebid of your opponent's suit, 2♣. This bid would be forcing to game, and you would start to describe your hand on the next round of bidding. Partner would have to say something over the 2♣ cuebid and would simply bid a long suit, treating the cuebid as a form of takeout double. You would then bid your spades, and partner would have to bid again.

"Originally, the direct cuebid also showed first-round control of the opponent's suit — either the ace or a void. On this hand, that would be perfect, since you have the ♣A. Over time, however, that restriction was dropped and, if the opening bid were 1♦, for example, you would still start with a cuebid of 2♦ — even though you have two losers in the diamond suit.

"The use of the direct cuebid to show a strong hand is no longer popular among tournament players. There are a couple of reasons for this:

- Very strong hands are extremely rare when an opponent opens the bidding. Retaining the cuebid to show this type of hand, therefore, isn't a very effective use of the bid.
- There are other ways to show a strong hand.

"**What call could South make to get North to bid something?** (Double.) The takeout double is similar to the cuebid in that it asks partner to bid. Although you don't have support for all of the unbid suits, it doesn't matter when you have a very strong hand. You have more than enough to bid again, no matter what North says. This is just an extension of the use of the takeout double to show a hand too strong for a simple overcall. In this case, you're much too strong to make a simple overcall, but you will show your strength later.

"**Suppose South doubles and North advances to 1♦. What would South call next?** (2♠.) If you double and then bid only 1♠, you are showing a hand too strong to overcall at the one level — but not this strong. Instead, jump to 2♠ on your rebid. A takeout double followed by a jump in a new suit is forcing. It shows a hand similar to the strength of a strong two-bid.

"Another option you have to show a strong hand is to double and then cuebid. If North were to respond 1♥ to your takeout double of 1♣, for example, you could show a big hand by cuebidding 2♣ and then raising hearts. That way, you can investigate slam possibilities, even if North doesn't have very much."

Summary

"In conclusion, there isn't much of a need to reserve the direct cuebid for very strong hands. Such hands come up rarely and, when they do, there are other ways to handle them. That means that the direct cuebid can be put to more practical use."

Michaels Cuebid

Introduction

"Mike Michaels, a bridge writer, lecturer and longtime associate of Charles Goren in various journalistic enterprises, invented a conventional use of the direct cuebid which has become quite popular. Michaels suggested using the direct cuebid of the opponent's opening 1♣ or 1♦ bid as a two-suited takeout showing both major suits."

Instructions

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the ace.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add the queen and a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace and add a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2♣

SOUTH
♠ K Q x x x
♥ K Q x x x
♦ x x
♣ x

"**East, on your right, opens 1♣. Using the Michaels cuebid, how would South show this hand?** (2♣.) The direct cuebid of the opponent's minor suit shows a two-suited hand with both major suits. Since the 2♣ cuebid will force North to choose a major suit at the two level, you should have at least five cards in each major suit. You can see one way the Michaels cuebid differs from a takeout double of 1♣. A takeout double would show support for all three unbid suits — diamonds, hearts and spades. Partner would only expect four-card support for an unbid major suit.

"**If East's opening bid were 1♦, what would South bid?** (2♦.) The cuebid shows nothing about your holding in the minor suit. It merely promises at least five cards in each major suit.

"**If North–South were not using the Michaels convention, what call would South make after a 1♣ or 1♦ opening bid?** (1♠.) With no conventional methods available, you would make a simple overcall. With two five-card suits, you would start with the higher-ranking, spades, hoping to show your second suit later, if you get an opportunity.

"Discuss with the others at your table some of the advantages and disadvantages of using the Michaels cuebid."

Give the participants a couple of minutes to discuss the convention among themselves.

"**What are some of the advantages of the Michaels cuebid?** (Descriptive/ Obstructive.) The Michaels cuebid has some advantages over the simple overcall of 1♠:

- You describe your hand right away. Partner immediately knows where ten of your cards are located. If you were to overcall 1♠, partner would not know that you had a two-suited hand.
- It is especially useful if your left-hand opponent competes. If you overcall 1♠, you might not get an opportunity to show your heart suit if the auction is too high when it comes back to you.
- Giving partner a choice of two suits is safer than entering the auction with a one-suited hand. It's quite likely that partner will have a fit for at least one of your suits. Even three-card support will give you an eight-card fit.
- Cuebidding takes more room away from the opponents than a simple one-level overcall. At the same time as you are describing your hand to partner, you are obstructing the opponents from finding their best spot.

"**What are some of the disadvantages to using the Michaels cuebid?** (Higher level / Gives away information.) There are some disadvantages to Michaels:

- You are committing the partnership to at least the two level. Partner will have to bid 2♥ or 2♠ to choose one of your suits. If you have no fit in either suit, the partnership could be dangerously overboard. On the other hand, if you were planning to bid spades and then show your heart suit, you would be at the two level anyway before you had described your hand.
- The Michaels cuebid describes your hand to the opponents as well as to partner. They may be able to take advantage of that knowledge in the play or the defense.
- You will need another way to show a very strong hand when the opponent opens 1♣ or 1♦. As mentioned earlier, this can be handled by starting with a takeout double.

"Most players feel that the advantages of the Michaels cuebid outweigh the disadvantages.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the queen and add a low card.
"In hearts: take away the king and add two low cards.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2♣

SOUTH
♠ K x x x x
♥ Q x x x x x
♦ x
♣ x

"**East opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (Pass/2♣.) You have to exercise your judgment on whether to use the Michaels convention. Most partnerships use the convention to show a relatively weak, distributional hand with at least five cards in each major. The better the distribution, the friskier you can afford to be. It's a good idea to keep an eye on the vulnerability, however. This would be an acceptable hand to cuebid 2♣ if non vulnerable. It's likely you can find a fit at the two level. Even if North has only a doubleton heart, you will at least be in an eight-card fit. If your side is vulnerable, however, and your opponents are not, you might want to exercise some caution and pass.

"North will have to make a call after your Michaels cuebid, so it's important that North knows what type of hand to expect. If your cuebid can cover too wide a range, partner won't know whether to take further preemptive action, to be cautious or to constructively look for a game contract. The guideline, therefore, is that partner should assume you have less then the values for an opening bid when you use Michaels.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away a low card and add the ace.
"In hearts: take away two low cards and add the ace.
"In diamonds: add the queen.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♠

SOUTH
♠ A K x x x
♥ A Q x x x
♦ Q x
♣ x

"**East opens with 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♠.) Although you are 5–5 in the major suits, the hand is too strong for a Michaels cuebid. Start with a simple overcall of 1♠. You are strong enough that it is unlikely the auction will be too high before you get another chance to bid. Even if West does raise to the two or three level, you are strong enough to introduce your second suit.

"Apart from leaving North in the dark as to your strength if you use Michaels on this type of hand, you leave yourself with a problem of what to do next.

If you were to cuebid 2♣ and North were to bid 2♥, you wouldn't know whether to bid again. After all, you've forced North to bid at the two level, and North might have a weak hand with only two-card support for hearts — or even a singleton on a really bad day.

"The caution about using the Michaels cuebid with an intermediate-strength hand of 12 to 16 points doesn't apply when you have a very strong distributional hand.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the jack.
"In hearts: add the jack.
"In diamonds: take away the queen and a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2♣

SOUTH
♠ A K J x x x
♥ A Q J x x x
♦ —
♣ x

"**East opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make?** (2♣.) You certainly want to insist on playing in a major suit, and the Michaels cuebid convention will get you off to a good start. You'll find out which major North prefers, and then you can raise to game. You expect to have a chance at making 4♥ or 4♠, even if North has only a couple of cards in the majors.

"The Michaels cuebid is used either with a relatively weak distributional hand with both majors or a very strong hand with both majors — not an in-between hand. Having said that, some partnerships do elect to play Michaels with intermediate-strength hands.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the ace and a low card.
"In hearts: take away the ace.
"In diamonds: add three low cards.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥/Pass

SOUTH
♠ K J x x
♥ Q J x x x
♦ x x x
♣ x

"**East opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♥/Pass.) Michaels is only used with at least five cards in each major. If you were to bid 2♣, North might have to bid 2♠ with only two or three spades — putting the partnership in a very poor contract which may get doubled for penalty. Instead, you will have to choose between passing or making an overcall of 1♥, showing your five-card suit.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: take away the queen, the jack and a low card.
"In diamonds: add the king and the queen.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♠

SOUTH
♠ K J x x x
♥ x x
♦ K Q x x x
♣ x

"**East opens the bidding 1♣. What call does South make?** (1♠.) Playing the Michaels cuebid, a cuebid of opener's minor shows both major suits, not spades and diamonds. This hand doesn't fit the Michaels convention. Instead, make a simple overcall of 1♠, the higher-ranking of the two five-card suits. You may get an opportunity to show the diamonds later. If not, you've done your best.

Note to Teacher: **Keep the hand above on the table. It will be used again after doing Exercise 1.**

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — Michaels Cuebid over a Minor

What call would East make with each of the following hands after North opens 1♦?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♦	?	

1) ♠ Q J 9 6 5
♥ K J 10 8 3
♦ 8
♣ 7 2

2) ♠ A Q J 7 6
♥ A Q 10 8 6 3
♦ 4
♣ A

3) ♠ A Q 8 7 3
♥ A K J 3
♦ 7 3
♣ 6 4

Exercise One *Answer* — Michaels Cuebid over a Minor

1) 2♦ (Michaels cuebid). The immediate cuebid of the opponent's minor suit shows both major suits and, typically, a weak hand. Competing to the two level doesn't carry too much risk if non-vulnerable, since West is likely to have a fit with at least one of the major suits. It would be riskier when vulnerable, but many players would still take a chance on competing.

2) 2♦ (Michaels cuebid). Although the cuebid usually shows a weak hand with both major suits, it can be used with a very strong hand. East plans to bid again after hearing which major suit West prefers.

3) 1♠. The distribution is not right for a Michaels cuebid, which promises at least five cards in each major. This hand is also too strong for a Michaels cuebid. Instead, overcall in the longer suit. East may get to show the hearts later in the auction.

"**If East were to open the bidding 1♥ instead of 1♣, what call would South make?** (2♥.) Although the original version of the Michaels cuebid applied only when the opening bid was a minor suit, the idea was soon extended to include a way of showing a two-suited hand over an opponent's opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠:

> A direct cuebid of an opponent's opening major suit bid shows at least five cards in the other major suit and at least five cards in one of the minor suits.

"**If South were to bid 2♥ as the Michaels cuebid convention, what would North know about South's hand?** (Spades and clubs or diamonds.) South would be showing at least five cards in spades — the other major suit — and at least a five-card club suit or a five-card diamond suit. North won't know which minor suit. We'll see how North gets that information in a moment.

"As with the cuebid of a minor suit, the cuebid of a major suit tends to show a weak or very strong distributional hand. With 12 to 16 high-card points, it's usually best to simply overcall in the major suit, planning to show the minor suit later.

"Change the South hand.
"In diamonds: take away all five cards.
"In clubs: add the ace and four low cards.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	2♥

SOUTH
♠ K J x x x
♥ x x
♦ —
♣ A x x x x x

"**If East opens the bidding 1♥, what call would South make?** (2♥.) A cuebid of 2♥ would show a two-suited hand with spades and an unspecified minor suit. By bidding 2♥, you are committing the partnership to the two level … or the three level if partner doesn't have a fit for spades. You don't have to use the Michaels convention. It's a tool you have available.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦. What call does South make?** (Pass/2♣/1♠.) You can't cuebid 2♦ because that would show both major suits. When you don't have a two-suited overcall available, the hand is awkward to describe. You could simply pass, or you could make a rather light overcall of 2♣ — bidding your longer suit — or you could overcall 1♠ — promising a five-card spade suit but keeping the true distribution of your hand hidden. Your choice would be a matter of judgment . Most players would probably overcall 1♠ — taking some action without getting too high.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the king and add a low card.
"In diamonds: add the king.
"In clubs: take away the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	Pass

SOUTH
♠ J x x x x
♥ x x
♦ K
♣ x x x x x

"**What would South call if East opened 1♥?** (Pass.) Although a bid of 2♥ would show spades and a minor suit, you aren't forced to use the Michaels cuebid just because you have the right distribution. Neither of your suits is worth showing. Bidding is likely to help the opponents more than your side.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away a low card and add the ace.
"In hearts: add the king, the jack and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the king and add a low card.
"In clubs: take away three low cards.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	1♠

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**What would South call if East opened 1♥?** (1♠.) A cuebid of 2♥ would show spades and a minor suit, not both majors. Over 1♥, you would make a simple overcall of 1♠.

"**If East opened 1♣, what would South call?** (2♣.) Now you could make a Michaels cuebid showing both major suits."

Summary

"When the opponent on your right opens the bidding at the one level in a suit, you can use the Michaels cuebid convention to show a two-suited hand:

- A direct cuebid of opener's minor suit shows both major suits.
- A direct cuebid of opener's major suit shows the other major and an unspecified minor suit.

"You should have at least five cards in both suits and either a relatively weak distributional hand — less than the high-card strength for an opening bid — or a very strong distributional hand with which you intend to bid again after hearing partner's response."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Michaels Cuebid over a Major

What call would East make with each of the following hands after North opens 1♥?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♥	?	

1) ♠ K J 10 7 4
♥ 8 3
♦ 7
♣ K Q 10 7 5

2) ♠ Q 10 7 5 4 3
♥ —
♦ K 10 9 8 4 2
♣ 4

3) ♠ K Q 10 8 4
♥ K 4
♦ A Q 8 7 3
♣ 5

Exercise Two *Answer* — Michaels Cuebid over a Major

1) 2♥ (Michaels cuebid). The cuebid shows spades and a minor suit. If West doesn't like spades, West can respond 2NT to find out which minor suit East has. East would then bid 3♣.

2) 2♥ (Michaels cuebid). East doesn't need much strength to get into the auction with a two-suited hand with such good distribution. With 6–6, East should be willing to compete in whichever suit West prefers.

3) 1♠. This is the right distribution for a Michaels cuebid, but the hand is too strong. West would expect a much weaker hand (see previous examples), and a game could be missed. East overcalls, intending to show the second suit, if given an opportunity later in the auction.

Advancing After a Michaels Cuebid

Introduction

"When partner makes a Michaels cuebid, visualize partner's two-suited hand when deciding what to call. Partner isn't promising a lot of strength in terms of high cards. Instead, partner wants to compete on the grounds of good distribution — the possibility of having a good trump fit. The better your side's trump fit, the more aggressively you can compete.

"The Michaels cuebid is both constructive — describing the hand and looking to compete for the contract — and obstructive — getting in the way of the opponents' auction. It is similar to the opening weak two-bid in that sense. When choosing how to respond to the Michaels cuebid, you must decide between bidding constructively to your side's best contract and bidding obstructively to prevent the opponents from reaching their best contract."

Instructions

"Leave the South hand as it is and construct a hand in front of North.
"In spades: a low card.
"In hearts: the queen and two low cards.
"In diamonds: the queen and three low cards.
"In clubs: the king, the queen and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ Q x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ K Q x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♦. What call does South make?** (2♦.) South can make a Michaels cuebid to show five cards in each major.

"**If West passes the 2♦ cuebid, what call does North make?** (2♥.) Knowing that South has at least five hearts and five spades, North should give preference to one of the major suits. North should bid 2♥ for several reasons:

- By bidding 2♥, North puts the partnership in an eight-card major suit fit at the cheapest possible level.
- Since South will typically have less than the values for an opening bid, North has no reason to look for game, especially with such a mediocre fit with South's suits.
- Even though North has a five-card club suit, North should not consider bidding clubs. South is unlikely to have more than one or two clubs.

- Although North–South have some length and strength in all four suits, it is unlikely that notrump will be a good choice. Without much of a fit in any suit, it will be difficult to develop enough winners. Even if winners can be developed in the heart suit, it may be difficult to reach them. By playing with hearts as trump, entries may be developed to the North hand.

"**If North bids 2♥ and East passes, what call should South make?** (Pass.) South has already described the hand with the Michaels cuebid. If North shows no interest in reaching game, South should not bid again. The partnership is high enough — or too high — already. Remember, South has essentially forced North to bid something. North's 2♥ is not freely bid.

"**How will North–South fare in a contract of 2♥?** (Hard to say.) It's difficult to judge how the play will go in a contract of 2♥, especially when the contract is declared from the short — three-card — side. From declarer's perspective — the North hand — there are a lot of losers to consider: a heart loser, four diamond losers and four club losers.

"It is usually easier to consider the play from the South side — the hand with the long trump suit. From that perspective, there are four spade losers, one heart loser (assuming the missing hearts divide 3–2), one diamond loser and one club loser. It should be possible to do something about the spade losers. If the opponents don't lead trumps, you may get to ruff a couple of spade losers in dummy. Even if the opponents do lead trumps, you can still ruff one spade loser, and you may eventually establish another winner in the spade suit through length.

"You will probably finish with at least seven tricks: four heart tricks, one club trick, the ♠A and at least one spade ruff. You might even make the 2♥ contract on a lucky lie of the cards or imperfect defense.

"**Would reaching a contract of 2♥ necessarily be a poor result?** (No.) As we've seen, you might actually take eight tricks. Even if you go down one trick, it's likely that East–West can make a partscore — perhaps eight or nine tricks in diamonds or seven or eight tricks in notrump. In addition, your bidding might push the opponents into a poor contract. Perhaps they will get too high in diamonds or reach 3NT and go down when your side leads hearts — now that you know you have a fit in hearts. A lot of things can happen in a competitive auction, so the interference stands to have more to gain than to lose.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South makes a Michaels cuebid of 2♦ and West bids 3♦. What call does North make?** (Pass.) West's bid relieves North from the obligation of responding to the Michaels cuebid. North can pass and choose to defend. Having described the hand with the 2♦ cuebid, South has no reason to bid again.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South cuebids 2♦ and West doubles. What call should North make?** (2♥.) West's double does give North an opportunity to pass since South will get another call. With a preference for hearts over spades, however, North should bid 2♥.

"There are two reasons for this:

- If North passes, South will assume that North has equal preference —or lack of preference — for hearts and spades. It will be up to South to choose the trump suit, and South may bid 2♠ rather than 2♥. Now the partnership will have to go to the three level to get to its best fit.
- If North–South are in trouble, a pass by North followed by an attempt to reach the best spot will let East–West know exactly how much trouble they are in. East–West might start doubling. If North bids a confident 2♥ right away, East–West may be unaware that North–South are in a poor contract. They are more likely to simply continue and bid on to their own contract.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ K Q x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	2♦
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**If East opens 1♦, what call does South make?** (2♦.) South starts with a Michaels cuebid.

"**If West passes, what call does North make?** (2♥.) If West passes, North has to make some call or the partnership will be playing in the opponent's suit! Distasteful as it is, North should call 2♥, the cheapest available bid in one of South's known suits.

"**If East passes, what call does South make?** (Pass.) You can see why South usually should pass North's response to the Michaels cuebid. South already may have pushed the partnership too high.

"**How will North fare if left to play in 2♥?** (Poorly.) North will really have to work hard to take more than four or five tricks. The Michaels cuebid doesn't guarantee success when competing. It can occasionally get the partnership to a poor contract. You just have to hope this is the exception, not the rule.

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South bids 2♦ and West doubles. Now what should North call?** (Pass/2♥.) With no preference for either major suit, North can pass and leave the decision to South. South will have to pick one of the major suits — the longer major if South has more cards in one

major than the other, or the stronger major if South has equal length in the two suits.

"As mentioned before, North's pass is likely to invite East–West to start doubling whichever suit South picks. A confident 2♥ call by North might stave off this possibility — although it also might land the partnership in the wrong suit. Sometimes, you just have to do your best in a difficult situation. Let's turn to the more positive situations where North does have a good fit with at least one of South's suits.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add the ace and the queen.
"In clubs: take away the king and the queen.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	2♦
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♦, South bids 2♦ and West passes. What call does North make?** (2♥/3♥/4♥.) North has a good fit with one of South's majors, but it is unlikely that the partnership has enough for game, since South has less than the values for an opening bid. North could settle for 2♥, hoping to make that contract, but that doesn't take advantage of the obstructive value of the Michaels cuebid. If North–South have a good fit, it is likely that East–West also have a good fit. If North bids only 2♥, East–West still may have plenty of room to find their best contract.

"A better choice is a jump to 3♥. This is a preemptive raise, not an invitation to game — although South could bid game with exceptional distribution. With a strong hand, North could bid game or cuebid the opponents' suit. This bid is designed to get North–South to a reasonably safe level while making things difficult for the opponents. North might even jump to 4♥ as a preemptive action, but that might be taking things a little too far.

"**If North does jump to 3♥ and East passes, what call should South make?** (Pass.) South has a fairly typical hand for a Michaels cuebid — about what North could expect — and, therefore, has no reason to bid again. Hopefully, North's preemptive action has done its work — getting the partnership to a reasonable spot while keeping East–West out of the auction.

"**If South and West pass, how will North fare in a 3♥ contract?** (Eight or nine tricks.) Although North will be declarer, it is still easier to look at the play from South's perspective. From South's point of view, there are four spade losers, one diamond loser and two club losers. The contract can be made if the spade losers can be held to one trick. This should be possible by ruffing one or two spade losers in the North hand. The remaining spades in the South hand should become winners. Unless suits divide very badly, North should be able to get away with one spade loser, one diamond loser

and two heart losers — making exactly 3♥.

"**How would East–West fare in a diamond or club contract?** (At least nine tricks.) East–West should be able to take at least nine tricks in diamonds or clubs. At most they are likely to lose one spade trick, two heart tricks and one diamond trick. If their four hearts are divided 3–1, they will lose only one heart trick. They also may avoid losing a diamond trick with the help of a successful finesse. They might make game their way. So, the jump to 3♥ could be effective in that way, even if North–South can't take nine tricks. East–West could miss a partscore or a game contract — or they might be pushed into bidding too much.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card and add the king.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K x			1♦	2♦	♠ A J x x x
♥ A Q x x	Pass	4♥	Pass	Pass	♥ K J x x x
♦ Q x x x					♦ x
♣ x x x					♣ x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♦ and South bids 2♦. West passes. What call does North make?** (4♥/3♦.) To bid accurately opposite a Michaels cuebid requires good judgment. Instead of counting the combined points, you need to visualize how the two hands will fit together. Here, you have only 11 high-card points and 2 of them — the ♦Q — are likely to be worthless. Nonetheless, it would be a reasonable gamble to jump to 4♥.

"Not only do you have a good fit in hearts — at least nine cards in the combined hands — you have some help in South's other suit, spades. South has at most three cards in the minor suits, so you have at most three losers outside of hearts and spades. You probably have no heart losers. Even if you are missing the ♥K — which is unlikely — you may be able to avoid a loser with the help of a finesse. If South holds the ♠A, you can visualize avoiding any losers in the spade suit. Declarer should be able to ruff any losing spades in North's hand and establish any remaining spades as winners.

"**If North does bid 4♥ and everyone passes, how will the contract fare?** (Ten tricks.) Unless the major suits divide very unfavorably, North should make 4♥, losing only one diamond and two clubs. So, the Michaels cuebid can help you reach a good game contract with only 20 high-card points in the combined hands. In fact, you might take 10 tricks without the ♠J, the ♦Q and the ♥J — only 16 high-card points. That's the power of the descriptive value of the Michaels cuebid.

"It is possible to be more scientific. Instead of jumping to 4♥, North might want to find out whether South has a minimum or a maximum for the Michaels cuebid.

"**What forcing bid can North make?** (3♦.) A further cuebid of the opponents' suit is forcing for one round and shows at least enough strength to be interested in game. With a minimum for the Michaels cuebid, South would bid 3♥. With more than a minimum, South should make some other call.

"**If North were to cuebid 3♦, what call would South make?** (4♥/3♥). With 9 high-card points concentrated in the major suits, South has a good hand for the Michaels cuebid, especially if non vulnerable. South should probably jump to 4♥, showing a willingness to play in game in whichever major North prefers. If vulnerable, South might take a more conservative view and rebid only 3♥. South probably wouldn't make a vulnerable Michaels cuebid with much less. As you can see, both partners must exercise their judgment when trying to reach the appropriate level.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the ace and add the queen.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K x			1♣	2♣	♠ Q J x x x
♥ A Q x x	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥	♥ K J x x x
♦ Q x x x	Pass	Pass	Pass		♦ x
♣ x x x					♣ x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♣ and South, non vulnerable, overcalls 2♣. West passes, and North shows interest in reaching game by cuebidding 3♣. What call does South make?** (3♥.) With a very minimal Michaels cuebid, South should bid 3♥.

"**What call would North make now?** (Pass.) Since South has shown a minimum, North can settle for 3♥.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add two low cards.
"In hearts: take away two low cards.

NORTH	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K x x x			1♣	2♣	♠ Q J x x x
♥ A Q	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥	♥ K J x x x
♦ Q x x x	Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass	♦ x
♣ x x x	Pass				♣ x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♣ and South overcalls 2♣. What call might North make to show an interest in reaching game?** (3♣.) The cuebid shows at least game interest. With a good fit with partner's major suits, North is interested in reaching a game in spades if South has a good hand.

"**If North cuebids 3♣, what call does South make?** (3♥.) With a minimum Michaels cuebid, South bids hearts at the cheapest available level.

South doesn't know whether North is interested in reaching game in hearts or spades — or something else. South is simply showing a minimum hand by bidding 3♥.

"**After South bids 3♥, what call does North make?** (3♠.) North corrects to 3♠, putting the partnership in its best trump fit.

"**What call does South make now?** (Pass.) South has the same minimum hand and should pass 3♠. North has merely clarified which suit should be trump.

"Delicate investigation is a little tricky opposite a Michaels cuebid. Although it will sometimes be possible, in most cases the advancer should simply make a reasonable decision on the best level for the partnership and get to it right away. Besides, most of the time, the opponents also will be competing vigorously for the contract, so there won't be much room for accuracy — both sides will be guessing.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add two low cards.
"In diamonds: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ Q x x
♦ x x x
♣ x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	2♦
Double	4♠		

SOUTH
♠ Q J x x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**Suppose North-South are non vulnerable and East opens 1♦. What call might South make?** (2♦.) Whether East opens 1♣ or 1♦, South could make a Michaels cuebid with this hand when non vulnerable.

"**Suppose West doubles the 2♦ bid. What call does North make?** (2♠/3♠/4♠.) West's double could mean various things depending on the East–West agreements. Most likely, it shows some strength in diamonds. Whatever it means, however, shouldn't affect North's decision. Since South is showing both major suits and North has only 5 high-card points, North might take the conservative view of bidding 2♠. That's not likely to get the partnership into much trouble since there is at least a nine-card fit. A more aggressive bid would be a preemptive jump to 3♠, taking some bidding room away from the opponents. The truly aggressive bid, however, is a jump to 4♠!

"**Looking at the combined hands, how are North–South likely to fare in a contract of 4♠?** (Down two or more.) There's at least one spade loser and one heart loser, even if both suits are divided reasonably in the East–West hands. Since South has a singleton diamond and a doubleton club, North–South will have to lose at least three tricks in those suits. The best North–South could hope for is to go down two tricks. If the major suits divide unfavorably, it's possible that 4♠ could be defeated three or four tricks.

"So, the best case scenario is that North–South might be doubled and escape for a penalty of 300 points, since they are non vulnerable.

"**Would that be a disaster?** (No.) Since North-South have only 12 HCPs, East–West have 28 HCPs and probably some distributional points as well. They can make at least a game contract and, very likely a slam contract. Whatever game contract they might reach will be worth far more than 300 points."

If the students don't believe this, have them randomly deal out the remaining cards to East and West and see what contract East–West can make. East–West will have at least 10 tricks in notrump and 11 tricks in either 5♣ or 5♦ — most likely 12 or even 13 tricks.

"By jumping to 4♠, North is risking a loss of 300 or 500 points in the hope that East–West will misjudge the situation. East–West may double for penalty when they would get more for bidding a game, or settle for game when they can make a slam, or get to slam when they can make only game.

"In addition, East–West may not know whether North's jump to 4♠ is based on values — with the expectation of making the contract — or based on weakness. They might even let North–South escape undoubled in a 4♠ contract.

"North should probably bid 4♠ over almost any bid that East makes — 3♣, 3♦, 2NT, 3NT and so forth.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away a low card and add the ace.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the queen, the jack and a low card.
"In clubs: add the ace, the queen and a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ Q x x
♦ A x x
♣ x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	2♠
Pass	3♥	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ A Q x x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♠. What call does South make?** (2♠.) South can cuebid 2♠ to show a two-suited hand with hearts and a minor suit.

"**If West passes, what call does North make?** (3♥.) With only 9 HCPs and a mediocre fit with partner, North isn't interested in reaching game opposite a Michaels cuebid. Instead, North wants to get the partnership to the best partscore. North doesn't know which minor suit South has — but doesn't care. With three-card support for hearts, North can bid 3♥, putting the partnership in an eight-card fit.

"**If East passes North's 3♥ bid, what call does South make?** (Pass.) South has described the hand with the Michaels cuebid. With nothing extra, South respects North's decision to play in partscore. In fact, the partnership

may be too high already.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: add the jack.
"In clubs: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ x
♦ A J x x
♣ x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	2♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ A Q x x x

"**Suppose East opens 1♠, South overcalls 2♠ and West passes. What call does North make?** (2NT.) North doesn't like hearts and wants to play in the partnership's minor-suit fit. To ask which minor South holds, North bids 2NT. 2NT is conventional (artificial) and simply asks partner to bid the minor suit.

"**If North bids 2NT and East passes, what call does South make?** (3♣.) South bids the minor suit at the cheapest available level.

"**If West passes, what call does North make?** (Pass.) North is happy to play in a partscore in the nine-card minor-suit fit.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king and two low cards.
"In hearts: add the queen.
"In diamonds: add a low card.
"In clubs: add the king.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ Q x
♦ A J x x x
♣ K x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	2♠
4♠	4NT	Pass	5♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ A Q x x x

"**East opens 1♠, and South overcalls 2♠. Suppose West jumps to 4♠. What call does North make?** (4NT.) It's probably not a good idea to choose to defend 4♠ when you know your side has at least a 10-card minor-suit fit and a partial fit in hearts. To find out which minor suit partner holds, North bids 4NT. This isn't the Blackwood convention; it simply asks South to name the minor suit.

"If North bids 4NT and East doubles or passes, what call does South make? (5♣.) South bids the minor suit at the cheapest available level."

The following point should be made only if the class is reasonably advanced.

> "**Suppose East bids 1♠, South makes a Michaels cuebid of 2♠ and West bids 3♠. What call does North make?** (4♣/4NT.) West's 3♠ bid takes away North's artificial 2NT bid. If North wants to compete at the four level in a minor suit, North must bid 4♣, not 3NT. The standard agreement is that 3NT is always a natural bid — to play — after a Michaels cuebid. The advancer has no other way to play game in notrump with a strong hand. So, to compete at the four level, the advancer has to bid 4♣. South is now expected to pass with clubs but to 'correct' to 4♦ when diamonds is the second suit. Instead, North could jump to 4NT. That would not be Blackwood … since it is highly unlikely that North–South are looking for slam in a competitive auction. It would ask South to name the minor suit.
>
> "It's subtleties like this that can lead to misunderstandings when a partnership adopts a new convention. It will work well when the auction continues in a predictable manner, but it may get the partnership into trouble when the auction moves into uncharted waters."

Summary

> "When partner makes a Michaels cuebid over a minor suit, showing both major suits, the advancer can:
>
> - Give preference with 2♥ or 2♠ with no interest in game.
> - Make a preemptive jump to 3♥ or 3♠.
> - Jump to 4♥ or 4♠ to play. This could be preemptive, or it could be bid with the intention of making the contract.
> - Make a further cuebid in the opponents' suit to show at least game-invitational values.
> - Bid 2NT as a natural invitational bid, or bid 3NT to play — although this is rarely done opposite a two-suited hand.
>
> "When partner makes a Michaels cuebid over a major suit, showing the other major and a minor suit, the advancer bids in a similar fashion with the exception that:
>
> - 2NT (or 4NT) is conventional (artificial), asking partner to bid the minor suit."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Advancing After a Michaels Cuebid

What would West respond with each of the following hands after East uses a Michaels Cuebid?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	2♥	Pass
?			

1) ♠ 10 7 2
♥ Q 8 7 6
♦ Q 8 3
♣ K 7 2

2) ♠ K 10 7 5
♥ 6
♦ J 9 6 2
♣ Q 6 5 4

3) ♠ 8
♥ 10 8 7 6 3
♦ K 4 2
♣ J 9 6 5

4) ♠ K Q 8 4
♥ A 8 3
♦ K 7 4
♣ K 8 2

5) ♠ K 10 5 4 2
♥ 6 5 3
♦ Q 7 6 5
♣ 10

6) ♠ 10 7
♥ 6
♦ A J 9 8 3
♣ A K 10 6 2

Exercise Three *Answer* — Advancing After a Michaels Cuebid

1) 2♠. East is showing at least five spades and five cards in a minor suit. West puts the partnership in its eight-card fit at the cheapest available level.

2) 3♠ (or 4♠). There is at least a nine-card fit in spades and also a nine-card fit in whichever minor suit East holds. 3♠ may not make, but if that's the case, the opponents can probably make, at least a game in hearts. West should not leave room for them to find their best spot. If West is aggressive, West might jump to 4♠.

3) 2NT. West doesn't like spades; 2NT asks which minor suit East holds. West intends to pass whether East bids 3♣ or 3♦.

4) 3♥. With an excellent fit in spades and a strong hand, West expects to make at least 4♠. Slam is still a possibility, since West also has a useful king in whichever minor suit East holds. Cuebidding the opponent's suit shows at least game-invitational values. If East makes a minimum bid, 3♠ for example, West bids game. By bidding game in this manner, West shows interest in slam. If East shows a good hand by jumping to 4♠, West can investigate bidding slam. East–West might make a slam, if East has as little as:

♠A 10 9 7 2 ♥7 2 ♦A Q 10 6 3 ♣6.

5) 4♠. The partnership has at least a ten-card fit in spades. If East's other suit is diamonds, there is a good fit in two suits. If East's other suit is clubs, there isn't more than one loser in that suit, and East won't have many hearts and diamonds. If 4♠ doesn't make, the opponents will have at least a game — and maybe a slam — in hearts.

6) 4NT. Whichever minor suit East holds, there is a tremendous fit. West asks East to show the minor suit at the game level.

More About the Michaels Cuebid

Introduction

"Once the partnership is familiar with the basic form of the Michaels cuebid, its use can be extended to other situations."

Instructions

"Remove the North hand and change the South hand.
"In spades: add the ace, the jack and a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace, the queen and a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1 ♦	Pass	Pass	2 ♦

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ K J x x x
♦ x
♣ x x

"**Suppose West opens the bidding 1 ♦ and both North and East pass. What call does South make?** (2 ♦.) The Michaels cuebid can be used in the balancing position. By cuebidding 2 ♦, South shows both major suits.

"**Suppose South is the dealer and decides to pass. West opens 1 ♣, North passes and East responds 1NT. What call can South make?** (2 ♣.) Even though South is a passed hand, North should be able to work out that a cuebid of 2 ♣ is the Michaels convention, showing both majors.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2 ♦	3 ♦

SOUTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ A K J x x x
♦ x
♣ x

"**You hold the South hand, and East opens the bidding with a weak 2 ♦ bid. What call can South make?** (3 ♦.) The immediate cuebid over a weak two-bid could be used to show a very strong hand or given some other meaning by the partnership. However, most partnerships that use the Michaels cuebid would assume that a 3 ♦ cuebid was showing both major suits.

"In this situation, South would promise a reasonably good hand with both major suits. When the opponents open with a preemptive bid, you should not also make an obstructive bid.

"**Suppose West deals and opens the bidding 1♣. North passes, and East raises to 2♣. What call does South make? (3♣.)** You could simply overcall 2♥, but it will be awkward to show the spades later if West or East compete further in clubs. Instead, a cuebid of 3♣ will likely be interpreted by partner as the Michaels cuebid convention, showing both major suits.

"**Suppose East is the dealer and opens 3♣. How might South describe this hand?** (4♣.) Again, most partnerships would assume that a bid of 4♣ would be the Michaels cuebid convention, showing both major suits."

Summary

"The basic concept of the Michaels cuebid convention can be extended into areas of the auction other than a direct cuebid at the two level. Before doing this, however, the partnership should discuss the various sequences that might occur. Otherwise, it's possible for the partnership to have some misunderstandings."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Four — More about the Michaels Cuebid

What call does West make with each of the following hands after an opponent has interfered?

1) ♠ Q 8 6
♥ J 3
♦ Q 9 6 3
♣ K 10 7 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	2♣	3♣
?			

2) ♠ 7 3
♥ 4
♦ A J 7 4 2
♣ A Q 8 6 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	2♥	4♥
?			

3) ♠ 2
♥ Q J 8 6 4
♦ 9 3
♣ A Q 10 7 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
2♠	3♠	3NT	Pass
?			

4) ♠ Q 2
♥ 10 8 6 3
♦ 7 5 2
♣ 9 7 5 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	2♦	3♦
Pass	4♦	Double	Pass
?			

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2♥
?			

Exercise Four *Answer* — More about the Michaels Cuebid

1) Pass. The opponent's 3♣ bid has let West off the hook. It's no longer necessary for West to give preference to one of East's major suits.

2) 4NT. East is showing spades and a minor suit. West asks East to bid the minor suit at the five level. Even if East–West can't make 5♣ or 5♦, the opponents can probably make 4♥.

3) Pass. East's 3NT is to play. East would have bid 4♣, if interested in playing in a minor suit.

4) 4♥. East's initial Michaels cuebid showed a weak hand with both major suits. The subsequent cuebid, however, shows a strong hand. East wants to play in a major suit at the game level. West shows preference for hearts. Even though West has only 2 points, there is a good chance to make a game.

5) 3♥. This is an extended form of the Michaels cuebid, showing spades and a minor suit — if that is the partnership's agreement. When not certain of the agreement, it's safer to overcall 2♠ and hope to show the diamonds later.

The Unusual Notrump

Introduction

"A convention similar to the Michaels cuebid is the unusual notrump convention. It was introduced to the game in 1948 by Al Roth and Tobias Stone, and this convention is considered a standard part of the game today — even by many people who don't play tournament bridge."

Instructions

"Pick up all the cards and put them into suits. Construct the following hand in front of South.

"In spades: a low card.
"In hearts: a low card.
"In diamonds: the king, the queen and three low cards.
"In clubs: the king, the jack, the ten and three low cards.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	2NT

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ x
♦ K Q x x x
♣ K J 10 x x x

"**East is the dealer and opens the bidding 1♥. What call does South make?** (2NT/Pass/2♣.) You could simply pass or overcall your long suit, 2♣. Neither of these bids describes your hand very well. If you were to choose to overcall 2♣ and West jumped to 4♥, for example, you might miss a big fit in diamonds.

"To show this type of two-suited hand, Roth and Stone suggested that, over an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠, a jump to 2NT should be used to show both minor suits. They reasoned that the jump overcall of 2NT didn't have much practical use as a natural bid. It's rare to hold a balanced hand with more than 20 points when an opponent opens the bidding. If you ever do, there are other ways to handle the auction — by starting with a takeout double and then bidding 2NT, for example.

"Similar to the Michaels cuebid, the unusual 2NT bid tends to show a very distributional hand with at least five cards in each suit. It tends to be obstructive — not much in the way of high-card strength — while giving your side a good chance to compete in one of the suits. The partnership may be able to find a cheap sacrifice if the opponents reach game. Occasionally, the partnership might reach a good game or slam based on having an excellent fit.

"**What call would South make if East opened 1♠ instead of 1♥?** (2NT.) The unusual notrump shows both minor suits over an opening bid of either 1♥ or 1♠.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In diamonds: add the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	2NT

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ x
♦ A K Q x x x
♣ K J 10 x x x

"**East opens 1♥. What call does South make?** (2NT.) With quite a strong distributional hand and both minor suits, you can still start with 2NT. Partner will assume you have the weaker type of hand, but you can show the added strength and distribution by bidding again after partner shows a preference for one of the minor suits. If partner bids 3♣, for example, you can raise to 4♣ or 5♣, or you could now cuebid 3♥ or 3♠ — showing interest in reaching a slam if partner has just the right cards.

"Cuebidding, after using a convention such as Michaels or the unusual notrump, requires good partnership trust and cooperation. Otherwise, there's always the possibility that partner will get confused about what is going on and you might land in a poor contract.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: add the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the king.
"In clubs: take away two low cards.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	Dbl/2♦

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ Q x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ K J 10 x

"**What call would South make if East opens 1♠?** (Double/2♦.) This would not be a good hand for an unusual 2NT overcall. You only have four-card support for clubs, and you have an intermediate-strength hand. You wouldn't be sure what to do if partner responded 3♣ or 3♦, for example. Partner will be assuming you have a weak distributional hand. Besides, you might belong in a heart contract.

"Instead, you'll have to choose between making a takeout double or making a simple overcall of 2♦. Either call would be reasonable.

"**If East opened the bidding 1♥, what call would South make?** (2♦/Pass.) Again, bidding 2NT to show both minor suits would be a poor choice. You would be committing the partnership to at least the three level, and you don't have a very distributional hand. The opponents might start doubling, and you could suffer a large penalty while the opponents may not even be able to make game.

"Instead, choose between overcalling 2♦ or passing. Your decision might depend on the vulnerability. Overcalling 2♦ is a little risky if your side is vulnerable and the opponents are not, but most players would overcall 2♦ at any other vulnerability.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add three low cards.
"In clubs: take away the king, the jack and a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2NT

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ Q x x x x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ 10

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 1♣? What call would South make?** (2NT/1♥.) You could make a simple overcall of 1♥, perhaps hoping to get to show the diamond suit later. With a fairly weak distributional hand, however, you may not get a second opportunity. The opponents might be at a high level in spades or clubs when the auction comes back to you, and your side might miss a good diamond fit.

"Most modern partnerships have extended the use of the unusual notrump to show the two lowest-ranking unbid suits rather than specifically showing clubs and diamonds. Over a 1♣ opening, a jump to 2NT would then show hearts and diamonds, the two lower-ranking suits excluding clubs. That would be a very descriptive bid, allowing your partnership to compete and create some obstruction for the opponents.

"**If East opens the bidding 1♠ rather than 1♣, what call would South make?** (2♠.) You can't use the unusual notrump, because that would show the two lowest-ranking unbid suits, clubs and diamonds. Instead, you could use the Michaels cuebid to show a distributional hand with hearts and an unspecified minor suit.

"You can see how the Michaels cuebid and the unusual notrump are very similar. Depending on whether East opens 1♣ or 1♠, you have different ways to show a two-suited hand, and partner will be picking a suit at the three level or higher in this case.

"**Is there any disadvantage to using the Michaels cuebid or the unusual notrump on hands such as this?** (Too high / Give away information.) There's always the risk that partner will not have a fit with either of your suits. You could get the partnership too high on a misfitting hand — and the penalty doubling might start. In describing your hand to North, you also are describing your hand to the opponents. This is likely to help the opponents during the play. You'll have to weigh the advantages of entering the bidding and disrupting the opponents' auction against the possible disadvantages."

Summary

"When the opponents open the bidding one of a suit:

- A jump to 2NT shows a two-suited hand with at least five cards in each of the two lowest-ranking unbid suits.
- The unusual 2NT usually promises a relatively weak distributional hand, although it can occasionally be used with a strong hand."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 5 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Five — The Unusual Notrump

What call would East make with each of the following hands after North opens 1♥?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
	1♥	?	

1) ♠ 7
♥ 5
♦ K J 8 7 6 5
♣ A J 10 8 5

2) ♠ 8 4
♥ 7 3
♦ A K J 8 7
♣ A K 10 2

3) ♠ A J 9 8 7
♥ 8 6
♦ 3
♣ K Q 10 8 5

Exercise Five *Answer* — The Unusual Notrump

1) 2NT (unusual 2NT). This shows the two lower-ranking unbid suits, clubs and diamonds. If West has a fit for one of the suits, East–West should be safe at the three level.

2) 2♦. The unusual 2NT shows at least five cards in both lower-ranking unbid suits. Also, it tends to show a weak hand. Bidding 2NT with this hand would send the wrong description to West. East settles for an overcall in the good five-card diamond suit.

3) 2♥ (Michaels cuebid) or 1♠. 2NT would show the two lower-ranking unbid suits, clubs and diamonds. The Michaels cuebid is available to show spades and a minor suit by bidding 2♥. Another option is a simple overcall of 1♠.

Advancing After the Unusual Notrump

Introduction

"When partner makes an unusual 2NT bid, you respond in a fashion similar to a Michaels cuebid. You assume partner has a fairly weak distributional hand and typically choose one of the suits as the trump suit. You make a further obstructive bid by jumping in one of the suits and look for a game or slam contract with an excellent fit."

Instructions

"Leave the South hand face up on the table and construct a hand in front of North.

"In spades: the king and three low cards.
"In hearts: a low card.
"In diamonds: the jack and two low cards.
"In clubs: the ace, the jack and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ x
♦ J x x
♣ A J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	2NT
Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ Q x x x x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ 10

"**East opens 1♣. What call does South make?** (2NT.) South can show both red suits — diamonds and hearts — by jumping to 2NT.

"**Assuming West passes, what call does North make?** (3♦.) Even though most of North's strength is in the black suits, North shouldn't pass 2NT. The partnership is unlikely to get many tricks in notrump when the hands don't fit well together and there aren't many entries back and forth. Instead, North should support one of South's suits — diamonds in this case.

"**If East passes North's 3♦ bid, what should South call?** (Pass.) South has said everything — and then some — with the 2NT bid. If partner isn't interested in going any higher, South should leave well enough alone. In fact, the partnership is probably too high already. North may have difficulty taking more than five or six tricks in 3♦. It's probably best to hope that the opponents don't double the 3♦ contract. Even better, they may continue bidding and reach some poor contract for their side.

"**Suppose East opens 1♣, South jumps to 2NT and West bids 3♠. What should North call?** (Pass.) West's bid has taken North off the hook. North can sit back and defend. North will have the advantage of knowing what South's hand looks like when defending.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the queen and three low cards.
"In clubs: add the king and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ x
♦ J x x
♣ A J x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	2NT
Double	4/5♣		

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ K 10 x x x

"**East opens the bidding 1♥. What call does South make?** (2NT.) South can show both minor suits — the lowest two unbid suits — by jumping to 2NT.

"**Suppose West doubles. What call does North make?** (4♣/5♣.) North could pass the double, since South will get another chance to bid, but that would be a poor tactic. Since South won't have many hearts, North knows that East–West probably have a 10-card fit or more in that suit. With an excellent fit in clubs and a partial fit in diamonds, North should be willing to compete in clubs. A bid of 3♣ is unlikely to interfere very much with the opponent's auction. Since the partnership has at least a 10-card fit in clubs, North should be willing to go to at least the four level. North can make a preemptive jump to 4♣ or, more aggressively, to 5♣.

"How high North bids will depend on the vulnerability. At favorable vulnerability — North–South non vulnerable and East–West vulnerable — North should probably jump right to 5♣. This puts the maximum pressure on East–West to decide what to do. They might overbid and go down or choose to defend when they would have done better to bid. When vulnerable, North might be a little more cautious and jump to only 4♣ — hoping that will be enough to interfere with the opponents' bidding.

"**How would North–South fare in a club contract?** (10 or 11 tricks.) With South's singleton spade and North's singleton heart, they will probably only lose two tricks in the majors. With no likely loser in the club suit, everything will hinge on the diamond suit. The ♦10 is an important card. If North–South have it, they may take 11 tricks with the help of a successful finesse. Without it, they probably — but not definitely — will have to lose a diamond trick and be held to 10 tricks.

"**How would East–West fare in a heart contract?** East–West have no losers in the heart suit and at most one loser in the club suit. They might have to lose one trick in spades, depending on the location of the ♠A. They might have two diamond losers — depending on the location of the ♦K. On balance, they should take at least 10 tricks in a heart contract.

"As you can see, it won't be clear exactly how many tricks each side can take until the play. That's what makes competitive bidding exciting — especially when both sides have distributional hands. Both the Michaels cuebid and the unusual notrump can lead to interesting results.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add the ace and the queen.
"In diamonds: take away a low card and add the king.
"In clubs: take away two low cards.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ A Q x
♦ K J x
♣ A J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	2NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ K x x x x

"**East opens the bidding 1♥. What call does South make?** (2NT.) South can show both minor suits with a jump to 2NT.

"**West passes. What call does North make?** (3♥/3NT/5♣/5♦.) Despite the fit with both of partner's suits, the practical call is 3NT. It will probably be easier to take nine tricks than 11. As when advancing after a Michaels bid, 3NT by the advancer is usually a natural bid (unless the advancer is a passed hand, for example).

"North has other options. North could simply jump to game in one of the minor suits, or North could start with a cuebid of 3♥. That would allow North to explore for a possible slam contract or the best minor-suit game contract — but it figures to take the partnership past 3NT, which may be the best contract.

"**Is there any disadvantage to a bid of 3NT by North?** (Yes.) Since South bid notrump first, South will become the declarer. The lead will come from West, through the North hand. A lead of either major suit by West would be unfavorable, but is unlikely to be fatal to the contract. South should still be able to take at least nine tricks on most layouts."

Summary

"When partner makes an unusual 2NT bid, your advances follow a pattern similar to those after a Michaels cuebid:

- A simple preference to one of partner's suits shows no interest in game.
- A jump in one of the suits is preemptive if it is below the game level.
- A jump to the game level could be a weak preemptive bid or a bid with the intention of making the contract.
- A cuebid of the opponent's suit is forcing for one round and shows at least game-invitational values.
- 3NT is to play."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 6 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Six — Advancing After the Unusual Notrump

What call would West make with each of the following hands after North opens 1♥, and East overcalls 2NT?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	2NT	Pass
?			

1) ♠ K 9 7 5 3
♥ Q 10 8
♦ K 5 2
♣ J 4

2) ♠ K Q 7 4
♥ 5
♦ Q 8 6 5
♣ J 9 6 3

3) ♠ J 8 3
♥ A 8 7 5 3
♦ 9 4
♣ K 10 2

4) ♠ A J 8 3
♥ K 8 3
♦ 10 7 4
♣ Q J 2

5) ♠ 6
♥ Q 2
♦ 10 9 7 6
♣ K 9 8 7 4 2

6) ♠ A K J 10 8 7 3 2
♥ 4
♦ 8 3
♣ A 2

Exercise Six *Answer* — Advancing After the Unusual Notrump

1) 3♥. East's unusual 2NT shows the two lower-ranking unbid suits, clubs and hearts. Since West prefers hearts to clubs, the suit is bid at the cheapest available level.

2) 3♣. East is showing hearts and clubs. West has a distinct preference for clubs.

3) 4♥. East is showing hearts and clubs, so West has an excellent fit for both suits. If East holds as little as ♠7 ♥Q 10 9 6 4 2 ♦10 ♣A J 9 6 4, there could be game. In the meantime, the opponents will do well in spades or diamonds, if there is any room to explore.

4) 4♥. West has only three hearts, but East has at least five. There also are some fitting cards in clubs and the useful ♠A. Game is likely, if East holds something like ♠4 ♥A Q 10 5 2 ♦9 3 ♣K 10 7 6 4.

5) 5♣. West has a tremendous fit in clubs and some help in hearts. Although West doesn't have much in high cards, West also doesn't have much defense against a spade or diamond contract by the opponents. 5♣ may be a good sacrifice.

6) 4♠. West isn't interested in either of East's suits, but doesn't need much from East to make game, even if East is void in spades. West's jump to game in spades says, "This is where I'd like to play."

More About the Unusual Notrump

Introduction

"Like the Michaels cuebid, the concept of the unusual notrump can be extended to other situations once the partnership is comfortable with the basic idea."

Instructions

"Leave the South hand face up on the table. Pick up the North cards and put them back into suits.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	2NT

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ K x x x x

"**Suppose East deals and opens 1♠. Would South jump to 2NT?** (Maybe.) It would probably depend on the vulnerability and how aggressive you are. Jumping to 2NT would commit the partnership to the three level and, with your suits lacking a lot of intermediate cards, you might elect to pass.

"**Suppose you do pass, and West raises to 2♠. North and East pass. Now what does South call?** (2NT.) Now you are in the balancing position. East and West have stopped at the two level and you have only 9 high-card points. You can infer that partner has some of the missing strength. Your side might be able to make a partscore or, by bidding, you might push the opponents higher. You can't afford to double, since you don't have support for hearts.

"Most partnerships would treat a bid of 2NT by South as unusual at this point, showing the minor suits, even though you didn't jump to 2NT. It's highly unlikely that you have a natural 2NT bid, having passed over 1♠. You can't be expected to have much strength."

With a more advanced group, you can discuss that 2NT at this point would show a two-suited hand but not necessarily both minors. If South had hearts and diamonds, for example, South might balance with 2NT. If North bid 3♣, South would correct to 3♦, asking North to choose between diamonds and hearts.

"**Suppose East deals and opens the bidding 1NT. Now what does South do?** (Pass/2NT.) It may not be advisable to come into the auction over the opponent's 1NT bid, but the modern style is to compete aggressively. If you are not vulnerable, you might decide to bid. Instead of making a simple overcall of 2♦, you could bid 2NT. This would certainly be unusual, and partner would assume that you are showing both minor suits. Whether you will be safe at the three level — who knows?"

Again, with a more advanced group, you can point out that 2NT might show a variety of distributional hands. Many partnerships have conventional methods that specify the meaning of 2NT in this sequence.

> "**Suppose South is the dealer. What call would South make?** (Pass.) You don't have quite enough to open the bidding."

Some students might want to open a slightly off-center weak 2♦. There is nothing wrong with that, but it isn't the "standard" call since South doesn't have a six-card suit.

> "**Suppose South passes and West now opens 1♥. North passes and East responds 1♠. Now what can South call?** (1NT/2NT/ Double/2♦/Pass.) You could simply pass or overcall 2♦, but you might want to show both of your minor suits. One way to do that would be to make a takeout double. Partner isn't going to expect too much strength since you passed originally.
>
> "You also could jump to 2NT to show both minor suits and create some disruption to the opponents' auction at the same time. This might be a little dangerous, however, since both opponents are bidding and partner may have little or no strength. If you don't find a good fit, you may get into trouble.
>
> "One other choice is to bid 1NT. This is certainly unusual, since you didn't open the bidding. Partner should assume that you are showing a distributional hand with both minor suits. This allows you to enter the bidding, show both suits and avoid getting higher than the two level.
>
> "As you can see, sometimes there are a variety of competitive choices once you incorporate the unusual notrump into your repertoire. An experienced partnership usually draws a fine distinction between the various bids you can make in a situation like this.
>
> "For example:
>
> - Double would tend to show more high-card strength and less in terms of distribution. You could have only four cards in each of the unbid suits, clubs and diamonds.
> - 1NT would be a "lighter" takeout based on good distribution, probably at least five cards in both minors.
> - 2NT would be a very distributional takeout for the minors — perhaps 6–5 or 6–6 in the minors.
> - 2♦ would conceal your distribution from both partner and the opponents. It might be the best choice if you don't think your side can compete effectively, but you would like partner to lead a diamond rather than a club if partner ends up on lead."

With a more experienced group, you can point out that some partnerships have a similar agreement even if South is not a passed hand. The partnership would have to discuss this beforehand, however. Otherwise, an overcall of 1NT by South would be treated as a natural bid, showing a balanced hand with 15 to 18 points.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away two low cards.
"In diamonds: add the jack.
"In clubs: add the ace.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		4♥	4NT

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ —
♦ A Q J x x x
♣ A K x x x x

"**Suppose East is the dealer and opens the bidding 4♥. What call could South make?** (4NT.) The standard agreement here is that 4NT would be unusual for the minor suits. It would not be the Blackwood convention, asking for aces."

With a more experienced group you could discuss that a bid of 4NT over an opening bid of 4♠ would show a two-suited hand, but not necessarily both minor suits. With hearts and clubs, for example, South might bid 4NT intending to correct partner's 5♦ bid to 5♥.

"**Suppose East opens 3♥ instead of 4♥. What call could South make?** (4NT.) A jump to 4NT would be considered as unusual, showing both minor suits. Be careful not to bid 3NT. That would not be unusual. It would simply show a strong balanced hand with the desire to play in notrump.

"**If East opens with a weak 2♥ bid, what call does South make?** (4NT.) Again, a jump to 4NT would be considered unusual, asking partner to pick a minor suit. A bid of 2NT, or 3NT, would not be unusual. Either of those bids would be natural.

"**Suppose East opens 1♥. What call could South make?** (4NT/2NT.) A jump to 4NT would be considered unusual in most partnerships and would get partner to choose a minor suit at the five level. It also would have the effect of interfering with the opponents' auction, since East–West may have a big fit in the major suits.

"If you are uncertain how partner would interpret a jump to 4NT, you could start with a jump to 2NT. That would certainly be the unusual notrump showing both minor suits. Of course, if partner bids only 3♣ or 3♦, you plan to bid again … perhaps simply raising to game or cuebidding to look for a possible slam.

"**Suppose East opens 1♥ and South does choose to jump to 2NT. West now jumps to 4♥ and both North and East pass. What call does South make?** (Double/4NT.) A bid of 4NT would be unusual and it insists that partner pick a minor suit. In an experienced partnership, you might double. That would say you have a very good hand with both minor suits. Partner will still pick a minor suit most of the time, but will have the additional option of defending for penalty with shortness in both minor suits and some strength in the major suits. That is getting fairly subtle."

Summary

"Once the partnership is familiar with the principles of conventional two-suited overcalls, there is a large variety of situations in which the concept can be applied. The partnership needs to be careful, however, that there has been some discussion beforehand. Otherwise, there is potential for a major misunderstanding when a conventional bid is used in an unfamiliar situation."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 7 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Seven — More About the Unusual Notrump

What call would West make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as indicated?

1) ♠ J 8 7 4
♥ 3
♦ A Q 8 7 3
♣ K 5 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	2NT	4♥
?			

2) ♠ Q 9 8 6 3
♥ K 8 4
♦ Q 2
♣ Q 10 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	2NT	Pass
?			

3) ♠ K J 7 2
♥ J 8 5 3
♦ 7 2
♣ Q 6 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	1NT	Double
?			

4) ♠ J 8 4
♥ Q 10 8 6 4
♦ J 10 2
♣ Q 8

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	2NT	Pass
?			

5) ♠ Q J 8 7 6 3
♥ J 8 4
♦ Q 9 4
♣ 10

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	4♥	4NT	Pass
?			

Exercise Seven *Answer* — More About the Unusual Notrump

1) 5♦. East's jump to 2NT shows diamonds and clubs. With an excellent fit for diamonds and some help in clubs, West bids game. Even if 5♦ doesn't make, the opponents quite likely can make their game.

2) 3♣. East passed over 1♥, so the 2NT bid is certainly unusual! East is unwilling to pass the hand out in 2♥ and is making a competitive call with diamonds and clubs. With support for all three unbid suits, East would have doubled. With a preference for clubs, West bids 3♣.

3) 2♥. East passed originally, so the 1NT bid can't be natural. It is a light takeout for the unbid suits, hearts and diamonds, and tends to show at least five cards in each suit. West has a preference for hearts.

4) 3♦. With a strong hand, East would have doubled the opponent's 1NT opening, so the 2NT bid is unusual. West assumes it is for the lower two unbid suits, diamonds and clubs, and shows the slight preference for diamonds.

5) 5♦. The standard agreement is that East's 4NT bid is unusual, showing the two lower-ranking unbid suits — diamonds and clubs in this case. West shows a preference for diamonds.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 4*

Guidelines for Teachers: The deals in this lesson are all examples of the Michaels Cuebid and the unusual notrump. Because of the bidding concepts in this lesson, most of the contracts will be played from the short side. Declarer will need to focus on establishing dummy's suits instead of trying to eliminate all of the losers from declarer's hand. This change in perspective is an important concept for the teacher to get across. The deals focus on trump management, suit establishment and handling suit combinations.

Bid and Play — Deal 1: Michaels Cuebid Over a Minor

Guidelines for Teachers: This first deal is a partscore contract with many possible variations. Take the students through only one possible line of play that will allow declarer to take eight tricks.

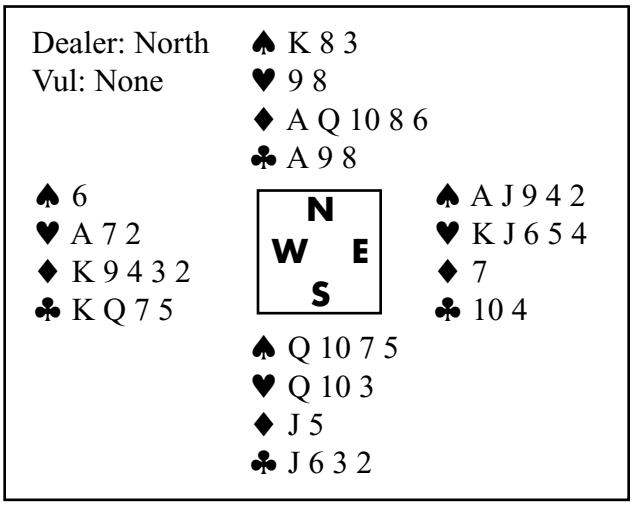
Introduction

"Let's play a deal that demonstrates the use of the classic Michaels Cuebid."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #4, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)



* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. Have all tables play a contract of 2♥ by West.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

"With a balanced hand but only 13 high-card points, North opens in the longest suit. East could make a simple overcall of 1♠, the higher-ranking of the two five-card suits. Playing the Michaels cuebid convention, however, East can show both major suits by cuebidding 2♦.

"South doesn't have enough strength to take any action at the two level. West has a hand of opening-bid strength, but doesn't have a very good fit with East's announced suits. With three-card heart support for East's "known" five-card suit, West can put the partnership in its eight-card fit by bidding 2♥. Since the Michaels cuebid typically shows less than the strength for an opening bid, West has no reason to go any higher than partscore. With some strength in the minor suits, West might consider bidding 2NT, but distributional hands should usually be played in the partnership's best trump fit. Developing tricks and getting back and forth between the two hands may be difficult in a notrump contract.

"West's 2♥ bid should end the auction. North has nothing extra; East's hand has already been described with the cuebid, and South is content to defend with some length and strength in the majors and no fit in North's suit."

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North doesn't have a clear-cut choice of leads. South hasn't shown any strength during the auction, and leading an ace may help declarer establish tricks. Leading a spade may not be successful, since that is one of the suits shown by East. A reasonable option is to lead a trump. This won't give much away and may prevent declarer from ruffing some of dummy's spade losers."

Suggested Play

"Playing contracts from the short side, the side with the fewer trumps, requires a shift in perspective. From the West point of view, declarer has a lot of losers — one possible heart loser, five diamond losers and three club losers. It is usually better to view things from the side with the most trumps, East in this case. Dummy has four spade losers, one heart loser, one diamond loser and one club loser. From that angle, a plan is easier to form. Declarer has to eliminate two losers. Declarer plans to ruff one

or two spades with the trumps in the West hand. Then declarer can lead spades to establish a trick through length if the missing spades are divided 4–3.

"For example, if North leads a trump, declarer might try playing the ♥J from dummy, although it is unlikely North has led a heart holding the ♥Q. Whichever heart is played from dummy, declarer will have to win the first trick with the ♥A. West can then lead a spade to dummy's ♠A and ruff a spade. With no quick entry back to dummy, West can lead the ♣K to establish the ♣Q as a winner. North will win the ♣A and probably lead another heart to prevent declarer from ruffing another spade loser. Declarer can win this with dummy's ♥K, in order to lead a third round of spades and give the trick to the opponents.

"The defenders won't be able to prevent declarer from eventually getting back to dummy to lead another spade and establish dummy's fifth spade as a winner. Playing as suggested above, declarer will lose two spade tricks, one trump trick, one diamond trick and one club trick — taking exactly eight tricks."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders do best to lead trumps at every opportunity to try to prevent declarer from ruffing spades in the West hand. If they don't lead trumps, declarer may make nine tricks by ruffing two spade losers in the West hand and then establishing the fifth spade. If declarer takes the approach of trying to ruff diamond losers in the dummy, the defenders may be able to hold declarer to six or seven tricks. Declarer should get at least one spade trick, four heart tricks and one club trick.

"Partscore hands like this are complex, because both declarer and the defenders have a number of options at each trick.

"If West plays in a notrump contract, the defenders should be able to take at least four diamond tricks, one heart trick and the ♣A — limiting declarer to at most seven tricks."

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Responding to a Michaels Cuebid

Guidelines for Teachers: On this second deal, the concept is again to establish dummy's side suit by using a dummy reversal. Walk through the line of play that will bring declarer ten tricks.

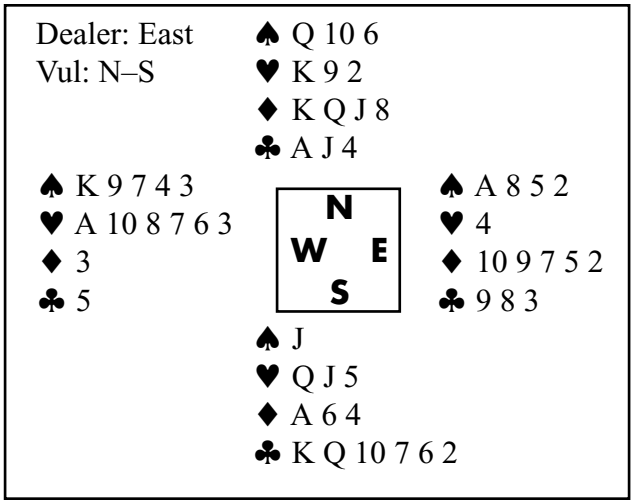
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the cuebid can be used to best describe the advancer's hand."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #4, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	1♣
2♣	3NT	4♠!	Pass
Pass	Double	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"After South opens the bidding 1♣, West uses a Michaels cuebid to show both major suits. North isn't interested in defending at a low level and simply jumps to game in notrump. Now it's up to East. East should appreciate the value of a fit with partner's spade suit and the lack of defensive prospects against North–South's contract. Since East–West aren't vulnerable and the

opponents are, East might bid 4♠ as a sacrifice bid. East isn't planning to make the contract, but the penalty may be less than the value of North-South's game.

"South doesn't want to double East's contract, but North has a good hand with good defensive prospects. North's penalty double ends the auction. If West had passed or overcalled 1♥, the auction would have gone very differently. East–West would be unlikely to uncover their spade fit, and North-South would be left to play in 3NT."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 4♠ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South is on lead and will probably start with the ♣K, top of a sequence. South might also consider leading a trump, hoping to prevent East–West from getting too many tricks through ruffs."

Suggested Play

"East has a lot of losers: one or more potential spade losers, if the suit doesn't divide 2–2, five diamond losers and three club losers. East should look at establishing West's hand as winners, rather than trying to eliminate all of those losers in the East hand. This is referred to as a dummy reversal.

"From the point of view of the West hand, there is only one loser in diamonds, one in clubs and a lot of heart losers. Declarer may be able to establish the heart suit by ruffing some of those losers.

"Suppose South leads a club and continues with another club, forcing dummy to ruff. Declarer should immediately play the ♥A and ruff a heart, starting to establish the suit. East can then play the ♠A and a spade to dummy's ♠K. The missing trumps divide 3–1, leaving declarer with a spade loser, but another heart can be led from dummy and ruffed with declarer's last trump. With the defenders' hearts dividing 3–3, dummy's remaining hearts are now established as winners. Declarer can ruff a club to dummy and start leading the heart winners. North can ruff a heart and take a diamond trick, but the rest of dummy's hand is all winners. Declarer makes the contract, losing one spade, one diamond and one club.

"Declarer is very lucky to actually make this contract. If the defenders' hearts weren't divided exactly 3–3, declarer would have to lose a heart trick. On the other hand, the defenders' spades might have divided 2–2, leaving declarer no losers in that suit. The deal illustrates the power of a trump fit. North–South are unlucky to be unable to defeat 4♠, even when holding 29 high-card points. Favorable distribution will often overcome a lack of high cards.

"East must be careful to use the entries wisely. Suppose South leads a trump initially. East must win this trick with the ♠A, leaving the ♠K in dummy. East must immediately lead hearts before drawing any more trumps. After ruffing a heart, declarer uses West's ♠K as an entry to dummy to ruff another heart. If declarer draws trumps right away or tries ruffing some of the club or diamond losers in dummy, establishing the heart suit may become impossible."

Suggested Defense

"Due to the lucky lie of the cards, the defenders can't defeat the contract if declarer plays as previously mentioned. South should probably lead a trump initially, hoping to prevent declarer from ruffing heart losers, but that won't work. The defenders also can try leading two rounds of clubs, forcing dummy to ruff and hoping to run dummy out of trumps before the hearts can be established. Again, declarer can still succeed with the lucky division of the hearts.

"North–South's best result is to push on to 4NT if East sacrifices in 4♠. That's difficult to do. North has no reason to expect East–West to make their contract. South, however, might think that the penalty derived will not be enough compensation for a vulnerable game and that the sixth club will produce a tenth trick in notrump. South, therefore, might bid 4NT to play. If North–South bid 5♣, that contract can be defeated at least one trick if East gets a heart ruff.

"East–West's use of the Michaels cuebid convention gives them an opportunity to compete for the contract. Without the intervention, North–South would make 3NT easily with an overtrick."

Bid and Play — Deal 3: Michaels Cuebid Over a Major

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal provides an opportunity for the teacher to start getting the students to think about the location of the missing cards. It also demonstrates the modern use of Michaels over a major to show the other major and an unidentified minor.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal where Michaels is used to show the modern use of the bid."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #4, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
1♠	2♠	4♠	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"After South's pass, West opens the bidding in the higher-ranking of two five-card suits. North uses the Michaels cuebid to show at least five hearts and a five-card or longer minor suit. East jumps to 4♠, a preemptive raise,

to try to keep North–South out of the auction. South knows the partnership has a fit in one of the minor suits, but can't be sure which one. With 2NT no longer available to ask for North's minor suit, South uses 4NT instead. North shows the diamond suit and that ends the auction. East–West are vulnerable, so it's better to defend and hope to defeat the contract, rather than to bid higher."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 5♦ by North.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East starts by leading the suit bid by East–West. East should lead the ♠A. Against a suit contract, leading low when holding an ace is dangerous."

Suggested Play

"The deal involves careful handling of a suit combination when taking a finesse. You can emphasize the concept of not leading a high card unless you can afford to have it covered. Review the auction for clues as to the location of missing cards. Most declarers are likely to guess the deal correctly without giving much thought to the auction – but that won't be the case on the next deal. So, this is a good opportunity to get the students to start thinking about the location of the missing high cards.

"Declarer has one spade loser, two heart losers, one diamond loser and two club losers. There's nothing that can be done about the spade loser, but declarer should be able to avoid a heart loser. The hearts might divide 3–3, declarer could ruff a heart loser in dummy or declarer can discard one or more heart losers by establishing club winners in the dummy. Declarer might be able to avoid a diamond loser with the help of a successful finesse against the ♦K. A club loser could be avoided by leading toward dummy and hoping to guess whether East holds the ♣A or ♣Q.

"The first critical decision is in the trump suit. Suppose East wins the ♠A and shifts to the ♥10. North wins this with dummy's ♥A and has to decide how to play the trump suit. It might appear tempting to lead the ♦Q, so that the finesse can be repeated if West has the ♦K and doesn't cover. Without the ♦10, however, declarer can't afford to lead the ♦Q. West would play the ♦K on the ♦Q, and after declarer wins tricks with the ♦A and ♦J, East gets a trick with the ♦10. Missing both the ♦K and the ♦10, declarer should lead a low diamond from dummy. This works, since West's ♦K appears, and declarer can draw trumps without losing a trick. It also would work if West started with the doubleton ♦K. Declarer could finesse and then play the ♦A. If West started with three diamonds including the ♦K, there's no way for declarer to take all of the diamond tricks.

"Having handled the diamond suit successfully, North needs to guess how to play the club suit. Since West opened the bidding and East has already turned up with the ♠A, it's more likely that West holds the ♣A than East. Declarer's best hope is that East started with the ♣Q. North should lead the ♣10, and if East doesn't cover, take the finesse by playing a low club from dummy. Once this is successful, declarer should be able to take the rest of the tricks, losing only a spade trick and one club trick."

Suggested Defense

"After leading the ♠A, East should switch to the singleton ♥10. If West can win a trick before trumps are drawn, East may get a heart ruff. Declarer can draw trumps before letting West gain the lead, but may make a mistake.

"If declarer does successfully draw trumps and later leads the ♣10, East should play low. Looking at the clubs in dummy, there's nothing for East to promote by covering with the ♣Q. If East plays low, declarer may misguess and play dummy's ♣K, hoping East started with the ♣A. If declarer does that, East will eventually get a third trick for the defense with the ♣Q.

"Note that North–South did well to get into the auction with their diamond fit by using the Michaels cuebid convention. If East–West were allowed to play in 4♠, they might make that contract. If North–South don't lead trumps often enough, West might get away with losing only one heart, one diamond and one club trick."

Bid and Play — Deal 4: The Unusual Notrump

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal uses the bidding to help declarer drop an offside king when missing three cards in the suit.

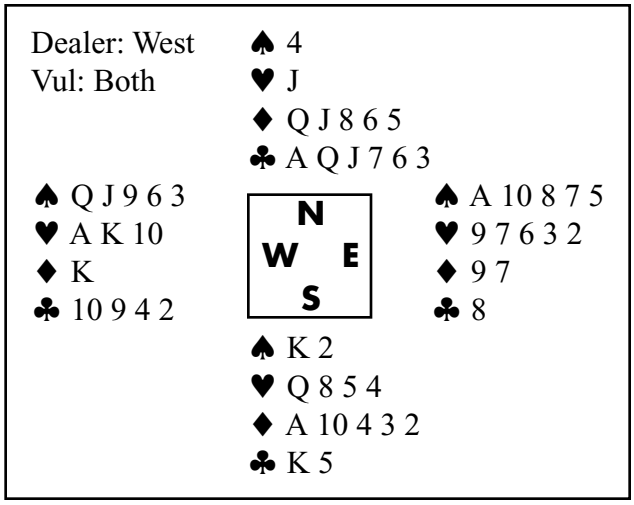
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where we can see how the unusual notrump helps the overcaller and the advancer find the right contract."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #4, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. Make sure everyone gets to a contract of 5♦, before you let them play out the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	2NT	4♠	5♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"After West's opening bid, North enters the auction by using the unusual notrump. Over the 1♠ bid, North's 2NT shows at least five cards in each of the two lowest-ranking unbid suits, diamonds and clubs. East makes a preemptive jump raise to 4♠, to try to buy the contract and keep North-South out of the auction. This shouldn't deter South. South knows from the unusual notrump bid that the partnership has at least a 10-card fit in

diamonds. South also has a useful card in North's other suit, clubs. It looks best to compete to 5♦, rather than quietly defend 4♠.

"Neither West nor East have enough to safely bid to the five level, and neither has enough to double 5♦. Their best hope is that the contract can be defeated."

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West will probably start with the ♥A, top of touching high cards. After seeing the singleton heart in dummy, West will probably switch to the ♠Q, top of touching cards in the partnership's agreed suit."

Suggested Play

"The only way to drop the offside singleton king on this hand – which goes against the odds if the suit is played in isolation – is to pay attention to the bidding. Counting the missing high-card points is a difficult concept, but most of the students should be able to follow the logic on this deal – once it is explained.

"Declarer has to lose a spade trick and one heart trick for sure. The rest of declarer's heart losers can be ruffed in dummy or discarded on the extra club winners. The success of the contract hinges around avoiding a loser in the trump suit.

"Declarer is missing the ♦K, and the normal play would be to take a diamond finesse, hoping that East holds the ♦K. Declarer has some indications, however, that the finesse won't work. West opened the bidding and there are very few high cards in the East–West hands. East has shown up with the ♠A. That leaves only 10 high-card points for West to hold — the ♠Q, the ♠J, the ♥A and the ♥K — unless West also holds the ♦K. It's unlikely West would have opened the bidding. Further, East might not have made a preemptive raise to 4♠ with both the ♠A and the ♦K. Everything points to West holding the ♦K.

"If that's the case, declarer's best chance to make the contract is to play the ♦A, hoping West's ♦K is a singleton. Playing the ♦A results in a spectacular success for declarer. Declarer avoids a diamond loser and makes the contract.

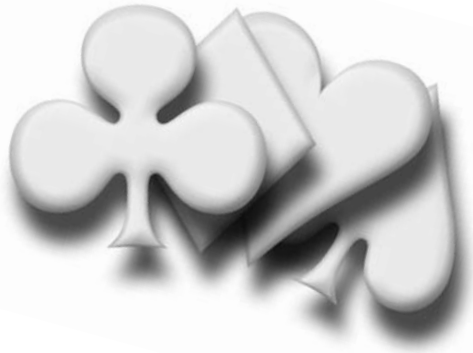
"Even if declarer does lose a trick to West's ♦K, North–South shouldn't be too disappointed. East–West can make the 4♠ contract by guessing how to handle the heart suit. So, down one should still be a good result."

Suggested Defense

"There's little the defenders can do once North–South bids to 5♦, except to keep quiet and hope that declarer misguesses the diamond suit. If they bid on to 5♠, the defenders will get at least one spade trick, one diamond trick and one club trick. West can restrict the heart losers to one by playing one high heart and finessing against South's ♥Q when North's ♥J appears."

LESSON 5

Blackwood and Gerber



General Concepts

General Introduction



Group Activities

Sample Deals

GENERAL CONCEPTS

Blackwood and Gerber

This is the first of two lessons on slam bidding conventions. This lesson covers the Blackwood and Gerber conventions. Cuebidding will be discussed in the next lesson. Most of the students will be familiar already with at least the rudiments of the Blackwood convention, but this lesson discusses a number of areas in which even experienced partnerships can have misunderstandings.

To keep the interest of those who already may be familiar with Blackwood, the introduction poses a challenge that isn't answered until the very end of the lesson.

Bidding

The standard form of Blackwood is discussed. There is no mention of variations such as Key Card Blackwood. Both Key Card Blackwood and Roman Key Card Blackwood are outlined in the Appendix, but they are not recommended for casual partnerships. If anything, such variations would be more relevant in the next lesson, Finding Key Cards, but they are outside the scope of this series. The emphasis is on the correct use of Blackwood, a convention frequently misused.

The standard form of the Gerber convention is introduced, along with appropriate guidelines for its use. It is emphasized that Gerber is used in concert with Blackwood, not as a substitute.

Here are the topics covered:

The First Ingredient — Combined Strength

This introduces the concept that approximately 33 combined points are required for a small slam and 37 points for a grand slam. Quantitative slam bidding in notrump and suit contracts is outlined. Avoid getting into a discussion of Blackwood at this point.

The Second Ingredient — Trump Fit

This section emphasizes the importance of uncovering the strain in which the final contract will be played before the bidding gets too high. Many students rush into the Blackwood convention before settling on the best strain.

The Third Ingredient — Controls

This section looks at the importance of first-and second-round controls, after the first two conditions have been satisfied. Here the Blackwood convention is introduced as a method for determining the number of aces and kings held by the partnership.

Showing a Void

One method for showing a void when responding to Blackwood is discussed. The participants may find this a bit confusing, so you should point out that the guidelines are in the textbook. You can suggest that they ignore this extension if they prefer, since it doesn't arise very often. The important point to make is that when responding to Blackwood, a void cannot be counted as an ace.

Stopping in 5NT

When a minor suit has been agreed upon as the trump suit, it's easy to get beyond a safe level when using Blackwood. It is key to show how to stop in 5NT after using Blackwood. The value of Blackwood is keeping the partnership out of an unmakeable slam.

Handling Interference over Blackwood

Two common methods for handling interference are DOPI and DEPO. They are concepts that could be skipped if the class appears to be struggling. ROPI (Redouble = 0; Pass = 1) isn't discussed. Ignoring a double of Blackwood will suffice for most students.

When Is 4NT Blackwood?

It's important to understand that 4NT isn't always Blackwood. In addition to the quantitative use of 4NT, the earlier lessons on the Michaels cuebid and the unusual notrump have already provided examples of other uses of 4NT.

The Gerber Convention

The Gerber convention is introduced to cover those situations where a jump to 4NT would be quantitative.

When Is 4♣ Gerber?

This is another important section. The standard guideline is used — a jump to 4♣ is Gerber after a natural 1NT or 2NT bid. Partnerships can have additional agreements, but this keeps things fairly straightforward. The common agreement that 4♣ is Gerber following a 2♣ Stayman inquiry is also introduced. This brings the discussion back full circle to the challenging auction introduced at the beginning of the lesson.

Play & Defense

The focus of all four deals is slam bidding conventions, and there are no difficult play concepts. The auctions should be challenging enough. If the students can get to the right level in each case, they will be rewarded.

The first deal includes a variation. Have the participants make the suggested change and then rebid the hand.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

To capture the group's interest, you might start the lesson like this:

> "In the next two lessons, we'll focus on slam bidding. You want to make the most of your luck when the partnership has most of the strength, so it's worth the effort to spend some time on this subject.
>
> "If you're traveling to the bridge game with your partner, probably the only discussion you will have about slam bidding is, 'Do you play the Blackwood convention?' Once you agree on that, you move on to other subjects. When you sit down to play, however, you may soon discover that your brief discussion hasn't covered all of the basics.
>
> "The cards are sorted into suits. Construct the following hand in front of South.
>
> "In spades: the ace, the ten and two low cards.
> "In hearts: the ace, the queen and two low cards.
> "In diamonds: two low cards.
> "In clubs: the ace, the queen and a low card."

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	4NT	Pass	?

SOUTH
♠ A 10 x x
♥ A Q x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q x

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of South.

> "**What is South's opening bid?** (1NT.) With a balanced hand and 16 high-card points, open 1NT even with the low doubleton in diamonds.
>
> "**West passes, and North responds 2♣. What does South do after East passes?** (2♥.) North's 2♣ response is Stayman, so you dutifully bid one of your four-card major suits. With two four-card majors, common practice is to bid the suits up the line, 2♥.
>
> "**West passes, and North jumps to 4NT. East passes. Discuss with the others at your table what call South makes now.**"

Give the students a couple of minutes to discuss whether 4NT is Blackwood or quantitative. You'll probably find that there is some disagreement over the meaning of 4NT. Don't give an answer at this point. Instead, say something like this:

> "When it comes to slam bidding, there's lot of room for discussion. We'll revisit this hand later in the session, after we've discussed some of the essential ingredients for slam bidding."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

The First Ingredient — *Combined Strength*

Introduction

"There are three main ingredients for bidding a slam, and the first of these is combined strength. You don't usually think about bidding a slam, unless there is some indication that the partnership has enough combined strength to be in the slam zone. The standard guidelines are:

- 33 or more combined points for a small slam.
- 37 or more combined points for a grand slam.

"If you are thinking of bidding a slam in notrump, the points are mostly high-card points, although you can still include length points when you have a five-card or longer suit. In a suit contract, distribution will play a much larger role, and you will be valuing shortness — singletons and voids.

"On some deals, all you need is this first ingredient. You can simply bid a slam based on power."

Instructions

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In hearts: take away a low card.
"In diamonds: add the queen and a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	6NT

SOUTH
♠ A 10 x
♥ A Q x
♦ Q x x x
♣ A Q x

"**Your partnership has agreed to use a range of 15 to 17 HCP for 1NT openings. Suppose North deals and opens the bidding 1NT. What does South respond?** (6NT.) You have 18 high-card points and North has at least 15 HCP, giving the partnership a combined total of 33 or more points, putting you in the slam zone. Since North has a maximum of 17 HCP, the partnership has at most 35 combined points, leaving you in the range for a small slam, but not a grand slam.

"**Does South know in what strain to play the contract?** (Yes.) With a balanced hand and no four-card major, you plan to play the contract in notrump.

"**Does South need any further information from opener before deciding on the contract?** (No.) It won't do any good to ask about aces. If North doesn't have an ace, you would still bid the slam, since you can afford to lose one trick. If North does have an ace, giving your side all of the aces, you still don't have enough combined strength to bid a grand slam — even if you also have all of the kings. Whether or not North has an ace, you should be in a small slam.

"It might seem that there is no harm in asking about aces on the way to slam, but it merely provides additional opportunities for something to go wrong. If you were to bid 4NT, for example, thinking that would be asking for aces, partner might pass. A raise of 1NT to 4NT is not the Blackwood convention — it's a quantitative raise, inviting opener to bid slam with a maximum for the 1NT opening. Even if you were to bid 4♣, the Gerber convention that will be discussed shortly, there's the possibility that West could make a lead-directing double, getting East off to the only lead that might defeat the slam.

"In summary, if you aren't interested in the answer, don't ask the question!

"**Suppose North–South use a range of 20 or 21 points for a 2NT opening. North deals and opens the bidding 2NT. What is South's response?** (7NT.) Again, there's no need to get any additional information before making your decision. Partner has at least 20 HCP. Adding that to your 18 points gives a combined total of 38 points, more than enough for a grand slam. Simply jump right to 7NT.

"Change the South hand.
"In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	4NT

SOUTH
♠ A 10 x
♥ A Q x
♦ Q x x x
♣ A x x

"**With 16 high-card points, South is all set to open 1NT, but North beats South to it. What does South respond to North's opening bid of 1NT?** (4NT.) You have more than enough to take the partnership to game, but not quite enough to commit the partnership to slam. If North has only 15 HCP, the combined partnership total will be 31 points. If North has 17 HCP, however, there will be 33 combined points, enough for slam.

"The way to invite opener to slam is to raise 1NT to 4NT. This is a quantitative, or invitational, raise. It asks opener to bid slam with a maximum, 17 HCP. With a minimum, 15 HCP, opener passes and the partnership will rest safely at the four level. With 16 HCP, opener should generally err on the side of caution and pass but, with a good 16 HCP — some 10's and 9's or a five-card suit — opener could accept the invitation and bid slam.

"The raise from 1NT to 4NT does not ask for the number of aces. We'll look at how to ask for the number of aces over an opening notrump bid a little later. Instead, it's similar to the raise from 1NT to 2NT, inviting game."

With a more experienced group, you can add that opener doesn't have to accept the invitation by bidding 6NT. Opener has the option of bidding four-card suits "up the line" at the five level or jumping to the six level in a five-card suit. This may allow the partnership to reach slam in an eight-card fit when 12 tricks aren't available in notrump. Using this approach, opener's bid at the five level is not showing the number of aces held — although inexperienced partnerships might interpret the bid in that manner.

"**Suppose North opens the bidding 2NT, showing 20 or 21 high-card points. What does South respond?** (5NT.) Combined with South's 16 HCP, the partnership has at least 36 combined points, enough for a small slam, but might have 37 combined points, enough for a grand slam. To invite opener to bid a grand slam, responder raises to 5NT. Unlike the raise to 4NT, the raise to 5NT is forcing. Opener is expected to bid a small slam with a minimum, 20 HCP, and a grand slam with a maximum, 21 HCP."

Again, with an experienced group, you could point out that opener doesn't have to bid 6NT or 7NT. Opener has the option of bidding a suit at the six or seven level, looking for an eight-card fit.

"Although the idea of quantitative bidding is usually applied to a notrump contract, it also can be used for a suit contract.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the king, the jack and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away all four cards.
"In clubs: add a low card.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	6♠

SOUTH
♠ A K J 10 x x
♥ A Q x
♦ —
♣ A x x x

"**Suppose North opens the bidding 1♦. What does South respond?** (1♠/2♠.) With 18 high-card points and a six-card suit, you could make a jump shift to 2♠, but that takes up a lot of bidding room which you might need to explore for the best contract. Unless North has a fit with spades, you might belong in clubs, notrump or even hearts. It's probably more practical to respond 1♠. That's forcing and leaves plenty of room to explore. You can show your additional strength later in the auction.

"**Suppose South responds 1♠ and North raises to 2♠. Now what does South bid?** (6♠/5♠/3♣.) The practical bid at this point is probably a simple jump to 6♠. You know the partnership is close to the combined values for slam, since North has 13 to 16 points in this auction. If you want to be a little more cautious, you could make a quantitative jump to 5♠, inviting North to bid slam with more than a bare minimum.

"It is possible that you can make a grand slam with this hand, but it will be very difficult to find out. You could start exploring with a bid such as 3♣, but unless your partnership has very sophisticated slam bidding methods, you are unlikely to be able to find out if North has exactly the cards you need to make a grand slam. A jump to 6♠, based on pure power, is probably the best you can do. It doesn't always pay to be too refined. If you don't give the opponents too much information, they may help you out with the opening lead or later plays."

Summary

"The first ingredient for bidding a slam is sufficient combined strength:

- 33 points for a small slam.
- 35 points for a grand slam.

"Sometimes that will be enough, and you can bid or invite slam based on power alone."

The Second Ingredient — *Trump Fit*

Introduction

"When you can determine that the partnership holds 33 or more points, you know the partnership should be considering a slam. On most hands, however, combined strength isn't the only ingredient you need."

Instructions

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the king and the jack; add the queen.
"In hearts: take away the ace.
"In diamonds: add the ace and the king.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	?

SOUTH
♠ A Q 10 x x
♥ Q x
♦ A K
♣ A x x x

"**Suppose this is your hand. Partner, North, opens the bidding 1♥, and East passes. Does South know whether the partnership belongs in the slam zone?** (Yes.) You have 19 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card suit. North has a minimum of 13 points, so the partnership has a combined total of at least 33 points. You know right away that the partnership should be considering a slam level contract.

"**Can South bid slam right away based on the combined strength?** (No.) **Can South launch right into the Blackwood convention to ask for the number of aces?** (No.) Although you know the partnership belongs in the slam zone, you still do not know where. Suppose you bid 4NT right away, asking for the number of aces held by North, and North responded 5♦. You would know now that the partnership has all of the aces but you wouldn't know whether the partnership belonged in 6♥, 6♠, 6NT or even 6♣. You would be missing the second key ingredient to slam bidding — a suitable trump fit. You must know where you are going to play the slam, before you can jump to slam or use any of the slam-bidding conventions.

"In fact, on this hand, you also wouldn't know whether the partnership belonged in a small slam or a grand slam, since you don't have enough information about North's strength.

"**Instead of launching into slam bidding right away, what should South respond?** (1♠/2♠.) With 20 points, you have enough strength to jump shift into 2♠ but that's probably not a good idea. You would use up bidding room on a hand that might require a lot of investigation to determine the best strain for the contract. Instead, a simple forcing response of 1♠ should suffice for now. Once you've found out more about opener's hand, you can show the extra strength later.

"To see why finding a fit takes priority over bidding a slam, leave the South hand as it is and construct the following hand in front of North.

"In spades: the king and a low card.
"In hearts: the ace, the jack, the ten and four low cards.
"In diamonds: the queen, the jack and a low card.
"In clubs: the jack.

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ A J 10 x x x x
♦ Q J x
♣ J

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♥	Pass	(6♥)

SOUTH
♠ A Q 10 x x
♥ Q x
♦ A K
♣ A x x x

"**What would North open ?** (1♥.) With 12 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card suit, North would open the bidding 1♥.

"**What does South respond?** (1♠.) The 1♠ response is forcing, giving North a chance to further describe the hand.

"**What does North rebid?** (2♥.) North shows a minimum opening bid with six or more hearts by rebidding 2♥.

"**Is South in a better position now to consider a slam contract?** (Yes.) Now South knows that the partnership has at least an eight-card heart fit, so the partnership can play in that suit. South also knows that North has a minimum opening bid, so the partnership probably doesn't belong in a grand slam. We'll look at more sophisticated slam bidding methods a little later, but South could reasonably jump right to 6♥ at this point, based on the partnership's combined strength and combined fit.

"6♥ is an excellent contract. You should take at least 12 tricks and may take all 13 tricks if the ♥K is favorably placed. 6NT, however, is a poor contract. If the opponents lead a club and the heart finesse loses, you may be defeated several tricks.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the jack and a low card.
"In hearts: take away the jack and a low card.

NORTH
♠ K J x x
♥ A 10 x x x
♦ Q J x
♣ J

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	(6♠)

SOUTH
♠ A Q 10 x x
♥ Q x
♦ A K
♣ A x x x

"**What would North open?** (1♥.) North would open the long suit, 1♥.

"**What does South respond?** (1♠.) A response of 1♠ leaves North plenty of room for a good bidding conversation.

"**What does North rebid?** (2♠.) With four-card support and a minimum opening bid, North would raise to the two level.

"**Does South now have enough information to consider bidding a slam?** (Yes.) North has shown a minimum opening bid, so South knows the partnership probably belongs in a small slam rather than a grand slam. The partnership has uncovered a fit in spades, so the partnership can play with that suit as trump. In effect, South now has enough information to jump to 6♠ and to expect that to be a reasonable contract. South might want to use some slam-bidding conventions along the way, but they are unlikely to add much useful information.

"Notice that 6♠ is an excellent contract on these combined hands. South might even take all 13 tricks by ruffing the club losers in dummy and discarding the heart loser on dummy's extra diamond winner. 6♥ would not be a good contract. You would need a favorable lie of the missing hearts. Similarly, 6NT does not work well. After a club lead, you have almost no chance to take 12 tricks."

Summary

"The second important ingredient for slam bidding is to determine the strain you want to play in — a trump fit or notrump — before launching into slam. Once you know you have the required strength and a suitable strain, you are two-thirds of the way along."

The Third Ingredient — Controls

Introduction

"While having enough combined strength and an agreed trump suit may be enough for a slam, on many hands there is a third consideration."

Instructions

"Pick up the North and South hands and sort the cards back into suits. Construct the following hand in front of South.

"In spades: the king, the queen and two low cards.
"In hearts: the king, the queen, the jack and two low cards.
"In diamonds: a low card.
"In clubs: the ace, the king and the jack.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	?

SOUTH
♠ K Q x x
♥ K Q J x x
♦ x
♣ A K J

"**Suppose North deals and opens the bidding 1♠. Are the first two ingredients for slam taken care of?** (Yes.) In support of spades you have 19 high-card points plus 3 dummy points for the singleton diamond. There's more than enough combined strength for at least a small slam. There's also an excellent trump fit in spades, so you know where the contract can be played.

"**Apart from the possibility of missing a grand slam, is there anything to prevent South from jumping right to 6♠?** (Yes.) If you are missing two aces, the opponents can take the first two tricks. That will defeat the slam, before declarer has a chance to develop extra winners on which to discard losers.

"Leave the South hand in place and construct a hand in front of North.
"In spades: the ace, the jack, the ten and three low cards.
"In hearts: a low card.
"In diamonds: the king, the queen and the jack.
"In clubs: the queen and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ A J 10 x x x
♥ x
♦ K Q J
♣ Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ K Q x x
♥ K Q J x x
♦ x
♣ A K J

"**What would North open?** (1♠.) With 13 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, North has more than enough to open the bidding at the one level, 1♠.

"**If South were to take the partnership right to 6♠, what would be the result?** (Down one.) The defenders have two aces to take to defeat the contract. Even if they don't take their aces right away, they'll still have another chance.

"Notice that you have lots of tricks. You have six spade tricks; you can develop at least two tricks in hearts and two tricks in diamonds; you have three tricks in clubs. That's 13 winners. Unfortunately, you have to lose two tricks in the process of developing your winners and that's no good in a slam contract.

"The problem is that the partnership has wasted values in the heart and diamond suits. South's ♥K, ♥Q and ♥J are not of much value opposite North's singleton heart. You could still take 11 tricks in a spade contract without them. Similarly, North's ♦K, ♦Q and ♦J are wasted opposite South's singleton diamond. Declarer could take 11 tricks in spades holding three low diamonds by ruffing two of the losing diamonds in the dummy.

"Change the North hand, giving North 2 fewer points.
"In diamonds: take away the king, the queen and the jack; add the ace and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ A J 10 x x x
♥ x
♦ A x x
♣ Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ K Q x x
♥ K Q J x x
♦ x
♣ A K J

"**What would North open?** (1♠.) Although North has 2 fewer high-card points, North would still open 1♠. There are 11 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit.

"**How would North–South fare in a slam contract if these are the combined hands?** (Make 6♠.) Declarer would only have to lose the ♥A. The two diamond losers could be ruffed in dummy or discarded on dummy's extra heart winners.

"The difference between these hands and the previous hands is the controls held by North and South. A control is a holding that prevents the opponents from taking too many tricks in a suit.

- An ace is a first-round control, since it prevents the opponents from taking the first trick in a suit.
- A king is a second-round control, since it prevents the opponents from taking the first two tricks in a suit — or at least gives you a chance of stopping the opponents from taking the first two tricks in a suit.

- In a trump contract, a void acts like an ace, since it gives you first round control of the suit — and often more control than that. A singleton acts like a second-round control, since it prevents the opponents from taking the first two tricks in a suit.

"When you bid a slam, you would like to make sure your side has a sufficient number of controls to prevent the slam from being defeated right off the top, before you have an opportunity to do something about your losers.

- In a small slam, you need first-round controls in three suits and at least second-round control in the fourth suit.
- In a grand slam, you need first-round control in all four suits.

"Having enough controls to bid a slam doesn't guarantee that you will make the slam. It only means that you will have a reasonable chance. You still may have work to do — losers to eliminate and finesses to take — but at least the opponents can't defeat you right away by taking their winners. The first two ingredients for slam bidding — enough combined strength and a suitable strain — should help ensure you have a play for slam once you gain the lead.

"How do you find out whether you have enough controls to bid a slam? This is where the Blackwood convention comes into play. Easley Blackwood popularized the concept that when a partnership feels there is enough combined strength for slam and a trump suit has been agreed upon, a bid of 4NT asks how many aces partner holds. Partner responds as follows:

- 5♣ shows zero aces or all four aces
- 5♦ shows one ace
- 5♥ shows two aces
- 5♠ shows three aces

"The reason that 5♣ doubles up to show either zero or four aces is to leave 5NT available to ask for kings. The 4NT bidder should be able to determine whether partner holds no aces or all four aces since there is a 16-point difference.

"If the partnership holds all of the aces and you are interested in a grand slam, a bid of 5NT asks how many kings partner holds:

- 6♣ shows no kings
- 6♦ shows one king
- 6♥ shows two kings
- 6♠ shows three kings
- 6NT shows four kings (there's no need to reserve this bid to ask about queens!)

"Let's see how the Blackwood convention would help.

"**After North opens 1♠, what call does South make?** (4NT.) An immediate jump to 4NT over an opening suit bid is the Blackwood convention. By inference, it implies agreement with opener's suit as the trump suit, since responder hasn't bothered to investigate other possibilities.

"**What response does North make to the 4NT bid?** (5♥.) A response of 5♥ shows two aces.

"**What call does South make after hearing the 5♥ response?** (6♠.) Now South has all of the information necessary to bid 6♠. South knows the partnership has enough combined strength to belong in the slam zone. South knows the partnership has a suitable trump fit in spades. Finally, South knows the partnership is missing only one ace. Whichever ace it is — the ♠A, the ♥A or the ♦A — the defenders won't be able to take more than one trick before declarer gains control.

"Change the North hand back to the previous example.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and two low cards, and add the king, the queen and the jack.

NORTH
♠ A J 10 x x x
♥ x
♦ K Q J
♣ Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦	Pass	5♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ K Q x x
♥ K Q J x x
♦ x
♣ A K J

"**North opens the bidding 1♠, and South again jumps to 4NT. What response does North make?** (5♦.) With one ace, North responds 5♦.

"**What call does South make after hearing North's response?** (5♠.) Knowing the partnership is missing two aces, South signs off by returning to the agreed trump suit at the five level, 5♠."

Summary

"The Blackwood convention is designed to help the partnership discover whether it is missing too many controls — aces or kings — to bid a slam. It is not a convention to get you to good slams. The first two ingredients — combined strength and a suitable trump fit — are more important in that aspect. Instead, it is a convention to keep you out of bad slams, when you have the first two ingredients but are missing the third ingredient."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — Responding to Blackwood

What call does East make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as shown?

	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	
1)	1♥	Pass	3♥	Pass	♠ K 8 3
	4NT	Pass	?		♥ A J 10 5
					♦ Q 10 7 4
					♣ J 8

	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	
2)		Pass	1NT	Pass	♠ A Q J 5
	4NT	Pass	?		♥ K 10 7
					♦ A 10 9
					♣ K 6 3

	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	
3)			1♦	Pass	♠ A 9 6 3
	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	♥ K 7 5
	4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass	♦ K Q 10 3
	5NT	Pass	?		♣ J 2

	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	
4)	1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass	♠ K Q 9 8 4
	3♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	♥ 3
	5♦	Pass	?		♦ K 4
					♣ A K J 8 2

	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	
5)	1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	♠ 4
	3♦	Pass	4NT	Pass	♥ A K 10
	5♦	Pass	?		♦ K J 9 8 7 3
					♣ A K 3

Exercise One *Answer* — Responding to Blackwood

1) 5♦. This response shows one ace.

2) 6NT. West's 4NT bid is quantitative (invitational). With a maximum for the 1NT opening bid, East accepts West's invitational raise.

3) 6♥. After East shows the number of aces in response to 4NT, West asks for the number of kings. The 6♥ response shows two kings.

4) 5♠. Two aces are missing, so East signs off at the five level in the agreed trump suit.

5) 6♦. Only one ace is missing, so East bids slam in the agreed trump suit.

Blackwood and Voids

Introduction

"The basic mechanics of the Blackwood convention are quite straightforward, but sometimes situations arise that require more partnership agreements."

Instructions

"Pick up both the North and South hands and sort the cards back into suits. Construct the following hand in front of North.

"In spades: the queen and three low cards.
"In hearts: the queen, the jack and two low cards.
"In diamonds: the ace, the queen, the jack and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ Q x x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ A Q J x x
♣ —

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	?		

"**What does North open?** (1♦.) With 12 high-card points plus 1 for the five-card suit, you have enough to open the bidding 1♦.

"**East passes, South responds 1♥ and West passes. What call does North make now?** (3♥.) With four-card support for South's suit, you can revalue the hand using dummy points. That gives you 12 high-card points plus 5 points for the club void — 17 points, a medium-strength hand. That's enough to make a jump raise to 3♥.

"**East passes, and South jumps to 4NT, the Blackwood convention. Should North count the void as a second ace when responding?** (No.) Although a void serves the same purpose as an ace in a trump contract, as a first-round control, don't count it as an ace when responding to Blackwood.

"To see why, leave the North hand as it is and construct a hand in front of South.

"In spades: a low card.
"In hearts: the ace, the king and three low cards.
"In diamonds: the king and a low card.
"In clubs: the ace, the king, the jack and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ Q x x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ A Q J x x
♣ —

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♦/6♣	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ A K x x x
♦ K x
♣ A K J x x

"Put yourself in the South position. North opens 1♦, you respond 1♥ and North jumps to 3♥. Since you have the first two ingredients for slam, you jump to 4NT, the Blackwood convention, to check for aces.

"**If North responds 5♥, treating the club void as a second ace, what might South be tempted to do?** (Bid 7♥.) From your perspective, the partnership holds all of the aces. You might be tempted to bid a grand slam. This would not be a great success!

"Counting a void as an ace when responding to Blackwood doesn't work well. You need to have an agreement with your partner before showing a void when responding to Blackwood. We'll look at one possible agreement, although it might be a good decision to simply ignore voids completely. The partnership can decide how much complexity it wants. One possible agreement is the following:

- With no aces, respond 5♣ — don't show the void.
- With one ace and a void:
    - Jump to the six level in the void suit if it is lower ranking than the trump suit.
    - Jump to the six level in the trump suit if the void is higher ranking than the trump suit.
- With two aces and a void, bid 5NT.

"Some partnerships have other agreements, such as showing the number of aces at the six level with a void. The partnership needs to agree on the specific method used. If the partnership has this agreement, let's see how it would be used on these hands.

"**What would be North's opening bid?** (1♦.)

"**What would South respond?** (1♥.)

"**What would be North's rebid?** (3♥.)

"**What would be South's next call?** (4NT.)

"**What would North respond to the Blackwood convention?** (6♣.) With one ace and a void in a lower-ranking suit than the trump suit, North jumps to the six level in the void suit, clubs.

"**Based on this information, what call would South make?** (6♥.) South knows that the partnership is missing an ace, either the ♠A or ♦A, so South settles for a small slam in hearts. North's club void will not be useful.

"You can see why it might not be a good idea to use methods where North–South would get to the six level when North has no aces and a void — the partnership would be overboard with no way to back out. With no aces and a void, you usually can't afford to show the void in response to Blackwood. You would have to have other methods to show the void earlier in the auction. We'll be discussing this in the next lesson.

"Even with one ace and a void, there is some danger in jumping to the six level. You should only show a useful, or potentially useful, void. North doesn't know that South has the ♣A and ♣K, so the club void is potentially useful. If the auction had gone differently, with South showing values in the club suit, North should probably ignore the club void, since it isn't likely to be useful — the partnership will have wasted values in the club suit.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away all of the cards.
"In clubs: add the queen and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ —
♥ Q J x x
♦ A Q J x x
♣ Q x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	6♥	Pass	7♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

SOUTH
♠ x
♥ A K x x x
♦ K x
♣ A K J x x

"**What would North open?** (1♦.) With 12 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card suit, North would still open 1♦.

"**What would South respond?** (1♥.) South's initial response is unchanged.

"**What would North rebid?** (3♥.) North can count 5 dummy points for the spade void. Combined with the 12 high-card points, this is enough to give a jump raise to 3♥.

"**What would South bid next?** (4NT.) Opposite North's jump raise, South is interested in slam and uses the Blackwood convention to check that the partnership isn't missing two aces.

"**What is North's response to** Blackwood**?** (6♥.) With one ace and a higher-ranking void than the trump suit, North jumps to slam in the agreed trump suit, 6♥.

"**Why doesn't North simply jump to slam in the void suit?** (May be too high.) When the void is in a higher-ranking suit than the trump suit, it would be illogical to jump to the six level in the void suit. The partnership could not stop at the six level in the agreed trump suit.

"While there is the possibility of some ambiguity when using this method of responses, the Blackwood bidder will usually be able to determine the void suit based on the earlier auction. On this auction, it is clear that North's void is in the spade suit, since that is the only higher-ranking suit than hearts.

"**Based on this information, what call does South make?** (7♥.) From North's jump to 6♥, South knows North holds one ace — which must be the ♦A — and a void in spades. That's enough information to make 7♥ a reasonable gamble. South should bid the grand slam."

Some of the students may be worried about a heart loser or a club loser in 7♥. That is a real possibility, but a loser in either suit is unlikely. Since North has no high cards in spades, it's hard to imagine a hand for North that would have enough for a jump to 3♥ without both the ♥Q and the ♣Q. Even if the ♥Q is missing, the partnership will have a nine-card heart fit, so the grand slam will at least have a reasonable chance of making. If the ♣Q is missing, South may be able to ruff the losing clubs in dummy, if North has only a doubleton, or discard the losing clubs on extra diamond winners. At worst, the grand slam might depend on a finesse, a reasonable gamble. Without very sophisticated methods, it would be impossible to get any better guarantee of a grand slam contract. On the actual combined hands, the grand slam is very secure — only an unlikely club ruff on the opening lead would defeat it.

> "Would you bid the grand slam with the South hand? If you wouldn't — perhaps because you are worried that there has been some misunderstanding and partner's jump to 6♥ means something else — then you probably should be ignoring this added complication for voids. Ignore your voids when responding to Blackwood and you'll be fine on most deals. It takes a firm partnership agreement and lots of faith in partner to use such methods, and they don't come up that often. Another consideration to weigh is whether you want to invest the extra memory work for such infrequent situations. It might be more appropriate to keep it simple."

Summary

> "When partner bids Blackwood and you hold a void, don't treat it as an ace. Either ignore the void completely or, if you have discussed such responses with partner, use your agreed methods. The agreement suggested here is:
>
> - With no aces, respond 5♣ — don't show the void.
> - With one ace and a void:
>   - Jump to the six level in the void suit if it is lower ranking than the trump suit.
>   - Jump to the six level in the trump suit if the void suit is higher ranking than the trump suit.
>   - With two aces and a void, bid 5NT.
>
> "This convention isn't a good idea unless you're playing in a regular partnership."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Blackwood and Voids

What call does East make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as shown?

1)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K 10 7 4
		Pass	1♣	Pass	♥ K J 8 5
	1♥	Pass	4♥	Pass	♦ —
	4NT	Pass	?		♣ A K J 8 3
2)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ —
		1♦	Pass	Pass	♥ A J 9 6
	1♥	Pass	4♥	Pass	♦ K Q 9 4 3
	4NT	Pass	?		♣ K Q 8 6
3)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ A 7 6 3
	1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass	♥ Q 10 8 7 2
	1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	♦ 10 9 7 3
	4NT	Pass	?		♣ —
4)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K 10 2
	1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass	♥ A K J 8 7 5
	3♥	Pass	4NT	Pass	♦ A
	6♥	Pass	?		♣ K Q 6
5)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ A 10 7 4
			1♣	1♦	♥ Q J 8 3
	1♥	4♦	4♥	Pass	♦ —
	4NT	Pass	?		♣ A Q J 7 4

Exercise Two *Answer* — Blackwood and Voids

1) 6♦. The jump to 6♦ shows exactly one ace and a diamond void.

2) 6♥. The jump to the six level in the agreed trump suit shows one ace and a higher-ranking void. In this situation, West will know the void is in spades.

3) 5♦. Simply show one ace. The club void isn't likely to be useful, since clubs is one of West's suits.

4) 7♥. West's response has shown one ace and a higher-ranking void. West must hold the ♣A and a void in spades. There shouldn't be any losers in a 7♥ contract, since the spade losers can be ruffed in the dummy.

5) 5NT. This response shows two aces and a void. That may be enough for West to go for a grand slam.

Stopping in 5NT

Introduction

"When you use 4NT as the Blackwood convention to ask for the number of aces, a continuation of 5NT is used to ask for the number of kings. The 5NT bid is used only when the partnership holds all of the aces and a grand slam is a possibility. Sounds straightforward enough, but you may have to be careful when the agreed trump suit is clubs or diamonds."

Instructions

"Pick up both the North and South hands and sort the cards back into suits. Construct the following hand in front of North.

"In spades: the king and a low card.
"In hearts: the king, the queen and a low card.
"In diamonds: the king and the queen.
"In clubs: the ace, the queen, the ten and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ K Q x
♦ K Q
♣ A Q 10 x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	3♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**What would North open?** (1♣/2NT.) With 19 high-card points plus 2 points for the six-card club suit, the hand isn't quite strong enough for an opening bid of 2♣. You might open 2NT, although the hand isn't quite balanced because there are two doubletons. 1♣ would be a reasonable opening bid.

"**Suppose North opens 1♣, East passes and South makes a limit raise to 3♣. West passes. What call does North make?** (4NT.) North might settle for 3NT or 5♣, but slam looks like a reasonable proposition. It's difficult to imagine a hand for South's limit raise that doesn't have at least one ace and, if South holds two aces, slam can't be any worse than a finesse. North can check for aces by bidding Blackwood.

"**Suppose North bids 4NT and South responds 5♥. What call does North make?** (6♣.) Since partner holds two aces, 6♣ should be a good spot. The partnership is missing one ace.

"**Now, suppose North bids 4NT and South responds 5♦. What call does North make?** (5♥.) The 5♦ response reveals that two aces are missing. North can't bid 6♣, since that contract is unlikely to have any chance. Unfortunately, it's no longer possible to sign off in 5♣. The only possible resting spot at this point is 5NT. There should be a play for 11 tricks in a notrump contract if all the partnership is missing is two aces.

"**Can North bid 5NT?** (No.) If North bids 5NT, that would be a continuation of the Blackwood convention, asking South to show the number of kings held. That would get the partnership into even more trouble.

"The standard agreement in this situation is that the bid of the cheapest suit at the five level that could not possibly be meant as a trump suit asks partner to bid 5NT. Then you can pass. Let's go over the complete auction.

"**North opens the bidding 1♣, and South raises to 3♣. North bids 4NT, and South responds 5♦. What call does North make?** (5♥.) A bid of 5♥ by North can't be a suggestion to play with hearts as a trump suit. The partnership has already found a club fit. Instead, it is a request for South to bid 5NT.

"**What call does South make?** (5NT.) As requested, South bids 5NT.

"**What call does North make?** (Pass.) North can now pass 5NT and hope for the best."

Summary

"When you bid 4NT as the Blackwood convention, you can't rebid 5NT as a signoff. To stop in 5NT, you have to bid a suit at the five level that can't be a suggested trump suit. This asks partner to bid 5NT, and you can now pass.

"When a minor suit has been agreed upon as the trump suit, think twice before launching into the Blackwood convention. Make sure you are prepared for any response partner might make. You don't want to get beyond the agreed trump suit and find you have nowhere to go."

Handling Interference over Blackwood

Introduction

"When your side is looking for slam, it's unlikely the opponents will be in the auction, since they won't hold very many points. Nonetheless, with very distributional hands, it's possible that the opponents may compete, both to interfere with your auction and, perhaps, to find a profitable sacrifice. When the opponents interfere with your Blackwood auction, it's a good idea to have some agreements to handle the situation."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the king and the queen; add two low cards.
"In clubs: take away two low cards.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ K Q x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q 10 x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♥
2♦	2♥	4♦	4NT
5♦	?		

"**What would North open?** (1♣.) With a balanced hand too weak to open 1NT, North would open 1♣.

"**East passes, and South responds 1♥. West overcalls 2♦. What call does North make?** (2♥.) West's overcall doesn't prevent North from making the intended response, 2♥, showing heart support and a minimum opening bid.

"**East makes a jump raise to 4♦, and South bids 4NT. What does North intend to respond to South's 4NT bid?** (5♦.) South's 4NT is Blackwood, and a response of 5♦ would show one ace.

"**Before North has an opportunity to bid 5♦, West bids 5♦. Now what does North do?** West has taken away your response. With no agreement, you could pass, leaving the next decision to South, or you could make a penalty double of 5♦. However, that won't give South the information needed to determine whether or not to bid slam.

"It is a good idea for the partnership to have some agreement about the meaning of calls when the opponents interfere over Blackwood. A common conventional agreement is to play DOPI when the opponents interfere at the five level:

- **D**ouble shows **O** (zero) aces.
- **P**ass shows **I** (one) ace.
- The next available bid (step) shows two aces; the next available bid (step) shows three aces; and so on.

"**Using DOPI, what would North's call be over West's 5♦ bid?** (Pass.) Pass would show one ace.

"**Suppose North passes, East passes and South doubles. Now what call does North make?** (Pass.) South is the captain after using Blackwood. North's response has told partner how many aces the partnership holds. It's now up to South to decide what to do. South knows how many combined aces the partnership holds; North does not. North should respect South's decision. South may be doubling because the partnership is missing three aces. Or the partnership may be missing two aces and South has decided that the penalty for defeating 5♦ will be better than bidding 5♥. Similarly, if South decides to bid 5♥ or 6♥, North should pass, accepting South's decision.

"Change the North hand.
"In clubs: take away the ace and add the king.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ K Q x x
♦ x x
♣ K Q 10 x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♥
2♦	2♥	4♦	4NT
5♦	Double		

"**What would North open?** (1♣.) With 13 high-card points, North would open 1♣.

"**East passes, South responds 1♥ and West overcalls 2♦. What is North's rebid?** (2♥.)

"**East jumps to 4♦, South bids 4NT and West bids 5♦. What call does North make?** (Double.) Double shows zero aces. Now it will be up to South to decide on the best North–South contract.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the king and add the ace.
"In clubs: take away the king and the queen and add the ace and a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ A Q x x
♦ x x
♣ A 10 x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♥
2♦	2♥	4♦	4NT
5♦	5♥		

"**What would North open?** (1♣.) With 13 high-card points, North would open 1♣.

"**East passes, South responds 1♥ and West overcalls 2♦. What is North's rebid?** (2♥.)

"**East jumps to 4♦, South bids 4NT and West bids 5♦. What call does North make?** (5♥.) Double would show no aces; pass would show one ace; the next available step, 5♥, shows two aces. After this response, South can set the contract."

With a more advanced group, you could discuss what to do if West doubled 4NT instead of bidding 5♦. Without discussion, the partnership could simply ignore the double. However, many partnerships play ROPI — redouble shows zero aces; pass shows one ace; the next available step, 5♣, shows two aces. Under that agreement, North would bid 5♣ if West doubled.

"If the opponents' interference leaves you no room to stop safely at the five level, the conventional agreement is to switch from DOPI to DEPO:

- **D**ouble shows an **E**ven number of aces — zero, two or four.
- **P**ass shows an **O**dd number of aces — one or three.

"There is some ambiguity in this arrangement, but you don't have much room left without committing the partnership to the slam level. Partner will usually be able to figure out which number of aces you have, since there is an 8-point difference between one ace and three aces.

"Let's see how we might put this agreement to work with this hand.

"**North opens 1♣. South responds 1♥ and West overcalls 2♦. North bids 2♥, East jumps to 4♦ and South bids 4NT. West now jumps to 6♦. What call does North make?** (Double.) With two aces, you would double, showing an even number. Hopefully, South will be able to tell from your earlier bidding that you have two aces rather than zero. South will know you can't have four aces, because you wouldn't have shown a minimum opening bid by raising to only 2♥ when holding four aces.

"Now it will be up to South to decide whether to bid a small slam, a grand slam or simply pass and defend for penalties."

Summary

"It is useful to have an agreement about what to do when the opponents interfere over partner's 4NT bid. A common agreement is to use DOPI and DEPO. If you don't have this agreement, double is simply for penalty and other bids are natural — not the standard responses to Blackwood. It's a good idea to discuss this with partner before it happens at the table. It won't come up that often, but when it does, it may be worth a lot of points to be on firm ground about your agreements."

When Is 4NT Blackwood?

Introduction

"A bid of 4NT is not always the Blackwood convention. It's important for the partnership to agree on when 4NT is a conventional bid asking for aces and when it has some other meaning. The general agreement is that 4NT is only Blackwood if the partnership has clearly agreed upon a trump suit — either directly or by inference."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king.
"In diamonds: add the king.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q x x
♦ K x x
♣ A 10 x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	?		

"**What would North open?** (1♣.)

"**Assume the opponents are silent and South responds 1♥. What would be North's rebid?** (2♥.)

"**South now jumps to 4NT. What call does North make?** (5♥.) South's 4NT bid is clearly Blackwood, since you have agreed on hearts as the trump suit. You would respond 5♥, showing two aces.

"**Suppose North opens the bidding 1♣ and South responds 1♦. What would be North's rebid?** (1♥.) You would continue bidding suits up the line, looking for a fit.

"**South now jumps to 4NT. What is North's call?** (5♥.) The standard agreement is that South's 4NT bid is Blackwood. Hearts is the agreed trump suit by inference.

"If North opens 1♣ and South jumps to 4NT right away, that would be the Blackwood convention. Presumably, South has a big fit with clubs and needs to know how many aces you have in order to decide on slam. South might have something else in mind, such as bidding slam in notrump after hearing how many aces you hold, but you must assume for now that the agreed trump suit is clubs. South has taken over captaincy by using Blackwood, and your responses are dictated by the convention.

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1♥. What response does North make?** (2♣/2NT.) Your response will depend on the methods you are using to show a game-forcing raise in hearts. If you aren't using a conventional raise, you might respond 2♣, planning to show the heart support next. If you are using the Jacoby 2NT, then you would jump to 2NT to show a forcing raise in hearts.

"**Suppose North uses the Jacoby 2NT in response to South's 1♥ bid and South now bids 4NT. What is North's call?** (5♥.) South's bid is Blackwood, since your artificial 2NT bid confirmed hearts as the trump suit. You would show your two aces by bidding 5♥.

"**Now suppose North opens the bidding 1♣ and South responds 1♠. What's North rebid?** (1NT.) With a minimum balanced hand, you would rebid 1NT.

"**Over North's 1NT rebid, South jumps to 4NT. What call does North make?** (Pass.) In this situation, no trump suit has been agreed upon. South's 4NT bid is a natural, invitational bid, showing a hand too strong to stop in 3NT, but not quite strong enough to bid slam. It's similar to the direct raise of 1NT to 4NT. With a minimum-strength hand of 13 points, you should probably decline the invitation by passing.

"If South wants to find out about aces after this start, South would first have to set the trump suit. With a slam-going hand and a strong spade suit, South should first jump shift to 2♠. South can then rebid the spades to set the trump suit and later bid 4NT, which would clearly be Blackwood. With a slam-going hand with spades and clubs, South might start with a jump shift in spades and then show club support. After that, 4NT would clearly be Blackwood with clubs as the agreed trump suit."

With a more experienced group, you could discuss how South might set clubs as the trump suit after responding only 1♠. Over North's 1NT rebid, South might have to make a forcing bid, such as 3♦ or 3♥, then show the club support and then bid 4NT as Blackwood. Alternatively, if the partnership uses a method such as new-minor forcing over opener's 1NT rebid, South can agree on clubs by first bidding 2♦ and then bidding clubs. Setting the trump suit before bidding Blackwood can sometimes be quite complicated.

"**Suppose East opens the bidding 4♠, South overcalls 4NT and West passes. What call does North make?** (5♣/6♣.) In this sequence, most partnerships would treat South's 4NT as the unusual notrump, showing a two-suited hand, likely with both minors. North should be picking a minor suit, not showing the number of aces held. Actually, since partner is willing to compete to the five level over East's preemptive 4♠ opening, North should probably be bidding slam in a minor, 6♣, with this much strength — or making an even stronger bid in search of a grand slam."

Summary

"When it's unclear whether 4NT is Blackwood, there can be uneasiness among the players at the table. One partner will often take a long time to make a call, and everyone will know it's one of those 'Is it or isn't it?' situations. To avoid this, make your decision in a reasonable tempo. If in doubt, treat 4NT as Blackwood and hope for the best.

"Some partnerships prefer to play that 4NT is always Blackwood. That's technically incorrect but may put the partnership more at ease."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Using Blackwood

What call does East make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as shown?

1)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ 3 2
		1♥	Pass	♥ K Q 9 8 5
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass	♦ A Q
4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass	♣ Q 10 7 6
5♠	Pass	?		

2)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ J 8 3
1♥	Pass	3♥	4♦	♥ K J 8 3
4NT	5♦	?		♦ 9 4
				♣ A Q 8 3

3)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ A 9
		2♣	Pass	♥ A K Q 9 6 3
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass	♦ K Q J 3
3♥	Pass	4NT	Pass	♣ A
5♦	Pass	?		

4)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K Q 10 8 7 3
1♣	1♥	1♠	4♥	♥ 6
4♠	Pass	4NT	5♥	♦ A K J 4
5♠	Pass	?		♣ K 9

5)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K 4
1♥	Pass	3♣	Pass	♥ K 3
4♣	Pass	4NT	Pass	♦ K 6
5♦	Pass	?		♣ A K J 10 9 7 4

Exercise Three *Answer* — Using Blackwood

1) 5NT. West's 5♠ bid can't be a suggestion to play with that suit as trump. It is a request for East to bid 5NT. West can then pass to allow the partnership to play in 5NT.

2) Pass. When the opponents interfere over Blackwood, pass shows one ace when playing DOPI.

3) 5NT. The partnership has all of the aces, so a grand slam is possible. East bids 5NT to ask about the number of kings West holds. If West holds one king, East should be able to take 13 tricks; if not, East will settle for a small slam.

4) 6♠. Playing DOPI, West's 5♠ bid shows two aces. Pass would show none; double would show one; the first available step would show two.

5) 5♠. The partnership is missing two aces, and it's too late to stop in 5♣. East bids 5♠, a suit that can't be a possible trump suit in light of the previous auction. This asks West to bid 5NT, which East will pass.

The Gerber Convention

Introduction

"4NT is the Blackwood convention after a trump suit has been agreed upon. A jump to 4NT is not Blackwood when there is no agreement on trump. When there is no suit agreement, however, you still may need to know how many aces and kings partner holds before bidding a slam. This requires another convention."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In hearts: take away the queen.
"In diamonds: add the queen, the jack and two low cards.
"In clubs: take away the ten and a low card.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ A x x
♦ K Q J x x x x
♣ A x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	?		

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1NT. Does the partnership have enough combined strength for the slam zone?** (Yes.) North has 14 high-card points plus 3 points for length in diamonds. The partnership has a combined total of 32 to 34 points, putting it in the slam zone.

"**Does North have a suitable trump fit?** (Yes.) South has at least two diamonds, so you have a nine-card or longer diamond fit.

"**What is the only thing holding North back from simply jumping to 6♦?** (Controls.) You could be missing two aces, so you should check for controls before bidding slam.

"**Would a jump to 4NT be Blackwood?** (No.) A jump to 4NT would be a quantitative, invitational, raise, asking South to bid slam with a maximum or pass with a minimum.

"One possibility would be to first agree on diamonds as the trump suit. That would be easy if a jump to 3♦ is forcing in the partnership methods. If South raises, you could bid 4NT, and South would play that as Blackwood. If South bids 3NT over 3♦, the situation becomes a little murkier. If you then bid 4NT, South might take that as a quantitative raise and pass with a minimum hand. You could try rebidding 4♦ to confirm that you want to play in diamonds, but if South were to raise to 5♦, you would no longer be able to bid Blackwood.

"Many partnerships don't play a jump to 3♦ as a forcing bid. They might play it as an invitational bid with a six-card diamond suit, for example. This

may make it difficult, or impossible, to agree on diamonds as a trump suit before bidding 4NT.

"To simplify matters, John Gerber of Houston, Texas suggested using a jump to 4♣ to ask for aces when partner has opened the bidding 1NT or 2NT. This agreement is appropriately named the Gerber convention.

"In response to 4♣, partner bids as follows:

- 4♦ shows zero aces or all four aces.
- 4♥ shows one ace.
- 4♠ shows two aces.
- 4NT shows three aces.

"The responses follow the same pattern as the Blackwood convention, with the cheapest step showing no aces or all four aces, the next step showing one ace and so forth. Following the same reasoning as the Blackwood convention, the response of 4♦ doubles up to show either zero or four aces in order to leave 5♣ available to ask for kings. Presumably, the 4♣ bidder can determine whether partner holds no aces or all four aces since there is a 16-point difference.

"After hearing partner's response to the 4♣ bid, any bid except 5♣ is a sign-off bid. If the partnership holds all of the aces and there is interest in a grand slam, a bid of 5♣ asks how many kings partner holds:

- 5♦ shows no kings.
- 5♥ shows one king.
- 5♠ shows two kings.
- 5NT shows three kings.
- 6♣ shows four kings.

"Let's see how the Gerber convention would work on this hand.

"**South opens the bidding 1NT. What response does North make?** (4♣.) A jump to 4♣ is the Gerber convention, asking about the number of aces South holds.

"**Suppose South responds 4♦. What call does North make now?** (5♦/4NT.) The 4♦ response shows no aces. That means that the partnership is missing two aces. You would now bid 5♦. 5♦ is a sign-off bid and South is expected to pass.

"If you are playing matchpoint duplicate, you might bid 4NT instead of 5♦. 4NT would be a sign-off bid, not Blackwood, since you have already asked about the number of aces. 4NT might look a little risky when you have such an unbalanced hand, but since you know you were thinking of playing at the slam level, the partnership should have enough combined strength to take at least 10 tricks in notrump. It's unlikely that you are missing much other than the two aces.

"It's important to know that 4NT is a sign-off bid after using the Gerber convention. If the agreed suit were clubs instead of diamonds, you could not

bid 5♣ as a sign-off bid. 5♣ would ask about the number of kings. When the agreed suit is clubs, you must prepare to play in 4NT if the partnership is missing two aces. It's similar to the situation when you need to stop in 5NT after using the Blackwood convention.

"**Suppose South opens 1NT, North responds 4♣ and South bids 4♥. Now what call does North make?** (6♦.) South's 4♥ response shows one ace, so the partnership is missing only one ace. Whether South holds the ♦A or the ♠A, slam should be a reasonable proposition, so you can jump to 6♦.

"**Suppose South opens 1NT, North responds 4♣ and South bids 4♠. Now what call does North make?** (5♣.) South's 4♠ bid shows two aces, so the partnership has all four aces. You might still settle for 6♦, but if South has enough kings, you might be able to make a grand slam. It can't hurt to bid 5♣.

"**Suppose North bids 5♣ and South responds 5♦. Now what call does North make?** (6♦/Pass.) If South has no kings, you might be worried about making slam. You could pass and settle for game in 5♦. Even if South has no kings, however, there should be a reasonable play for slam. South must have almost all of the missing queens and jacks to have enough to open 1NT! It would be timid not to bid 6♦.

"**Suppose North bids 5♣ and South responds 5♥. Now what call does North make?** (6♦.) If partner has two aces and one king, 6♦ should definitely be a reasonable contract.

"**Suppose North bids 5♣ and South responds 5♠. Now what call does North make?** (6NT/6♦.) If partner has two aces and two kings, 6♦ is virtually guaranteed. In fact, you should have 12 top winners. 6NT is safer than 6♦, and the score is worth more."

If the students have difficulty seeing that there will be 12 winners, have them construct a hand for South with two aces and two kings — any two of the three kings — and count the tricks.

"**Suppose North bids 5♣ and South responds 5NT. Now what call does North make?** (7NT/7♦.) South shows three kings. Now you can count 13 top tricks. You might as well bid 7NT rather than 7♦. That way, there's no possibility the opponents can get a surprise ruff in a suit, and you'll also get the top score available.

"Incidentally, if South does bid 5NT, you know every single high card in partner's hand — the ♠A K, the ♥K, the ♦A and the ♣K. Partner can't have any queens or jacks, since partner has already shown 17 high-card points!"

Summary

"Gerber is not an alternative to Blackwood; it is used in concert with Blackwood. You use the Blackwood convention when a trump suit has been agreed upon. Use the Gerber convention directly over a natural notrump bid by partner. In some situations Blackwood applies; in others, Gerber applies. Either Blackwood or Gerber will be appropriate on a given hand, not both."

When Is 4♣ Gerber?

Introduction

"It's a good idea to have a clear partnership agreement about when 4♣ is Gerber. The usual agreement is:

- If partner's last bid was a natural 1NT or 2NT, then a jump to 4♣ is Gerber."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the ace.
"In hearts: add the queen.
"In diamonds: take away the queen and two low cards.
"In clubs: add the queen.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ A Q x x
♦ K J x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	2NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	?		

"**What would North open?** (2NT.) With a balanced hand and 20 high-card points, open 2NT.

"**Suppose the opponents are silent and South jumps to 4♣. What call would North make?** (4NT.) Since 2NT is a natural opening bid, partner's jump to 4♣ is the Gerber convention, asking for aces. With three aces, respond 4NT.

"**Suppose South now bids 5♣. What call does North make?** (5♥.) 5♣ is a continuation of the Gerber convention, asking for the number of kings. With one king, you would bid 5♥.

"**If South now bids 6♣, what call does North make? (**Pass.) South's 6♣ is a sign-off bid. It doesn't ask for the number of queens. South has placed the contract after checking for aces and kings. You've described your hand, so there's no reason to overrule South's decision.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the king and add a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace and add a low card.

NORTH
♠ A x
♥ A Q x x
♦ J x x x
♣ Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	?		

"**What would North open?** (1♦.) With 13 points and no five-card major, open the longer minor, 1♦.

"**The opponents pass throughout. South responds 1♠. What is North's rebid?** (1NT.) With a minimum balanced hand, rebid 1NT.

"**South now jumps to 4♣. What does North bid?** (4♠.) South has jumped to 4♣ over a natural notrump bid by you, so 4♣ is the Gerber convention. With two aces, you respond 4♠.

"**If South had jumped to 4NT over your 1NT rebid, what would North do?** (Pass.) 4NT would not be Blackwood, since there has been no agreement on the trump suit. Instead, it would be a quantitative raise, inviting you to bid slam with more than a minimum. With only 13 points, pass, declining the invitation. You can see that it's important to have an agreement on whether Gerber or Blackwood applies in this situation — otherwise, there could be all sorts of confusion.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In diamonds: take away the jack.

NORTH
♠ A x x
♥ A Q x x
♦ x x x
♣ Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	?		

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1♥. What response does North make?** (3♥.) With 12 high-card points, you don't have quite enough to make a forcing raise in hearts, although that would not be unreasonable. A limit raise to 3♥ probably describes your hand best.

"**Suppose North makes a limit raise to 3♥ and South bids 4♣. Is that the Gerber convention?** (No.) 4♣ isn't Gerber because it isn't a jump over a natural notrump bid. After a trump suit has been agreed upon, partner would use Blackwood, a jump to 4NT, to ask for the number of aces.

"The meaning of 4♣ will be discussed in more detail in the next lesson. For now, all that is important is that 4♣ isn't Gerber."

4♣ would actually be a cuebid in this sequence. North could sign off in 4♥ or go beyond game and cuebid 4♠. There's no need to go into a detailed discussion with the students. There are some who will feel that it's cheaper to use Gerber rather than Blackwood in sequences such as this. That isn't standard practice, and it is not recommended. If the partnership has enough combined strength to be considering slam, the contract should be safe at the five level. As discussed in the previous section, Blackwood and Gerber aren't interchangeable. Either one or the other applies in any given auction.

"There is one exception to the guideline that 4♣ is Gerber only if it is used directly over a natural 1NT or 2NT bid. A common partnership agreement is that after a 1NT opening bid, if responder uses the Stayman convention first and then jumps to 4♣, then 4♣ is the Gerber convention.

"Change the North hand back to the hand we had at the start of the lesson.
"In spades: add the ten.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ A 10 x x
♥ A Q x x
♦ x x
♣ A Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♣
Pass	?		

"**What would North bid?** (1NT.) A balanced hand with 16 high-card points. Open 1NT.

"**South responds 2♣. What call does North make?** (2♥.) With two four-card majors, common practice is to respond up the line and bid 2♥.

"**After North's 2♥ rebid, South jumps to 4♣. Now what call does North make?** (4NT.) The agreement is that the jump to 4♣ following the use of the Stayman convention is the Gerber convention, asking for aces. With three aces, you would respond 4NT.

"Finally, let's go back to the challenge we presented at the start of this lesson.

"**Suppose North opens 1NT, South bids 2♣ and North responds 2♥. South jumps to 4NT. What call does North make?** (5♠/6♠.) Since 4♣ would be asking for the number of aces, 4NT isn't the Blackwood convention. Instead, it's a quantitative raise, similar to the direct raise of 1NT to 4NT. South has 16 or 17 points and is inviting you to bid slam.

"Why did South bid using the Stayman convention before jumping to 4NT? South must have a four-card major suit. It isn't hearts. As you've just seen, if South held four hearts, South could jump to 4♣ to find out about aces. By inference, South must have a hand with four spades and 16 or 17 points. First South checked for a spade fit. When you didn't bid spades, South then made a quantitative invitation to slam.

"Since you now know there is an eight-card spade fit, you can bid 5♠ if you are feeling conservative, or you can bid 6♠ if you want to accept the slam invitation."

Summary

"As you can see from this last example, it's important to agree when Gerber applies and when Blackwood applies. On this last hand, if North thinks 4NT is Blackwood, North might make the same 5♠ bid, showing three aces. However, South may be under the impression that partner is declining the slam invitation and signing off in 5♠.

"The standard agreement is that a jump to 4♣ is the Gerber convention:

- If it is made over a natural 1NT or 2NT bid by partner or
- If it is made after using the Stayman convention.

"The partnership may have other agreements, but they require additional discussion."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Four — The Gerber Convention

What call does East make with each of the following hands after the auction goes as shown?

1)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ A 5
	1NT	Pass	?		♥ 3
					♦ K Q J 8 7 6 3
					♣ K Q 6
2)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K J 8
			2NT	Pass	♥ A Q 8 7
	4♣	Pass	?		♦ K Q 6 2
					♣ A J
3)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ Q J 8 4
		Pass	1NT	Pass	♥ A 8
	2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass	♦ A 10 7 5
	4♣	Pass	?		♣ A J 3
4)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ K J 9 6 2
			1♠	Pass	♥ A Q
	2♦	Pass	3NT	Pass	♦ Q J 3
	4♣	Pass	?		♣ K Q 10
5)	WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH	♠ A K 7 4
	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	♥ K Q 8 3
	2♥	Pass	?		♦ K J 10 2
					♣ 5

Exercise Four *Answer* — The Gerber Convention

1) 4♣ (Gerber). The partnership should have enough combined strength for a slam contract, if it holds enough first-round controls. East uses the Gerber convention to ask for the number of aces West holds.

2) 4♠. This response shows two aces. 4♦ would show none; 4♥ would show one.

3) 4NT. This response shows three aces.

4) 4♦. East gives preference to diamonds. West's 4♣ isn't Gerber because it wasn't a jump after a natural 1NT or 2NT bid.

5) 4♣ (Gerber). Use the Gerber convention to ask for aces. 4NT would be quantitative.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 5*

General Guidelines for Teachers: The focus of all four deals in this lesson is slam bidding conventions. The auctions should prove to be quite challenging. If the students can get to the right level in each case, they will be rewarded.

Bid and Play —Deal 1: Using Blackwood

Guidelines for Teachers: On this first deal, the students will use Blackwood to explore for slam. A variation of the hand is offered where the students can make the suggested changes to the hands and then bid them again.

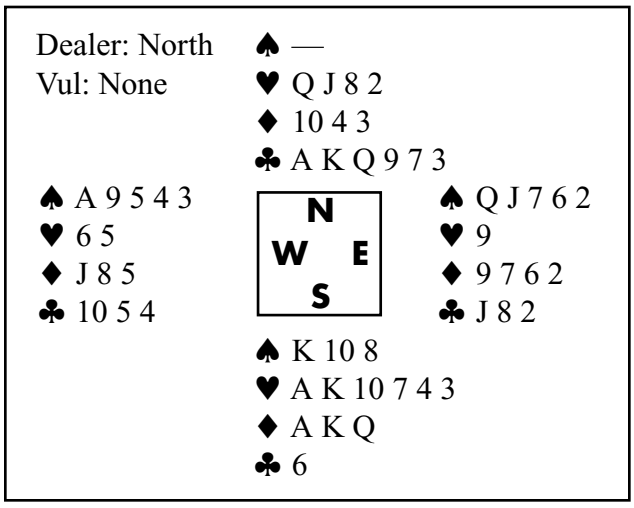
Introduction

"Let's play a deal that demonstrates the use of Blackwood to find a trump fit and to bid a grand slam."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #5, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♥/2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	6♥	Pass	7♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"North opens the bidding in the longest suit and East passes. With 19 high-card points and a six-card suit, South knows the partnership is in the slam range. The first priority, however, is to find a trump fit. South could make a jump shift into 2♥, but a response of 1♥ is forcing and leaves more room to explore for the best strain.

"Assuming South bids only 1♥ and West passes, North's hand can be revalued in support of hearts. Counting 12 high-card points plus 5 dummy points for the spade void, the hand is worth 17 points, enough for a jump raise to 3♥.

"Once the partnership has agreed upon the trump suit, South can use the Blackwood convention to check for the number of aces. South doesn't want to be in a slam if two aces are missing. If the partnership is missing one ace, a small slam is the best spot. If North has two aces, South can investigate a grand slam.

"North has one ace and a potentially useful void in spades. North shows this by jumping to 6♥ — showing one ace and a higher-ranking void. If South interprets this correctly, South will know that North holds the ♣A and a spade void. That should be enough for a grand slam. South will be able to ruff the spade losers with dummy's trumps. Trusting partner, South bids 7♥."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 7♥ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West is on lead against 7♥. If North–South have not already supplied an explanation of the auction, West can ask for one. West is probably aware that the ♠A will be ruffed but should lead it anyway. It's always possible that the opponents have had a misunderstanding. If the ♠A is ruffed, it's unlikely to matter. East–West probably don't have much else if the opponents have bid a grand slam."

Suggested Play

"South should have little difficulty taking all of the tricks in a heart contract. Any spade losers can be ruffed in dummy or discarded on the extra club winners in dummy."

Suggested Defense

"There's nothing East —West can do to prevent declarer from taking 13 tricks in a heart contract."

Bid and Play — Variation of Deal 1 – Blackwood and Voids

Introduction

"Let's construct a variation of this hand.

"From the North hand, take the ♦10, the ♦4 and the ♦3 and give them to East.

"From the East hand, take the ♠7, the ♠6 and the ♠2 and give them to North."

Instructions

"North is still the dealer. Take out your hands and let's see how the bidding will go this time. Stop when you have completed the auction."

Dealer: North
Vul: None

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♥/2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT
Pass	6♦	Pass	6♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"The bidding goes the same way in this version of the deal. The only difference is that North has a diamond void rather than a spade void. South uses the Blackwood convention to check for the number of aces.

"North has one ace and a potentially useful void in diamonds. North can show this by jumping to 6♦ — showing one ace and a void in diamonds. South now knows that the partnership is missing either the ♠A or the ♣A. South settles for a small slam in hearts by bidding 6♥. North accepts partner's decision."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards. Have all tables play a contract of 6♥ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West is on lead against 6♥. West has to decide whether to lead the ♠A or pick another suit. Some players always lead an ace against a slam contract. A better approach is to listen to the auction before deciding what to lead. On this auction, the opponents have bid very strongly, so it's quite likely they can take 12 or all 13 tricks. Leading the ♠A is probably the best chance for the defense. It's possible, though unlikely, that the opponents have bid to slam missing both the ♠A and the ♠K. A more likely possibility is that East started with a singleton spade. West may be able to give East a ruff by leading the ♠A and a second round of spades."

Suggested Play

"South should have little difficulty making the slam whether or not West leads the ♠A. If West doesn't lead the ♠A, declarer can take all 13 tricks by discarding dummy's spades on the ♦A K Q and then ruffing spade losers in dummy or discarding them on dummy's extra club winners."

Suggested Defense

"There's nothing East–West can do to prevent declarer from taking 12 tricks in a heart contract. The ♠A turns out to be the best lead. Otherwise, declarer can take all 13 tricks."

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Signing Off with Blackwood

> **Guidelines for Teachers:** On this second deal, East can visualize slam if West holds two aces, so East uses Blackwood to check.

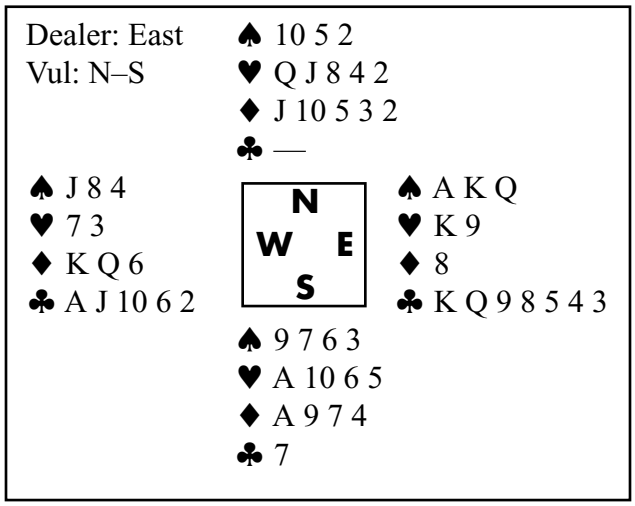
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where slam appears to be possible if the partnership has the right controls."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #5, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass
5NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

"East isn't quite strong enough for a conventional (artificial) 2♣ opening and starts the auction with 1♣, planning to show the extra strength later. South passes, and West makes a limit raise to 3♣. West has 11 high-card points and five-card support.

"East can visualize a slam if West holds two aces, so East jumps to 4NT, the Blackwood convention. West's 5♦ response shows one ace. East knows the partnership can't make a slam.

"Unfortunately, West's 5♦ response puts the partnership beyond the safe resting spot of 5♣. East can't bid 5NT, since that would ask for the number of kings. Instead, East bids 5♥, a suit in which the partnership can't possibly want to play. This asks West to bid 5NT. When West bids 5NT, East passes. 5NT may not be a safe contract, but it may have a chance. East can expect West to hold some strength in diamonds, since there isn't room for much else if West has enough strength for a limit raise. Since two aces are missing, 6♣ would have no chance."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 5♥ by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South is on lead and has a difficult choice. The usual lead against a notrump contract would be the ♥5, fourth highest from the stronger of the four-card suits. From the auction, South has a clue that North doesn't have much, because East–West were trying to get to slam. South might prefer the safer lead of a spade, hoping to give nothing away and make declarer do all of the work to take 11 tricks."

Suggested Play

"The 5NT contract is a challenge. If South leads a heart, East will have an easy time. East can win the ♥K and then quickly take seven club tricks and three spade tricks to make the contract.

"If South leads a spade, declarer has to find an 11th trick. The best choice is to lead a diamond, hoping South has the ♦A. If North has the ♦A, declarer will have to hope that North also holds the ♥A. Otherwise, the contract will be defeated by several tricks. North could return a heart, trapping East's ♥K. East is safe. South holds both aces and can't prevent declarer from taking 11 tricks — three spades, one diamond and seven clubs. A lucky escape for East–West."

Suggested Defense

"Due to the unfortunate location of the ♦A, the defenders can't do anything to prevent declarer from taking 11 tricks."

Bid and Play — Deal 3 – Blackwood, DOPI, DEPO

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal provides an opportunity for the teacher to let the students have a little fun. Highly distributional hands are always interesting.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the distribution produces a lively auction."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #5, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

Dealer: South Vul: E–W	♠ 8 5 ♥ K Q J 9 8 6 5 ♦ — ♣ J 10 8 7	
♠ Q J 9 7 6 4 ♥ A ♦ J 8 4 3 ♣ A 4	N W E S	♠ A K 10 3 2 ♥ 2 ♦ A K Q 9 6 2 ♣ 5
	♠ — ♥ 10 7 4 3 ♦ 10 7 5 ♣ K Q 9 6 3 2	

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. East uses Blackwood to check for aces, but South, with a great fit with North's hearts, provides some interference to make the auction interesting.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
1♠	3♥/4♥	4NT	5♥
5♠	Pass	7♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

"South doesn't have the right type of hand to open the bidding. South can't open a weak two-bid when the six-card suit is clubs, and with a void and a side four-card major, it would be a bit off-center to open 3♣. West's hand is too strong for a weak two-bid in spades, so West starts with 1♠. With a good seven-card suit, North can make a weak jump overcall to 3♥. North is unlikely to be defeated more than two tricks, considering the nice side-

suit holding in clubs. Some players might even venture 4♥ with the North hand.

"With an excellent fit for spades and a good hand, East uses the Blackwood convention to ask how many aces West holds. By inference, the jump to 4NT agrees on spades as the trump suit. East doesn't want to show the diamond suit or do something else, because the opportunity to use Blackwood may not be there when the bidding comes back around. There should be no losers in spades or diamonds, so a small or grand slam will hinge on the number of aces held by West.

"With an excellent fit for North's hearts — North is showing seven of them — South should take some action over the 4NT bid to make the auction more difficult for the opponents. With such a good distributional hand, South might even envision the partnership making 5♥ if North is short in diamonds. South should bid at least 5♥. An adventuresome South might jump to 6♥ to put more pressure on East–West.

"If South does bid 5♥, West can bid 5♠ to show two aces in response to Blackwood. Playing the DOPI convention, a double would show no aces, a pass would show one ace and the next available step, 5♠, would show two aces. If South jumps to 6♥, West could double to show an even number of aces if the partnership is using DEPO — double even, pass odd. East would now have to guess whether West held no aces (highly unlikely) or two aces (most likely). If South chooses to bid 5♣ rather than 5♥, West would bid 5♦ to show two aces when playing the DOPI convention.

"Over West's 5♠ bid, North should pass, having already described the hand with the preemptive jump overcall. Assuming East trusts West's 5♠ bid to be the DOPI conventional response, East can now jump to 7♠. The partnership should have no losers. Even if West doesn't hold the ♠Q, the partnership has at least a ten-card fit, which should be good enough. A jump to 7NT would be possible, but could lead to disaster if West is short in diamonds and there are diamond losers. Getting to a grand slam in spades over the opponents' interference should be good enough."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North is on lead and will probably start with the ♥K, although this probably won't develop a trick for the defense. East–West are unlikely to bid a grand slam in spades without the ♥A, so North might consider leading a club. It is always possible that the opponents have had a misunderstanding and are missing an ace. That's a little unlikely, since South might have made a Lightner double asking for an unusual lead holding a minor-suit ace or a void. North's opening lead won't make much difference."

Suggested Play

"There's nothing to the play. Declarer can draw trumps and claim all of the tricks."

Suggested Defense

"North–South can't prevent East–West from making a grand slam. The best North–South can do is to throw up interference and hope that East–West land in the wrong contract.

"North–South will do very well if allowed to play in a heart contract, even if they are doubled. They are unlikely to lose more than two tricks — the ♣A and the ♥A — since East–West are unlikely to find their club ruff."

Bid and Play — Deal 4 – Gerber Over Notrump

Guidelines for Teachers: This hand introduces Gerber over Notrump and the idea that 4NT would now be quantitative.

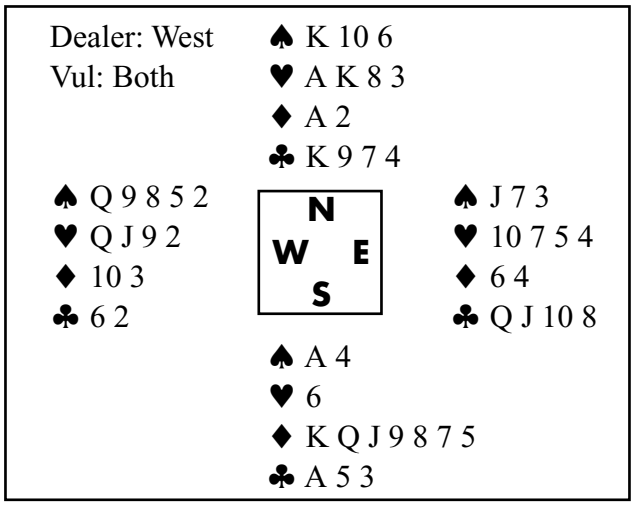
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the Gerber convention allows the partnership to check for aces and kings at a lower level."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #5, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠	Pass	5♣
Pass	5NT	Pass	7NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"With a balanced hand and 17 high-card points, North opens 1NT. East passes. South can visualize a slam if the partnership isn't missing two aces. South uses Gerber, a jump to 4♣, to ask for the number of aces. A jump to 4NT would be a quantitative (invitational) jump and not the Blackwood convention.

"After West's pass, North bids 4♠, the third step, to show two aces — 4♦, the first step, would show no aces or all four aces; 4♥ would show one ace.

"South now knows the partnership holds all of the aces and can try for bigger things by bidding 5♣ to ask for the number of kings. North responds 5NT, the fourth step, to show three kings — 5♦ would show no kings; 5♥ would show one king; 5♠ would show two kings; and 6♣ would show all four kings.

"South now can be certain that the partnership has all 13 tricks, the ♠A and the ♠K, the ♥A and the ♥K, seven diamond tricks and the ♣A and ♣K. South can bid a grand slam. Although South was originally planning to play with diamonds as the trump suit, South might as well bid the slam in notrump. That contract is worth more than 7♦ and is slightly safer — no possibility of the opponents getting a ruff on the first trick."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 7NT by North.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East is on lead and would start with the ♣Q, top of a sequence."

Suggested Play

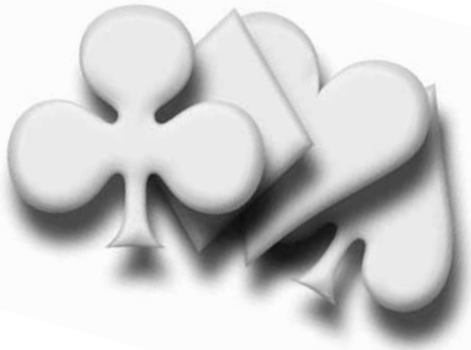
"There isn't much to the play. North has 13 sure tricks: two spades, two hearts, seven diamonds and two clubs."

Suggested Defense

"If North–South reach 7NT, East–West will just have to wait for the next deal."

LESSON 6

Finding Key Cards



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

Finding Key Cards

This is the second lesson covering slam bidding techniques. It assumes familiarity with the general requirements for slam and the Blackwood and Gerber conventions. It is mainly a discussion of when not to use Blackwood (or Gerber). It covers the concept of cuebidding controls and covers methods for finding out about trump quality. This material will probably challenge the students.

Bidding

Students frequently equate the Blackwood convention with slam bidding. As soon as a trump suit has been agreed upon and slam is in sight, they launch into Blackwood. This convention, however, only tells how many aces and kings partner holds, not which aces and kings. In addition, the Blackwood convention doesn't effectively handle other forms of controls such as singletons and voids.

Cuebidding can be very effective in uncovering the controls held by the partnership, but does require a lot of partnership cooperation and judgment. The focus of this lesson is to introduce the students to this concept.

Cuebidding also has its shortcomings in that it doesn't deal with controls in the trump suit. Conventions that address this issue, such as Key Card Blackwood, are beyond the scope of this lesson, although the more advanced students can be referred to the material in the Appendix covering this topic. The lesson, however, covers a couple of "standard" methods specific to the trump suit, including the *grand slam force*.

Here are the topics covered:

When Blackwood (or Gerber) Isn't Enough

This is an introduction to the topic, showing why Blackwood (or Gerber) doesn't resolve all of the control issues in slam-going auctions. The important point to emphasize is that Blackwood (or Gerber) tells how many aces partner holds, but not which aces.

Cuebidding First-Round Controls

This section shows how cuebidding can be used to show a first-round control and to elicit partner's cooperation in discovering whether the partnership holds enough controls. Once a trump suit has been agreed upon, both outside aces and voids can be treated as first-round controls.

Finding the Ace of Trump

Because cuebidding ignores the trump suit, this section gives an example of how cuebidding can be combined with Blackwood (or Gerber) to check for the trump ace.

Cuebidding Second-Round Controls

A basic principle assumed in this lesson is that first-round controls are shown ahead of second-round controls. While experienced partnerships may at times sidestep this principle, sometimes showing a second-round control ahead of a first-round control for convenience in the auction, this is not recommended for more inexperienced students. Instead, the students are shown how to show a second-round control in a suit — either a king or a singleton — once a first-round control in that suit has already been shown or denied.

Finding the King of Trump

This is a brief example to show how Blackwood (or Gerber) can be used to ask about kings in a slam-going auction that started with a cuebid. As mentioned earlier, Key Card Blackwood is outside the scope of the lesson, but more experienced students can be referred to the Appendix in the student textbook if they want more details.

Trump Quality

There are some standard methods to ask about trump quality. The students are shown examples of quantitative trump auctions and are introduced to the grand slam force convention.

Play & Defense

The first two deals focus entirely on the auction. There are no play challenges involved if the partnership reaches the appropriate contract. Both of these deals have variations. Be sure to have the students make the appropriate changes once they have completed the initial bidding and play, and then have them rebid and replay the deal.

The last two deals combine slam bidding with some more challenging play concepts:

- End play.
- Safety play.
- Suit establishment.

The third deal is an excellent example of an endplay. It is unlikely that many of the students will spot the winning line of play the first time through. Declarer must plan ahead and strip out a side suit to be successful. On the actual lie of the cards, partially stripping out the diamond suit will suffice, but the students should be shown how to make sure that West has no diamonds left before being endplayed.

The fourth deal has a couple of challenges for declarer. The first involves a standard safety play in the trump suit. In addition, declarer must be careful to combine suit establishment with safety when handling the trump suit. It would not be surprising for most declarers to get tangled up with entries in the play, so be sure to walk slowly through the recommended line of play.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This is a continuation of the previous lesson on slam bidding. It's assumed that the students are familiar with the basic requirements for slam bidding, especially the need to check for controls. It's probably a good idea, however, to briefly review the basic principles before moving into the concept of cuebidding.

You might start like this:

> "In the previous lesson, we discussed the three basic requirements for slam bidding:
>
> 1. **Combined strength.** The partnership needs approximately:
>   - 33 or more combined points for a small slam;
>   - 37 or more combined points for a grand slam.
>
> "This amount of combined strength doesn't guarantee that the partnership can take 12 or 13 tricks, but does put the partnership in the slam zone — where it is worth investigating the possibility of slam if the next two requirements can be met.
>
> 2. **Trump fit.** Before launching into slam, make sure you know in which strain the partnership belongs — in a suitable trump suit or in notrump. You may need the early rounds of the auction to uncover your best fit.
> 3. **Controls.** In a slam contract, it's important to make sure that the opponents can't take enough tricks to defeat the contract before you gain the lead.
>   - A first-round control is a holding that makes sure your side can win the first trick in a suit. An ace is a first-round control; a void in a trump contract is a first-round control.
>   - A second-round control is a holding that makes sure your side can win the second trick in a suit. A king is a second-round control; a singleton in a trump contract is a second-round control.
>
> "In a small slam, you must have at least first-round control in three suits and second-round control in the fourth. In a grand slam, you need first-round control in all four suits.
>
> "In the previous lesson, we looked at two of the conventions that can be used to find out about controls, Blackwood and Gerber. These conventions reveal the number of aces and kings partner holds. Combined with the first two requirements, strength and fit, that will often be everything needed to bid a good slam or to keep out of a bad slam."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

When Blackwood Isn't Enough

Introduction

"Knowing how many aces and kings partner holds won't always give you enough information to decide whether slam is a reasonable prospect. In a trump contract, for example, there are other forms of controls, such as singletons and voids. There may be other considerations as well."

Instructions

"The cards are sorted into suits.
"Give each player one suit and construct the following hand in front of South.
"In spades: the ace, the king and the queen.
"In hearts: the ace, the king and four low cards.
"In diamonds: two low cards.
"In clubs: the king and the queen."

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2♥
Pass	3♥	Pass	?

SOUTH
♠ A K Q
♥ A K x x x x
♦ x x
♣ K Q

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of South.

"What is South's opening bid? (2♣.) With 21 HCP plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, South has enough for a strong two bid.

"How would the bidding proceed? North bids a waiting 2♦. South shows a good heart suit with a 2♥ bid, and North shows more than a minimum hand by bidding 3♥.

"After North bids 3♥ and East passes, does South think slam is a possibility? (Yes.) North's raise to 3♥ shows a better than minimum response, since 4♥ would have been a signoff.

"What's the only concern before simply bidding 6♥? (Controls.) The only thing holding you back from jumping to 6♥ — which wouldn't be entirely unreasonable – is the possibility that the opponents might take the first two tricks. For example, two aces may be missing.

"**Should South jump to 4NT to ask about aces?** (No/Yes.) 4NT might work, but it still might leave South guessing what to do. To understand why, let's see what might happen if South bids Blackwood.

"**If South were to bid 4NT and North responded 5♣, what call would South make?** (5♥.) North's 5♣ bid would show no aces. Now South would know that slam isn't a good spot because two aces are missing. South would sign off in 5♥, the agreed trump suit.

"**If South were to bid 4NT and North responded 5♥, what call would South make?** (6♥/5NT.) North's 5♥ response shows two aces, so the partnership holds all of them. That means that 6♥ should be an excellent spot."

South might even consider bidding 5NT to try for a grand slam. If North holds the missing ♦K, that would account for 11 high-card points in North's hand — the ♦AK and the ♣A. Provided North doesn't have a doubleton ♣A, South will be able to discard the spade loser on dummy's ♣A. If the missing hearts divide 2–1, South will be okay.

"So, South will be okay if North shows no aces or two aces.

"**If South were to bid 4NT and North responded 5♦, what call would South make?** (5♥/6♥.) If North shows one ace, South will be left to guess whether to stop at 5♥ or bid slam.

"To see this, leave the South hand as it is and construct a hand in front of North.
"In spades: the jack and three low cards.
"In hearts: the queen and three low cards.
"In diamonds: the ace, the queen and a low card.
"In clubs, two low cards.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ J x x x		2♣	♠ A K Q
♥ Q x x x	2♦	2♥	♥ A K x x x x
♦ A Q x	3♥	(4NT)	♦ x x
♣ x x	(5♦)	(6♥?)	♣ K Q

"South opens 2♣. What would North respond? (2♦, waiting.) With four-card support for both majors, North bids 2♦, waiting for South's rebid.

"What does South bid next? (2♥.) South bids the six-card heart suit which North supports by raising to 3♥.

"If South were now to bid 4NT, what would North respond? (5♦.) With one ace, North would respond 5♦.

"Would slam be a reasonable contract? (Yes.) Slam would be an excellent contract. Declarer doesn't even need to take the diamond finesse, since South's diamond loser can be discarded on North's extra spade winner.

"So, the partnership could have 12 tricks if North holds only one ace.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the ace.
"In clubs: add the ace.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ J x x x		2♣	♠ A K Q
♥ Q x x x	2♦	2♥	♥ A K x x x x
♦ Q x	3♥	(4NT)	♦ x x
♣ A x x	(5♦)	(5♥?)	♣ K Q

"South opens 2♣. What would North respond? (2♦, waiting.) North is waiting for South's response. Again, South bids the six-card heart suit.

"What does North bid next? (3♥.) North shows a better than minimum hand by bidding 3♥.

"**If South were now to bid 4NT, what would North respond?** (5♦.) Again, North would respond 5♦ to show one ace.

"**Would slam be a reasonable contract?** (No.) The opponents can take the first two diamond tricks to defeat the slam contract, before South gains the lead.

"Notice that there are enough tricks to make slam if the opponents don't take their diamond winners right away. In fact, there are 13 tricks — four spades, six hearts and three clubs. North–South are definitely in the slam zone, but North–South just don't have first- or second-round control of diamonds.

"These hands illustrate why it's sometimes better just to jump to slam instead of using — or misusing — a convention. If South jumps right to 6♥ over North's raise to 3♥, West might not lead a diamond, and North–South will get a lucky result. If South bids 4NT and North responds 5♦, East might make a lead-directing double. Now West will lead a diamond even if that wasn't what West was intending to lead.

"The real problem is with the use of the Blackwood convention. It may work out all right if North shows no aces or two aces, but South won't know what to do when North shows one ace. Slam will have a chance if North holds the ♦A, but the contract may go down if North holds the ♣ A."

Summary

"One disadvantage of the Blackwood convention is that it reveals how many aces partner holds, but it doesn't tell you which aces partner holds. When you need information about specific controls, other methods must be used.

"Sometimes simple is best — as this hand illustrates. With the South hand, you could jump to slam over the limit raise and be right most of the time. When it's wrong — because the opponents have two tricks to take — you may get lucky and make slam anyway. It isn't always easy for the opponents to find the winning defense when you don't give them any information."

Cuebidding First-Round Controls

Introduction

"There is a way to get information about specific controls; it's called cuebidding. Like the double, the cuebid can be used in many different ways. You've already seen some uses, the Michaels cuebid and the cuebid as a limit raise, for example. Slam cuebidding, however, is a separate art. Unlike the Blackwood and Gerber conventions, which are quite mechanical, cuebidding requires good judgment.

"Cuebidding works this way: Instead of asking how many aces partner has, you show partner a specific ace you hold, then partner can show you a specific ace, and so on. Let's see how that works."

Instructions

"Start with the hands as they are.

NORTH
♠ Q J x x
♥ Q x x x
♦ Q x
♣ A x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
3♥	3♠
4♣	4♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K x
♥ A K x x x x
♦ x x
♣ K Q

"**Suppose South opens 1♥ and North makes a limit raise to 3♥. How can South start a cuebidding sequence?** (3♠.) Now that the trump suit has been agreed, South can start a cuebidding sequence by showing a first-round control. Typically, South shows the most convenient first-round control outside of the trump suit. South shows first-round control of spades, the ♠A, by cuebidding 3♠.

"**How would North recognize South's 3♠ bid as a cuebid, rather than simply a bid of a new suit?** (Trumps are already agreed upon and the bid commits the partnership to game.) There are two indications that South is cuebidding with interest in slam:

- First, hearts have already been agreed upon as the trump suit, so South can't be suggesting spades as a trump suit.
- Second, South's 3♠ bid commits the partnership to at least game. South can't be interested in stopping in a partscore, because South would simply pass North's raise to 3♥. When South bids 3♠, the partnership can no longer stop below the game level in hearts. South can't be merely interested in getting to game, since South could simply bid 4♥ instead of bidding 3♠.

"When the partnership is already committed to at least game, the bid of a suit in which the partnership can't want to play is a cuebid, showing interest in reaching a slam contract.

"**After South cuebids 3♠, what call would North make?** (4♣.) South initiates the cuebidding sequence by showing a first-round control. This asks North to cooperate by showing a control in one of the suits outside of the trump suit — typically a first-round control. North cooperates by cuebidding 4♣, showing first-round control of clubs.

"**What does North know about South's hand from South's use of cuebidding instead of using the Blackwood convention?** (South is interested in specific controls.) If South were only interested in the number of aces North held, South could use the Blackwood convention right away. Since South has cuebid instead, South must be interested in which controls North holds, rather than just the number of aces North holds. That's why North cooperates by showing controls.

"**What does South do after North cuebids 4♣?** (4♥.) The ♣A isn't the ace South was looking for. The partnership could be losing the first two tricks in diamonds. South signs off in the agreed trump suit by bidding 4♥.

"**How does North know that 4♥ isn't a cuebid, showing the ♥A?** You only cuebid controls outside of the trump suit. The trump suit is used to sign off — or at least to say you have nothing further to cuebid at this point in the auction.

"**What call would North make after South bids 4♥?** (Pass.) North has already shown the ♣A and doesn't have any other controls to show. North accepts South's decision to sign off by passing the 4♥ bid. The partnership rests safely at the game level, avoiding the poor slam contract.

"Change the North hand back to the previous example.
"In diamonds: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away the ace.

NORTH
♠ Q J x x
♥ Q x x x
♦ A Q x
♣ x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
3♥	3♠
4♦	6♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K x
♥ A K x x x x
♦ x x
♣ K Q

"**What would South open?** (1♥.)

"**What would North respond?** (3♥.)

"**What would be South's next call?** (3♠.) Since Blackwood won't tell South what to do if North holds only one ace, South starts a cuebidding sequence by bidding 3♠.

"**What would North respond after South's 3♠ bid?** (4♦.) Recognizing South's 3♠ as a cuebid showing interest in reaching slam, North cooperates by cuebidding 4♦, showing the first-round control North holds in diamonds.

"**What does South know after North's 4♦ bid?** (North has first-round control of diamonds, but no first-round control of clubs.) South now knows that North holds a first-round control of diamonds, likely the ♦A. South knows more than that, however. Since North bypassed 4♣, South knows North doesn't hold the ♣A. First-round controls are usually bid up the line — cuebidding the cheapest control first."

Experienced partnerships sometimes bid controls in a prepared order to avoid unnecessarily using up bidding room. This is beyond the scope of this lesson. It is best to start with showing first-round controls first, cuebidding them up the line. That's more than enough for now.

"**What call does South make after North's 4♦ cuebid?** (6♥.) South now knows that North holds the right ace, the ♦A. The opponents won't be able to take the first two tricks in a slam contract. Since the partnership has enough combined strength and an agreed trump suit, South can simply jump to slam, knowing it should have a reasonable chance.

"South knows there's no chance for a grand slam. Since the partnership is missing the ♣A, there's no need for any further cuebidding."

If South is nervous that there has been a misunderstanding (or if the partnership would sometimes show a second-round control in this sequence), South now could safely bid 4NT to check for aces. However, that is essentially a redundant bid. It may only serve to give the opponents further information or another opportunity for a lead-directing double. There is a practical example of using Blackwood after cuebidding later in this lesson.

"Cuebidding resolves the earlier flaw with using the Blackwood convention when North has only one ace. South can now avoid bidding slam when North holds the ♣A, but get to slam when North holds the ♦A. What would happen in a cuebidding sequence, however, if North held neither ace?

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and add the king.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the jack.

NORTH
♠ Q J x x
♥ Q x x x
♦ K Q x
♣ J x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
3♥	3♠
4♥	Pass

SOUTH
♠ A K x
♥ A K x x x x
♦ x x
♣ K Q

"**South again starts the auction with 1♥. What response does North make?** (3♥.) North still has enough to make a limit raise to 3♥.

"**What call does South make next?** (3♠.) South shows interest in reaching slam by cuebidding 3♠.

"**What does North respond to South's 3♠ cuebid?** (4♥.) With no first-round control to cuebid, North simply returns to the agreed trump suit by bidding 4♥.

"**What does South call after hearing North's 4♥ bid?** (Pass.) South now knows that the partnership is missing both the ♦A and the ♣A, since North couldn't cuebid either of those controls. That tells South that slam is a poor contract. South passes, leaving the partnership in the safe game contract.

"Cuebidding on these hands also works well if North holds no aces. In fact, it works better than the Blackwood convention, since the partnership stays one level lower. Now let's see what happens if North holds both of the missing aces.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the queen.
"In diamonds: take away king and the queen; add the ace and a low card.
"In clubs: add the ace.

NORTH
♠ J x x
♥ Q x x x
♦ A x x
♣ A J x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
3♥	3♠
4♣	4♥
5♦	6♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K x
♥ A K x x x x
♦ x x
♣ K Q

"**South starts with 1♥. What call does North make?** (3♥.) With four-card support and 12 high-card points, North makes a limit raise to 3♥.

"**What is South's rebid?** (3♠.) With interest in slam, South cuebids 3♠.

"**What does North respond to South's 3♠ cuebid?** (4♣.) With first-round control in two suits, North starts with the cheaper cuebid, 4♣.

"**What does South respond after hearing North's 4♣ cuebid?** (4♥.) South knows that North holds the ♣A, but is afraid that the partnership is missing the top two diamond tricks. South returns to the agreed trump suit by bidding 4♥. Remember, South's 4♥ bid isn't a cuebid. It simply says that South has nothing further to say.

"**What does North call after South bids 4♥?** (5♦.) North now can show the other first-round control by cuebidding 5♦. North knows that South is interested in slam because of the 3♠ cuebid. South didn't continue to slam after hearing about North's ♣A, so South is presumably worried about a control in diamonds. North can show that control now, leaving the final decision to South.

"**What call does South make over the 5♦ cuebid?** (6♥.) Now that South knows North holds controls in both clubs and diamonds, South can bid the slam. South might even try for a grand slam at this point — but more on that later. For now, you can see how cuebidding works no matter how many aces North holds:

- If North holds no aces, the partnership can stop safely at the game level.
- If North holds two aces, the partnership can reach the slam level.
- If North holds one ace, the partnership can get to slam if it is the ♦A, but keep out of slam if it is the ♣A.

"Cuebidding tells you which controls partner holds instead of how many controls partner holds. This can be useful on many types of hands.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the queen and add a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace and add a low card.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add the queen.
"In hearts: add the jack.
"In diamonds: take away two low cards.

NORTH
♠ J x x
♥ x x x x
♦ A x x
♣ J x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♥
3♥	3♠
4♦	6♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x
♥ A K J x x x x
♦ —
♣ K Q

"**What would South open?** (2♣.) South would open with a strong 2♣ bid.

"**What would North respond?** (2♦.) North makes a waiting response of 2♦.

"**What would be South's rebid?** (2♥.) South would now describe the hand by bidding 2♥.

"**What would North respond over South's 2♥ bid?** (3♥.) With four-card support for hearts, North can raise to the three level. North is too strong to jump to 4♥, which would show heart support, but deny any ace or king outside of the trump suit. North's 3♥ bid commits the partnership to at least the game level.

"**Is South interested in reaching a slam?** (Yes.) Now that a trump fit has been agreed upon, South definitely wants to be in slam. The only question is whether the partnership belongs in a small slam or a grand slam. If North holds the ♣A, the partnership can make a grand slam.

"**Would Blackwood give South the information needed to determine whether the partnership belongs in a grand slam?** (No/Maybe.) If North holds both missing aces, Blackwood would work, because South would know the partnership could make a grand slam. If North showed no aces, South would know the partnership belongs in a small slam, since it is missing the ♣A. If North were to show one ace in response to Blackwood, South still would not know whether to bid the grand slam.

"North would respond 5♦ to Blackwood, showing one ace, but the partnership cannot make a grand slam. Instead, South should resort to cuebidding to try to discover whether North has first-round control of clubs.

"**Over North's raise to 3♥, what would South respond?** (3♠.) South can initiate a cuebidding sequence by bidding 3♠, showing first-round control of spades.

"**What does North respond after South's cuebid of 3♠?** (4♦.) North shows first-round control in diamonds by cuebidding 4♦.

"**What does South respond after hearing North's 4♦ cuebid?** (6♥.) South now knows that partner holds the wrong ace. South settles for a small slam by jumping to 6♥.

"Of course, the partnership doesn't need the ♣A to make a grand slam. It only needs first-round control of the club suit.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away ace and add four low cards.
"In clubs: take away the jack and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ J x x
♥ x x x x
♦ x x x x x x
♣ —

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♥
3♥	3♠
4♣	7♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x
♥ A K J x x x x
♦ —
♣ K Q

"**What would South open?** (2♣.)

"**What does North respond to South's 2♣ opening?** (2♦.) North makes a waiting response of 2♦.

"**What is South's rebid?** (2♥.)

"**What does North respond over South's 2♥ bid?** (3♥.) Even though North has only 1 high-card point, the hand is excellent in support of hearts — especially in support of a strong two-bid in hearts. North starts by simply raising to 3♥ to agree on the trump suit. North's hand is too good for a jump to 4♥.

"Now that you are becoming familiar with cuebidding toward slam, you can begin to see why it is important to leave lots of bidding room available for careful exploration of slam. The raise to 3♥ is forcing to at least game. With a very weak hand, North would make the negative rebid of 2NT — or jump right to 4♥ with a weak hand but good trump support. Any other bid by North commits the partnership to game and leaves room to explore for slam."

If any of the students are familiar with splinter bids, they might suggest jumping to 4♣ with the North hand to show heart support and club shortness. That's okay, although splinter bids with voids can sometimes lead to an awkward auction.

"**Over North's raise to 3♥, what does South respond?** (3♠.) South moves toward slam by cuebidding 3♠.

"**After South's cuebid of 3♠, what does North respond?** (4♣.) A first-round control doesn't have to be an ace. A void is as effective as an ace in a trump contract. North can cooperate in the slam investigation by cuebidding 4♣.

"**After hearing North's cuebid of 4♣, what does South respond?** (7♥.) Once South learns that North has first-round control of clubs, there's no reason not to bid a grand slam.

"South will probably be expecting North to put down the ♣A in the dummy, but will be equally happy to see the void. Both of South's club losers can be ruffed in the North hand. Intermingling voids and aces in a cuebidding auction can be dangerous, but it is often the only way to get to a slam like this one.

"Both partners have to use good judgment. If partner shows a first-round control in a suit in which you are holding the ace, for example, you'll have to recognize that your ace is probably a wasted or duplicated value. At the same time, you'll know that any remaining losers you hold in that suit can be ruffed in dummy — if there are enough trumps in the dummy. Cuebidding takes a lot of practice."

Summary

"The Blackwood convention won't tell you which controls partner holds, only how many aces or how many kings. If you need information about specific controls, you must resort to cuebidding. Here are some guidelines on cuebidding:

- A cuebidding sequence is initiated by showing partner a specific first-round control that you hold. Partner can then show a specific first-round control and so on.
- How do you recognize whether partner is cuebidding or simply bidding a new suit? When the partnership is already committed to game, the bid of a new suit in which the partnership can't want to play is a cuebid showing interest in reaching a slam contract.
- You only cuebid controls outside of the trump suit. The trump suit is used to say that you have nothing further to say at that point in the auction.
- In a trump contract, both aces and voids can be treated as first-round controls.
- First-round controls are generally bid up the line — the cheapest first-round control first. If you skip a suit, presumably you don't have first-round control in that suit."

Finding the Ace of Trumps

Introduction

"The one first-round control you can't cuebid is the ace of the trump suit. You use the trump suit to sign off, or to say that you have nothing further to bid. In a cuebidding situation, sometimes you will need to know how to find out whether partner holds the trump ace."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away four low cards and add the king.
"In clubs: add three low cards.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add the queen.

NORTH
♠ J x x
♥ x x x x
♦ K x x
♣ x x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♥
3♥	3♠
4♥	4NT
5♣	5♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x
♥ K Q J x x x x
♦ —
♣ K Q

"**What would South open?** (2♣.) With 20 high-card points plus 3 length points for the seven-card suit, South is strong enough to open with 2♣. South can visualize taking at least 10 tricks with no help from North.

"**What would North respond to the 2♣ bid?** (2♦.) North would make a waiting response of 2♦.

"**What would South rebid?** (2♥.) South would show a strong two-bid in hearts.

"**What would North respond over the 2♥ rebid?** (3♥.) With four-card support and an outside king, North can raise to 3♥, committing the partnership to at least the game level.

"**Should South now bid Blackwood?** (No.) Using the Blackwood convention would be okay if North shows no aces, since South would then be sure that there is no slam. If North were to show one ace or two aces, however, South wouldn't know what to do. South should start a cuebidding sequence, looking for specific controls.

"**What call does South make?** (3♠.) South initiates a cuebidding sequence by showing a first-round control. South starts bidding controls up the line by bidding 3♠, the cheapest available cuebid.

"**What call does North make after South's 3♠ bid?** (4♥.) With no first-round control outside of the trump suit, North returns to the agreed trump suit by bidding 4♥.

"**What does South know from North's 4♥ bid?** (North does not have the ♣A or the ♦A.) North has bypassed both the club and diamond suits, so North doesn't have first-round control of either suit.

"**Should South settle for game in hearts?** (No.) It is still possible for North to hold the ♥A. That's the one ace that North can't cuebid.

"**How does South find out if North holds the ♥A?** (4NT.) South can use the Blackwood convention to discover how many aces North holds. If North holds one ace, it must be the ♥A, since North has already denied possession of the ♣A and the ♦A.

"There is nothing to prevent you from using the Blackwood convention after a cuebidding sequence has been started. Sometimes you need to find some information about a specific control — the ♣A in this example — before using the Blackwood convention. Sometimes, one partner initiates a cuebidding sequence, and that's all the other partner needs to take over and use the Blackwood convention. Cuebidding and Blackwood can work hand in hand — but the cuebidding must come first.

"**When South bids 4NT, what call does North make?** (5♣.) North shows no aces by responding 5♣. 5♣ is not a cuebid. The use of the Blackwood convention ends the cuebidding sequence. North merely makes the standard response to Blackwood to show no aces.

"**After North's 5♣ response, what call does South make?** (5♥.) South now knows that the partnership is missing both the ♣A and the ♥A. South signs off in the agreed trump suit, keeping out of the unmakeable slam.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ J x x
♥ A x x x
♦ K x x
♣ x x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♥
3♥	3♠
4♥	4NT
5♦	6♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x
♥ K Q J x x x x
♦ —
♣ K Q

"**What is South's opening bid?** (2♣.)

"**What is North's initial response?** (2♦.)

"**What is South's rebid?** (2♥.)

"**What is North's rebid?** (3♥.)

"**After North's raise to 3♥, what call does South make?** (3♠.) South starts a cuebidding sequence by bidding 3♠. Notice an immediate use of the Blackwood convention at this point would leave South guessing. North would show one ace, but South wouldn't know if it was the ♣A, the ♦A or the ♥A.

"**What call does North make over South's cuebid of 3♠?** (4♥.) With no ace outside of the trump suit, North simply returns to the agreed trump suit by bidding 4♥.

"**What call does South make next?** (4NT.) South now can check on the trump ace by using the Blackwood convention.

"**What is North's response to South's 4NT bid?** (5♦.) North shows one ace by responding 5♦.

"**What call does South make after hearing North's 5♦ response?** (6♥.) South knows that North holds an ace, and since it isn't the ♣A or the ♦A, it must be the ♥A. That's all South needs to know to bid the excellent slam."

Summary

"After a slam, cuebidding auction has been initiated, either partner can subsequently launch into the Blackwood convention to check on the number of aces held — assuming the auction is still below the level of 4NT."

With an experienced group, you could mention that some judgment may be required when responding to Blackwood after a cuebidding sequence. For example, if partner has shown first-round control in a suit in which you hold the ace, you should ignore that ace when responding to Blackwood. Partner presumably has a void in that suit.

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — Cuebidding First-Round Controls

What call does West make on each of the following hands after the auction has started?

1) ♠ A K 9 7 4 2
♥ 7 5
♦ K J 2
♣ A 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

2) ♠ Q 5
♥ K 10 9 3
♦ A Q 6 2
♣ 9 7 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

3) ♠ A K Q 7 3
♥ Q J 9 8 2
♦ —
♣ A Q 8

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

4) ♠ A K Q J
♥ A K Q 10 7 5
♦ Q 3
♣ 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♥	Pass
?			

5) ♠ A 9 3
♥ Q J 6 5
♦ A 8 6 2
♣ 7 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
?			

Exercise One *Answer* — Cuebidding First-Round Controls

1) 4♣. Cuebid the ♣A. Don't use Blackwood with two low hearts.

2) 4♦. East has cuebid the ♠A. Cooperate by showing the ♦A.

3) 4♣. Cuebid the ♣A. Don't use Blackwood with a void.

4) Pass. East doesn't appear to have either the ♣A or the ♦A.

5) 4♠. East has shown interest in slam by starting a cuebidding sequence. The 4♦ cuebid didn't inspire East to go beyond the game level, but West has more to show. East may hold two or three low spades and be afraid to move beyond the game level if the partnership doesn't have a control in spades.

Cuebidding Second-Round Controls

Introduction

"In addition to cuebidding first-round controls, the partnership can cuebid second-round controls — kings and singletons. The usual practice is to show a second-round control only after a first-round control has been shown or denied by the partnership. Let's see how this works."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the jack and add two low cards.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: add two low cards.
"In hearts: take away the jack and four low cards.
"In diamonds: add the queen and a low card.
"In clubs: add the ace.

NORTH
♠ x x x x
♥ A x x x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♠
3♠	4♣
4♥	5♣
5♦	6♠
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x x x
♥ K Q
♦ Q x
♣ A K Q

"**What would be South's opening bid?** (2♣.) With 25 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, South has enough for game without any help from North. South starts the auction with a strong, artificial, 2♣ bid.

"**What would North respond to South's 2♣ bid?** (2♦.) North would respond with a waiting bid of 2♦.

"**What would be South's rebid?** (2♠.) South would describe a strong two-bid in spades by rebidding 2♠.

"**What call would North make over the 2♠ rebid?** (3♠.) With support and some useful strength outside the spade suit, North would raise to 3♠.

"**Is South interested in a slam contract?** (Yes.) Having found a trump fit, South is definitely interested in a slam contract, if the partnership has enough controls.

"**Should South use the Blackwood convention to check for aces?** (No.) If South were to bid 4NT, North would show one ace, but South still wouldn't know whether to bid slam. The opponents might take the first two diamond tricks. Instead, South should start a cuebidding sequence.

"**What call does South make after North's raise to 3♠?** (4♣.) South bids 4♣, a cuebid, showing first-round control of clubs and asking North to cooperate in looking for slam.

"**Over South's 4♣ cuebid, what call does North make?** (4♥.) North is happy to cooperate in searching for a slam and cuebids the first-round control of hearts by bidding 4♥.

"**What does South know from North's 4♥ cuebid?** (North has the ♥A, but not the ♦A.) South knows that North holds first-round control of hearts, either the ♥A or a void. South also knows that North doesn't have first-round control of the diamond suit, since North bypassed 4♦.

"**Does South know enough to place the contract?** (No.) South knows that the partnership cannot make a grand slam, since it is missing the ♦A. South is still worried that there might be two diamond losers, but cannot be certain that there is no small slam, since North might hold second-round control of diamonds.

"**How can South discover more information about controls?** (By continuing to cuebid.) Since South doesn't have enough information yet to decide whether there is a slam, South can continue the investigation by making another cuebid.

"**What call might South make?** (5♣.) A bid of 4♠ over North's 4♥ cuebid would show no interest in going any higher — although North could make a further move. Instead, South can make a further cuebid by bidding 5♣. Since 4♣ showed first-round control of clubs, 5♣ logically shows second-round control of clubs — the ♣K or a singleton.

"Since North has shown first-round control of hearts with the 4♥ cuebid, South could show second-round control of hearts by cuebidding 5♥. This isn't as economical, however. South is really interested in the diamond suit, and bidding 5♥ leaves no room for North to conveniently show a control in that suit. As with cuebidding first-round controls, cuebidding second-round controls up the line usually works best.

"**If South cuebids 5♣, what call would North make?** (5♦.) North denied first-round control of diamonds by not bidding 4♦. A bid of 5♦ by North must show a second-round control of diamonds.

"**After North cuebids 5♦, what call does South make?** (6♠.) North has now shown first-round control in hearts and second-round control in diamonds. That's exactly what South needs to know to bid the slam."

Some students may suggest jumping to 6NT with the South hand. That would work on the actual hand, but you should point out that it wouldn't be very successful if North held a heart void instead of the ♥A. You have to be careful when cuebidding, because voids and singletons are bid in the same manner as aces and kings.

"Even if South had bid 4♠ on the previous round, an experienced North player would probably bid 5♦, showing second-round control in that suit, and the slam would be reached. North has a very good hand opposite South's strong two-bid in spades, and if South has some interest in reaching a slam, North couldn't have better cards.

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the king and a low card.
"In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH
♠ x x x x
♥ A x x x
♦ x
♣ x x x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♠
3♠	4♣
4♥	5♣
5♦	6♠
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x x x
♥ K Q
♦ Q x
♣ A K Q

"**What is South's opening bid?** (2♣.)

"**What is North's response to the 2♣ bid?** (2♦.) North makes a waiting bid of 2♦.

"**What is South's rebid?** (2♠.)

"**What is North's second bid?** (3♠.) With support for spades, North raises to the three level.

"**What is South's next call?** (4♣.) South makes a slam try by cuebidding 4♣.

"**What call does North make over 4♣?** (4♥.) North cuebids 4♥ to show first-round control of hearts.

"**What call does South make over North's 4♥ call?** (5♣/4♠.) South could simply sign off in 4♠, but will more likely make one more try for slam by cuebidding 5♣.

"**What call does North make over South's 5♣ bid?** (5♦.) A singleton works as well as a king in a trump contract to provide second-round control in an outside suit. Having denied first-round control in diamonds, North shows second-round control by cuebidding 5♦.

"**What call does South make over North's 5♦ cuebid?** (6♠.) South now knows that the partnership has enough controls to bid the small slam in spades. South is probably expecting North to put down the ♦K in dummy, but won't be disappointed to see the singleton instead. South will be able to ruff one of the diamond losers in dummy.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away three low cards.
"In diamonds: add three low cards.

NORTH
♠ x x x x
♥ A
♦ x x x x
♣ x x x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	2♣
2♦	2♠
3♠	4♣
4♥	5♣
5♥	5♠
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ A K Q x x x
♥ K Q
♦ Q x
♣ A K Q

"**South opens 2♣. What response does North make?** (2♦.)

"**South rebids 2♠. What call does North make?** (3♠.)

"**South now cuebids 4♣. What call does North make?** (4♥.) North shows first-round control in hearts.

"**What call does South make over the 4♥ cuebid?** (5♣/4♠.) South might stop in 4♠, but has a good enough hand to make one more try by cuebidding 5♣.

"**What call does North make over the 5♣ cuebid?** (5♥.) Having shown first-round control of hearts, North can show second-round control of hearts as well by bidding 5♥. North's singleton ace acts as first- and second-round controls — and third-round control for that matter.

"**Over North's 5♥ cuebid, what call does South make?** (5♠.) Neither partner has shown a control in the diamond suit, so South has to settle for 5♠.

"**What call does North make over South's 5♠ bid?** (Pass.) North has shown spade support and two heart controls. If South still doesn't want to bid slam, North has nothing further to say.

"If North didn't have second-round control in hearts, North would simply have returned to 5♠ over South's cuebid, and South would pass. The partnership stops short of slam when missing the ♦A and the ♦K.

"**Can you see a disadvantage to cuebidding?** (Gives away information.)

The very accuracy of cuebidding can be a disadvantage as well. After this auction, the opponents are likely to lead a diamond. Your cuebidding has told the opponents where your weakness lies. That's a small price to pay for accurate slam bidding.

"However, you can see why simply jumping to slam sometimes has an advantage over the scientific approach. If South had simply jumped to 6♠ over North's raise to 3♠, North–South would be in a poor contract, but the opponents might not have enough information to lead a diamond. Slam still isn't a good bet, but if the missing clubs are divided 3–3, South can discard a diamond loser on the fourth round of clubs, after drawing trumps, and make the slam."

Summary

"In addition to first-round controls, the partnership can cuebid second-round controls. Here are some guidelines:

- A second-round control of a suit is not usually shown until the partnership has shown first-round control of that suit. Occasionally, you can show a second-round control, after having already denied a first-round control.
- You only cuebid second-round controls outside of the trump suit.
- Both kings and singletons can be treated as second-round controls in a trump contract.
- Use judgment when showing controls. You don't want to get beyond your last makeable contract in your eagerness to show a control. Also, showing controls gives information to the opponents as well as to partner. Make sure the information you are exchanging with partner is more valuable to your side than to the opponents."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Cuebidding Second-Round Controls

What call does West make on each of the following hands after the auction has started?

1) ♠ A J 5
♥ K 7 2
♦ K 10 8 5 3
♣ 8 3

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♥	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
?			

2) ♠ 9 6
♥ Q 8 6 3
♦ A K 9 4
♣ Q 10 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♣	Pass
?			

3) ♠ 6
♥ J 10 7 3
♦ 9 6 4 3
♣ A 9 5 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
?			

4) ♠ A K J 10 8 7 4
♥ Q 6
♦ A
♣ A K Q

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♠	Pass
5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass
?			

5) ♠ Q 9 6 3
♥ 10 8 6 5
♦ —
♣ Q J 7 4 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	Pass
?			

Exercise Two *Answer* — Cuebidding Second-Round Controls

1) 4♥. After East's 3♥ cuebid, West showed first-round control in spades. When East continues cuebidding, West now can show a second-round control in hearts — the king. East has already shown first-round control of hearts, so there is no ambiguity when West cuebids 4♥.

2) 5♦. West has already shown first-round control of diamonds and now has an opportunity to show second-round control as well.

3) 4♠. A singleton is as good as a king when it comes to second-round controls. East has already shown first-round control of the suit; West can show second-round control.

4) 6♠. East doesn't have first-round control of hearts, since East didn't cuebid 4♥ over West's 4♣ cuebid. East is now showing second-round control of hearts — the ♥K or a singleton — so a small slam in spades should be a good contract.

5) 5♦. A void acts as both a first-round control and a second-round control of a suit. Having shown first-round control of diamonds, West now has an opportunity to show second-round control.

Finding the King of Trumps

Introduction

"The king of trumps is more valuable than any of the other kings. If you are missing a king in a side suit, you may be able to avoid losing a trick in the suit — perhaps by discarding or ruffing your loser(s). There is no way to avoid a missing king in the trump suit — you'll have to deal with it.

"Cuebidding doesn't tell you about the trump king, since the trump suit is usually used to stop the cuebidding sequence when you have nothing further to say. There are special conventions to deal specifically with the trump king, but those are beyond the scope of this lesson. In some cases, however, you can find the information you need with the tools discussed so far."

You can refer more experienced students to the section on Key Card Blackwood in the Appendix of the student textbook.

Instructions

"Pick up the cards in the North and South hands and sort them into suits.

"Construct the following hand in front of South.
"In spades: the king and a low card.
"In hearts: the ace, the jack and five low cards.
"In diamonds: the jack and a low card.
"In clubs: the ace and the king.

NORTH	SOUTH
1♠	2♥
3♥	4♣
4♦	4NT
5♥	5NT
6♥	7♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ K x
♥ A J x x x x x
♦ J x
♣ A K

"**Suppose North opens 1♠. What call does South make?** (2♥/3♥.) With 16 high-card points plus 3 length points, you have enough to jump shift to 3♥, but that will take up a lot of bidding room. It's best to respond 2♥, planning to show the extra strength later, after you have determined where you want to play.

"**North raises to 3♥. Is slam a possibility?** (Yes.) The partnership has the combined strength to be in the slam zone, and you have already found a fit.

"**Should South use the Blackwood convention at this point?** (No.) If North were to show one ace, South still could not be certain that the opponents would not take the first two diamond tricks.

"**What call does South make?** (4♣.) Having agreed on hearts as a trump suit, 4♣ must be a cuebid, showing interest in reaching slam.

"**Over a 4♣ cuebid by South, North bids 4♦. What call does South make next?** (4NT.) South knows that the partnership has first-round control of three suits — hearts, diamonds, and clubs — and at least second-round control of the fourth suit, spades. It is safe to use the Blackwood convention, since the opponents can't take the first two tricks. South could continue cuebidding, but that is unlikely to give any better information than Blackwood at this point. South won't be able to find out from cuebidding, for example, whether North holds the king of trumps.

"**When South bids 4NT, North responds 5♥. What call does South make next?** (5NT.) North's 5♥ response shows two aces, so North holds the ♦A — which South already knew about — and the ♠A. You could settle for a small slam at this point, but there is still a chance of a grand slam, if North holds both of the missing kings.

"**When South bids 5NT, North responds 6♥. What call does South make?** (7♥/7NT.) North holds both of the missing kings, the ♦K and the ♥K. That should be enough for the partnership to take all 13 tricks, so you can bid the grand slam.

"On some deals, South can combine cuebidding with the Blackwood convention to discover if North holds the trump king. It won't always be so easy, however.

"**Suppose North responded 6♦ instead of 6♥ to the 5NT bid. What call would South make?** (6♥.) If North showed only one king, South would have to settle for a small slam, since the partnership could be missing the ♥K.

"A grand slam still could be possible, however. If North holds the ♥K and not the ♦K, South might be able to take 13 tricks by eliminating the diamond loser. That would be possible if North holds the ♠Q or if North's spade suit can be established for an extra winner."

Summary

"Using standard methods, it can be difficult to determine whether the partnership holds the trump king. The trump king can't be shown through cuebidding because the partnership doesn't bid controls held in the trump suit. The Blackwood convention can be used to find out if the partnership holds all of the missing kings, but if a king is missing, you may not be able to tell whether it is the trump king."

Trump-Asking Bids

Introduction

"The trump ace and the trump king aren't the only critical cards in a slam contract. Even a missing queen in the trump suit can be a challenge, since you can't escape losers in the trump suit itself. Unless you hold the critical cards in the trump suit, you may need to check on the quality of the partnership's combined trump holding before committing to a slam."

Instructions

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the king and a low card.
"In hearts: take away the ace and a low card.
"In diamonds: add the ace, the king and the queen.
"In clubs: add the jack.

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
3♥	?

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ J x x x x
♦ A K Q J x
♣ A K J

"**What would South open?** (1♥.) With two five-card suits, South opens the higher-ranking suit — even though the diamonds look better than the hearts. With the poor heart suit, the hand isn't quite good enough to open a strong two-bid.

"**North raises the 1♥ opening to 3♥. Is slam a possibility?** (Yes.) Opposite North's limit raise, there's an excellent chance that the partnership can make a small slam (or even a grand slam).

"**What is South's concern?** (The trump suit.) South's only real concern is that there are losers in the trump suit. South should be able eliminate the club loser — or, at worst, take a finesse.

"**Can South use the Blackwood convention to get the information needed to decide on slam?** (No.) Holding a void, the Blackwood convention is unlikely to do any good. If North were to show one ace, for example, it might be the ♠A, and the partnership could still be missing the ♥A and the ♥K.

"**Can South get the information needed through cuebidding?** (No.) Cuebidding doesn't include controls in the trump suit. If South were to cuebid 3♠, for example, and North were to bid 4♥, South would be no better off.

"**What bid could South make that shows interest in a slam, but puts the focus on the trump suit?** (5♥.) When the partnership considers a slam contract in a major but there is concern about the quality of the trump suit, a jump or a raise to the five level asks partner to bid the slam with good trump support, but to pass otherwise.

"This is a rather vague agreement and requires good judgment from both partners. Essentially, a jump to 5♥, in this auction, asks if North has better trump support than South might expect, in light of the auction to date. North already has made a limit raise showing four-card heart support, so a 5♥ bid by South asks for good quality in the heart suit — at least two high cards most likely.

"Let's see how this might work.
"Leave the South hand on the table and construct a hand in front of North.
"In spades: the ace, the king and two low cards.
"In hearts: the queen and three low cards.
"In diamonds: two low cards.
"In clubs: the queen and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ A K x x
♥ Q x x x
♦ x x
♣ Q x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
3♥	5♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ J x x x x
♦ A K Q J x
♣ A K J

"**What is South's opening bid?** (1♥.)

"**What is North's response?** (3♥.) With 11 high-card points and 1 dummy point, North has an excellent limit raise to 3♥. (Remember partner could have a 12-point hand.)

"**What is South's rebid?** (5♥.) South asks North to focus on the trump suit.

"**What call does North make over South's jump to 5♥?** (Pass.) Even though North has a maximum for the limit raise, the queen and three low hearts is not much better than South can expect for a limit raise. With only one high card, North declines the slam invitation by passing.

"Slam has absolutely no play on these combined hands. Even 5♥ is in a little danger if the hearts break badly.

"**What can North infer about South's hand from the jump to 5♥?** (South has all the outside controls.) Since South has not started a cuebidding sequence, North can infer that South has enough controls outside of the heart suit to warrant bidding a slam, if the partnership doesn't have two losers in the trump suit. Since North is looking at the ♠A K and had never mentioned the suit, North can infer that South is void in spades and the ♠A and ♠K are not of much use.

"Notice that this type of bid only works with major suits. With a minor suit, there's no room to invite slam by going beyond the game level. A jump or raise to 5♣ or 5♦ would simply be a game bid, not a slam invitation.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the ace and add a low card.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the king.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ K Q x x
♦ x x
♣ Q x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
3♥	5♥
6♥	Pass

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ J x x x x
♦ A K Q J x
♣ A K J

"**What would North call after a 1♥ opening bid by South?** (3♥.) North has only 10 high-card points plus 1 dummy point for the doubleton diamond, but that's still enough for a limit raise.

"**What call does South make over North's limit raise?** (5♥.) South is only concerned with the quality of the trump fit.

"**What call does North make over the jump to 5♥?** (6♥.) Although North doesn't have as good a hand as in the previous example, this time the heart support is very good. Even if South holds five low hearts, the partnership will at least have a chance for slam. North accepts the invitation by bidding 6♥.

"Notice that 6♥ would be a good spot if North held the ♥A K x x or ♥A Q x x, instead of the ♥K Q x x. If North held the ♥A 10 x x, slam would be reasonable, and even ♥K 10 x x would give South a chance.

"Auctions asking about trump quality can be quite challenging, but there is one standard, conventional bid that can sometimes be useful."

➥ "Keep these hands on the table. Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Trump-Asking Bids

What call does West make on each of the following hands after the auction has started?

1) ♠ J 10 8 7 5
♥ —
♦ K Q 6
♣ A K Q 10 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♦	Pass
?			

2) ♠ J 8 4
♥ 10 9 7 5
♦ Q 5
♣ A K J 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	5♥	Pass
?			

3) ♠ A K J 8
♥ K Q
♦ K Q J 7 3
♣ 9 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♠	Pass
?			

Exercise Three *Answer* — Trump-Asking Bids

1) 5♠. The cuebidding sequence has revealed that East holds first-round control of diamonds. The only losers are likely to be in the spade suit. It's not necessary to show first-round control in hearts. 4♠ would be a sign-off, so jump to 5♠ to ask about trump quality. Slam will be a good proposition if partner holds something like ♠A Q x x, ♠K Q x x, or ♠A 9 x x. It won't be good if East holds ♠Q x x x or ♠K x x x. Hopefully, East will make a reasonable decision.

2) Pass. East is asking about the quality of the trump support. Since West already promised four-card support with the limit raise, the holding couldn't be much weaker. West rejects the invitation by passing.

3) 6♠. East could have used Blackwood to ask about the number of aces or started a cuebidding sequence if interested in controls outside the trump suit. East's raise to the five level asks about the quality of West's trump support. It couldn't be much better, so West accepts the invitation and bids the slam.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king and a low card.
"In hearts: add two low cards.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: take away three low cards and add the ace.
"In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ K Q x x x x
♦ x x
♣ Q x x

NORTH	SOUTH
2♥	5NT
7♥	Pass

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ A J x
♦ A K Q J x
♣ A K J x x

"**What would North open the bidding with?** (2♥.) If the partnership plays weak two-bids, North has a good hand for a weak two-bid — a good six-card suit and less than the values for a one-level opening bid.

"**After North's opening 2♥ bid, what call does South make?** (5NT.) South would be very timid to bid anything less than a small slam — that should have a good chance opposite any six-card heart suit in the North hand. A grand slam, however, is a distinct possibility. The only danger is that there might be a trump loser if North doesn't hold both the ♥K and the ♥Q.

"In this situation, the partnership can make use of a convention devised by Ely Culbertson in 1936 and popularized by his wife, Josephine — the grand slam force. When the partnership has found a trump fit, a jump to 5NT asks partner to:

- Bid a grand slam if partner holds two of the top three trump honors;
- Otherwise, sign off in the agreed trump suit at the six level.

"On these hands, a jump to 5NT over North's 2♥ opening would be the grand slam force, agreeing on hearts as the trump suit by inference.

"**What call would North make over South's jump to 5NT?** (7♥.) With two of the top three trump honors, North jumps to the grand slam in hearts."

Experienced students sometimes accept the grand slam force by always jumping to 7♣ instead of the agreed trump suit, but this isn't standard practice.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card and add the king.
"In hearts: take away the king and add the ten.

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ Q 10 x x x x
♦ x x
♣ Q x x

NORTH	SOUTH
2♥	5NT
6♥	Pass

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ A J x
♦ A K Q J x
♣ A K J x x

"**Not everyone would open North's hand with a weak 2♥ bid, but some players might. What call would South make over a weak 2♥ bid by North?** (5NT.) South would use the grand slam force to ask about the quality of the trump suit.

"**What call would North make over South's 5NT bid?** (6♥.) Without two of the top three heart honors, North would sign off in the agreed trump suit at the six level. The term 'force' in the name of the convention really means that the partnership is forced to at least a small slam by the 5NT bid.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the queen and add the king.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH
♠ K x	2♥	5NT
♥ K 10 x x x x	6♥	Pass
♦ x x		
♣ Q x x		

SOUTH
♠ —
♥ A J x
♦ A K Q J x
♣ A K J x x

"**If North chose to open 2♥ , what would North respond over South's jump to 5NT?** (6♥.) With only one of the top three honors, North would sign off in 6♥. 7♥ is reasonable, but being in a grand slam missing the trump queen isn't generally a good idea. If the hearts divide 3–1 or 4–0 and you lose a trick to the ♥Q, not only have you lost the grand slam bonus, you have also lost the small slam bonus."

Summary

"The quality of the trump fit is important in a slam contract, since losers in the trump suit can't be avoided. There are two standard methods for checking on trump quality:

- A jump or a raise to the five level of the agreed major suit can be used to ask partner to bid slam with good trump support, but to pass otherwise.
- A bid of 5NT can be used to ask partner to bid a grand slam, if partner holds two of the top three trump honors, but to sign off in a small slam otherwise."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Four — Grand Slam Force

What call does West make on each of the following hands after the auction has started?

1)

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♠ J 5	1♦	Pass	2♣	Pass
♥ 9 3	3♣	Pass	5NT	Pass
♦ A K Q 8 2	?			
♣ K 8 7 3				

2)

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♠ A Q 9 3	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
♥ K Q 8 4 2	2♠	Pass	5NT	Pass
♦ J 7 3				
♣ 8 ?				

3)

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♠ —			3♦	Pass
♥ A 6 4				
♦ Q 9 6 3	?			
♣ A K Q 10 8 2				

4)

♠ A **WEST**	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	
♥ A K Q J 3	2♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
♦ Q 9 3	?			
♣ A K 8 2				

5)

	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
♠ K Q 8	1NT	Pass	5NT	Pass
♥ A 10 5	?			
♦ Q J 7 3				
♣ K 8 2				

Exercise Four *Answer* — Grand Slam Force

1) 6♣. West has only one of the top three honors in clubs.

2) 7♠. West has two of the top three honors in the spade suit.

3) 5NT. West uses the grand slam force to ask if East has both the ♦A and the ♦K.

4) 5NT. West uses the grand slam force to ask if East has both the ♦A and the ♦K.

5) 6NT. East's 5NT is forcing to 6NT and invites partner to bid 7NT. It isn't the grand slam force convention, although it is similar in effect. West has a minimum and signs off in a small slam.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 6*

General Guidelines for Teachers: Since this lesson is a continuation of slam bidding, introduced in Lesson 5, the deals will focus on the auction. Play challenges are introduced in Deals 3 and 4.

Bid and Play — Deal 1: Finding Key Cards

Guidelines for Teachers: On this first deal, a continuation of slam bidding, the focus is entirely on the auction. There are no play challenges, assuming the students reach the appropriate contract. This deal has a variation. Get the students to make the changes in their hands and replay the deal. Start with the review of slam bidding found in the general introduction to Lesson 6.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal where Blackwood won't provide the information you need to decide whether or not a slam should be bid. Let's think about showing controls and bid this deal."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #6, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North
Vul: None

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

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♥
Pass	5♣	Pass	5♥
Pass	5♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"After North's opening bid of 1♠, South makes a limit raise to 3♠. North can see a potential slam contract, if South has either first- or second-round control of diamonds. The Blackwood convention is unlikely to do any good. If South shows no aces or one ace, North still won't know what to do.

"Instead, North cuebids the ♣A, showing interest in reaching slam and first-round control of clubs. South cuebids the ♥A in return. This isn't what North was hoping to hear, but North makes one more try by repeating the club cuebid to show second-round control of clubs. South cooperates by bidding 5♥ to show second-round control of hearts. Neither partner, however, has shown either first- or second-round control of diamonds, so North stops in 5♠. South, having shown both controls and having nothing further to add, accepts North's decision to stop short of slam.

"If North were to use the Blackwood convention, South would show one ace and North wouldn't know whether to bid the slam. Cuebidding is the only way for the partnership to make an accurate determination of whether it belongs in a slam contract."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards ina contract of 5♠ by North.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East is on lead. With all of the cuebidding in hearts and clubs, East should probably lead the unbid suit, diamonds. East should lead the ♦A. It would be risky to lead away from an ace against a suit contract."

Suggested Play

"There's not much to the play in 5♠. Declarer has to lose two diamond tricks, and that's all."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders should get two diamond tricks, whether or not East leads diamonds initially. That will be good if North-South reach a slam contract. If they stop below the slam level, there's nothing the defenders can do."

Bid and Play — Variation of Deal 1 – Finding Key Cards

Introduction

"Let's construct a variation of this hand.

"From the South hand, take the ♥A and give it to East.

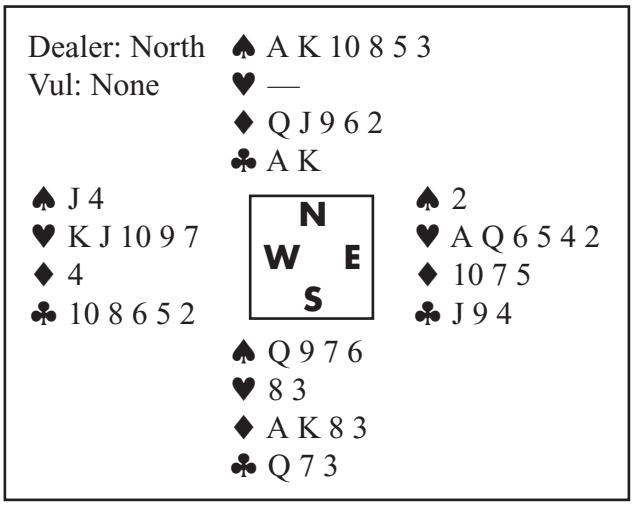
"From the South hand, take the ♥K and give it to West.

"From the West hand, take the ♦K and give it to South.

"From the East hand, take the ♦A and give it to South."

Instructions

"North is still the dealer. Start the auction and let's see how it goes this time. Stop when you reach a final contract."



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♦
Pass	7♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"Once again, after North's opening bid of 1♠, South makes a limit raise to 3♠. North can see a potential slam contract, if South has either first or second-round control of diamonds. Blackwood is unlikely to do any good. If South shows no aces or one ace, North still won't know what to do.

"Instead, North cuebids the ♣A, showing interest in reaching slam and first-round control of clubs. This time South cuebids the ♦A in return. North shows first-round control of hearts, the void, by cuebidding 4♥. South shows second-round control of diamonds, the ♦K, by cuebidding 5♦. That's all North needs to hear to bid the grand slam. The partnership doesn't appear to have any losers in any of the suits.

"The North–South hands are identical to those in the previous hand except that South's hearts and diamonds have been exchanged. Now North–South can make a grand slam, whereas they couldn't make even a small slam on the previous deal. Only through cuebidding can the partnership successfully reach the best contract both times."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards. Have all tables play a contract of 7♠ by North.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East is on lead. Despite all of the cuebids, East will probably lead the ♥A. In case North–South have had a misunderstanding, East can hope to take the first trick."

Suggested Play

"There's not much to the play in 7♠. Declarer should draw trumps right away to make sure that the defenders don't get a ruff."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders can't defeat the grand slam in spades. East-West's only hope is that North-South don't reach that level, or if they do, they accidentally get to 7NT."

Bid and Play — Deal 2: When Blackwood Won't Help

Guidelines for Teachers: On this second deal, East can visualize slam if West has first or second round control of the diamond suit… but Blackwood won't give the necessary answers unless West has an ace. There is a variation to this hand. Be sure you have the students make the suggested changes to the hands and replay the deal.

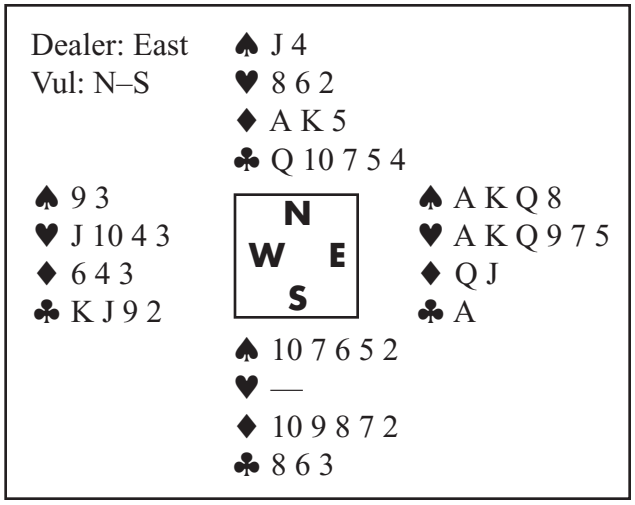
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where slam would be in the picture if the partnership has control of all four of the suits."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #6, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

"With 25 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card heart suit, East starts with a strong conventional (artificial), 2♣ bid. West makes a

waiting bid of 2♦, and East rebids 2♥ to show a strong two-bid. With good support and the ♣K, West raises to 3♥, leaving room for East to explore for slam.

"With two potential diamond losers, East should not bid Blackwood. Unless West shows an ace, East still won't know whether the partnership belongs in slam. West might have the ♦K, and slam would be a good venture. East starts by cuebidding 3♠. Without an ace to cuebid, West signs off in 4♥. East makes one more try by cuebidding 5♣, still hoping West has something in diamonds. With three low diamonds, West signs off again in 5♥. Now East has nothing further to say."

When everyone understands the proper bids, have the students play out the cards in a contract of 5♥ by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South is on lead and would start with the ♦10, top of a sequence in the unbid suit."

Suggested Play

"If South leads a diamond, there's nothing much to the play. The defenders will take the first two diamond tricks, and declarer will take the rest. East's spade loser can be ruffed in dummy or discarded on dummy's ♣K.

"If South doesn't lead a diamond, East can take 12 tricks by discarding one of the diamond losers on dummy's ♣K."

Suggested Defense

"A diamond lead prevents declarer from taking 12 tricks. Other than that, there's nothing the defenders can do. If East-West reach a slam, however, finding the diamond lead will be critical."

Bid and Play — Variation of Deal 2 – When Blackwood Won't Help

Introduction

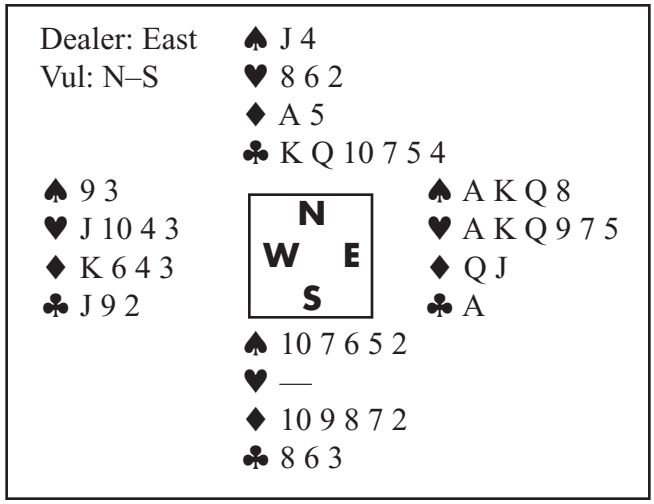
"Let's construct a variation of this hand.

"From the West hand, take the ♣K and give it to North.

"From the North hand, take the ♦K and give it to West."

Instructions

"East is still the dealer. Start the auction and let's see how it goes this time. Stop when you reach a final contract."



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
3♥	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♥	Pass	5♣	Pass
5♦	Pass	6♥	Pass
Pass	Pass		

"The bidding starts the same way. With 25 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card heart suit, East starts with a strong, conventional (artificial), 2♣ bid. West makes a waiting bid of 2♦, and East rebids 2♥ to show a strong two-bid. With good support and the ♦K, West raises to 3♥, leaving room for East to explore for slam.

"Once again, with two potential diamond losers, East doesn't use the Blackwood convention. East starts by cuebidding 3♠. Without an ace to cuebid, West signs off in 4♥. East makes one more try by cuebidding 5♣, still hoping West has something in diamonds. Having denied first-round control of diamonds with the earlier 4♥ bid, West can afford to show second-round control of diamonds by bidding 5♦. This is all East needs to hear to bid the slam. East knows that there isn't a grand slam, since the partnership must be missing the ♦A."

When everyone understands the proper bids, have the students play out the cards in a contract of 6♥ by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South is on lead and would start with the ♦10, top of a sequence in the unbid suit."

Suggested Play

"After South leads a diamond and North takes the ♦A, there's nothing to the rest of the play. East's spade loser can be ruffed in dummy or discarded on dummy's ♦K."

Suggested Defense

"There's nothing the defenders can do to defeat 6♥. If East-West get to 6NT, instead of 6♥, the slam can be defeated by leading a club."

Bid and Play — Deal 3 – Cuebid Controls on the Way to Blackwood

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal provides an excellent example of an endplay. It is unlikely that many of the students will spot the winning line of play the first time through. Declarer must plan ahead and strip out a side suit to be successful. On the actual lie of the cards, partially stripping out the diamond suit will suffice, but the students should be shown how to make sure that West has no diamonds left before being endplayed.

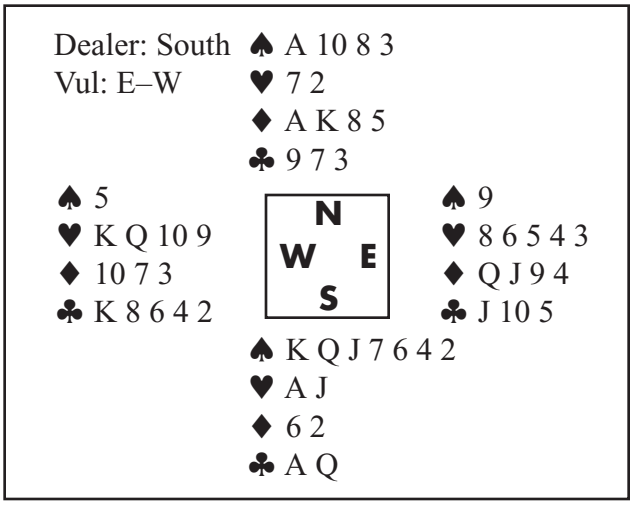
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where Blackwood takes a back seat in the auction, but eventually provides a perfect method of gathering the information the partnership needs to get to slam."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #6, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone. South first by-passes Blackwood to show a club control, and then switches to Blackwood to check on aces.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♦	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"South doesn't have quite enough for a strong two-bid, so South settles for an opening bid of 1♠. After West's pass, North makes a limit raise to 3♠, and East passes. South is interested in slam, but can't use the Blackwood convention with two low diamonds. If North were to show one ace, South couldn't be sure that the partnership isn't losing the first two diamond tricks. Instead, South shows some interest in slam by cuebidding 4♣ to show first-round control of clubs.

"With an excellent hand for the limit raise, North cooperates by cuebidding 4♦ to show first-round control of diamonds. South could continue by cuebidding 4♥, but that won't accomplish very much. Cuebidding won't tell South whether the partnership has the ♠A, since spades, the agreed trump suit, is the suit used to sign off with. Instead, South can revert to the Blackwood convention, now that North is known to hold the ♦A. The partnership can't be losing the first two tricks in diamonds. When North shows two aces in response to the Blackwood convention, South simply bids the small slam.

"There isn't much point in looking for a grand slam. North, having made only a limit raise, can't hold enough in high cards. Even if South were to bid 5NT and North showed one king, South would settle for a small slam. In fact, South might have jumped to 6♠ directly over the 4♦ cuebid. If the partnership is missing the ♠A, North is likely to have enough high cards elsewhere to give slam at least a reasonable chance of success."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, let the students play out the cards in a contract of 6♠ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West is on lead against 6♠ and will start with the ♥K, top of touching cards from a broken sequence."

Suggested Play

"Declarer has two potential losers — one in hearts and one in clubs. One possibility is to take the club finesse. That has a 50% chance of success. There's a much better option, however, once West leads the ♥K. West's lead of the ♥K indicates possession of the ♥Q. Since declarer has the ♥J, West can be put back on lead later in the play with that card. If declarer can arrange things so that West is forced to lead a club at that point, there will be no need to rely on the club finesse.

"Declarer starts by winning the ♥A and drawing the opponents' trumps, which takes only one round with the ♠K. Declarer now goes about eliminating the diamond suit from the North and South hands. Dummy's ♦A and ♦K are played, and a third round of diamonds is ruffed. Declarer crosses to dummy's ♠A and ruffs dummy's last diamond, leaving the following cards in the North–South hands:

NORTH
♠ 10 8
♥ 7
♦ —
♣ 9 7 3

SOUTH
♠ Q J 7
♥ J
♦ —
♣ A Q

"Now the time is ripe to lead the ♥J, putting West back on lead. That will eliminate the remaining hearts from the North–South hands. West will be left with nothing but losing choices. If West leads a club, it will be right into declarer's ♣A and ♣Q. If West leads another heart, declarer can ruff in dummy and discard the ♣Q from the South hand. Whatever West does, declarer makes the contract without relying on the club finesse.

"This line of play is known as a strip and end play. Declarer first strips West out of any useful options by drawing trump and eliminating the diamonds. Then declarer throws West on lead toward the end, forcing West to lead a club — or give declarer a ruff and a sluff. Declarer has to visualize the possibility and then bring it about."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders cannot do anything to prevent declarer from making the slam, if declarer finds the winning line of play. Even if West initially leads a spade or a diamond, declarer still can play the same way — eliminate the spades and diamonds and then play the ♥A and ♥J to end play West. This is declarer's best line of play, since, even if East were to hold the ♥K or ♥Q, declarer could still fall back on the club finesse as a second chance."

Bid and Play — Deal 4 – The Grand Slam Force

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal offers a couple of challenges for declarer. The first involves a standard safety play in the trump suit. In addition, declarer must be careful to combine suit establishment with safety when handling the trump suit. It would not be surprising for most declarers to get tangled up with entries in the play, so be sure to walk slowly through the recommended line of play.

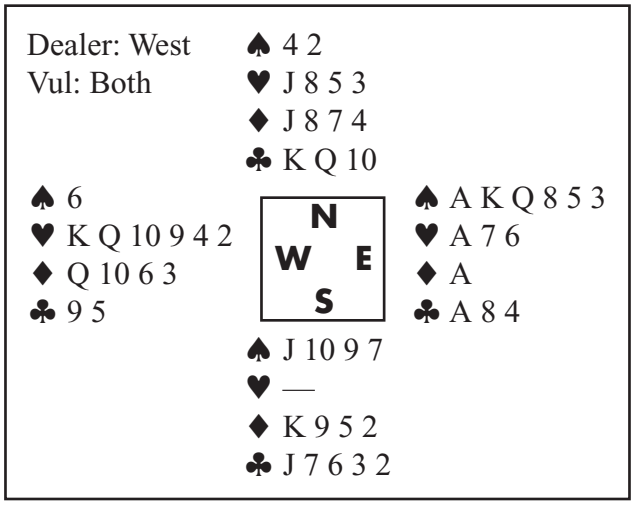
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the Grand Slam Force asks the question that partner must answer in order to set the contract."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #6, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
2♥	Pass	5NT	Pass
7♥	Pass	Pass	Pass

"West starts with a weak 2♥ bid. East can visualize a grand slam, if West holds a six-card suit headed by both the ♥K and the ♥Q. West should be able to take 13 tricks by establishing the spade suit or ruffing diamond losers in the dummy. East uses the grand slam force to find out whether partner holds two of the top three honors in hearts. With both the king and the queen, West accepts by bidding 7♥. East–West reach the grand slam in three bids.

"West shouldn't try to bid the grand slam in notrump. If the spades don't break — as on the actual deal — there may not be 13 tricks in notrump."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 7♥ by West.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North is on lead and will probably start with the ♣K, top of the broken sequence in clubs."

Suggested Play

"Outside the heart suit, declarer has three diamond losers and one club loser. Provided the missing spades divide no worse than 4–2, declarer should be able to establish the spade suit and use it to discard all four losers.

"The first challenge is the trump suit. There will be no difficulty drawing the missing trumps, if they are divided 2–2 or 3–1. Declarer should, however, guard against the possibility that the missing hearts are divided 4–0. Declarer does this by winning the ♣A and then leading up to the ♥K. If both opponents follow suit, declarer can simply finish drawing trumps. If North were to show out on the first round, declarer could play a heart to dummy's ♥A and take a finesse against South's ♥J.

"On the actual deal, South shows out on the first round of hearts. Declarer leads the ♥10 now to trap North's ♥J. If North plays low on the ♥10, it wins the trick, and declarer can win the third round of hearts with dummy's ♥A. The remaining challenge is to return to the West hand to draw the last trump. Declarer accomplishes this by playing one high spade from dummy and then leading a low spade and ruffing it. This has a two-fold purpose. It is the safest way to return to the West hand, since North will only be able to overruff when holding a singleton spade. At the same time, it helps to establish dummy's remaining spades as winners, when the missing spades are divided 4–2 and not 3–3.

"Once in the West hand, declarer plays the ♥Q to draw North's remaining trump. Declarer can now cross to dummy with the ♦A and take the remaining spade winners, discarding the club and diamond losers from the West hand.

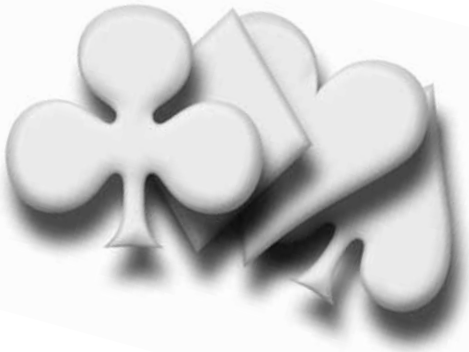
"The unfortunate trump break makes the play even more challenging than the bidding!"

Suggested Defense

"There's nothing the defenders can do, if East–West reach the grand slam in hearts and declarer safely negotiates the pitfalls. If East–West bid 7NT, the defenders can defeat that contract. Declarer can't untangle the heart suit in a notrump contract. With the 4–2 spade division, East–West will probably be defeated five tricks in notrump."

LESSON 7

Leads and Signals



General Concepts

General Introduction

Group Activities

Sample Deals



GENERAL CONCEPTS

This lesson covers the defenders' conventional agreements. Leads and signals against both suit and notrump contracts are discussed. This is a slightly different format from the other lessons in this series where bidding is the focus.

Leads and Signals

While it is assumed that the students in this course are generally familiar with opening leads against both suit and notrump contracts, these areas are reviewed. There is an emphasis on the less commonly used conventional agreements.

The students will probably be familiar with attitude signals, but may be less familiar with both count and suit preference signals and how to apply them.

The methods discussed are all standard carding. Topics such as upside-down carding, Rusinow and Journalist leads are outside the scope of this lesson.

Here are the topics covered:

Opening Leads against Suit Contracts

The emphasis is on choosing the appropriate — conventional — card to lead rather than choosing the actual suit to lead. Some discussion of choosing the suit is included, however. The main difference between leads against suit contracts and notrump contracts is that, against suit contracts, the top of a two-card sequence is often led, and it is usually not a good idea to lead away from an ace.

The partnership must agree on which card is led from three low cards, since there is no standard agreement. It's also a good idea to discuss which card is led from a suit headed by the ace and king. The standard lead is the king, but many players lead the ace — following the guideline of always leading the top of touching honors. This also affects the lead from a doubleton ace-king.

Opening Leads against Notrump Contracts

The choice of suit is discussed briefly, but the emphasis is on leading the conventional card from the chosen suit. Leading fourth highest, even when holding touching honors, is discussed. Leading the top of touching cards from an interior sequence is covered. Leads from a broken sequence such as A–K–J–x and K–Q–10–x are left until after the discussion on signals. The conventional leads from these sequences require the additional knowledge of attitude and count signals.

Rule of Eleven

In addition to the previous discussion of the advantage of leading fourth highest to keep communications open, the potential advantage from applying the *rule of eleven* is illustrated. The value of the rule of eleven is usually given too much emphasis. It is probably better to get the students to simply visualize the possible holdings partner could have, based on the opening lead. Nonetheless, the students should become familiar with the rule.

Attitude Signals

The students should already be familiar with attitude signals, so this is mainly a quick review. While introducing this topic, the appropriate card to play when returning partner's suit is also discussed.

The approach taken here is that attitude signals are the top priority. Count and suit preference signals are used only when attitude signals clearly do not apply. Not all experts would agree with this philosophy, but it is probably the best starting point for most players.

Count Signals

Count signals can be used in a number of situations, but the only example discussed here focuses on the standard use when holding up in a notrump contract. Many players confuse the use of count and attitude signals, so it is best to keep the discussion relatively straightforward. For example, many players automatically play high-low from a doubleton, when their partner leads from an ace-king against a suit contract. This is actually an attitude situation, not a count situation, and it is not always correct to play an encouraging card, as one of the sample deals will illustrate.

The trump echo is briefly mentioned, but is not discussed in any detail. Many players prefer to use the trump suit for suit preference, reserving the trump echo for very specific situations.

Suit Preference

Suit preference is a very important defensive signal that can be used in many situations. The students are taken through a couple of examples to give them the general idea. There is time to discuss only the standard agreements, since this course focuses on conventions and not on play and defense.

Leading from a Broken Sequence Against Notrump

The standard agreements for leading from holdings such as A–K–J–10–x and K–Q–10–9 against notrump contracts can become quite complex. This section could be omitted if the students have already been sufficiently challenged. Leading the top of touching honors from such holdings is a fairly good guideline for most players. Even expert partnerships don't always have sound agreements about the exceptions.

Play & Defense

The deals are examples of defensive leads and signals. The auctions are kept relatively straightforward.

The first deal has an example of getting a ruff against a suit contract when holding a doubleton ace-king. It is important for the students to have previously discussed their standard lead from a suit headed by the ace-king. In addition, the defenders have to make use of a suit-preference signal, so that the opening leader doesn't have to guess how to cross to partner's hand. This should be a very challenging deal for the group. It is a good illustration of how defensive conventions can help find the winning defense. Without good agreements, it is doubtful that any partnership would defeat the contract on this deal.

The second deal shows an example of the correct use of attitude signals when defending. Most of the students will make the automatic play of encouraging partner in a suit contract, when partner leads from a suit headed by the ace-king and they hold a doubleton. This is a good deal to emphasize that the defenders' conventions are tools that must be used wisely.

The third deal is an example of the use of the standard count signal, when defending against a notrump contract with a long suit in the dummy. Again, it's easy for the defenders to go wrong in such a situation, especially if declarer handles the suit combination deceptively.

The final deal is an example of the rule of eleven in action. Even though the concept has been discussed in the lesson, it will be challenging for the defenders to find the correct play at the table.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This lesson is in a different format than the earlier lessons, which have all focused on bidding conventions. It's essential to emphasize the importance of defensive carding conventions. The students will probably find a good knowledge of defensive techniques far more valuable than bidding conventions.

You might start the lesson like this:

> "In the previous lessons, our focus has been on bidding conventions. These are important because both members of the partnership must be aware of these agreements to successfully work together during the auction. There's an equally important area where the defenders have to work together, and that is during the defense of a deal.
>
> "Once your side has lost the auction, the contest is only half over. Now you have a chance to defeat the opponents' contract with good defense. This will happen on about half of the deals, so it's very important to be able to focus on this aspect of the game. The partnership has many conventional agreements during the auction. There are also many conventional agreements that can be used during the defense. You can exchange information with partner with every card you play. Let's see what sort of messages you can send to each other, starting with the opening lead."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Opening Leads against Suit Contracts

Introduction

"There are two decisions to make when you are on opening lead:

- Which suit to lead.
- Which card to lead in the chosen suit.

"The choice of suit is something that you must work out based on the auction you have heard. There are guidelines to help you make that decision, but there are no hard and fast rules. The choice of card, on the other hand, is dictated by the partnership agreement. You don't have to lead the specific card prescribed by your conventional understanding, but if you don't, you run the risk of leading partner astray."

Instructions

"The cards are sorted into suits. Give each player one suit and construct the following hand in front of West.

"In spades: the six.
"In hearts: the queen and the jack.
"In diamonds: the king, the queen, the seven and the three.
"In clubs: the queen, the nine, the seven, the five, the four and the two."

WEST
♠ 6
♥ Q J
♦ K Q 7 3
♣ Q 9 7 5 4 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of West. Note that the specific spot cards are being named in this lesson, so you may have to repeat the hand a couple of times to make sure everyone is in agreement.

"**South opens 1♥. West passes, North raises to 2♥ and South bids 4♥. That puts West on lead. What is West's opening lead?** (♠6/♥Q/♦K/♣5.) This is a typical opening lead challenge. With very little to guide you, there are sound arguments for and against leading any of the four suits:

- Leading the singleton might work well, if East can win a trick and return the suit for you to ruff before all of your trumps are drawn. It might not work well if, for example, East holds the ♠Q, and the lead helps declarer find that card. Or your lead might help declarer establish spade winners on which to discard losers once trumps are drawn.

- Leading a trump might work well by removing one or more of dummy's trumps, before they can be used to ruff losers in the dummy. It also might prevent giving up a trick by leading one of the other suits — following the adage, 'When in doubt, lead trump.' It also could work poorly by helping declarer draw trumps and giving declarer time to establish winners on which to discard losers.
- Leading a diamond might work well. If partner holds the ♦A, you may be able to take two or three tricks in the suit, before declarer has an opportunity to discard any losing diamonds. Even if declarer has the ♦A, you may establish a winner that can be taken when your side gains the lead. On the other hand, leading a diamond may cost a trick if, for example, declarer holds the ♦A J 10 and would have lost two tricks if you didn't lead the suit.
- Leading a club might work best. If partner holds the ♣K, for example, you might establish a winner in the suit, before declarer can establish a side suit on which to discard a club loser. Partner might have a singleton or a void in clubs, and you may be able to give partner a ruff before trumps are drawn. However, it might work out badly if, for example, it is into the jaws of declarer's ♣A K J, or if partner holds the ♣A and declarer was going to have to guess which defender held the ♣A and which defender held the ♣Q.

"Only after seeing all four hands will it be possible to know which suit gets the defense off to the best start. In fact, it might not matter which suit you choose. Declarer may be able to make the contract on any opening lead, or your side might be able to defeat the contract no matter what you lead.

"We won't spend a lot of time on the choice of suit. Anything could be right. Instead, the focus will be on the card you choose after selecting the suit to lead.

"**If West chooses to lead a spade, which spade does West lead?** (♠6.) Trick question! With a singleton, you have no choice of cards to lead. East will have to identify the ♠6 as a singleton based on the auction and the cards that are visible when dummy comes down. It won't always be easy for East to recognize your lead as a singleton. It could easily be construed as coming from a doubleton, or fourth highest, or from three low cards. That's one disadvantage of leading a singleton against an auction such as this one, where little information is given to the defenders.

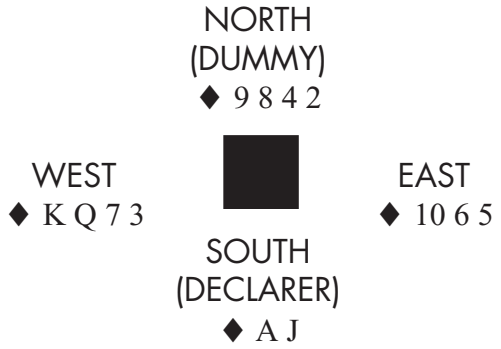
"Of course, it would be unethical to lead the ♠6 very quickly after the auction is over. You have to take the same time as you would if you were leading from a doubleton or a longer suit. You can't use the tempo in which you make your opening lead to influence partner. East will just have to figure things out from the logic of the situation.

"**If West chooses to lead a diamond, which diamond does West lead?** (♦K.) Although you would lead a low card from this suit against a notrump

contract — since you don't have a solid three-card or longer sequence, or a broken or interior sequence — against a suit contract, you usually lead the top of two or more touching cards headed by an honor.

"To see why, turn West's spades, hearts and clubs face down and construct a possible layout for the diamond suit.

"North: the nine, the eight, the four, and the two.
"East: the ten, the six, and the five.
"South: the ace and the jack.

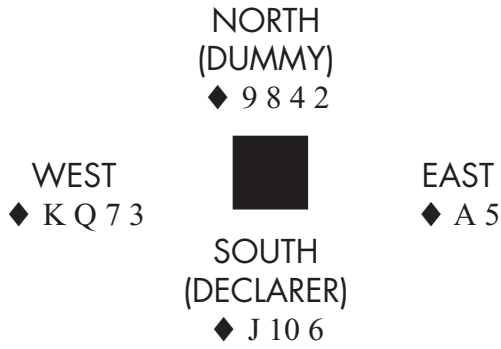


"**What would happen if West led a low diamond?** (East–West would get no tricks.) South would win the first diamond with the ♦J and still have the ♦A. Since North–South are playing with hearts as the trump suit, it's likely that East–West won't get any tricks from the diamond suit, since South will be able to ruff a third or fourth round of diamonds.

"In a notrump contract, leading a low diamond would not necessarily cost a trick. South would win the ♦J and later get a second trick with the ♦A, but West still might get two tricks with the ♦K and the ♦Q, since declarer can't ruff them once they are established.

"**What is the advantage of leading the ♦K?** (One trick.) By leading the ♦K, West immediately establishes the ♦Q as a winner. West still isn't guaranteed a trick with the ♦Q, since South may be able to discard the ♦J on an extra winner in dummy, but West has at least created a potential winner for the defense.

"Change the diamond layout.
"East: give the ten and the six to South.
"South: give the ace to East.



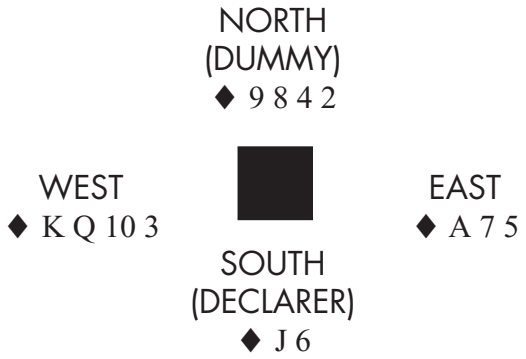
"**If North–South were in a notrump contract, what would happen if West led the ♦K?** (The diamond suit would be blocked.) If West leads the ♦K, the defenders can't take three diamond winners right away, because the suit would be blocked. West would need an outside entry to untangle the suit. It would be worse if East played the ♦A on West's ♦K, since the defenders would now take only two diamond tricks.

"**If North–South are in a heart contract, what happens if West leads the ♦K?** (East–West still may get three tricks.) It would have been better if West had led a low diamond since East–West could immediately get their three winners in the suit. If West leads the ♦K, however, the defenders still may get three tricks. East can overtake the ♦K with the ♦A and lead the ♦5 to West's ♦Q. West can then lead a third round of diamonds for East to ruff. That is not the most efficient way to get three tricks from the suit, but it may be okay if East doesn't ruff with a natural trump trick.

"In summary, leading the top of two touching honors is less likely to cost a trick in a suit contract than in a notrump contract.

"Leads from broken and interior sequences are similar to those against notrump contracts.

"Change the diamond layout.
"West: give the seven to East.
"South: give the ten to West.



"**What would West lead?** (♦K.) West would lead the ♦K, top of a broken sequence.

"Solid and broken sequences are usually good combinations to lead against a suit contract, because they are unlikely to give up a trick. They may be safer than leading from a long suit. In notrump contracts, you can often afford to give up a trick or two when leading from a long suit, because once your suit is established, you'll be able to take your winners when you gain the lead. In a suit contract, giving up a trick or two to establish a suit is less likely to be effective. By the time the suit is established, declarer will usually be in a position to ruff your winners.

"Change the diamond layout.
"West: give the queen to South.
"North: give the two to South.
"South: give the jack to West.

NORTH
(DUMMY)
♦ 9 8 4

WEST
♦ K J 10 3

EAST
♦ A 7 5

SOUTH
(DECLARER)
♦ Q 6 2

"**Which card would West lead from this combination against a suit contract?** (♦J.) If West has chosen to lead a diamond, the appropriate card is the ♦J, top of the touching cards from an interior sequence.

"It is risky to lead from a combination like this against a suit contract because declarer might hold both the ♦A and the ♦Q. Nonetheless, you must sometimes lead from a suit like this after listening to the auction, since it might represent your best chance. For example, it might be the only suit that the opponents have not bid—giving you a reason to hope that East holds either the ♦A or the ♦Q.

"**When West leads the ♦J, which card should East play?** (♦A.) It usually will be correct for East to play the ♦A. From the lead of the ♦J, the one card that East knows you don't hold is the ♦Q, since you would lead the top of touching cards. East can't be sure whether you hold the ♦K, but there will usually be no harm in playing the ♦A in case the layout is something like this. If declarer holds both the ♦K and the ♦Q, the defenders won't be able to prevent declarer from taking two tricks in the suit — except on the rare occasion when there are insufficient entries to the dummy.

"Change the diamond layout.
"North: give the nine to South.
"South: give the queen to North.

NORTH
(DUMMY)
♦ Q 8 4

WEST
♦ K J 10 3

EAST
♦ A 7 5

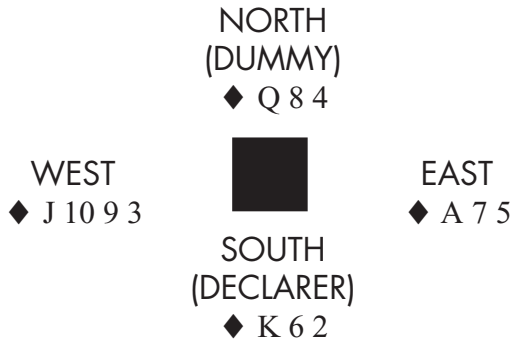
SOUTH
(DECLARER)
♦ 9 6 2

"**Which card would West lead against a suit contract?** (♦J.) The ♦J, top of the interior sequence.

"**If declarer plays the ♦4 from dummy, should East play the ♦A?** (No/Yes.) If this is the actual layout, you can see that it would not be a good idea for East to play the ♦A. If East does play the ♦A, declarer will get a trick with dummy's ♦Q. Instead, East should let West's ♦J win the trick. The defenders will be able to take the first three tricks in the suit.

"Of course, East might be afraid that South holds the ♦K. That is a possibility, since West's lead of the ♦J is ambiguous in this situation. It might be from an interior sequence including the ♦K, or it might simply be the top of a sequence headed by the ♦J. Most of the time, however, it will be best for East to withhold the ♦A, keeping the ♦Q trapped in the dummy.

"Change the diamond layout.
"West: give the king to South.
"South: give the nine to West.

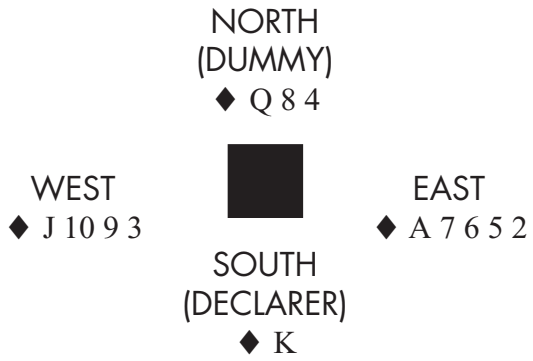


"**What would West lead?** (♦J.) The ♦J, top of touching high cards.

"**If this is the actual layout, should East play the ♦A when the ♦4 is played from dummy?** (No/Yes.) If East plays the ♦A, declarer will get two tricks, the ♦K and the ♦Q. If East withholds the ♦A, declarer will get only one diamond trick with the ♦K. If West can regain the lead before declarer can dispose of either of the diamond losers, the defenders will be able to trap the ♦Q and take two diamond tricks.

"There might be times, however, when East will need to grab the ♦A to defeat the contract. If declarer has some extra winners on which the diamond losers can immediately be discarded, East might have to take the ♦A before the defenders' diamond trick goes away. That will be the exception, rather than the rule.

"East might have another concern.
"Change the diamond layout.
"South: give the six and the two to East.

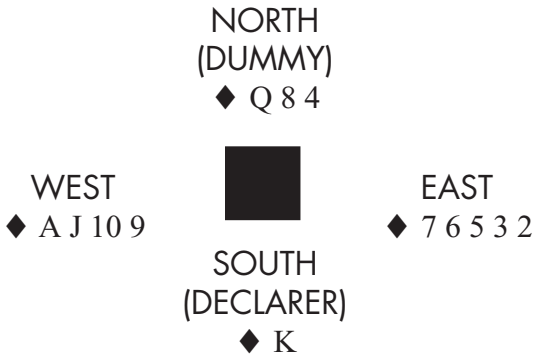


"**If West leads the ♦J and dummy plays the ♦4, should East play the ♦A?** (Yes/No.) East might be concerned that declarer will take a trick with the singleton ♦K. If that's the case, the defenders will be unable to take any diamond tricks, since declarer can ruff the next round of diamonds. That's a possibility, but East shouldn't be in a hurry to play the ♦A, unless East can clearly see that taking the ♦A will defeat the contract.

"If East does play the ♦A, dropping South's singleton ♦K, then North's ♦Q is established as a winner. South may be able to discard a loser in another suit on dummy's ♦Q. Declarer still gets one trick in the diamond suit. If East doesn't play the ♦A on the first trick, South will win the singleton ♦K, but won't be able to use dummy's ♦Q to discard a loser. In other words, the defenders may not lose anything, even if South is allowed to take a trick with the singleton ♦K."

At this point, there is not much advantage to introducing the concept of playing "jack denies a higher honor" and "10 or 9 shows zero or two higher honors." (This implies that the 10 is led from K–J–10–x or 10–9–8–x and the 9 is led from K–10–9–x or Q–10–9–x.) This convention is not recommended for most partnerships, since it is more likely to help an experienced declarer than inexperienced defenders in most situations.

"Change the diamond layout.
"West: give the three to East.
"East: give the ace to West.



"**If West decides to lead a diamond, which card should be led?** (♦A.) Although it is generally safe to lead away from a suit headed by the ace against a notrump contract, it is very risky to lead low when holding the ace against a suit contract. Instead, you should lead the ace, if you have chosen to lead the suit.

"Looking at this layout, you can see the danger of leading the ♦J, top of the interior sequence. Declarer will win the first trick with the singleton ♦K and will never lose a trick in the suit, thanks to the trump suit. Even if declarer held a doubleton, declarer might be able to dispose of the loser in the suit after winning the ♦K, and the defenders would not get their trick in the suit.

"Pick up the diamonds in the North, East, and South hands.
"Turn all of the suits in the West hand face up.

WEST
♠ 6
♥ Q J
♦ A J 10 9
♣ Q 9 7 5 4 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**Suppose North–South reach 4♥, and West decides to lead a club. Which club would West lead?** (♣5.) When leading from a four-card or longer suit that is not headed by touching high cards or by an ace, lead fourth highest — the same card you would lead against a notrump contract.

"Change the West hand.
"In spades: add the four, the three and the two.
"In clubs: take away the seven, the four and the two.

WEST
♠ 6 4 3 2
♥ Q J
♦ A J 10 9
♣ Q 9 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

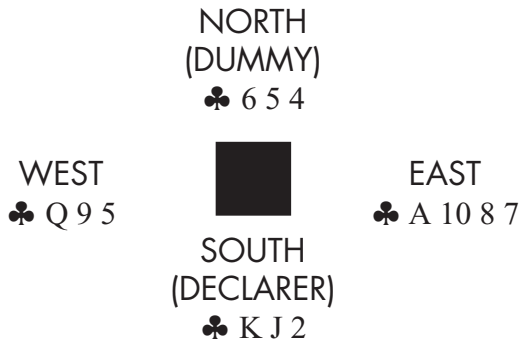
"**Suppose North–South reach 4♥, and West decides to lead a club. Which club would West lead?** (♣5.) You would lead a low club from a three-card or longer suit that is not headed by touching honors — or the ace. In this situation, that would mean leading the ♣5, low from an honor.

"Notice that this isn't your fourth highest club. You can't lead the fourth highest card from a three-card suit. The net result is that you lead fourth highest from a four-card or longer suit headed by an honor, but third highest from a three-card suit."

Some partnerships prefer leading third and fifth best against suit contracts to help distinguish among three-, four- and five-card suits. That's beyond the scope of this lesson.

"**Suppose East has bid clubs during the auction. Which club would West lead now?** (♣5.) You still would lead low from an honor, the ♣5. There is an old saying about always leading the top of partner's suit, but that isn't generally a good idea. To see why, leave West's clubs face up on the table and turn all of West's remaining cards face down.

"Now put out the following layout:
"North: the six, the five and the four.
"East: the ace, the ten, the eight and the seven.
"South: the king, the jack and the two.



"**How many club tricks does declarer get if West leads the ♣Q?** (Two.) If East wins the first trick with the ♣A, declarer immediately gets two tricks. Even if East doesn't win the first trick with the ♣A, declarer can win the ♣K and later lead from dummy toward the ♣J to get a second trick.

"**How many club tricks does declarer get if West leads the ♣5?** (One.) If West leads the ♣5, East can win the ♣A and return a club. Whether South plays the ♣K or ♣J, declarer is limited to one club trick. In summary, leading low from an honor in partner's suit from a three-card or longer holding will usually work best.

"Pick up all of the clubs in the North, the East and the South hands.
"Turn all of West's cards face up and change the West hand.
"In clubs: take away the queen and add the two.

WEST
♠ 6 4 3 2
♥ Q J
♦ A J 10 9
♣ 9 5 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	2♥	3♣	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**Suppose East bids clubs during the auction. Which card would West lead?** (♣9/♣5/♣2.) With three low cards in a suit bid by partner, the partnership should agree on which card is led. There are three possible agreements:

- Lead low, ♣2. This tells partner that you hold three or more cards in the suit — or a singleton — but would not tell partner whether you hold an honor in partner's suit. Of course, it won't tell declarer either.
- Lead high, the ♣9. This is commonly referred to as leading top of nothing in partner's suit. It will tell partner that you don't hold an honor in the suit, but it will leave partner guessing whether you hold a singleton, doubleton, or three or more.
- Lead the middle card, the ♣5. This will be ambiguous on the opening lead, and partner may initially be under the impression that you are leading a singleton or a doubleton. When a second round of the suit is played, you can play up, the ♣9. That will let partner know that you don't have a doubleton. By then, partner will probably also know you don't have an honor, since the ♣2 is still missing. On the third round of the suit, you would follow down, with the ♣2. This is commonly referred to as leading MUD — Middle, Up, Down — from three low cards in partner's suit."

There is no preferred method. The students can discuss with their partners which choice they prefer. Most expert partnerships lead low from this combination, trusting partner to figure out whether they hold an honor.

"Change the West hand.
"In diamonds: take away the jack and the ten, and add the king.
"In clubs: add the three.

WEST
♠ 6 4 3 2
♥ Q J
♦ A K 9
♣ 9 5 3 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**Suppose North–South reach 4♥, and West chooses to lead a diamond. Which diamond does West lead?** (♦A/♦K.) Whether you lead the ♦A or the ♦K from this holding is a matter of partnership agreement. There are two schools of thought.

- The standard lead used to be the ♦K. This is because you rarely lead away from an ace against a suit contract, so you would often lead the ♦A when you are leading the suit, but don't hold the ♦K. In other words, when you lead the ♦A, you are specifically denying possession of the ♦K, because you would lead the ♦K from a suit headed by both the ♦A and the ♦K.

"The downside of this approach is that partner can't be certain whether you are leading the ♦K from a suit headed by the ♦A K or from a suit headed by the ♦K Q. Of course, if partner holds the ♦A or ♦Q, or can see one of those cards in the dummy, the situation will be clear.

- Many modern partnerships prefer to lead the ♦A from this holding. The advantage of this is that it is consistent with leading the top of touching honors, and if you lead the ♦K, there is no ambiguity — you are leading from a suit headed by the ♦K Q, not the ♦A K.

"The downside of this approach is that partner can't be certain that you hold the ♦K when you lead the ♦A. You would lead the ♦A, if you decided to lead the suit, but did not hold the ♦K, because you avoid leading low when you lead from a suit headed by an ace. Of course, if partner holds the ♦K or can see that card in the dummy, the situation will be clear.

"The standard lead on the ACBL convention card is the king from a suit headed by the ace-king. Most of today's students, however, have been taught to lead the ace from a suit headed by the ace-king, maintaining the straightforward guideline of the top of touching honors.

"Change the West hand.
"In diamonds: take away the nine.
"In clubs: add the four.

WEST
♠ 6 4 3 2
♥ Q J
♦ A K
♣ 9 5 4 3 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**Suppose North–South again reach 4♥, and West chooses to lead a diamond. Which diamond does West lead?** (♦A/♦K.) Against a suit contract, you might want to let East know that you hold a doubleton ♦A K. You might hope to find an entry to East's hand, so that East can lead a third round of diamonds for you to ruff. However, if you lead the same honor that you normally lead from a three-card or longer suit headed by the ace-king, East won't be aware that you have only a doubleton.

"The standard way to send the message to partner that you specifically have a doubleton ace-king is to reverse your standard lead from this combination.

- If you normally lead the ♦K from a suit headed by the ♦A K, you would lead the ♦A. Partner will think at first that you don't hold the ♦K. When you next play the ♦K, your unusual lead will alert partner to the fact that you have only two diamonds.

- Similarly, if you normally lead the ♦A from a suit headed by the ♦A K, you would lead the ♦K and then play the ♦A. This reversal of your normal lead will alert partner to the fact that you have only two diamonds.

"All this, of course, relies on partner watching carefully which cards you lead and noticing when you do something unusual.

"**Suppose North–South reach 4♠, and West chooses to lead a heart rather than a diamond. Which heart does West lead?** (♥Q.) Although you can reverse your normal honor lead when you have a doubleton ace-king, you should not do the same thing when you have other doubletons headed by an honor. Simply lead the top of the touching cards, the ♥Q.

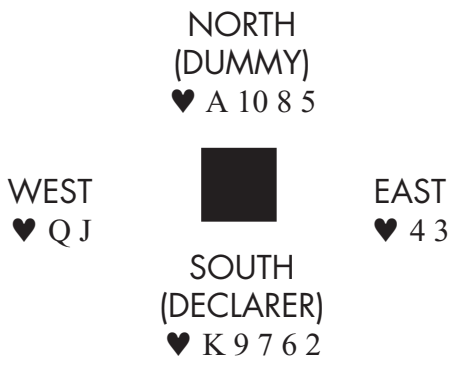
"The reason you can afford to lead your doubleton ace-king in an unusual order is that there is little chance of confusing your partner. You figure to win the first trick, and then you can clarify the situation by leading your other honor. The same would not be true if you led the ♥J from this combination. Partner would assume that you are leading the top of touching honors, or leading from a singleton or doubleton heart, and would likely go wrong when holding the ♥K or ♥A. Instead, make your normal honor lead and hope that partner can determine from the auction and subsequent play that you hold only two hearts.

"**Suppose North–South reach 4♥, and West chooses to lead a trump. Which card would West lead?** (♥Q/♥J.) Although you generally lead the top of touching honors against a suit contract, you are not compelled to do so, even if that is what is indicated on your convention card. The reason you usually lead the top of touching honors is to give useful information to partner. Unfortunately, you also give the same information to declarer.

"If you decide that you want to fool both declarer and East, you can lead whatever card you want. This is especially true in the trump suit, where it is more likely that declarer rather than East will be more interested in your exact holding. If you were always to lead the ♥Q from this combination, it would help declarer locate the ♥J. Instead, you should sometimes lead the ♥J, hoping to conceal the location of the ♥Q from declarer.

"Leave West's hearts face up on the table and turn all of West's other suits face down. Take the remaining hearts and lay out the following combination.

"North: the ace, the ten, the eight and the five.
"East: the four and the three.
"South: the king, the nine, the seven, the six and the two.



"If you lead the ♥Q, declarer will probably win the ♥K and play a heart toward dummy's ♥A 10. If you lead the ♥J, declarer may assume your partner holds the ♥Q. Declarer might win the first trick with dummy's ♥A and then lead a second heart and take a finesse, losing a trick to your ♥Q. Of course, declarer might still guess correctly, but you've given declarer a losing option."

Don't get into a discussion of restricted choice. It's likely to create considerable confusion at this level.

"Naturally, if you overuse this ploy, declarer won't be fooled too often. If you think declarer will always suspect that you hold both the ♥Q and ♥J when you lead the ♥J in this situation, try occasionally leading the ♥Q. Now declarer may assume that you would never lead that card when holding the ♥J as well, and declarer might win dummy's ♥A and take a finesse, losing to your ♥J — a small double cross!"

Summary

"Against a suit contract, the partnership should agree on what it conventionally leads from various combinations. The standard agreements are:

- Top of a doubleton.
- Top of two or more touching cards headed by an honor.
- Low from three cards headed by an honor; fourth highest from four or more cards.

"The partnership also should agree on whether the ace or king is led from a suit headed by the ace and king and which card is led from three low cards — high, middle, or low.

"Either partner can deviate from the standard agreements, either to send a special signal — such as a doubleton ace-king — or to deliberately mislead declarer and partner."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — Opening Leads against Suit Contracts

West chooses to lead a diamond against the following auction. Which card would West select from each of the following hands?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1) ♠ 8 3
♥ Q 8 5
♦ K Q J 6
♣ J 7 4 2

2) ♠ J 5
♥ J 9 7 5
♦ Q J 9 2
♣ J 8 4

3) ♠ 7 6 3
♥ 8 4 2
♦ A K 9 5
♣ J 8 3

4) ♠ J 7
♥ K 8
♦ Q 10 6 4 2
♣ J 6 5 3

5) ♠ Q 8 5
♥ Q 9 3
♦ 9 6 2
♣ J 7 5 3

6) ♠ J 8 5 3
♥ J 6
♦ A J 8 7 5
♣ Q 5

Exercise One *Answer* — Opening Leads against Suit Contracts

1) ♦K. Lead the top of touching high cards.

2) ♦Q. The top of touching high cards is led from a broken sequence.

3) ♦A. The partnership must agree on which card to lead from this holding. Without discussion, the standard lead from this combination is the ♦A, but some partnerships prefer to lead the ♦K.

4) ♦4. Without touching high cards, lead the fourth highest — unless the partnership has agreed to play third and fifth leads, in which case the ♦2 would be led.

5) ♦6 or ♦2 or ♦9. The partnership must agree on which card to lead from this holding. If the partnership uses MUD, the middle card would be led, the ♦6. If the partnership leads low from three or more cards, whether or not they include an honor, the ♦2 would be led. If the partnership leads top of nothing, the ♦9 would be led.

6) ♦A. Avoid leading a low card from a suit headed by the ace against a suit contract — the ace may never win a trick.

Opening Leads against Notrump Contracts

Introduction

"Leading against a notrump contract follows a similar approach to leading against a suit contract. First you choose the suit to lead, then you choose the specific card. The main difference is that leading from a long suit takes on a high priority. It may be worth giving up one or two tricks in the suit in order to establish winners. In a notrump contract, declarer can't prevent you from taking established winners once you gain the lead.

"In general, use the following guidelines when choosing the lead against a notrump contract:

- Lead a suit bid by partner. This will frequently be the longest combined suit for the partnership.
- Lead an unbid suit. Avoid leading suits bid by the opponents, especially major suits.
- Lead fourth highest from your longest and strongest suit. With nothing else to guide you, this advice still works well against notrump contracts."

Instructions

"Turn all of the suits in the West hand face up. Pick up all of the other cards and sort them back into suits.

"Change the West hand.
"In spades: add the ace.
"In diamonds: take away the ace.
"In clubs: take away the two and the three and add the ten and the seven.

WEST
♠ A 6 4 3 2
♥ Q J
♦ K
♣ 10 9 7 5 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"**South has opened the bidding 1NT, and North has raised to 3NT. Which suit would West choose to lead?** (Spades/Clubs.) With no help from the auction, choose your longest suit. With equal length in spades and clubs, choose the stronger. Determining the stronger suit might require some judgment. A suit headed by the ace is probably stronger than a suit headed by the ten and nine, but it isn't clear-cut. If East holds both the ♠K and the ♠Q — or even four spades headed by the ♠K — you might take the first five tricks to defeat the contract. The same would not be true if East held the ♣K and the ♣Q or four clubs headed by the ♣K.

"Another factor is that North–South did not investigate a major-suit contract, looking for an eight-card fit. That provides you with an inference that North–South probably have length in the minor suits.

"You would not automatically lead a spade. Listen to the auction before selecting the suit to lead.

"**If East had bid hearts during the auction, which suit would West lead?** (Hearts.) It's generally a good idea to lead partner's suit, unless you clearly have a better alternative. If East has bid hearts, it may well be the longest combined suit for the partnership. Even if you have an equally long suit of your own, it still may be best to establish winners in East's suit. If East has bid during the auction, East is more likely to have an entry to the long suit, once it is established.

"**If West were going to lead a heart, which card would West lead?** (♥Q.) The guidelines for leading partner's suit are identical to those for leading against a suit contract:

- Lead the top of a doubleton;
- Lead the top of touching honors;
- Otherwise, lead low — fourth highest from four or more.

"Some partnerships change the lead from three or more cards when you have raised the suit during the auction:

- With an honor, you still lead low.
- With three or more cards that don't include an honor, lead high — the top of nothing.

"There are other reasons why you might not lead a spade. If one of the opponents had bid spades during the auction, for example, you might choose a club instead. The opponents don't even need to have bid spades in some situations. Consider this auction.

"**South opens 1NT, and North responds 2♣, the Stayman convention. South bids 2♥, and North now jumps to 3NT. Would a spade lead be a good idea?** (No.) North has used the Stayman convention, showing interest in finding a major-suit fit. South has shown a four-card heart suit, but North has chosen to play game in notrump. By inference, North must hold a four-card spade suit and was looking for a fit in that suit. South holds at least a doubleton spade for the notrump opening bid. Leading a spade against this auction is probably not a good idea. Lead a club instead.

"**If West does choose to lead a club, which club does West lead?** (♣10.) With a broken sequence headed by the queen, jack or ten, lead the top of touching cards —the ♣10 from this holding. This is the same card you would lead against a suit contract. We'll discuss leads from broken sequences headed by the ace or king later.

"Change the West hand.
"In clubs: take away the seven and add the king.

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"**Which club would West lead?** (♣10.) Lead the top of touching cards from an interior sequence, the ♣10.

"One of the touching cards must be an honor. So, you would lead the ♣10 from this holding, but you would lead fourth highest if your suit were ♣K 9 8 5 4.

"**If West leads a queen, jack or ten against a notrump contract, can East tell whether West has a higher honor?** (No/Maybe.) The lead of the queen, jack or ten is ambiguous. You may simply be leading the top of a solid sequence or a broken sequence, or you may be leading from an interior sequence. East can't be sure unless the appropriate missing honors are in dummy or in East's hand."

This isn't the time to mention that some partnerships attempt to resolve this dilemma by using the "jack denies a higher honor; ten or nine implies zero or two higher honors." Using this approach, the ♣9 would be led from this holding — since there are two higher honors, the ♣K and the ♣10.

"Change the West hand.
"In diamonds: add the two.
"In clubs: take away the king and the ten and add the two.

WEST
♠ A 6 4 3 2
♥ Q J
♦ K 2
♣ 9 5 4 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"**South has bid spades, and West chooses to lead a club against 3NT. Which club would West lead?** (♣9/ ♣5/♣2.) The partnership needs to agree on which card is led from three or more cards not headed by an honor.

"There are three common approaches:

- Low, the ♣2. The partnership can continue to lead low — fourth highest from four or more cards. Using this approach, a low card would not guarantee an honor.
- High, the ♣9. Some partnerships prefer to lead high. That way, partner can be sure that the opening leader does not hold an honor in the suit.

- Second highest, the ♣5. Some partnerships prefer to lead the second highest card from a suit not headed by an honor. This has the advantage of not wasting the ♣9, which might be a valuable card, while giving some indication to partner that no honor is held in the suit. Partner will sometimes have difficulty distinguishing between second highest and fourth best, but that should be clarified as the play progresses.

"There is no particular method recommended, but the partnership should reach an agreement.

"Let's return to the original auction: 1NT by South and a raise to 3NT by North. With nothing else to go on, suppose West chooses to lead a spade.

"**Which spade does West lead?** (♠3.) The traditional lead from a four-card or longer suit is the fourth highest card — the fourth down from the top — the ♠3.

"There is no suggestion that you should avoid leading away from an ace against a notrump contract. You should get an opportunity to win your ♠A at a later point in the play, and you want to hold on to it as an entry.

"Change the West hand.
"In spades: take away the two and add the king.
"In diamonds: take away king and add the three.

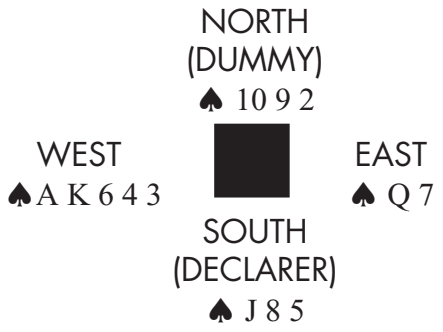
WEST
♠ A K 6 4 3
♥ Q J
♦ 3 2
♣ 9 5 4 2

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"**South opens 1NT, and North raises to 3NT. What would West lead?** (♠4.) Even with both the ace and the king, the standard lead is the ♠4, fourth highest.

"To see why the ♠4 is likely to work better than the ♠A or ♠K, turn the remaining suits in the West hand face down and lay out the entire spade suit as follows:

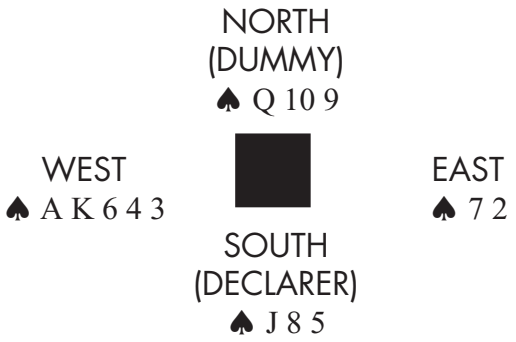
"North: the ten, the nine and the two.
"East: the queen and the seven.
"South: the jack, the eight and the five.



"**If West leads the ♠A or ♠K, how many spade tricks could East–West take immediately?** (Two tricks.) If you lead a high spade, the suit is blocked. Whether you continue with a low spade or play your other high spade, you can't take more than two tricks in the suit right away.

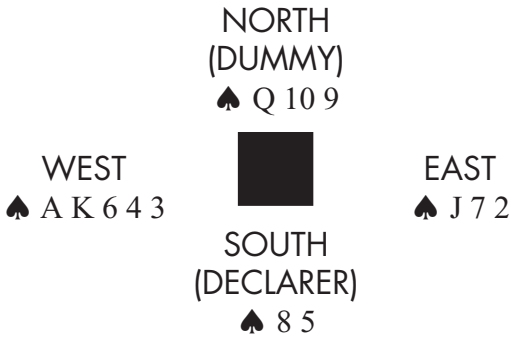
"**If West leads the ♠4, how many tricks could East–West take immediately?** (Five tricks.) By leading fourth highest, the defenders can take the first five tricks.

"Change the layout.
"North: give the two to East
"East: give the queen to North.



"**Is there any advantage to leading the ♠4?** (Yes.) Declarer is always entitled to one spade trick. If West leads the ♠A, ♠K and a third round of the suit, West's spades will be established, but West will need an entry in another suit to take the winners. If, instead, West leads a low spade, declarer will win the first trick, but now the defenders are poised to take four winners if either West or East regains the lead.

"Leading a low spade may gain in other situations.
"Change the layout.
"South: give the jack to East.



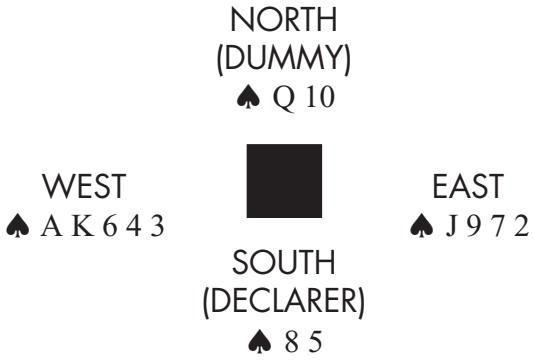
"**If West leads the ♠4, what is likely to happen?** (East–West will take five tricks.) It's easy to see that declarer can play dummy's ♠Q to win the first trick and restrict the defenders to four winners in the suit. In practice, however, declarer can't see the East–West hands. Declarer is likely to play the opening leader for one of the top two honors and the jack and finesse

dummy's ♠9 or ♠10. This will lose to East's ♠J, and the defenders can take the first five spade tricks.

"Declarer would be going with the odds to play dummy's ♠9 or ♠10 at trick one. That would be successful, if West were leading from a suit headed by the ♠A J or ♠K J. It's only wrong if West is leading from a suit headed by the ♠A K. Declarer is going with the 2–1 odds that East holds the ♠K or the ♠A, rather than the ♠J.

"Is it possible that leading a low spade could work out badly?

"Change the layout.
"North: Give the nine to East.



"**What might happen if West leads a low spade?** (East–West would take four tricks.) If West leads the ♠4 and declarer plays dummy's ♠Q — the correct play — East–West get at most four spade tricks. If West leads the ♠A and ♠K, the defenders could take the first five spade tricks.

"Even though this could be the layout, the percentages favor leading a low spade from the West hand. Even if this were the layout, the defenders might not get five tricks anyway. East would have to be careful not to play the ♠2 on the first two rounds of the suit, otherwise, the suit would become blocked — and the defenders would be back to taking only four tricks."

Summary

"When leading your long suit against a notrump contract, if the suit is not headed by a three-card solid, broken or interior sequence, lead your fourth highest card."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Opening Leads against Notrump Contracts

What is West's opening lead from each of the following hands after the auction shown?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1) ♠ Q J 10 8 5
♥ A 7 4
♦ 6 2
♣ 9 5 4

2) ♠ Q 7 3
♥ J 10 8 6 5
♦ K 8 4
♣ 8 4

3) ♠ K J 10 7 3
♥ 7 4 3
♦ K 9 5
♣ J 8

4) ♠ Q 8
♥ 9 5 4
♦ A K 7 4 3
♣ J 7 3

5) ♠ J 5 4
♥ K 6
♦ 8 4 2
♣ A K J 10 4

6) ♠ J 9 7 3
♥ K 10 6 2
♦ A 5
♣ J 4 3

Exercise Two *Answer* — Opening Leads against Notrump Contracts

1) ♠Q. West leads the top of a solid (three-card or longer) sequence.

2) ♥J. The top of touching high cards is led from a broken sequence.

3) ♠J. The top of touching high cards is led from an interior sequence. If the partnership has agreed to play zero or two higher, the ♠10 would be led from this holding since there are two higher honors (the ♠J would then deny a higher honor).

4) ♦4. With no solid, broken or interior sequence, lead fourth highest.

5) ♣A. This is the card that would be led from a broken sequence. The partnership may have an agreement that East will play the ♣Q at trick one when holding that card. If not, give a count signal. Otherwise East shows attitude.

6) ♥2. With a choice of four-card or longer suits, generally choose the stronger suit and lead fourth highest without a sequence in the suit.

Leading from a Broken Sequence against Notrump

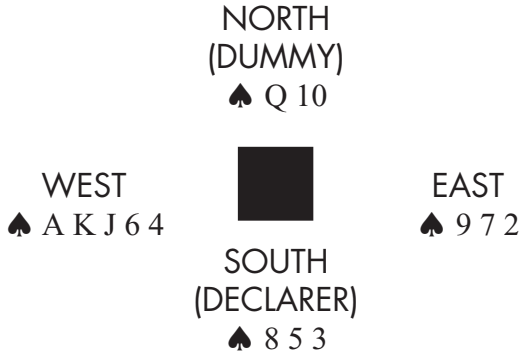
This topic has been covered at various times during the ACBL Series courses. You may want to offer this review or skip it.

Introduction

"The standard lead from a solid sequence, an interior sequence or a broken sequence is the top of touching high cards. Using this guideline keeps things simple. Some partnerships, however, make an exception when leading from a broken sequence against a notrump contract."

Instructions

"Pick up all of the cards and lay out the following combination in spades.
"West: the ace, the king, the jack, the six and the four.
"North: the queen and the ten.
"East: the nine, the seven and the two.
"South: the eight, the five and the three.



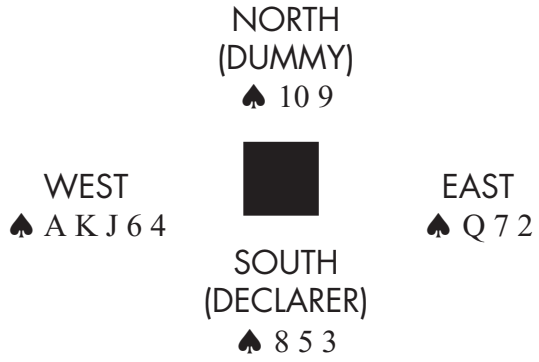
"**South opens 1NT, and North raises to 3NT. Which spade would West lead?** (♠A/♠K.) When holding a broken sequence, the partnership must agree which card should be led. This is also true when leading against a suit contract. The partnership should have a specific agreement about which card is to be led from a suit headed by the ace and king. One common agreement is:

- The lead of an ace asks partner to play a high honor if one is held, otherwise to give a count signal.
- The lead of a king asks partner to give an encouraging signal when holding a touching honor — either the ace or the queen. The lead of the king can be from a suit headed by the ace-king or the king-queen.

"This may sound a little confusing, so we'll look at some examples.

"In this situation, it wouldn't matter much whether West led the ♠A or the ♠K. On seeing dummy, West would know what to do.

"Change the layout.
"North: give the queen to East.
"East: give the nine to North.

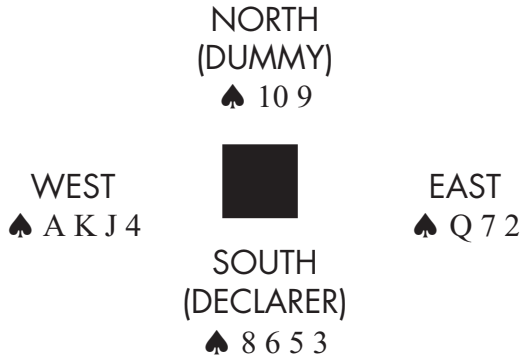


"**If West chooses to lead the ♠A, which card would East play?** (♠Q.) If the partnership has the agreement that a lead of the ace asks partner to play an honor, if one is held, East would play the ♠Q under the ♠A. West would now know what to do.

"**If West chooses to lead the ♠K, which card would East play?** (♠7.) The lead of the ♠K would ask East to make an encouraging signal when holding either the ♠A or ♠Q. Holding the ♠Q, East would make an encouraging signal, the ♠7. West could continue with a low spade to East's ♠Q, and the defenders would take the first five tricks.

"It may seem to make no difference whether West leads the ace or king from this holding, but let's change the situation slightly.

"Change the layout.
"West: give the six to South.

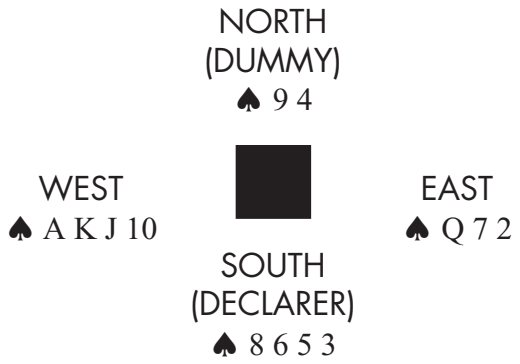


"**Can West afford to lead the ♠A?** (No.) If the lead of the ace asks partner to play a high honor, leading the ace would not be a good idea. East would play the ♠Q under the ♠A, and the defenders could take only three spade tricks.

"Instead, West should play the ♠K, get an encouraging signal from East and then play a low spade to East's ♠Q. The defenders would get the four tricks to which they are entitled.

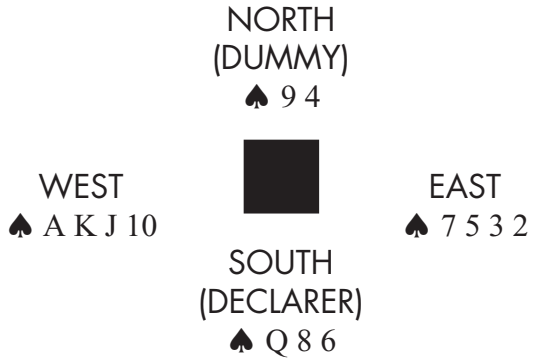
"In choosing whether to lead the ace or the king from this type of holding, West must decide, before seeing the dummy, whether West can afford to lead the ace and have East play an honor under it.

"Change the layout.
"West: give the four to North.
"North: give the ten to West.



"**Can West afford to lead the ♠A?** (Yes.) Holding both the ♠J and the ♠10, West can afford to lead the ♠A. If East holds the ♠Q and plays it under the ♠A, West is assured of taking four tricks.

"Change the layout.
"East: give the queen to South.
"South: give the five and the three to East.

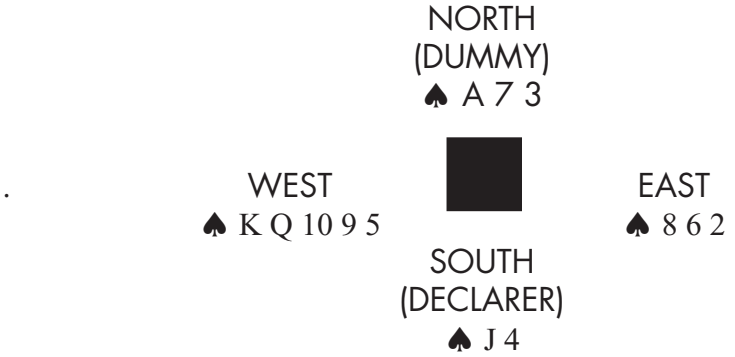


"**West leads the ♠A. Which card does East play?** (♠7.) Since East doesn't hold an honor, East gives a count signal instead. With an even number of spades, East starts a high-low signal with the ♠7. Now West knows that declarer must hold the ♠Q and that East holds either two or four spades — East can't hold a singleton spade, since that would give declarer a six-card suit for the 1NT opening.

"**What should West do after seeing East's ♠7?** (Switch to another suit.) Since South's ♠Q isn't falling, West should probably shift to another suit and wait for East to gain the lead to trap declarer's ♠Q.

"Note how important it is that East–West have a firm agreement on the meaning of the lead of an ace or king against a notrump contract. If East–West don't have an agreement, West might mistake East's count signal for an attitude signal and continue to lead spades, expecting East to hold the ♠Q.

"Pick up all of the spades and put out the following layout.
"West: the king, the queen, the ten, the nine and the five.
"North: the ace, the seven and the three.
"East: the eight, the six and the two.
"South: the jack and the four.



"**South opens 1NT, and North raises to 3NT. Which spade does West lead from this combination?** (♠K/♠Q.) With a broken sequence headed by the king-queen, it appears natural to lead the ♠K, the top of the touching cards. Many partnerships, however, prefer to lead the queen from this combination. It asks partner to:

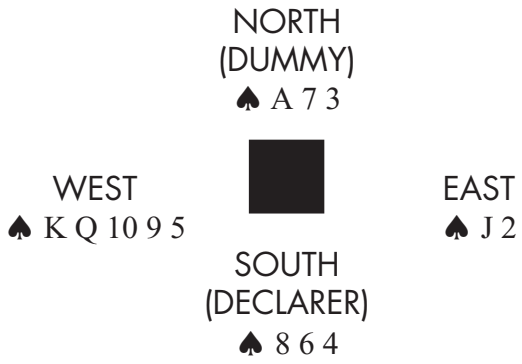
- Play the jack, when holding that card;
- Otherwise, to give a count signal.

"**With this agreement, which card would East play when the ♠A or a low spade is played from dummy?** (♠2.) Not holding the ♠J, East would play the ♠2, starting a low-high count signal to show an odd number of cards.

"**What would this tell West?** (It is probably safe to lead the ♠K.) West would know that East doesn't hold the ♠J, so declarer must hold that card. In addition, West would know that East holds either a singleton spade or three spades. If East holds a singleton spade, then there is no way to continue leading spades without giving declarer a trick with the ♠J. It won't do any good to wait for East to gain the lead, since East won't have a spade to lead. If West holds three spades, however, South's ♠J is falling under West's other high honor.

"If West leads the ♠Q and a low spade is played from dummy, leaving West on lead, West can continue with the ♠K and then the ♠10 to drive out dummy's ♠A and establish the suit. If declarer wins the first trick with dummy's ♠A and West later regains the lead, West can play the ♠K, expecting declarer's ♠J to fall. There is no need to look for an entry to the East hand.

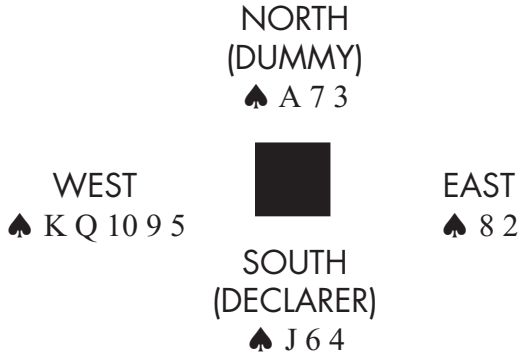
"Change the layout.
"East: give the eight and the six to South.
"South: give the jack to East.



"**Suppose West leads the ♠Q against South's 3NT contract. Which card does East play?** (♠J.) Holding the ♠J, South plays it when West leads the ♠Q, whether or not the ♠A is played from dummy. West knows that the suit can safely be continued.

"Note that East should recognize the opportunity to make this play. When West leads the ♠Q, East usually will expect that West is making a standard lead from a suit headed by the ♠Q J 10 or ♠Q J 9. When holding the ♠J, however, East knows that West has made an unusual lead from a suit headed by the ♠K Q 10 and is looking for the ♠J. East also would know that West is leading from ♠K Q 10 if the ♠J appeared in the dummy.

"Change the layout.
"East: give the jack to South.
"South: give the eight to East.



"**West leads the ♠Q against 3NT, and declarer plays a low spade from dummy. Which card does East play?** (♠8.) When not holding the ♠J, East gives a count signal when the ♠Q is led. With an even number of cards, East starts a high-low signal.

"**What information does East's play give West?** West now knows that declarer holds the ♠J and that it is not going to fall if West continues leading the suit. If West doesn't want to give up a second trick in the suit, West will have to wait until East gains the lead and can lead a spade to trap declarer's ♠J.

"It is important for the partnership to agree on whether East gives a count signal or an attitude signal when West leads a queen. If East is holding the king or ten or can see one of those cards in the dummy, East knows partner isn't leading from K–Q–10 and can make a normal attitude signal. Otherwise, East gives a count signal. Even experienced partnerships can sometimes get their signals confused in such situations."

Summary

"The partnership should discuss which card is led against a notrump contract from suits headed by broken sequences such as A–K–J or K–Q–10. If there has been no discussion, it is probably best to stick with the standard guideline of leading the top of touching cards in all situations."

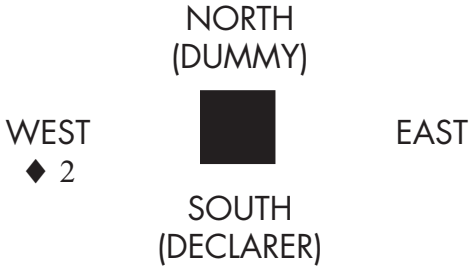
Rule of Eleven

Introduction

"The lead of the fourth highest card from a long suit gives a lot of information to partner."

Instructions

"Pick up all of the cards and sort them into suits. Take the diamond suit and put the ♦2 face up in front of West.

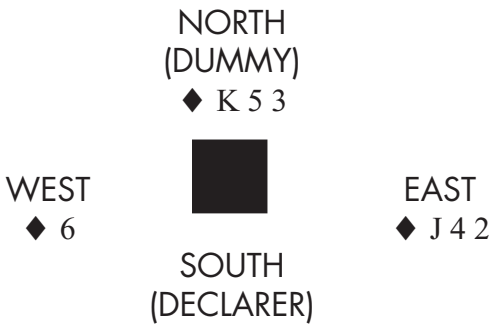


"**South opens the bidding 1NT, and North raises to 3NT. West leads the ♦2. What information does this give East about the West hand?** (West has a four-card diamond suit and has no five-card suit.) West has no information from the auction and is probably leading the longest suit in the hand. If the ♦2 is the fourth highest card in the suit, West holds only four diamonds — since the three higher cards must be higher than the ♦2, and there is no lower card in the suit."

If the students question this concept, have them try to construct a five-card or longer diamond suit for West that includes the ♦2 as the fourth highest card.

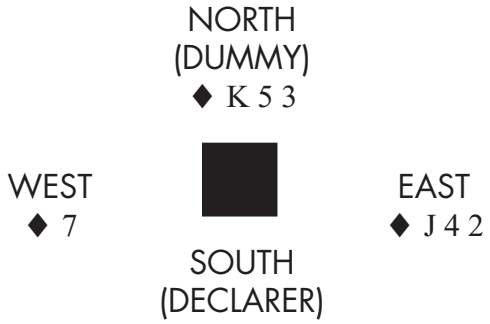
"Also, since West has chosen to lead from a four-card diamond suit, it is unlikely that West holds a longer suit. West's distribution will be 4–3–3–3, 4–4–3–2 or 4–4–4–1, with diamonds being the strongest of the four-card suits. East can get all of this information from the lead of the ♦2.

"Change the layout.
"Give West the six.
"Give North the king, the five and the three.
"Give East the jack, the four and the two.



"**West leads the ♦6 against 3NT. North puts down the ♦K 5 3 in the dummy, and East holds the ♦J 4 2. What does East know about the length of West's diamond suit?** (Four-card suit.) The ♦6 is the lowest outstanding diamond. Assuming it is fourth highest, West has only a four-card suit.

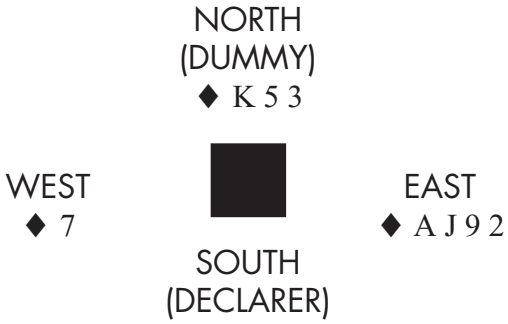
"Change the layout.
"West: replace the six with the seven.



"**West leads the ♦7, instead of the ♦6. How many cards does West hold in the diamond suit?** (Four or five.) Since the ♦6 is missing, East can't be sure whether West is leading from a four-card or a five-card suit. If declarer plays the ♦6 at some point during the play, East will know that West started with only a four-card suit. If West plays the ♦6 at some later point in the play, East will know that West started with a five-card suit — assuming East remembers that West originally led the ♦7.

"The lead of the fourth highest card can help partner determine how many cards are held in the suit, but there is more to it than that.

"Change the layout.
"East: replace the four with the ace and the nine.



"**South opens 1NT, North raises to 3NT and West leads the ♦7. If the ♦3 is played from dummy, which card should East play?** (♦2.) If a low diamond is played from dummy, East should play the ♦2, letting West's ♦7 win the trick! If the ♦7 is West's fourth highest card in the suit, West must also hold the ♦Q, ♦10 and ♦8, since these are the only three diamonds higher than the ♦7."

If the students question this, have them try to construct a holding for West from the remaining diamonds that does not include the ♦Q 10 8.

"If you have difficulty visualizing West's holding in this type of situation, you can make use of the rule of eleven:

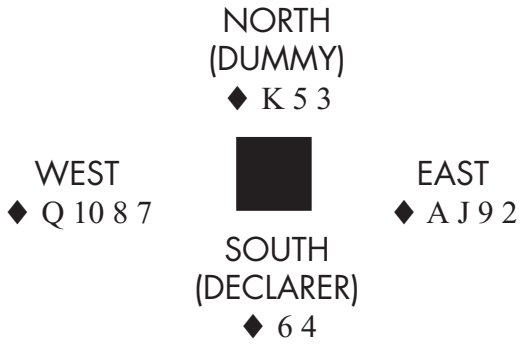
- When partner leads fourth highest, subtracting partner's card from 11 gives you the number of higher cards in the remaining three hands.

"**What is the result of subtracting partner's card from 11?** (Four.) Eleven minus seven leaves four cards higher than the seven in the other three hands.

"**How many cards higher than the seven can East see?** (Four.) East can see the ♦K in the dummy and the ♦A, the ♦J and the ♦9 in the East hand. That's four cards higher than West's ♦7.

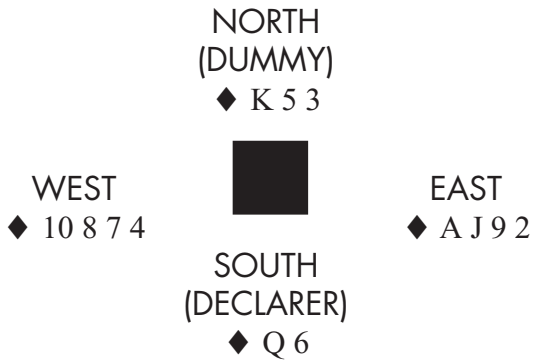
"**How many cards higher than the ♦7 are in declarer's hand?** (Zero.) Since East can see all four cards higher than the ♦7, there are no cards in declarer's hand higher than the ♦7.

"Complete the layout.
"West: add the queen, the ten and the eight.
"South: add the six and the four.



"**Which card should East play, when a low diamond is played from dummy?** (♦2.) By playing the ♦2, East keeps West on lead, and the defenders can now take the first four diamond tricks. If East were to play the ♦9 or ♦J on the first trick, East would win the trick and be on lead. East couldn't lead the suit a second time, without giving a trick to dummy's ♦K.

"Change the layout.
"West: give the queen to South.
"South: give the four to West.



"**Which card would West lead?** (l4.) West would lead the fourth highest card, the ♦4.

"**What information would West's lead give to East?** (West has a four-card suit. Declarer has two higher cards.) Since East holds the ♦2 and can see the ♦3 in dummy, East knows that West is leading from a four-card suit. In addition, the rule of eleven tells East that declarer holds two higher cards than the ♦4. Eleven minus four is seven. East can see two higher cards than the ♦4 in dummy, the ♦K and the ♦5. East holds three higher cards, the ♦A, the ♦J and the ♦9. That leaves two cards higher than the ♦4 in declarer's hand.

"In this situation, East can't tell which two higher cards declarer holds. East will have to discover which cards they are during the play."

Summary

"Leading fourth highest sends information to partner about both the number of cards held in the suit and the number of higher cards held by declarer — by applying the rule of eleven."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Rule of Eleven

After the following auction, West leads the ♥7, and a low heart is played from dummy. Which card does East play?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	3NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

NORTH
♠ J 7 6
♥ K 6 2
♦ A Q 10 6 3
♣ K 9

WEST
♥7



EAST
♠ 9 5 4
♥ A 10 9 3
♦ K 8 2
♣ 7 4 2

SOUTH

Exercise Three *Answer* — Rule of Eleven

♥3. Assuming West's lead is fourth highest, East can subtract from 11 to get the number of higher cards in the other three hands (11–7 = 4). One higher card is in dummy, and three higher cards are in East's hand. That means that declarer has no card higher than the ♥7. By playing low, East lets West win the first trick. West can lead the suit again to trap dummy's ♥K. West has led fourth highest from ♥Q J 8 7.

Attitude Signals

Introduction

"In addition to the information conveyed through the cards led, the defenders can exchange other information through defensive signals. You can give a defensive signal when you have a choice of cards to play, either when following suit or when discarding.

"The most important defensive signal is attitude toward a suit. You can tell partner that you would like a particular suit led or continued, or that you would prefer that partner not lead or continue a specific suit.

"The standard attitude signal is quite straightforward:

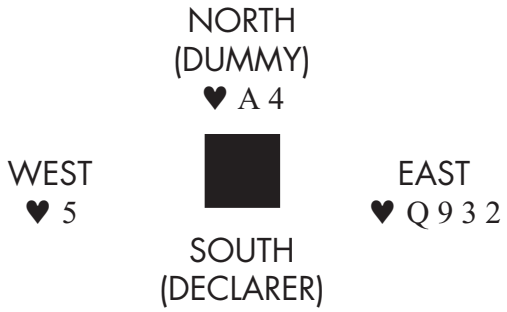
- A high card is encouraging.
- A low card is discouraging.

"The challenge comes in knowing which attitude signal to give."

Instructions

"Pick up all of the cards and sort them into suits. Take the heart suit and put out the following cards.

"West: the five.
"North: the ace and the four.
"East: the queen, the nine, the three and the two.



"**South opens the bidding 1NT, and North raises to 3NT. West leads the ♥5, and the ♥A is played from dummy. Which card does East play?** (♥9.) Before choosing the card to play, East should look at the cards in the deal that are visible. If East would prefer that West lead a different suit after regaining the lead, East should make a discouraging signal by playing the ♥2. Assuming East likes the suit West has led, however, East plays the ♥9, an encouraging signal.

"East shouldn't make a mini-encouraging signal with the ♥3, hoping that West will be able to interpret the signal. Make an encouraging signal with as high a card as East can afford. Assuming West holds four or more hearts, East isn't likely to need the ♥9, so East can afford to make the signal as clear as possible.

"By making an encouraging signal, East tells West that East would like the suit continued if West regains the lead. If West holds the ♥K, for example, East's play of the ♥9 tells West that it is safe to lead a low heart over to East's known ♥Q.

"**If East plays the ♥9 and East regains the lead before West, which card does East return?** (♥2.) When returning partner's lead, use the following guidelines:

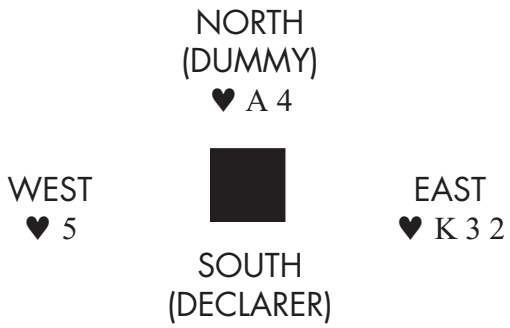
- Lead back the top card from a remaining doubleton.
- Lead the top card from two or more touching cards headed by an honor.
- Otherwise, lead back the original fourth highest card from three or more remaining cards.

"Based on this, the correct card for East to return is the ♥2, East's original fourth- highest card.

"**If West leads the ♥5 and the ♥4 is played from dummy, which card does East play?** (♥Q.) East can only signal when East has a choice of cards to play. If a low heart is played from dummy, East doesn't have a choice. East must play high, the ♥Q, to prevent declarer from winning a trick with the ♥10 or the ♥J.

"**If the ♥Q wins the trick, which card does East return?** (♥2.) With three remaining cards, East returns the ♥2, East's original fourth highest card.

"Change the East hand.
"Take away the queen and the nine and add the king.



"**West leads the ♥5. If the ♥A is played from dummy, which card does East play?** (♥3.) Assuming East still wants to make an encouraging signal in the suit, all East can afford is the ♥3. East will have to hope that West notices that the ♥2 is missing and will interpret the ♥3 as an encouraging signal.

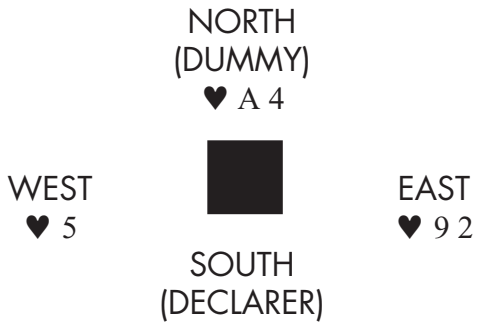
"**If East next gains the lead for the partnership, which card does East return?** (♥K.) With the remaining ♥K 2, East returns the ♥K, top of the doubleton. This is to avoid blocking the suit.

"**If declarer plays the ♥4 from dummy on the first trick, which card does East play?** (♥K.) East has no choice. East plays the ♥K to win the trick.

"**After winning the ♥K, which card would East return, assuming East decides to continue leading the suit?** (♥3.) East would return the ♥3, top of the remaining doubleton.

"**Suppose West didn't lead a heart originally. East, during the play, wants to encourage West to lead a heart after gaining the lead. How might East send that message?** (Encouraging signal in hearts; discouraging signal in other suits.) With this holding, it's difficult to directly encourage West to lead a heart. If East gets an opportunity to discard, East could try playing the high ♥3 as an encouraging signal, but West might misinterpret the ♥3 as a discouraging signal. Instead, East might try making discouraging signals in the other three suits, hoping that West will draw the inference that East wants a heart led when West gains the lead.

"Change the East hand.
"Take away the king and the three and add the nine.



"**Suppose West leads the ♥5 against South's 3NT contract and the ♥A is played from dummy. Which card does East play?** (♥2.) East should play the ♥2, a discouraging card. Don't get attitude signals mixed up with count signals — which we will discuss soon. The message East wants to send West is that East doesn't like the suit, not that East holds a doubleton."

Summary

"The most important defensive signal during the play is the attitude signal. High cards encourage; low cards discourage. All this is based on the premise that both partners are watching the cards that are played. Sometimes, a defender doesn't have the appropriate high card to encourage or low card to discourage. Each defender will have to be keenly aware of the potential challenge that partner might face.

"Be careful to use the attitude signal wisely. Don't encourage partner to lead a suit if you would really prefer another suit to be led. Also, don't discourage a suit if you don't want partner to shift to another suit. Sometimes, you have to encourage partner to keep leading a suit when all of the alternatives look worse."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Four — Attitude Signals

After the following auction, West leads the ♦K, and a low diamond is played from dummy. Which card would East play?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

NORTH
♠ Q 8 6 2
♥ A Q
♦ J 7 4
♣ A 9 6 4

WEST
♦K

EAST
♠ 6 4
♥ J 7 5 2
♦ Q 9 2
♣ Q 8 5 3

SOUTH

Exercise Four *Answer* — Attitude Signals

♦9. This is an encouraging attitude signal asking West to keep leading the suit. If the partnership leads the king from ace–king, East–West will take the first three tricks in the suit, if declarer has more than a doubleton. Besides, East doesn't particularly want West to switch to another suit.

Count Signals

Introduction

"When an attitude signal won't be of much use to partner, a defender can sometimes give a count signal, telling partner how many cards are held in the suit:

- High-low shows an even number of cards — two, four or six.
- Low-high shows an odd number of cards — three, five or seven.

"The signal isn't perfect. For example, when partner shows an even number of cards, you can't always be sure whether partner holds two, four, six or even eight cards in the suit. The auction and the logic of the situation, however, will usually allow a defender to know exactly how many cards partner holds when giving a count signal.

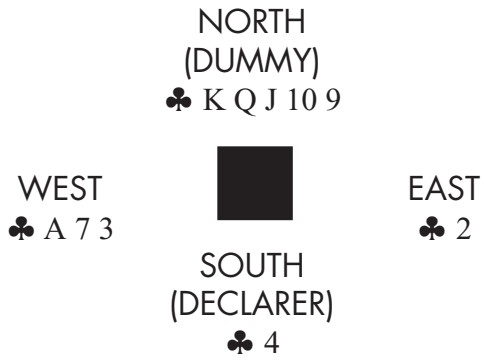
"If you know how many cards partner holds in a suit, you can tell how many cards declarer holds. You can see the number of cards in your hand and in the dummy, so any missing cards must be in declarer's hand.

"Determining when to give a count signal is a challenge. If you give count signals all the time, you may help declarer more than partner. Still, there are some situations in which a count signal is very important. Let's look at one common example."

Instructions

"Pick up all of the cards and sort them into suits. Take the club suit and put out the following cards.

"West: the ace, the seven and the three.
"North: the king, the queen, the jack, the ten and the nine.
"East: the two.
"South: the four.



"**Suppose South is declarer in a notrump contract with the ♣K Q J 10 9 in the dummy and no outside entry to the dummy. The ♣K is led from dummy, East plays the ♣2, and South plays the ♣4. Should West win the ♣A or hold up?** (Hold up/Depends.) Of course, this may depend on how the play has gone so far. If East–West have already established enough tricks to defeat the contract, West can win the ♣A and take the established winners.

"In most situations, however, West doesn't want to take the ♣A right away. If South has opened 1NT, for example, South will have at least two clubs. If West wins the ♣A right away, declarer will have a club left in the South hand as an entry to dummy's four established winners.

"The real question is how long West should hold up with the ♣A. If South holds a doubleton club, West only needs to hold up the ♣A for one round. If West wins the second round of clubs, declarer won't have a club left to cross to dummy's remaining winners. If South holds three clubs, West will have to wait until the third round to play the ♣A. If South holds four clubs, it won't matter when West takes the ♣A.

"The only way West can determine how long to hold up the ♣A is for East to give a count signal. Once West knows how many clubs East holds, West can figure out how many clubs declarer holds.

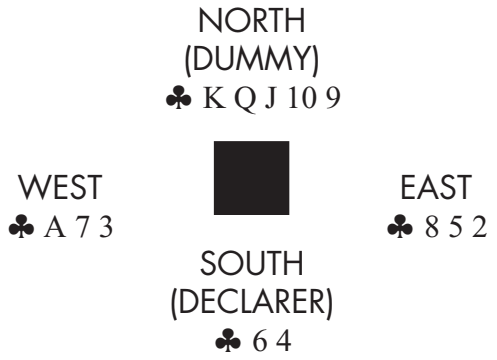
"This is a perfect situation for a count signal. There's not much point in East giving an attitude signal in this situation. West can see, from the dummy and the fact that declarer is playing the suit, that East doesn't like the suit. East should recognize that this is a count situation and not an attitude situation.

"**Assuming East–West are giving count signals, how many clubs does East hold?** (One or three.) East's ♣2 is the lowest outstanding club, so East must be starting a low-high signal, showing an odd number of clubs. East can't have five clubs, since that would leave declarer with a void in clubs. East must have either one club or three clubs.

"**If East has one club, does it matter when West takes the ♣A?** (No.) If East has one club, declarer must hold all four of the missing clubs. West can't hold up long enough to break the link between declarer and the dummy.

"**If East holds three clubs, when should West take the ♣A?** (Second round.) If East has three clubs, West should play the ♣A on the second round of the suit. Declarer must hold only a doubleton club and will then be out of the suit.

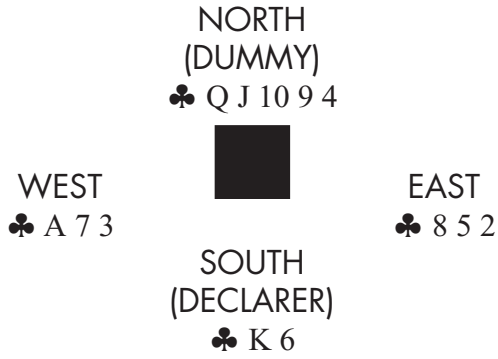
"Complete the layout of the club suit.
"East: add the eight and the five.
"South: add the six.



"**How many tricks does declarer take in the club suit if the defenders make use of the count signal?** (One.) East plays low-high to show an odd number of clubs — three. West takes the ♣A on the second round, and declarer has no entry to dummy's remaining winners. Declarer is restricted to one club trick.

"Notice that East doesn't actually need to complete the count signal for West to know how many clubs South holds. As soon as West sees East's ♣2, West knows that declarer holds either two or four clubs.

"To see the importance of this, change the layout.
"North: give the king to South.
"South: give the four to North.

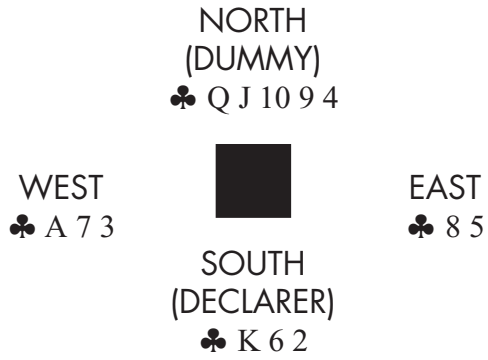


"**Suppose South leads the ♣K, trying to promote winners in the suit. Does West play the ♣A?** (No.) Presumably not. Declarer probably has at least two clubs.

"**Which club does East play to the first trick in the suit?** (♣2.) East starts a low-high by playing the ♣2.

"**When declarer next plays the ♣6, does West play the ♣A?** (Yes.) West doesn't have to see the second half of East's signal to know that East started with an odd number of clubs. If the ♣2 is singleton, taking the ♣A now doesn't matter. If the ♣2 is low-high from a three-card holding, West should play the ♣A now. In either case, West should win the second trick.

"Change the layout.
"East: give the two to South.



"**Suppose South leads the ♣K, and West holds up the ♣A. Which club should East play?** (♣8.) With a doubleton, East should start a high-low by playing the ♣8.

"**When South leads a second round of clubs, should West take the ♣A?** (No.) East's ♣8 might have been a singleton, in which case, it can't hurt to hold up the ♣A because South has four clubs. Otherwise, East's ♣8 must be the start of a high-low signal showing an even number of clubs. East can't have four, since that would leave declarer with a singleton. At most, East can have two clubs, leaving declarer with three. West should hold up the ♣A until the third round of the suit, restricting declarer to two tricks."

Summary

"In addition to attitude signals, the defenders can use a count signal when attitude clearly does not apply. High-low shows an even number; low-high shows an odd number."

With an advanced group, you can mention that this count signal is usually reversed in the trump suit. Low-high shows an even number; high-low — a trump echo — shows an odd number. Typically, this signal is used only when a defender is trying to get a ruff. Many partnerships rarely use the trump echo, preferring to use the trump suit for suit preference. There is a mention of the trump echo in the textbook.

➥ "Let's do Exercise 5 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Five — Count Signals

After the following auction, West leads the ♠2, and the ♠K is played from dummy, winning the trick. Which spade does East play? The ♣3 is led from dummy to the second trick. Which club does East play?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

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

WEST
♠2

EAST
♠ Q 9 4 3
♥ Q 10 5 2
♦ 9 7 5
♣ 7 4

SOUTH

Exercise Five *Answer* — Count Signals

♠9 and ♣7. The ♠9 is an encouraging attitude signal. When West gains the lead, East would like West to continue leading spades. Since East holds the ♠Q, that should be successful if West holds either the ♠A or the ♠J. The ♣7 is a count signal, the start of a high-low to show an even number of cards in the suit. West may hold the ♣A and need to know how many times to hold up in order to limit declarer to as few club tricks as possible.

Suit Preference Signals

Introduction

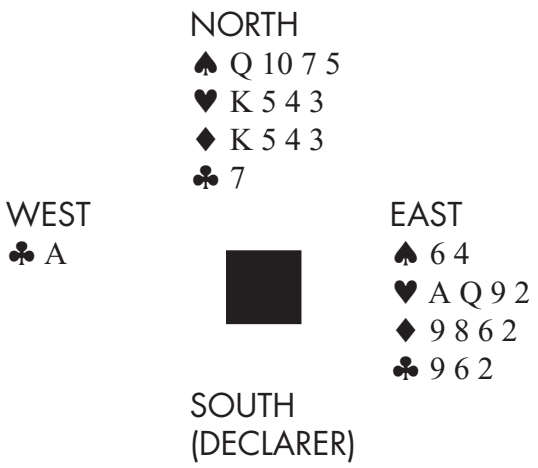
"There is a third type of signal that the defenders can use, the suit preference signal. This is used in very specific situations, when attitude and count signals don't logically apply. A suit preference signal tells partner which of two suits you prefer.

"Let's look at an example."

Instructions

"Pick up all of the suits and construct the following hand in front of North.
"In spades: the queen, the ten, the seven and the five.
"In hearts: the king, the five, the four and the three.
"In diamonds: the king, the five, the four and the three.
"In clubs: the seven.

"Construct the following hand in front of East.
"In spades: the seven and the four.
"In hearts: the ace, the queen, the nine and the two.
"In diamonds: the nine, the eight, the six and the two.
"In clubs: the nine, the six and the two.



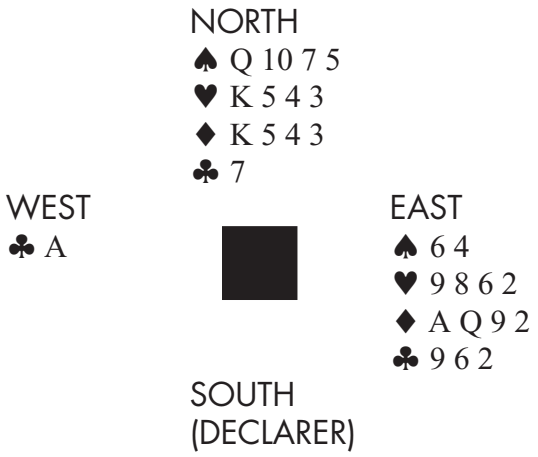
"**Suppose South opens 1♠, North raises to 3♠ and South bids 4♠. West leads the ♣A. Which card should East play on the first trick?** (♣9.) There's not much point in giving an attitude signal in clubs. Even if East likes clubs, it won't do much good for West to lead another club, since it can be ruffed in dummy. There's also little point in giving a count signal in the club suit. It's unlikely to be important for West to know how many clubs East holds.

"After winning the first trick with the ♣A, West will to want to know what to lead at trick two. This is the type of situation that calls for a suit preference signal. It works this way. East eliminates the suit led, clubs, from consideration. East also eliminates declarer's trump suit, spades. That leaves a choice between hearts and diamonds. The club East plays can be used to indicate a preference for one of these two suits:

- A high card shows preference for the higher-ranking suit.
- A low card shows preference for the lower-ranking suit.

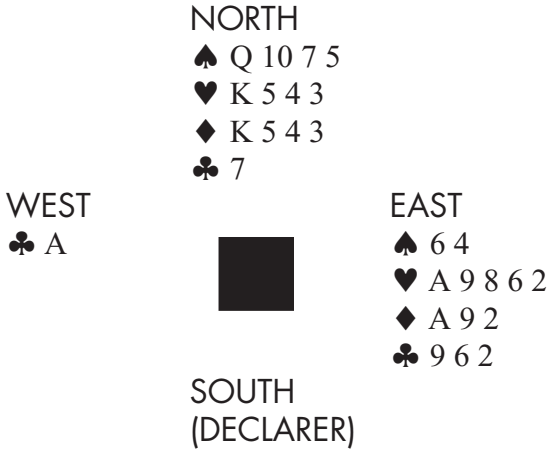
"In this situation, East would show preference for a shift to hearts, the higher-ranking of the two obvious suits, by playing the ♣9.

"Change the East hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace and the queen and add the eight and the six.
"In diamonds: take away the eight and the six and add the ace and the queen.



"**Suppose West leads the ♣A against North–South's 4♠. Which club does East play to the first trick?** (♣2.) With a preference for diamonds over hearts, East plays the ♣2 — a low card for the lower-ranking suit.

"Change the East hand.
"In hearts: add the ace.
"In diamonds: take away the queen.



"**Suppose West leads the ♣A against North–South's 4♠ contract. Which club does East play to the first trick?** (♣6.) Now East doesn't have a preference for either hearts or diamonds. Instead of playing a high card or a low card, East chooses the middle card, the ♣6, showing no preference for either suit.

"This leaves the next decision to West. West might have a preference for leading either a heart or a diamond, knowing East doesn't care which suit. West might make a passive lead, leading another club and letting declarer ruff in the dummy or leading a trump.

"Change the scenario slightly. Suppose South opens 1NT, North responds 2♣, the Stayman convention, South bids 2♠ and North raises to 4♠. Against 4♠, West leads the ♥7. Put the ♥7 on the table in front of West.

"**How many hearts does West hold?** (One.) West's ♥7 is the lowest outstanding heart. West can't be leading low from a three or four-card suit. That would leave declarer with a singleton or void for the 1NT opening. West's ♥7 must be a singleton.

"**Based on this knowledge, how does East plan the defense?** (♥A followed by ♥9.) East plans to win the ♥A and lead back a heart for West to ruff. That's two tricks. If West now leads a diamond, East can win the ♦A and lead another heart for West to ruff.

"**How will West know to lead a diamond, rather than a club, after ruffing the heart?** (Suit preference.) This is where the suit-preference signal is useful. There's no point in giving an attitude or count signal in the heart suit. Instead, the heart East returns should indicate preference between the two obvious suits, clubs and diamonds. Holding the ♦A, East should return the ♥9, a high heart, telling West to lead the higher-ranking suit, diamonds.

"**What if East held the ♣A, instead of the ♦A?** (East would lead the ♥2.) Then East should return the ♥2, showing preference for the lower-ranking suit, clubs.

"**What if East held neither the ♣A, nor the ♦A?** (♥6.) With no preference between clubs and diamonds, East returns a middle heart, the ♥6. This tells West, 'You're on your own from here.' "

Summary

"A suit preference signal can be used when it is clear that neither an attitude nor a count signal applies. It shows a preference for one of the obvious suits. A high card shows a preference for the higher-ranking suit and a low card shows a preference for the lower-ranking suit.

"In a trump contract, it is usually clear which are the obvious suits, since declarer's trump suit can be eliminated as a possibility. Suit preference, however, also can be used in notrump contracts. When establishing a suit, you can sometimes show partner where your entry lies — when you have a choice of playing a high card, a low card or even a middle card, when leading the suit. The high card would ask partner to lead the highest-ranking suit when gaining the lead, the low card would ask for the lowest-ranking suit, the middle card would show no preference or, possibly, ask for the middle-ranking suit.

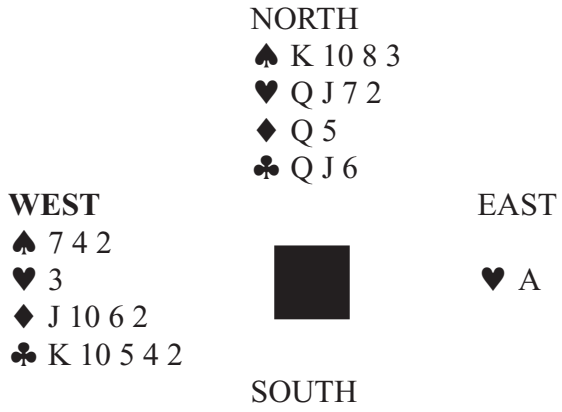
"There are lots of opportunities to give suit preference signals during the play, but the partnership must be clear on when a signal is attitude, when a signal is count and when a signal is suit preference. Even experienced partnerships can sometimes find this a challenge."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 6 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Six — Suit Preference Signals

After the auction has gone as follows, West leads a singleton heart. East wins the first trick with the ♥A and returns the ♥4. West ruffs the heart return. Which card does West play to trick three?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	



Exercise Six *Answer* — Suit Preference Signals

♣4. East has returned the lowest outstanding heart. This should be a suit preference signal for clubs, the lower of the two "obvious" choices — diamonds or clubs. Although a club lead is unattractive and a diamond lead appears safer, West respects East's signal. With an entry in diamonds, East would have returned a high heart. With no entry in either suit, East would have returned a middle heart. Partnership trust is what it is all about!

SAMPLE DEALS — LESSON 7*

General Guidelines for Teachers: The deals in this lesson provide opportunities for the students to use defensive leads and signals. The auctions are kept relatively straight-forward.

Bid and Play — Deal 1: Unusual Lead Signals a Doubleton

Guidelines for Teachers: The first deal provides an opportunity for a ruff against a suit contract when holding a doubleton ace-king. It is important for the students to have previously discussed their standard lead from a suit headed by the ace-king. In addition, the defenders have to make use of a suit-preference signal so that the opening leader doesn't have to guess how to cross to partner's hand. This should be a very challenging deal for the group. It is a good illustration of how defensive conventions can help find the winning defense. Without good agreements, it is doubtful that any partnership would defeat the contract on this deal.

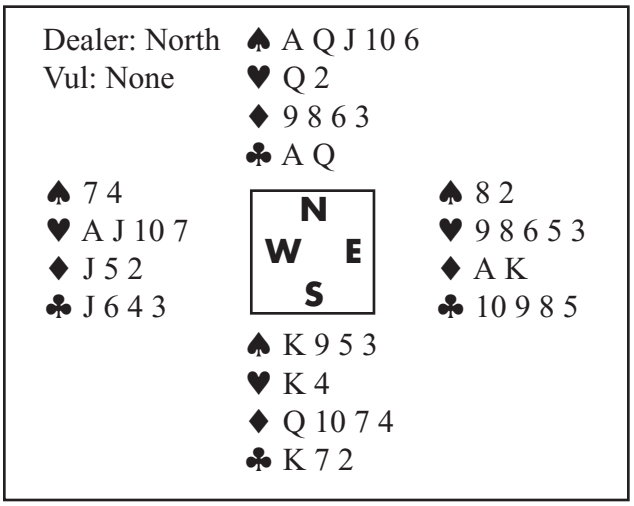
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the defenders can get a ruff if they have previously discussed their agreements and can read partner's signal."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #7, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)



* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"North, with an unbalanced hand and a five-card major suit, opens 1♠. After East passes, South makes a limit raise to 3♠. North accepts the invitation and bids game."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 4♠ by North.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East is on lead and should make a plan, before choosing the opening lead. With a doubleton ♦A K, East can visualize the possibility of getting a diamond ruff to defeat the contract, if there is an entry to West's hand. East should start by leading a high diamond. After seeing the dummy, there still may be time to change plans — if there is a singleton or doubleton diamond in dummy, for example.

"To alert West that the ♦A K is doubleton, East should reverse the standard partnership agreement of leading from a suit headed by the ace and king. If the partnership agreement is to lead the king from a suit headed by the ace and king, East should start by leading the ♦A. If the partnership agreement is to lead the ace from a suit headed by the ace and king, East should lead the ♦K. This unusual sequence of plays is intended to alert West to the possibility of a diamond ruff."

Suggested Play

"North's 4♠ contract is precarious. There is one sure heart loser, and there are three potential diamond losers. If East leads something other than a diamond, North will have the opportunity to draw trumps and then play diamonds. If the diamonds lie favorably, as they do on the actual deal, declarer will lose one heart and only two diamond tricks and make the contract.

"If the defenders lead diamonds initially and get their diamond ruff, they will defeat the contract by taking two diamonds, one ruff and the ♥A."

Suggested Defense

"When East leads a high diamond, West will play the ♦2, a discouraging card. West can't see much future in the diamond suit. After looking at the dummy, however, East should continue with the other high diamond. East can see that there is a possibility of getting a diamond ruff, if East can find a quick entry to the West hand.

"After leading the second diamond, East's dilemma will be whether to lead a heart or a club to get to the West hand. With no help from West, this would be a pure guess. If East leads a club, declarer can win and draw trumps, making the contract. By leading a heart, the contract can be defeated.

"On the second round of diamonds, West has an opportunity to help East find the winning defense. From East's unusual play in diamonds and the fact that East continued leading diamonds despite West's discouraging signal, West should realize that East has a doubleton diamond. With an entry in the heart suit, but not the club suit, West should play the ♦J on the second round of diamonds! This is a suit-preference signal for the higher-ranking of the two "obvious" suits, hearts and clubs. East should now lead a heart, rather than a club, preferably the ♥9, top of nothing, to show no interest in having the suit returned. West can win the ♥A, and trusting East, lead a diamond for East to ruff in order to defeat the contract.

"If East–West find this defense, all North–South can do is congratulate their opponents and move on to the next deal."

Bid and Play — Deal 2: Lead High to See the Dummy

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal demonstrates the correct use of attitude signals when defending. Most of the students will make the automatic play of encouraging partner in a suit contract, when partner leads from a suit headed by the ace-king and they hold a doubleton. This is a good deal to emphasize that the defenders' conventions are tools that must be used wisely.

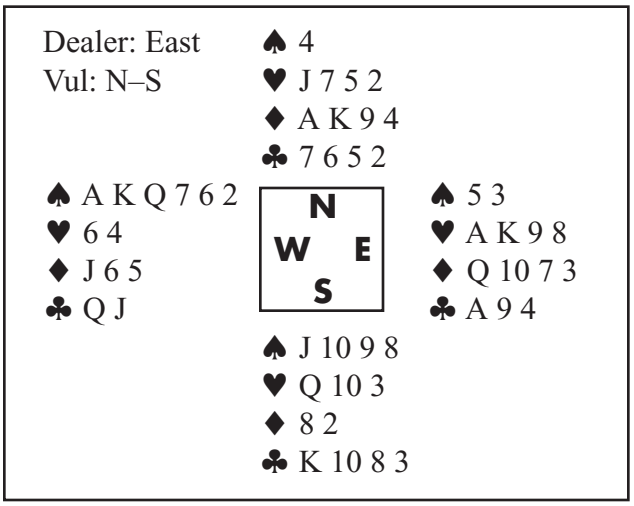
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the auction is straightforward, but the defense is challenging."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #7, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

"East has a balanced hand, but it isn't strong enough to open 1NT. Instead, East opens 1♦ and rebids 1NT after West's 1♠ response. West has enough

to take the partnership to game and knows there is an eight-card spade fit, since East has shown a balanced hand. West then bids 4♠."

When everyone understands the proper bids, have the students play out the cards in a contract of 4♠ by West.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North is on lead. Despite East's opening bid of 1♦, North should lead a high diamond. It may be possible to give partner a ruff in diamonds, or North can choose to shift to another suit after seeing the dummy. North would make the agreed-partnership lead from a suit headed by the ace and king."

Suggested Play

"If the missing spades are divided 3–2, declarer would have no spade losers. Declarer has only two diamond losers and one potential club loser. If the defenders don't lead clubs in time, declarer may be able to establish an extra winner in diamonds on which to discard the club loser.

"The spades are divided 4–1, giving West an unexpected loser in that suit. The club finesse also loses to South's ♣K. Declarer has four losers and can be defeated. The defense, however is a challenge."

Suggested Defense

"If North leads a high diamond, South's play to the first trick will be important. North will interpret South's choice of cards as an attitude signal. If South plays the ♦8, that would be an encouraging signal. North would continue with another high diamond and give South a ruff by leading a third round of diamonds.

"From North's perspective, giving South a diamond ruff might be the only way to defeat the contract. South might have a singleton diamond and the ♠A, for example. It is up to South to give the appropriate attitude signal on the first trick.

"From South's perspective, getting a diamond ruff will not help the defense. South has a natural spade trick without being given a ruff. After the ♠A K Q are played, South's ♠J will always be a winner. Since North's opening lead shows both the ♦A and ♦K, South knows the defenders already have three tricks, unless West holds a singleton diamond. The best source of a fourth defensive trick is in the club suit. If North can be persuaded to lead a club, South's ♣K should be a trick for the defense.

"On the first trick, therefore, South should play the ♦2, a discouraging signal! South hopes that North will then shift to a club. Now declarer can't prevent the defenders from taking two diamond tricks, one club trick and one spade trick to defeat the contract.

"If South plays the ♦8 on the first trick and North continues leading diamonds, South can ruff the third round, but now the defenders lose the race. Whatever South leads next, declarer can win, draw the remaining trumps and discard the club loser on dummy's established diamond winner.

"If South makes a discouraging signal on the first trick, how does North know to switch to a club rather than a heart? It isn't clear-cut, but with both the ♥A and ♥K in the dummy, a club switch looks more promising than a heart switch. The defenders would have to lead hearts twice to drive out the ♥A and the ♥K. By then, declarer would probably have been able to establish dummy's ♦Q on which to discard a heart loser. From North's perspective, if South doesn't want diamonds continued, a club lead may give the defenders their best chance. South might have the ♣K Q J, for example."

Bid and Play — Deal 3 – Declarer Determines the Dangerous Opponent

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal provides an excellent opportunity for the defenders to use the standard count signal when defending against a notrump contract with a long suit in the dummy. It's easy for the defenders to go wrong in such a situation, especially if declarer handles the suit combination deceptively.

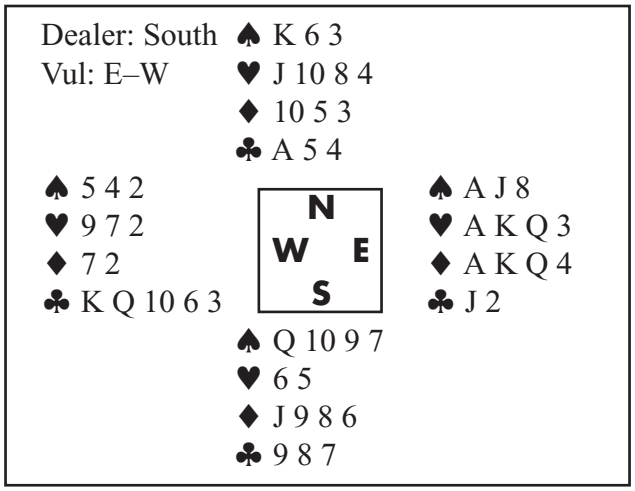
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where careful defense can set the contract."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #7, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass	Pass

"After three passes, East, with 24 high-card points, opens with a strong artificial 2♣. West makes a waiting response of 2♦, and East rebids 2NT, showing a balanced hand of 22 to 24 points. West has enough to raise to game, ending the auction.

"If the partnership doesn't use weak two-bids and the strong artificial 2♣ opening, East can simply open 2NT, showing a balanced 22 to 24 points, and West will raise to 3NT."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, let the students play out the cards in a contract of 3NT by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South leads against 3NT. The spades are slightly stronger than the diamonds, so South should start with spades. South leads the ♠10, top of touching cards from an interior sequence."

Suggested Play

"Declarer starts with seven sure tricks: one spade, three hearts and three diamonds. An eighth trick can be established in clubs, and a ninth trick might appear if the missing hearts divide 3–3.

"Dummy's clubs would actually provide four tricks, if there were an entry to the winners once the ♣A is driven out. Unfortunately, there is no entry. It's possible, however, that the clubs will provide two tricks, if the opponents hold up the ♣A until the third round. While that assumes a defensive error, it may offer a better chance than relying on hearts to divide 3–3.

"Declarer first has to decide what to do if South leads a spade and North plays the ♠K at trick one. There are two possibilities. If declarer feels that South has the ♣A, it may be best to win the ♠A and lead clubs immediately. South may not hold up with the ♣A exactly one round and may play the ♠Q, setting up East's ♠J. Also, the hearts might divide 3–3. If declarer feels that North holds the ♣A, it may be best to hold up the ♠A in case South has a five-card spade suit.

"There's no right decision for declarer. Winning the first spade is probably the best choice. If South holds the ♣A, declarer will have a couple of chances. If North holds the ♣A, declarer still will have some chances, if the spades divide 4–3.

"If East wins the ♠A at trick one, the best play is to lead two rounds of clubs, hoping the defenders duck twice. Then declarer can take nine tricks. If East chooses to hold up the ♠A until the third round, the best play is still to lead two rounds of clubs. East now knows for certain that the missing

spades are divided 4–3. If the defenders correctly take the ♣A on the second round, there is still the chance that hearts will divide 3–3. Even when hearts don't divide 3–3, declarer can make the contract by cashing the top diamonds, bringing the total to eight. Now, knowing that North holds a good heart and no spades, declarer can lead a heart to North's high heart and hope that North's last card is a club and not a diamond."

Suggested Defense

"If South does lead the ♠10 against 3NT, North must be careful to play the ♠K on the first trick. North can't tell whether South is simply leading the top of a sequence or is leading from an interior sequence. If South doesn't hold a higher honor, playing the ♠K is unlikely to make much of a difference, since declarer can always get three tricks from the ♠A Q J when North has the ♠K. If South is leading from an interior sequence, it is important for North to play the ♠K to prevent East from taking a trick with the ♠J.

"Playing the ♠K on the first trick is unlikely to lose and may gain. Playing the ♠K is essential on the actual layout and would also be necessary if South had led the ♠10 from something like ♠A Q 10 9 or ♠A 10 9 8 7.

"Declarer may win the ♠A at trick one or may hold up twice. In either case, the critical decision for North is when to play the ♣A. If North takes the ♣A on the first round, declarer has an easy route to nine tricks. If North waits until the third round, declarer will again make nine tricks.

"How does North know to win the ♣A on the second round of the suit? South should give a count signal in clubs by playing low-high to show an odd number of clubs, three in this instance. If South holds three clubs, declarer can hold only two, so it is safe for North to win the ♣A on exactly the second round. Provided the defenders are careful from that point onward, with North holding on to all four hearts and South holding on to all four diamonds, declarer will be held to eight tricks.

"North will have to watch South's play in the club suit carefully. The ♣7 may look like a high club at first, but when South follows with the ♣8 or ♣9 on the second trick, North should know what is going on."

Bid and Play — Deal 4 – The Rule of Eleven

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal shows the rule of eleven in action. Even though the concept has been discussed in the lesson, it will be challenging for the defenders to find the correct play at the table.

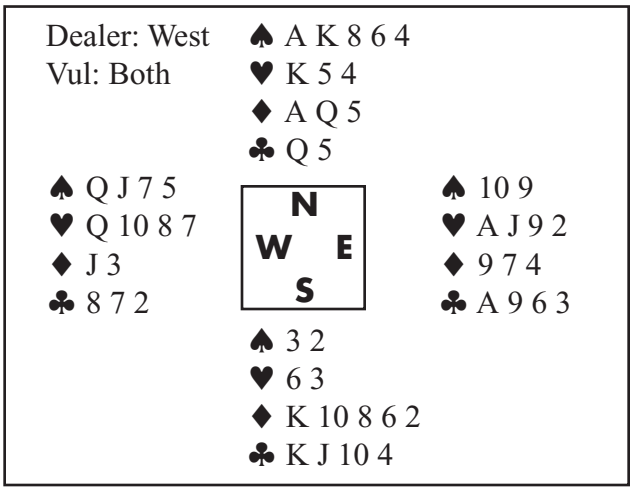
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where all roads lead to a 3NT contract that can be defeated with careful play."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #7, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"West passes. With 18 high-card points plus 1 for the five-card suit, North is too strong to open 1NT. North starts the auction with 1♠. East doesn't have quite enough for a takeout double and passes.

"South, without the strength to bid a new suit at the two level, responds 1NT. With a hand worth 19 points, North can invite game by raising to 2NT, showing 18 or 19 points. With 7 high-card points plus 1 point for the five-card suit, South accepts the invitation and bids 3NT. Aggressive North

players might raise directly to 3NT."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in 3NT by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West is on lead. Although the spades are better than the hearts, West should lead the unbid suit, hearts. With no sequence, West leads the ♥7, fourth highest."

Suggested Play

"If the diamonds divide 3–2, declarer has five tricks in that suit to go with two sure tricks in spades. The remaining tricks needed for the contract can be promoted in the club suit.

"The only danger is the heart suit. If the missing hearts divide 4–4, there will be no problem if West holds the ♥A, since dummy's ♥K will be a winner. Declarer, however, shouldn't be in a hurry to play dummy's ♥K at trick one. East might hold ♥A Q 10 or ♥A J 9, for example. Playing the ♥K at trick one would not be successful. Declarer should play a low heart from dummy on the first trick, hoping that East will win. Now East can't continue leading the suit without giving a trick to dummy's ♥K.

"Suppose East plays the ♥2 on the first trick. West wins and leads a second heart. Declarer can then play dummy's ♥K, hoping that West has the ♥A. On the actual lie of the cards, however, declarer can't avoid losing four heart tricks and the ♣A, if the defenders handle the heart suit correctly."

Suggested Defense

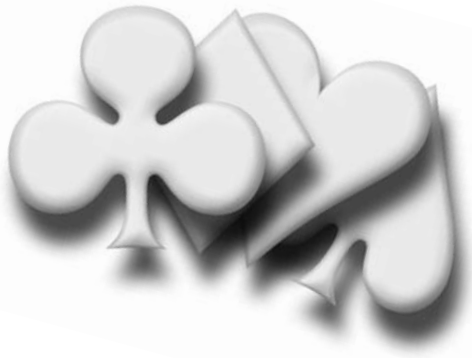
"If West leads the ♥7 and declarer plays a low heart from dummy on the first trick, East must be careful to play the ♥2. This is not a discouraging signal. East should expect partner's ♥7 to win the first trick!

"East determines this by applying the rule of eleven. Assuming West has led fourth highest, East can subtract 7 from 11, leaving four cards higher than the ♥7 in the remaining three hands. East holds three cards higher than the ♥7 and can see one higher card in the dummy. That leaves declarer with no cards higher than West's ♥7.

"Playing the ♥2 on the first trick is the only way to defeat the contract. Once West's ♥7 wins the first trick, West can lead a second heart, trapping North's ♥K. The defenders get the first four heart tricks to go with the ♣A. If East plays the ♥J or ♥9 on the first trick, the contract can no longer be defeated. East can't continue hearts without giving a trick to dummy's ♥K, and declarer will be able to establish enough winners in clubs to make the contract."

LESSON 8

Two-Over-One



General Concepts

General Introduction



Group Activities

Sample Deals

GENERAL CONCEPTS

Two-Over-One

Two-over-one is not part of the standard convention card. However, it is popular among tournament players in North America. This lesson provides an introduction to the basic two-over-one style.

Bidding

The two-over-one style discussed in this lesson is two-over-one game forcing. Other variations are possible — such as two-over-one game forcing, except for a 2♣ response, or except when responder rebids the same suit at the three level. These are included in the Appendix of the textbook, if your students want to look further into this.

Only the essential concepts are covered here: two-over-one responses and the forcing 1NT. A complete two-over-one game forcing style usually includes a number of additional conventions. The ideas presented here, however, are enough to get started.

Here are the topics covered:

Two-Over-One

This clarifies the use of the term two-over-one and reviews the standard approach, which does not commit the partnership to game in some sequences. Some of the challenges associated with the standard approach are illustrated, especially the challenge of knowing whether a specific bid is forcing or non-forcing.

Two-Over-One Game Forcing

The concept of playing two-over-one as game forcing is introduced. The major advantage is that it removes any doubt for the partnership about which sequences are forcing and which are invitational after a two-over-one response. This part of the concept is straightforward.

Principle of Fast Arrival

This section covers an important bidding principle: the faster the final contract is reached, the weaker the hand that places the contract. You have to take care in the practical application of this idea. It is a principle that isn't universally accepted, so this section could be skipped with an inexperienced group.

Handling Interference

This section covers the major exceptions to two-over-one game forcing. When there is interference over the opening bid, responder's two-over-one response is no longer game forcing. In addition, when responder is a passed hand, a two-over-one response is no longer forcing — to game or otherwise.

1NT Forcing

This section introduces the downside of two-over-one game forcing. The 1NT response has to cover a much wider range of hands. This leads to the need to play the response of 1NT as forcing, when the opening bid is a major suit. 1NT is not forcing in response to a minor suit, because responder has more bidding room. 1NT also isn't forcing by a passed hand.

Opener's Rebid after 1NT Forcing

Opener's rebid after a forcing 1NT response is discussed. Most of the time, opener simply makes a natural response. The only complication arises when opener would have passed a non-forcing 1NT response and may now have to manufacture a rebid.

Responder's Rebid after a Forcing 1NT Response

The forcing 1NT response is quite straightforward to apply — responder bids 1NT with any hand unsuitable for a two-over-one response. The challenge arises at responder's second bid, after hearing opener's rebid. This section covers responder's options. It is important to emphasize that responder must bid again with an invitational-strength hand — the same type of hand that would have led to an invitational sequence, if the partnership was not playing 1NT forcing.

Handling Interference

The effect on 1NT forcing after interference by the opponents is discussed. A 1NT response becomes natural, if there is an immediate overcall or takeout double after the opening bid. Interference after a 1NT forcing response removes the obligation for opener to manufacture a rebid.

Play & Defense

The deals in this lesson are all examples of two-over-one game forcing and 1NT forcing in action.

They include some examples of safety plays.

The first deal shows how two-over-one can make it easier for the partnership to reach a slam. To reach slam, the slam-bidding methods covered in earlier lessons can be used. There isn't much to the play except for declarer to avoid the trap of taking an unnecessary finesse before trumps have been drawn. To further illustrate the effect of two-over-one, a variation of the deal can be constructed in which the objective is to avoid getting too high after a two-over-one response.

The second deal illustrates another example of two-over-one game forcing with the addition of the principle of fast arrival to avoid getting too high. In the play, declarer must be careful to take a safety play in the trump suit to avoid losing a trick.

The third deal illustrates the use of a forcing 1NT response to show a three-card limit raise of opener's major. In the play, declarer again must handle the trump suit carefully to avoid an unnecessary loser.

The fourth deal illustrates the advantage of using the forcing 1NT response to find an appropriate partscore contract. The partscore can be defeated, but only with excellent defense. Discussing the defense to defeat the contract can be omitted unless the students are quite experienced.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

This lesson covers a concept that is outside the scope of standard conventions, but is becoming part of standard bidding in North American tournaments.

You might start the lesson like this:

> "In this lesson, we'll discuss a concept that isn't part of the standard bidding structure we have discussed so far. It is a style that is commonly used among competitive players, however, and one you might encounter when playing duplicate bridge."

GROUP ACTIVITIES

Two-Over-One

Introduction

"One key to good bidding is for each member of the partnership to recognize whether a particular bid is forcing, invitational or a signoff. There are many situations which create almost insurmountable challenges using standard methods."

Instructions

"The cards are sorted into suits. Give each player one suit and construct the following hand in front of North.
"In spades: the king and a low card.
"In hearts: the queen and two low cards.
"In diamonds: the queen and three low cards.
"In clubs: the ace, the jack and two low cards."

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ Q x x
♦ Q x x x
♣ A J x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♠
2♣	2NT
?	

Check that each table has the correct starting hand set up dummy style in front of North.

"**Suppose South deals and opens the bidding 1♠. What is North's response?** (2♣.) With 12 high-card points, you are too strong for 1NT. Using standard methods, North is too weak to jump to 2NT, which would be forcing, showing 13 or more points. North might play a jump to 2NT as artificial, the Jacoby 2NT response showing a forcing raise in spades. Instead, North simply starts with a new suit. When responding with four-card suits, bidding up the line, 2♣ is typical. Responding in a new suit at the two-level over partner's one-level suit bid is referred to as a two-over-one response.

"**Suppose South rebids 2NT over North's 2♣ response. What does that show?** (A balanced minimum.) South has described a minimum-strength balanced hand of 12 to 14 points with a five-card spade suit. With a balanced hand of 15 to 17 points, South would have opened 1NT. With 18 or 19 points, South could jump to 3NT.

"**Is South's rebid forcing?** (No.) Although some partnerships might have an agreement that North's two-level response has guaranteed a second bid, most partnerships would treat South's 2NT rebid as non forcing. North is allowed to pass with a minimum. A two-over-one response in standard methods is not forcing to game.

"**Over South's 2NT rebid, what call would North make?** (Pass/3NT.) North is in a quandary. If South has 14 points, or even a good 13 points with a five-card suit, the partnership should have enough for 3NT. In modern bidding, 25 combined points should give the partnership a good play for game, when the points are relatively evenly divided between the two hands. If South has only 12 or a poor 13 points, however, the partnership may have no play for 3NT, and it would be best to stop in 2NT.

"North would like to bid 2NT inviting South to game with a maximum. North will have to guess whether to pass or bid game. There is no right answer using standard methods.

"It would be an equally difficult situation if North held 11 points. North might get the partnership to a poor contract by raising to 3NT or might miss an excellent game contract by passing.

"**South opens 1♠, North responds 2♣ and South raises to 3♣. Now what call does North make?** (Pass/3NT.) Again, there is no easy answer. By pushing on to 3NT, North might be getting the partnership into a hopeless game with 24 combined points. By passing, North might miss a good game contract. The partnership might even be in a 4–3 fit, if South has raised with three-card support.

"This illustrates one of the flaws in the standard approach to two-over-one responses. It uses up a lot of bidding room, and the partnership may not be left with any satisfactory invitational sequence.

"To illustrate another shortcoming, change the North hand.
"In diamonds: add the ace.
"In clubs: take away the jack.

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ Q x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ A x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
2♦	3♦
?	

"**South opens 1♥. What is North's response?** (2♦.) With 15 high-card points plus a five-card suit, North knows the partnership belongs in at least game. With only three-card support for hearts, North shouldn't make an immediate forcing raise in that suit. Instead, North can start with a two-over-one response of 2♦, waiting to hear South's rebid."

Some participants might suggest other calls. A natural, forcing, 2NT response is a possibility, but doesn't describe the heart support or the fine diamond suit. The same flaw is present in a response of 3NT, showing a strong balanced hand. A response of 2♦ keeps most options open.

"**South raises North's 2♦ response to 3♦. Would a rebid of 3♥ be forcing?** (No/Yes.) Although some partnerships might agree to play a rebid of 3♥ as forcing in this situation, the standard approach is to treat it as non forcing. A rebid of 3♥ would be invitational, showing three-card support and a hand of limit-raise strength, 10 to 12 points.

"Similarly, even a raise to 4♦ would be treated as non forcing in most partnerships.

"**What rebid should North make?** (4♥/5♦/4♣.) If a rebid of 3♥ is non forcing, North has a difficult choice. North could simply jump to 4♥. That will get the partnership to game in an eight-card fit, but will give up on the possibility of slam. North could jump to 5♦, but that might bypass the best contract of 4♥. North could make a forcing bid, such as 4♣ or 3♠, but that would simply muddy the waters. South would be unaware of North's intentions.

"North will probably settle for the practical bid of 4♥, but that might not be the best contract.

"Leave the North hand face up and construct the following hand in front of South.
"In spades: the ace and a low card.
"In hearts: the ace, the king and three low cards.
"In diamonds: the king and three low cards.
"In clubs: two low cards.

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ Q x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ A x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
2♦	3♦
4♥	Pass

SOUTH
♠ A x
♥ A K x x x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x

"**What would South open the bidding?** (1♥.) With 14 high-card points and a five-card suit, South would open 1♥.

"**What would North respond?** (2♦.) North makes the two-over-one response of 2♦.

"**What would South rebid?** (3♦.) With a minimum hand, South would raise to 3♦."

Actually, South has quite a good hand for diamonds and might consider a jump to 4♦ — but that wouldn't be everyone's choice.

"**If North now jumps to 4♥, what call would South make?** (Pass.) With only 14 high-card points, South will probably settle for game. It might be dangerous to move beyond the four level, since there might be two club losers and another loser somewhere.

"**If the hearts and diamonds divide reasonably, how many tricks will North–South take?** (13.) If the hearts divide 3–2, there are five tricks in hearts. If the diamonds divide no worse than 3–1, there are five tricks in diamonds. Together with the ♠AK and the ♣A, that's all 13 tricks.

"It is possible that the partnership will stop at the game level when a grand slam is reasonable."

Summary

"In standard methods, there are many challenges for the partnership after a two-over-one response. Even though this is a forcing response, it doesn't commit the partnership to game. That can leave many sequences in which the partnership is unsure whether it belongs in partscore, game or slam."

Two-Over-One Game Forcing

Introduction

"One possible solution to the dilemma of handling two-over-one responses is for the partnership to discuss guidelines for each possible sequence that might occur. There's a simpler solution, however."

Instructions

"Start with the hands as they are.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K x		1♥	♠ A x
♥ Q x x	2♦	3♦	♥ A K x x x
♦ A Q x x x	3♥	3♠	♦ K x x x
♣ A x x	4♣	4NT	♣ x x
	5♥	(6♥)	

"**What is South's opening call?** (1♥.)

"**What is North's initial response?** (2♦.)

"**What is South's rebid?** (3♦.)

"**What bid would North like to make at his point to clarify the situation?** (3♥, forcing.) North would like to show heart support, without using up all of the bidding room below the game level. The ideal bid at this point would be a forcing 3♥ call. That leaves plenty of room for the partnership to explore for the best game or to move toward slam.

"Many partnerships simplify this whole situation through the following agreement:

- A two-over-one response by an unpassed hand is forcing to game.

"Playing two-over-one game forcing, North can bid 3♥ at this point without any worry about being passed. The initial 2♦ response already committed the partnership to the game level. Any bid below game, therefore, must be forcing.

"**Over North's 3♥ bid, what call could South make?** (3♠.) South didn't promise anything extra with the raise to 3♦, so South can now show a top-of-the-line hand for either diamonds or hearts by cuebidding 3♠, showing interest in reaching slam.

"**If South cuebids 3♠, what call might North make?** (4♣.) Now North can confirm interest in slam by cuebidding 4♣, showing first-round control of clubs.

"Notice that the partnership is still below the game level, but both partners have had an opportunity to express interest in reaching a slam. After this start, the partnership should reach an excellent 6♥ contract or even a grand slam."

There's no need to go into the detailed auction to reach a small or grand slam. The partnership would probably need to use some form of Key Card Blackwood to consider the grand slam. A grand slam isn't necessarily a good contract on these combined hands, since it requires a 3–2 division of the missing hearts.

"**Why is the agreement that two-over-one is game forcing only if responder did not pass originally?** (Responder can't have enough to insist upon game.) By passing originally, responder has shown fewer than 12 or 13 points. Unless responder's hand can be revalued after partner's opening bid, it is unlikely that responder can have enough to force the partnership to game.

"Even if responder's hand does revalue upward, opener could have a light opening in third or fourth position. That is why most partnerships use conventions such as Drury after third- and fourth-position openings, in place of two-over-one game forcing.

"Change the South hand.
"In spades: take away the ace and add the queen.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add a low card.
"In clubs: take away two low cards and add the king and the jack.

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ Q x x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ A x x

NORTH	SOUTH
	1♥
2♦	3♦
3♥	4♥
Pass	

SOUTH
♠ Q x
♥ K x x x x
♦ K x x x
♣ K J

"**What would South bid?** (1♥.) With 12 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card suit, South would open 1♥.

"**What would North respond?** (2♦.)

"**What would South rebid?** (3♦.) South would raise North's suit.

"**What would North call next?** (3♥.) North can now show three-card heart support by bidding 3♥.

"**May South pass?** (No.) Even with a minimum opening bid, South may not pass if the partnership is playing two-over-one game forcing. North's 2♦ response committed the partnership to the game level.

"**What call would South make?** (4♥.) With a minimum opening bid, South would settle for game in the eight-card major-suit fit by bidding 4♥.

"**What call would North make after South's 4♥ bid?** (Pass.) North would have no reason to bid again. South has shown a minimum opening bid and expressed no interest in slam. North would pass and settle for game.

"**Is 4♥ a good spot?** (Yes.) 4♥ is the best contract for North–South. 3NT is unlikely to make if the opponents lead spades. 5♦ is also unlikely to make. Declarer has to lose the ♠A and may also lose two heart tricks, unless the missing hearts lie very favorably. Even 4♥ isn't 100% secure. If the hearts divide badly, declarer could lose three heart tricks and the ♠A. However, 4♥ is certainly where the partnership would like to be."

Summary

"Two-over-one game forcing can make it easier to explore for the best game contract or to look for slam. Once the initial two-over-one response has been made, any bid below game is forcing. Neither partner needs to jump to game for fear of being passed in a partscore contract. It can make the partnership more comfortable because there is no longer any doubt about whether a bid is forcing or invitational."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 1 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise One — Two-Over-One Game Forcing

West opens the bidding 1♥. What does East respond with each of the following hands?

1) ♠ K 10 6
♥ J 6
♦ Q 10 8 5 3
♣ Q 9 5

2) ♠ Q J 7 6 3
♥ 9 3
♦ K 7
♣ A Q J 2

3) ♠ 5 2
♥ Q 9 4
♦ 7 6 3
♣ A J 8 6 2

4) ♠ J 7 2
♥ 4
♦ A K J 7 4
♣ Q 10 8 4

5) ♠ K 9 8 5
♥ 10 6
♦ A K J 6 3
♣ K 5

6) ♠ 10 3
♥ 6
♦ A J 5 3
♣ K J 10 6 3 2

Exercise One *Answer* — Two-Over-One Game Forcing

1) 1NT. This is the same bid East would make whether or not the partnership plays two-over-one. The only difference is that East knows West will bid again since the 1NT response is forcing. That will be too bad if 1NT is the best possible contract on this deal, but it's the price that must be paid for using this convention.

2) 1♠. No reason for East not to make a natural response. 1♠ is forcing.

3) 2♥. Playing five-card majors, East should raise with three-card support.

4) 1NT. Playing natural methods, East could respond 2♦. Playing two-over-one, a response of 2♦ would be forcing to game. East isn't quite strong enough for that and must settle for 1NT. The good news is that West will bid again, giving East an opportunity to further describe the hand.

5) 2♦. East has enough to commit the partnership to game and makes a natural response, bidding the longest suit first.

6) 1NT. Unless the partnership is playing that a response of 2♣ followed by 3♣ is non forcing, East has to make a forcing 1NT response. East will have an opportunity to show the club suit after West makes a rebid.

➥ "Let's do Exercise 2 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Two — Opener's Rebids

What call does West make with the following hands after the auction goes as shown?

1) ♠ A K J 8 7 3
♥ 10 5
♦ Q J 9
♣ J 8

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
?			

2) ♠ K J 8 6 2
♥ A Q 8 3
♦ 9 4
♣ Q 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
?			

3) ♠ 8 6
♥ K Q 10 8 6 2
♦ 9 4
♣ A K 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

4) ♠ K 10 8 7 4
♥ J 8 3
♦ K 4
♣ A 7 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	1♠	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

Exercise Two *Answer* — Opener's Rebids

1) 4♠. East's 2♥ response committed the partnership to at least game. East's 3♠ bid is forcing, leaving room to explore slam possibilities. With nothing to add to the conversation, West settles for 4♠.

2) 3NT. The 2NT bid is forcing once East started with a two-over-one. West has shown a five-card spade suit and a four-card heart suit. If East doesn't want to support either of these suits, notrump looks like the spot.

3) 4♣. After the 2♦ response, the partnership is committed to at least game. East's 3♥ bid shows interest in a slam. With a minimum hand and heart support, East could have jumped to 4♥. West should cooperate with East by cuebidding 4♣ (see Chapter 6). The first-round control of clubs may be what East needs to know about before bidding a slam.

4) Pass. Since East passed originally, the 2♥ response is not forcing. With a light opening bid, there's no need for West to bid again. Hearts should be a satisfactory trump suit.

5) Pass. After the interference, East's 2♣ bid is not game forcing. The 3♣ bid is only invitational so, with nothing else to say, West should stop in partscore.

Principle of Fast Arrival

Introduction

"Although two-over-one game forcing can leave the partnership more room to search for the best contract, once you know where the partnership belongs, there's no advantage to any further exploration."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away the ace and add the jack.

"Change the South hand.
"In hearts: add the ace.
"In diamonds: take away the king.

NORTH	NORTH	SOUTH	SOUTH
♠ K x		1♥	♠ Q x
♥ Q x x	2♦	2♥	♥ A K x x x x
♦ Q J x x x	4♥	Pass	♦ x x x
♣ A x x			♣ K J

"**What would South open?** (1♥.) With 13 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, South would start with 1♥.

"**What would North respond?** (2♦.) With 12 high-card points plus 1 length point for the five-card diamond suit, North has enough to respond 2♦ and commit the partnership to the game level. North shouldn't raise hearts right away with only three-card support.

"**What is South's rebid?** (2♥.) Although South has three-card support for diamonds, South will probably give priority to showing the sixth heart by rebidding 2♥.

"**After South's 2♥ rebid, what would be North's next call?** (4♥.) North could show heart support at this point by bidding 3♥, which would be forcing. There's no need, however, for North to conserve any bidding room. North knows the partnership belongs in game in hearts. With a minimum for the game-forcing 2♦ response, North has no interest in looking for a possible slam contract. North can simply jump to 4♥.

"The advantage of jumping to 4♥ is twofold. It tells partner that North isn't interested in going beyond game. It also gives no additional information to the opponents. With nothing to guide them, the opponents might lead a club, for example, making declarer's task easy, since one of South's diamond losers can then be discarded on an extra club winner in dummy.

"If North were to bid only 3♥, South might make a move toward slam, since South holds a very good hand for the minimum-sounding 2♥ rebid. South might show some values in clubs, for example. The defenders may then get off to the best lead against 4♥, perhaps even getting a diamond ruff to defeat the contract. Worse, even if North stops at 4♥, South might consider taking another bid, which would get the partnership too high.

"North's jump to 4♥ in this situation — when 3♥ was available as a forcing bid — is sometimes referred to as the principle of fast arrival. Jumping directly to game shows no interest in looking for any other contract. Going slowly, would show interest in exploring other possibilities — perhaps getting to slam or doubt about whether hearts is the best denomination."

Summary

"As usual, simple is often best. Once you know where the partnership belongs, get there as quickly as possible. If you make extraneous bids along the way, there's always the chance that partner will misunderstand where you are heading and get the partnership to the wrong spot. Extra bids also give the opponents additional information and additional opportunities to enter the bidding — with a lead-directing double, for example.

"The principle of fast arrival is that the faster the final contract is reached, the weaker the hand that places the contract. Conversely, the slower the approach, the stronger the suggestion that a higher contract may be appropriate."

With an experienced group you could point out that the concept of fast arrival should be discussed carefully with partner. Not all jumps to game are signoffs, showing a weak hand. In some sequences, jumps carry very specific information. Such picture bids are beyond the scope of this lesson series, however.

➥ "Let's do Exercise 3 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Three — Principle of Fast Arrival

What does East call with each of the following hands after the auction goes as shown?

1)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	?	

♠ A 4
♥ Q 7 5
♦ A K J 9 7 5
♣ 6 4

2)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♠	Pass	?	

♠ K Q 7
♥ 8 4 3
♦ 10 3
♣ A Q J 8 5

3)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	Pass	?	

♠ K 2
♥ 7 3
♦ K Q 8 3
♣ A J 9 7 5

4)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	?	

♠ K Q 10
♥ 3
♦ Q J 10 5
♣ K Q 9 7 3

5)

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♥	Pass	?	

♠ 9 3
♥ A J 6
♦ K Q 3
♣ A K 9 8 5

Exercise Three *Answer* — Principle of Fast Arrival

1) 3♥. The 2♦ response by East committed the partnership to at least game. There still could be a slam, if West has a good heart suit and first- or second-round control of clubs. East should raise to the three level to leave room to explore. West may be able to cuebid 4♣. If not, East can settle for game.

2) 4♠. If West has a minimum opening bid, East has no interest in going beyond game. By jumping to game, East uses the principle of fast arrival to send that message to West.

3) 3♦. East can't be certain that the best contract is 5♦. The partnership might still belong in 3NT, 4♥ — if West has six of them — or even 6♦. East should raise to 3♦, and see what partner has to say next.

4) 3NT. Without a fit in West's suit and strength in all of the other suits, East jumps to game in notrump. By using the principle of fast arrival, West gets the message that East doesn't have much interest in any other contract. By bidding 2NT first and then 3NT, East would be indicating interest in other contracts.

5) 2NT. No need to jump to 3NT when there is the possibility of bigger things. East leaves room for West to make a further descriptive bid. West might rebid 3♥, for example, showing a five-card suit, and slam might be possible.

Handling Interference

Introduction

"There are exceptions to a two-over-one response being game forcing. One exception has been discussed already. A two-over-one response by a passed hand is not forcing to game. Another exception occurs when the opponents interfere."

Instructions

"Pick up all of the cards and sort them into suits. Put out the following hand in front of North.

"In spades: three low cards.
"In hearts: two low cards.
"In diamonds: the ace, the queen, the jack and three low cards.
"In clubs: the king and a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ x x
♦ A Q J x x x
♣ K x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♣
1♠	2♦		

"**Suppose South opens 1♣, and West passes. What call does North make?** (1♦.) No problem. North would show the diamond suit at the one level. A one-level response is forcing, but is not forcing to game.

"**Suppose South opens 1♣, and West overcalls 1♠? What call does North make?** (Pass/2♦.) West's overcall creates a challenge for North. North doesn't have enough strength to commit the partnership to the game level. With a doubleton heart, North doesn't have the right type of hand to make a negative double. If South were to bid hearts, the auction might get out of control.

"North could pass. South will get another opportunity to bid, holding more than a minimum opening. Passing is dangerous, however. East might raise spades to the two level or higher, and North–South may now have difficulty getting back into the auction. Even if South does make another bid, North will have difficulty catching up and showing this amount of strength.

"To get around this dilemma, a two-level response in a new suit after an overcall is not treated as forcing to game. It is forcing for one round. Responder may have enough to force to game, but the partnership is not committed to game. In effect, it is as though the partnership has returned to standard methods where two-over-one responses are not game forcing. North can make the convenient response of 2♦ without being concerned about getting the partnership too high. If South makes a minimum rebid such as 2NT or 3♣, North can pass or make a non-forcing rebid of 3♦.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the king.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ K x
♦ A Q J x x x
♣ K x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	2♦		

"**Suppose South deals and opens 1♥. West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make?** (2♦.) With 13 high-card points and a six-card diamond suit, North has more than enough to respond 2♦, which is forcing for one round.

"**Suppose East passes, and South rebids 2♥. West passes. Now what call does North make?** (4♥.) North must be careful to get the partnership to a game contract. Because of West's interference, the 2♦ response is not forcing to game. South might pass, if North raises to only 3♥ or rebids 3♦. Instead, South should put the partnership in game by jumping to 4♥. South probably has a six-card heart suit for the 2♥ rebid.

"Although it doesn't apply on this hand, North does have a forcing bid available. A cuebid of the opponent's suit, 2♠. This is one of the reasons that a new suit response at the two level isn't game forcing after an overcall. A cuebid of the opponent's suit is always available to show a game-forcing hand at some point in the auction. When the opponents don't interfere, there is no cuebid available, so the two-over-one game forcing concept is more useful.

"Let's consider the auction from the other side of the table, when North is the opening bidder.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the king and add the jack.

NORTH
♠ x x x
♥ J x
♦ A Q J x x x
♣ K x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♦	1♠	2♥
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**What would North bid?** (1♦.) North has 11 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, enough for an opening bid of 1♦.

"**Suppose East overcalls 1♠, and South responds 2♥. West passes. What call does North make?** (3♦.) South's 2♥ bid is forcing, so North must bid something. North can show a minimum hand by rebidding the diamond suit at the cheapest available level, 3♦.

"**East passes, and South now bids 3♥. West passes. What call does North make?** (Pass.) Because of East's interference, South's 2♥ bid followed by a 3♥ rebid isn't forcing. With a minimum opening bid, North can pass, leaving the partnership in partscore.

"Let's change the scenario.

"**Suppose North opens the bidding 1♦, and East passes. South responds 2♣, and West overcalls 2♠. Does North have to bid?** (No.) Although South's 2♣ response is forcing, North doesn't have to bid when West overcalls. South will get another opportunity to bid, so passing doesn't risk ending the auction.

"North could rebid 3♦, but with a minimum opening bid, North should probably pass at this point.

"**Suppose North does pass, East passes and South rebids 3♣. West passes. Can North pass?** (No.) If East had overcalled, South's 2♣ bid would not be game forcing. When East passed, however, South's 2♣ response committed the partnership to the game level. West's overcall hasn't changed that. South's 3♣ rebid is forcing, since the partnership has not yet reached the game level. North can't pass.

"**What call does North make?** (3♦.) North can now rebid the diamond suit. Since North passed West's 2♠ overcall, North is simply showing a minimum opening bid with five or more diamonds. North's 3♦ bid is also forcing, since game has not yet been reached. The next move will be up to South."

Summary

"When you open the bidding in a suit at the one level, partner's two-level response in a new suit is forcing to game, unless partner is a passed hand or unless your left-hand opponent has overcalled. If your left-hand opponent passes, partner's two-level response is game forcing, even if your right-hand opponent interferes."

1NT Forcing

Introduction

"Playing two-over-one game forcing appears to make the partnership's bidding much easier. There's no longer any question of whether partner's bid is invitational or forcing after a two-over-one response. As with all conventions, however, there is a price to pay. You can't play two-over-one game forcing without adding another conventional agreement."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In hearts: add the queen.
"In diamonds: take away the ace.
"In clubs: add the jack.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ Q J x
♦ Q J x x x
♣ K J x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT		

"**Suppose South deals and opens the bidding 1♠. West passes. What call does North make?** (1NT.) Playing two-over-one game forcing, North doesn't have enough to respond 2♦. With 10 high-card points plus 1 length point, North doesn't have enough to commit the partnership to game. South might have as few as 12 or 13 points.

"Instead, North's only option is to start with a response of 1NT. Playing two-over-one game forcing, the response of 1NT has to cover a much greater range than the standard 6 to 9 or 6 to 10 points.

"This can make it very awkward for the partnership to find its best contract, especially when the opening bid is a major suit. If the opening bid is 1♥, responder's only options with fewer than 13 points are to respond 1♠ or 1NT, unless responder has the right type of hand to make an immediate raise of opener's suit. After a 1♠ opening bid, responder has no option other than to raise or bid 1NT.

"If responder can have 11 or 12 points for a 1NT response, opener can't be sure that the partnership doesn't belong in game, even when holding a minimum-strength hand of 14 or 15 points.

"To circumvent this problem, partnerships that use two-over-one as a game force usually have the following agreement:

- Unless responder passed originally, a response of 1NT to an opening bid of 1♥ or 1♠ is forcing for one round.

"This is referred to as 1NT forcing. On most hands, it will actually be advantageous to have this agreement instead of the standard agreement that a 1NT response is non forcing.

"**For example, suppose South's opening bid is 1♥. What would North respond?** (1NT.) With 10 high-card points plus 1 point for the doubleton spade, North has enough strength for a limit raise, but only three-card support. North can't make an immediate jump raise to 3♥. Playing standard methods, North could respond 2♦, planning to show heart support at the next opportunity.

"Playing two-over-one game forcing, North can't respond 2♦, since that would commit the partnership to game. Instead, North must start with a 1NT response.

"Now it is advantageous that the 1NT response is forcing. South must take another bid, giving North an opportunity to describe the hand.

"**Suppose South rebids 2♥. What call would North make?** (3♥.) North can now show an invitational strength hand, with fewer than four-card support, by raising to 3♥.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, North responds 1NT and South rebids 2♣. What call does North make?** (3♥.) North can show an invitational hand with three-card support by jumping to 3♥. This is a jump preference. A rebid of only 2♥ by North would be a simple preference, showing a minimum hand with 6 to 9 points — and only two-card support, because North didn't raise right away.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add four low cards.
"In diamonds: take away the queen and the jack.
"In clubs: take away the jack and a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ Q J x x x x x
♦ x x x
♣ K

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥		

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1♠. What call does North make?** (1NT.) With only 6 high-card points plus 3 points for the seven-card suit, North would respond 1NT, whether using standard methods or 1NT forcing.

"Playing standard methods, the 1NT response might end the auction if opener passes. 1NT is unlikely to be a good contract. Playing 1NT forcing, North will get another chance to bid.

"**Suppose South rebids 2♣ after the forcing 1NT. What call will North make?** (2♥.) Now North can show the heart suit by bidding 2♥. South will know that North has a long heart suit with too little strength to show it immediately at the two level. The partnership is likely to reach its best contract, thanks to the forcing 1NT response.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away three low cards.
"In clubs: add the queen and two low cards.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ Q J x x
♦ x x x
♣ K Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**South opens the bidding 1♠. What response does North make?** (1NT.) With 8 high-card points and only two spades, North would respond 1NT. This is the same response North would make playing standard methods.

"1NT might be the best contract for North–South. South can't pass, however, since the 1NT response is forcing.

"**Suppose South rebids 2♠. What call does North make?** (Pass.) When South rebids the spade suit, North can pass, leaving the partnership in partscore. This is exactly what North would do playing standard methods, if South had rebid 2♠ after a non-forcing 1NT response. Not much difference."

At this point, don't discuss what North would do if South rebid 2♦, instead of 2♠. After the next section, it will become much clearer why North should give preference back to 2♠.

"The 1NT response is only forcing if the opening bid is 1♥ or 1♠. That's because responder will usually have other options when the opening bid is a minor.

"**Suppose South's opening bid is 1♦. What would North respond?** (1♥.) South would show a four-card major suit at the one level by responding 1♥.

"**Suppose South now rebids 1NT. What call would North make?** (Pass.) South is showing a minimum balanced hand, and North would pass. The partnership can stop in 1NT, when the opening bid is a minor suit.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the king.
"In hearts: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ Q J x
♦ x x x
♣ K Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♦
Pass	1NT?		

"**Suppose South opens the bidding 1♦. What call does North make?** (1NT/2NT.) This is a little awkward playing two-over-one game forcing, because North isn't strong enough to respond 2♣, committing the partnership to game.

"If the partnership would treat a 2NT response as forcing, showing a balanced hand of 13 or more points, then North's only option is to respond 1NT. With 11 high-card points, there's some danger that the partnership will miss a game. Opener will pass with a minimum hand containing as many as 15 or 16 points.

"To get around this, many partnerships play a jump response to 2NT over an opening bid of 1♣ or 1♦ as invitational, showing 11 or 12 points. This works well in concert with two-over-one game forcing."

Summary

"When the partnership plays two-over-one game forcing, it usually also plays 1NT forcing in response to an opening major suit bid. 1NT is non forcing in response to a minor-suit opening bid or when responder is a passed hand."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 4 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Four — 1NT Forcing

What does West respond with each of the following hands, when East opens the bidding 1♥ and South passes?

1) ♠ K J 4
♥ 9 3
♦ A J 10 7
♣ Q 10 6 3

2) ♠ 10 8 3
♥ 6
♦ K J 8 7 6 2
♣ K 9 4

3) ♠ J 6 2
♥ A 10 4
♦ J 4 3
♣ K Q 6 2

Exercise Four *Answer* — 1NT Forcing

1) 1NT. Playing standard methods, West would be too strong for 1NT. Playing two-over-one, a 1NT response is forcing, so West will have an opportunity to show additional strength on the rebid.

2) 1NT. The forcing 1NT response doesn't promise a balanced hand.

3) 1NT. West has enough strength for a limit raise in hearts but only three-card support. West should start with a forcing 1NT response, planning to bid 3♥ at the next opportunity.

Opener's Rebid after 1NT Forcing

Introduction

"After an opening major-suit bid, a response of 1NT is forcing. Finding a rebid is usually straightforward for opener, although there can be awkward situations."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add the king and a low card.
"In diamonds: take away two low cards.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ K Q J x x
♦ x
♣ K Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣		

"**What would North open?** (1♥.) North would open the bidding in the five-card major suit, 1♥.

"**Suppose South responds with a forcing 1NT. What is North's rebid?** (2♣.) Having already shown the major suit, North can show a second suit by bidding 2♣. This is the same call North would make even if the 1NT response were non forcing, since North has an unbalanced hand.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: add a low card.
"In clubs: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ K Q J x x x
♦ x
♣ K x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥		

"**What would North open?** (1♥.) With 12 high-card points and a six-card suit, North would open 1♥.

"**Suppose South responds 1NT. What is North's rebid?** (2♥.) With an unbalanced hand and a six-card suit, North would rebid the hearts at the cheapest available level to show a minimum-strength opening bid. Again, this is the same rebid North would make if the 1NT response were non forcing.

"Change the North hand.
"In clubs: take away a low card and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ K Q J x x x
♦ x
♣ A K x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	3♥		

"**What would North open?** (1♥.)

"**If South responds 1NT, what call does North make?** (3♥.) With 16 high-card points plus 2 points for the six-card suit, North has a medium-strength hand which can be shown by jumping to 3♥. The forcing 1NT response hasn't changed the standard rebid with this hand.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the jack.
"In diamonds: add the king.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ K Q x x x
♦ K x
♣ A K x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT		

"**What would North open?** (1♥.) With 18 high-card points and a five-card suit, North is too strong to open 1NT. Instead, North starts with 1♥.

"**Over South's forcing 1NT response, what call does North make?** (2NT.) North would raise the 1NT response to 2NT, inviting game. This is the usual way to show a balanced hand of 18 or 19 points.

"So far, nothing has changed due to the forcing 1NT response.

"Change the North hand.
"In clubs: take away the ace and the king and add the jack and a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x
♥ K Q x x x
♦ K x
♣ J x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣		

"**What would North open?** (1♥.) With 12 high-card points and a five-card suit, North would open 1♥.

"**What call does North make if South responds 1NT?** (2♣.) Playing standard methods, North would pass the 1NT response, holding a minimum balanced hand. When the 1NT response is forcing, North has to take a second bid. Having already shown a five-card heart suit, North will have to manufacture a rebid on a three-card suit by bidding 2♣.

"Treat the clubs as a four-card suit. Responder will be aware that you might occasionally have to bid a three-card minor suit in this situation, when you don't have a six-card major suit to rebid.

"North can't bid 2NT. As the previous example showed, a raise to 2NT is invitational, showing 18 or 19 points.

"**Suppose North rebids 2♣, and South now raises to 3♣. What call does North make?** (Pass.) Don't panic. South is making an invitational raise, showing 11 or 12 points and club support. With a minimum opening bid, you should pass the invitation. South figures to have at least five clubs to raise in this position. South is aware that you might have to bid a three-card suit.

"**Suppose North opens 1♥, South responds 1NT and North rebids 2♣. South now bids 2♦. What call does North make?** (Pass.) South is showing a hand with five or more diamonds that was too weak to respond 2♦. With a minimum hand, North should pass and leave the partnership in partscore. South could have a very weak hand with six or seven diamonds.

"**Suppose North opens 1♥, South bids 1NT and North bids 2♣. South now jumps to 3♥. What call does North make?** (Pass.) South's jump preference to 3♥ shows an invitational hand of 11 or 12 points with three-card support. South would have made an immediate limit raise with four-card support. With a minimum opening bid, decline the invitation by passing.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card.
"In diamonds: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x
♥ K Q x x x
♦ K x x
♣ Q x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣		

"**What is North's opening bid?** (1♥.)

"**What does North rebid if South responds 1NT?** (2♣.) With a choice between three-card minor suits, the standard approach is to bid 2♣. This is similar to opening the bidding with 1♣, when you have a choice between opening 1♣ or 1♦ on a three-card suit.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add two low cards.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ K x x x
♥ K Q x x x
♦ K x
♣ Q x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♥	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♥		

"**What is North's opening bid?** (1♥.)

"**What is North's rebid if South responds with a forcing 1NT?** (2♥.) This is very awkward. South didn't raise hearts right away. South also has fewer than four spades; otherwise South would have responded 1♠. North doesn't have a satisfactory call:

- You can't afford to bid 2♠, because that would be a reverse, showing at least a medium-strength hand, and it would be forcing for one round.
- You can't bid 2NT, since that would show 18 or 19 points.
- Manufacturing a bid on a two-card suit is also unappealing. Partner will assume you have at least a three-card suit, if you bid 2♣ or 2♦.

"Since you can't pass, your only option is to rebid 2♥. That will sound to partner as though you have a six-card suit, but you don't have a better choice. This is a time when you would not be happy to be playing 1NT forcing.

"**Would it make any difference if South had passed originally?** (Yes.) If South is a passed hand, the 1NT response is not forcing. You could simply pass and get out of this awkward rebid problem."

Summary

"Unless responder is a passed hand, you must find a rebid after opening 1♥ or 1♠ and hearing a Forcing 1NT response from partner. Most of the time, you can make your standard rebid, as if the 1NT response were non forcing. The only exception is when you have a minimum hand with which you would pass a standard 1NT response. Since you must bid something, you may have to manufacture a bid on a three-card minor suit, or simply rebid your five-card major suit."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 5 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Five — Opener's Rebid after 1NT Forcing

What does West rebid with the following hands after the auction shown?

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
?			

1) ♠ Q J 9 7 5 3
♥ J 4
♦ A 7 3
♣ K J

2) ♠ K Q 9 8 3
♥ 4
♦ A J 8 4 2
♣ Q 3

3) ♠ A 10 8 7 3
♥ Q 5
♦ K 7 2
♣ A 9 3

4) ♠ A Q J 8 3
♥ K J 7
♦ A J 6
♣ Q 4

5) ♠ A Q J 7 4
♥ A 9 4
♦ 10 7 3
♣ J 5

6) ♠ A K Q 9 6
♥ 8
♦ K 6 4
♣ A K 10 3

Exercise Five *Answer* — Opener's Rebid after 1NT Forcing

1) 2♠. West has an opportunity to show the sixth spade. This is the same rebid West would make if 1NT were not a forcing response.

2) 2♦. West should make a natural rebid, showing the second suit.

3) 2♣. If the 1NT response were not forcing, West could pass. Using this convention, however, West has to manufacture a rebid. With no four-card suit, West bids 2♣ on the three-card suit. West can't raise to 2NT, since East might have a very weak hand.

4) 2NT. With a balanced hand too strong to open 1NT, West raises to 2NT. That bid shows this type of hand.

5) 2♦. Ugly, but West doesn't want to rebid 2♠ with only a five-card suit or bid 2♣ with a doubleton. 2♦ is the lesser of evils.

6) 3♣. A response of 2♣ could be passed. Here West has enough to commit the partnership to game by making a jump shift.

Responder's Rebid after 1NT Forcing

Introduction

"The forcing 1NT response covers a wide range of hands. Responder has to be prepared to describe the hand after hearing opener's rebid."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the king and two low cards.
"In hearts: take away the king.
"In diamonds: add two low cards.
"In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ Q x x x
♦ K x x x
♣ Q x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"**South opens the bidding 1♠. What is North's response?** (1NT.) With 7 high-card points and no support for spades, North starts with a forcing 1NT response.

"**South rebids 2♣. What call does North make?** (Pass.) Although the 1NT response was forcing, opener's 2♣ rebid is not. Responder isn't required to bid again unless opener makes a reverse or a jump shift. With a clear preference for clubs, North should pass.

"It's possible that South has only a three-card club suit, but North should not be concerned about that. It's more likely that South has four or five clubs. Besides, if South has chosen to bid a three-card club suit, it must be because South has only a five-card spade suit and no four-card suit. The 4–3 fit in clubs should be better than a 5–1 fit in spades.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the queen.
"In clubs: take away the queen.

NORTH
♠ Q x
♥ Q x x x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"**South opens the bidding 1♠. What is North's response?** (1NT.) With only a doubleton spade, North would respond with a forcing 1NT.

"**South rebids 2♣. What call does North make?** (2♠.) With three clubs and only two spades, it would appear that North prefers clubs to spades. Even playing standard methods, however, there are good reasons for returning to 2♠ instead of passing 2♣:

- South is known to have a five-card spade suit and is likely to have only a four-card club suit. Returning to 2♠ will put the partnership in the 5–2 fit, which should play as well, or better, than the 4–3 fit.
- Bidding 2♠ is more flexible than passing 2♣, since it gives opener another opportunity to bid. Opener could have a medium-strength hand of 16 to 18 points — just short of a jump shift. Bidding 2♠ will allow opener to show extra strength, perhaps getting the partnership to a close game.
- Opener will know that responder has only a doubleton spade. With three-card support, responder would have raised right away. If opener has five spades and five clubs, opener may bid 3♣, showing the full shape of the hand and allowing the partnership to play in its eight-card fit.
- A partscore in a major suit will score better than a partscore in a minor suit, if the same number of tricks can be taken in either strain —or sometimes even when an extra trick can be taken in the minor suit.

"When playing forcing 1NT, there is an extra incentive for returning to the major suit when holding only three-card support for the minor suit. Responder may have been forced to bid a three-card minor suit, and you don't want the partnership playing in a 3–3 fit.

"Returning to the doubleton spade with three-card support for the minor suit is referred to as giving false preference. Experienced players sometimes give false preference with four-card support for the minor suit and two-card support for the major suit.

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away a low card and add the ace.

NORTH
♠ Q x
♥ A Q x x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT		

"**South opens 1♠. What call does North make?** (1NT.) With 11 high-card points, North isn't strong enough to respond in a new suit at the two level since that would be game forcing. Instead, North settles for a forcing 1NT response.

"**Over the 1NT response, South rebids 2♣. What call does North make?** (2NT.) By rebidding 2NT, North is showing 11 or 12 points, inviting opener to bid game with a little more than a bare minimum. It is not a weak bid. North is showing a hand that wasn't quite strong enough for a two-over-one response with some length and strength in the unbid suits.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.

NORTH
♠ Q x x
♥ A Q x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♠		

"**South opens the bidding 1♠. What does North respond?** (1NT.) With 11 high-card points, North isn't strong enough to make a game-forcing two-over-one response. With only three-card support, North can't make an immediate limit raise to 3♠. Instead, North starts with a forcing 1NT response.

"**Over the 1NT response, South rebids 2♣. What call does North make?** (3♠.) North is too strong for a simple preference back to 2♠, which would show a minimum response and only a doubleton spade. Instead, North shows a limit raise with 3♠.

"This sequence shows a limit raise of partner's major with only three-card support. South can pass or continue to game.

"**Suppose South opened 1♥ instead of 1♠. How would North plan to respond?** (Similar manner.) North would make a similar plan to show the strength for a limit raise with three-card support. North would start with 1NT, planning to bid 3♥ at the next opportunity.

"If South rebids 2♣, for example, North would give jump preference to 3♥. If South were to rebid 2♥, North would raise to 3♥.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, North responds 1NT and South rebids 2♦. What call does North make?** (3♥.) Despite the four-card support for diamonds, North should follow through with the original plan and give jump preference to 3♥. It's more likely that the partnership can make game in the major suit than the minor suit.

"This is another example of false preference. North could make an invitational raise to 3♦, but inviting game in hearts is the more practical choice.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the queen and a low card.
"In hearts: take away the ace and add four low cards.
"In clubs: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ x
♥ Q x x x x x
♦ K x x x
♣ x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♥		

"**South opens 1♠. What is North's response?** (1NT.) North has 5 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit. That's not enough for a two-over-one response, so North would start by bidding 1NT.

"**Over North's 1NT response, South rebids 2♣. What call does North make?** (2♥.) Now North can afford to bid 2♥. This shows a five-card or longer heart suit with a hand too weak to respond 2♥ over 1♠. It also implies that North doesn't care much for either spades or clubs. South will usually pass and leave North to play partscore in hearts, unless South has exceptional distribution or extra strength.

"**Suppose South opens 1♠, North responds 1NT and South rebids 2♦, What call does North make?** (Pass.) Having found a fit in diamonds, North should pass. There's no need to look for a fit in hearts. South has shown at least five spades and four diamonds, so there's not much room left for hearts. South could have a singleton or void in hearts.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add a low card.
"In hearts: take away two low cards and add the ace and the jack.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ A Q J x x x
♦ K x x
♣ x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	3♥		

"**Suppose South opens 1♠. What does North respond?** (1NT.) With 10 high-card points plus 2 length points for the six-card suit, North doesn't have quite enough for a game-forcing two-over-one response. Instead North starts with a forcing 1NT.

"**Over North's 1NT, South rebids 2♣. What call does North make?** (3♥.) A rebid of 2♥ would show a weak hand with five or more hearts. Instead, North should jump to 3♥, showing a good six-card or longer suit and a hand of invitational strength —just under the strength for a two-over-one response.

"South can pass the jump to 3♥ with a minimum opening, since South knows North wasn't quite strong enough to bid 2♥ over the 1♠ opening. With a little extra, however, South can continue to game.

"**Would the auction go any differently if North passed originally, and South opened 1♠?** (Yes.) As a passed hand, a 1NT response would not be forcing. Instead, North can simply respond 2♥. This is no longer game forcing, since North passed originally. In fact, it isn't even forcing. South could pass the 2♥ response."

Some students might point out that North might have opened with a weak 2♥ bid.

Summary

"The 1NT forcing response is only a one–round force. Opener must bid again, but responder doesn't have to bid again unless opener makes a forcing bid — a reverse or a jump shift. Since the 1NT response covers a wide range, however, responder should plan on making an invitational rebid with any hand of 11 or 12 points."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 6 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Six — Responder's Rebid after 1NT Forcing

What does East rebid with the following hands after the auction shown?

WEST	NORTH	**EAST**	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	?	

1) ♠ J 2
♥ 10 7 4 2
♦ K 7 3
♣ Q 9 4 2

2) ♠ 8
♥ A 6 4
♦ J 9 7 4
♣ J 10 7 6 3

3) ♠ 7 3
♥ K Q 10 9 5
♦ 7 5
♣ Q 8 6 2

4) ♠ 9 7
♥ K Q 9 8
♦ J 6 5
♣ A Q 7 5

5) ♠ K 10 5
♥ A J 5 3
♦ Q 8
♣ J 7 4 3

6) ♠ 8
♥ A Q J 9 8 5
♦ J 6 4
♣ Q 9 4

Exercise Six *Answer* — Responder's Rebid after 1NT Forcing

1) 2♠. West has at least five spades but could have only a three-card diamond suit. East should put the partnership in its seven-card fit. That also gives West another opportunity to bid with a medium-strength hand.
2) Pass. Even if West has only three diamonds, this looks like the best spot for the partnership.
3) 2♥. This shows a five-card or longer heart suit but not enough to respond 2♥ initially. West can pass or return to 2♠ with good spades and a singleton or void in hearts.
4) 2NT. This is an invitational bid, showing 11 or 12 points.
5) 3♠. This shows a limit raise in spades with only three-card support.
6) 3♥. This is highly invitational, but West can pass with a minimum and no fit. It shows the type of hand where East would respond 2♥, if the partnership weren't playing two-over-one game forcing.

Handling Interference (The Subsequent Auction)

Introduction

"As with most conventions, interference by the opponents can affect the 1NT forcing agreement. Let's look at some examples."

Instructions

"Change the North hand.
"In hearts: take away the ace, the queen and two low cards.
"In diamonds: add the queen and a low card.
"In clubs: add the queen and a low card.

NORTH
♠ x x
♥ J x
♦ K Q x x x
♣ Q x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	Double		

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, and West passes. What would North respond?** (1NT.) If West passes, North would make the usual 1NT forcing response, waiting to hear North's rebid before deciding what to do next.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, and West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make?** (Double.) West's overcall changes the situation. North can now make a negative double to describe this hand — support for the unbid suits and enough strength to compete at the two level.

"When the opponents interfere over partner's major-suit opening, responder is given additional options such as passing, making a negative double and cuebidding. This means that there is no need to use the 1NT forcing convention after interference. It reverts to a natural bid.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away a low card the add the ace and the jack.
"In diamonds: take away the king.
"In clubs: take away the queen and add a low card.

NORTH
♠ A J x
♥ J x
♦ Q x x x
♣ x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	1NT		

"**South opens 1♥, and West overcalls 1♠. What call does North make?** (1NT/Double.) North has a choice. With strength in the opponent's suit, North can make a natural, non-forcing, 1NT call. North could also make a negative double to show support for the unbid suits. It's a matter of judgment, but 1NT is probably the more practical call.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, and West makes a takeout double. What call does North make?** (1NT.) West's double removes the forcing 1NT convention. Instead, North can make a natural 1NT response, which South could pass with a minimum balanced hand.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: take away the ace.
"In diamonds: take away a low card.
"In clubs: add the ace and the queen.

NORTH
♠ J x
♥ J x
♦ Q x x
♣ A Q x x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
1♠	2♣		

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, and West passes. What call would North make?** (1NT.) North doesn't have quite enough to bid 2♣, which would be a game-forcing two-over-one response. Instead, North would start with a forcing 1NT response.

"**Suppose South opens 1♥, and West overcalls 1♠. What call would North make?** (2♣.) After the 1♠ overcall, a response of 1NT would be natural, showing 6 to 10 points and some strength in spades. The two-over-one game force, however, is also off after the overcall. North can respond 2♣. This is forcing, but not game forcing.

"Now let's look at things from opener's point of view.

"Change the North hand.
"In spades: add the ace and two low cards.
"In diamonds: add the ace and a low card.
"In clubs: take away the ace, the queen and three low cards.

NORTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ J x
♦ A Q x x x
♣ x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	1NT
2♣	2♦		

"**What would North open?** (1♠.) With 12 high-card points and two five-card suits, North would open in the higher-ranking suit, 1♠.

"**East passes, and South responds 1NT. If West passes, what call would North make?** (2♦.) North would show a second suit by bidding 2♦.

"**Suppose North opens 1♠, East passes and South responds 1NT. West now overcalls 2♣. What call does North make?** (2♦.) West's overcall doesn't prevent North from showing the second suit by bidding 2♦.

"**Suppose North opens 1♠, East passes and South responds 1NT. West now overcalls 2♥. What call does North make?** (Pass.) West's overcall has made it difficult for North to conveniently show the second suit. Bidding 3♦ with a minimum opening bid might get the partnership too high.

"South's 1NT response doesn't guarantee any more than 6 points, and South's high cards might be in the club suit. Although the 1NT response is forcing if West passes, North doesn't have to bid if West interferes. North should pass.

"Passing doesn't end the auction. South will still get another opportunity to bid. With a hand of invitational strength, South will take some action — perhaps reopening with a cooperative double. Now North will be able to bid the diamonds without promising any extra strength.

"**Suppose North opens 1♠, East passes, South responds 1NT, and West overcalls 2♦. What call does North make?** (Pass/Double.) West's interference relieves North from the obligation of bidding. North could pass. North, however, might prefer to make a penalty double in this situation — assuming that is the partnership agreement. Whether North chooses to make a penalty double may depend on the quality of the diamond suit.

"The standard agreement would be that North's double is for penalty in this auction. Some partnerships, however, would have the agreement that North's double would be for takeout — making it very unattractive on this hand!

"Change the North hand.
"In diamonds: take away two low cards.
"In clubs: add two low cards.

NORTH
♠ A J x x x
♥ J x
♦ A Q x
♣ x x x

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	1NT
2♣	Pass		

"**What would North open?** (1♠.) With 12 high-card points and a five-card suit, North would open 1♠.

"**East passes and South responds 1NT. If West passes, what call would North make?** (2♣/2♦.) Since the 1NT response is forcing and North doesn't have a six-card spade suit, North has to manufacture a bid in a three-card minor suit. With three cards in both minors, the standard practice is to bid 2♣ — although the disparity in the strength of the two suits might sway North to bid 2♦.

"**Suppose North opens 1♠, East passes, South responds 1NT, and West comes in with an overcall of 2♣. What call does North make?** (Pass.) West's overcall has removed North's obligation to bid after the forcing 1NT response. North doesn't have to manufacture a rebid on a three-card suit. Instead, North can pass. Bidding 2♦ in this situation would promise a four-card or longer diamond suit."

Summary

"Although the 1NT response to 1♥ or 1♠ is forcing if the opponents are silent, the situation changes if the opponents interfere. If there is a takeout double or an overcall over the opening bid, the 1NT response is natural, non forcing. If an opponent interferes after a forcing 1NT response, opener doesn't have to bid unless it is convenient to do so."

➥ "Let's do Exercise 7 in the student text to review what we have just discussed."

Exercise Seven — The Subsequent Auction

What call does West make with the following deals after the auction goes as shown?

1) ♠ K J 9 6 2
♥ 10 6
♦ A Q 8 3
♣ K 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♥	Pass
?			

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♥	Pass
?			

3) ♠ Q 3
♥ A Q 9 8 4
♦ K 8 2
♣ Q 9 5

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	1♠	1NT	Pass
?			

4) ♠ A J 10 8 3
♥ J 5
♦ K Q 9 4
♣ A 6

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	2NT	Pass
?			

5) ♠ K J 2
♥ A Q 10 7 5
♦ 9 3
♣ Q 5 4

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	3♣	Pass
?			

Exercise Seven *Answer* — The Subsequent Auction

1) Pass. East shows a weak hand with five or more hearts. Looks like this is the best partscore. East hasn't shown support for either of West's suits.

2) 4♥. East shows a hand of limit-raise strength with only three-card support for hearts. With more than a minimum, West accepts the invitation.

3) Pass. When the opponents interfere, the 1NT response is no longer forcing.

4) 3NT. East shows 11 or 12 points and strength in the unbid suits. West accepts the invitation.

5) Pass. East's raise is invitational, showing 11 or 12 points. With a minimum opening, West doesn't want to get any higher. West should not worry about the clubs; East knows West could have a three-card suit.

SAMPLE DEALS – LESSON 8*

General Guidelines for Teachers: The deals in this lesson focus on two-over-one game forcing and 1NT forcing situations. They include some examples of safety plays.

Bid and Play — Deal 1: Two-Over-One Game Forcing

Guidelines for Teachers: The first deal shows how two-over-one can make it easier for the partnership to reach a slam. To reach slam, the slam-bidding methods covered in earlier lessons can be used. There isn't much to the play except for declarer to avoid the trap of taking an unnecessary finesse before trumps have been drawn. To further illustrate the effect of two-over-one, a variation of the deal is given in which the objective is to avoid getting too high after a two-over-one response. Have the students make the changes in the hands and replay the deal.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal where we can see two-over-one game forcing in action."

Instructions

"North is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 1 — Dealer, North)

Dealer: North Vul: None	♠ A Q 10 8 6 5 ♥ 7 3 ♦ 10 2 ♣ A Q 3	
♠ 2 ♥ Q 10 5 2 ♦ K 7 6 5 3 ♣ J 10 9	N W E S	♠ J 9 3 ♥ J 9 8 6 4 ♦ 4 ♣ K 8 6 2
	♠ K 7 4 ♥ A K ♦ A Q J 9 8 ♣ 7 5 4	

* The explanation of each deal is the same as the material in the student text. Teachers should use this information as a starting point for an interactive discussion with the students covering the main points of the hand.

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	5NT
Pass	6♣	Pass	6♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"Playing two-over-one game forcing, South starts by responding 2♦ to North's 1♠ opening. When North rebids spades, South's raise to the three level is forcing and leaves room for investigating slam. Having agreed on the trump suit, North is able to show some values in clubs, and it's now safe for South to use the Blackwood convention to check for the number of aces and kings. When North shows two aces, but no kings, South bids the excellent slam.

"If North–South weren't playing two-over-one game forcing, South would have a dilemma after North's 2♠ rebid. A raise to 3♠ would be invitational and would risk missing a game contract. A jump to 4♠ would give up on the possibility of a slam contract. South can't conveniently show spade support in any other manner, and the partnership might get too high, if South raises to 5♠ as a slam try or uses the Blackwood convention."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 6♠ by North.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"East is on lead and might try leading the singleton diamond, hoping for a ruff. This isn't likely to be an effective lead, since South's 5NT bid is a grand slam try, presumably showing that North–South have all of the aces. It's unlikely that East can get a ruff before trumps are drawn. However, it may work if declarer is careless.

"Another choice would be to lead a heart, trying to establish a trick, if West has the ♥K and hoping to get another trick, such as the ♦K. A club lead also could be effective in establishing a trick, if partner holds the ♣Q, but it looks a little more dangerous once North has shown values in clubs."

Suggested Play

"Declarer has no losers in spades (unless East has all four trumps), no losers in hearts, one loser in diamonds and two losers in clubs. North's plan should be to draw trumps and then establish the diamond suit. The club losers can be discarded on the extra diamond winners in dummy. There's no need to take the club finesse.

"If the opening lead is a heart or a club, declarer has no difficulty. After winning the first trick, declarer can draw all of the trumps and try the diamond finesse. Even though the finesse loses to West's ♦K, the remaining diamonds in dummy are winners and can be used to discard all of North's losers.

"If East leads a diamond, North should be careful. A successful diamond finesse would result in an overtrick, but if the finesse loses, the defenders may be able to get a diamond ruff. North should play safely by winning the first trick with the ♦A, drawing trumps and then driving out the ♦K."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders can't defeat 6♠, if declarer is careful. If East leads the singleton diamond and declarer takes the finesse, West should return a diamond to give East a ruff.

"If South were declarer in 6NT, West could defeat the contract by leading the ♣J. South can't take 12 tricks in notrump without losing a trick to the ♦K, and then the defenders can take any established club winners."

Bid and Play — Variation of Deal 1 – Two-Over-One Game Forcing

Introduction

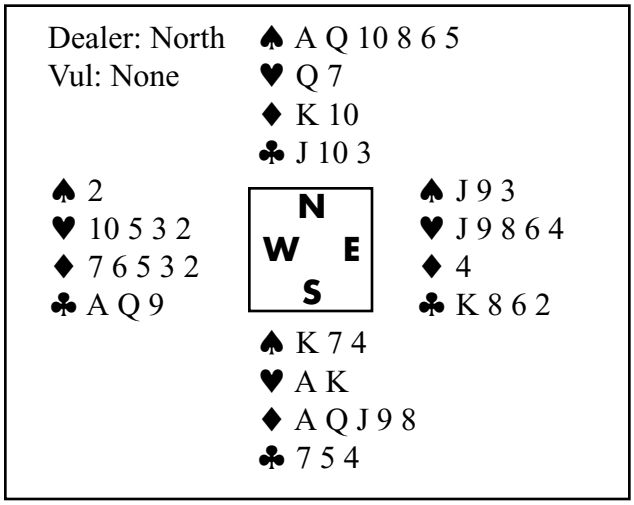
"Let's construct a variation of this hand.

"From the North hand, take the ♥3, the ♦2, the ♣A and the ♣Q and give them to West.

"From the West hand, take the ♥Q, the ♦K, the ♣J and the ♣10 and give them to North."

Instructions

"North is still the dealer. Start the auction and let's see how it goes this time. Stop when you reach a final contract."



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"Again, playing two-over-one game forcing, South starts by responding 2♦ to North's 1♠ opening. When North rebids spades, South's raise to the three level is still forcing and leaves room for investigating slam. With no first-round control outside of the trump suit, North might simply sign off in 4♠.

"In an experienced partnership, North might cuebid 4♦, showing a control in the diamond suit, but denying first-round control of clubs. South might

make another slam try by cuebidding 4♥, but North, having nothing further to cuebid, would sign off in 4♠. South now passes, since the partnership doesn't have a first- or second-round control in the club suit. The auction would go like this:

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	1♠	Pass	2♦
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♦	Pass	4♥
Pass	4♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

"Playing two-over-one game forcing allows South to show interest in slam without getting the partnership too high, when there is a critical weakness in one of the suits."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 4♠ by North.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"When the opponents have been bidding strongly, but stop below the slam level, it is usually because there is a weakness in one of the suits. In this auction, neither opponent bid clubs, so East should choose the unbid suit and lead the ♣2."

Suggested Play

"If East leads a club, declarer can't prevent the defenders from taking the first three tricks. After that, declarer has all of the remaining tricks. If East doesn't lead a club, declarer can take all 13 tricks by discarding the club losers on dummy's extra diamond winners after drawing trumps."

Suggested Defense

"After listening to the auction, East should lead a club. This allows West to win the ♣A, the ♣Q and then return a third club to East's ♣K. It is unlikely that declarer has any losers outside of the trump suit. Without the ♦K, North wouldn't have enough to open the bidding at the one level. East's best move is to lead the last club and hope that West holds the ♠10. If West can ruff the fourth round of clubs with the ♠10 — an uppercut — East's ♠J will be promoted into a winner.

"North holds the ♠10, so the defenders can't defeat the contract, but congratulations to East if the defender tried for the uppercut. Exchange North's ♠10 and West's ♠2 to see how this could be the winning defense!"

Bid and Play — Deal 2: The Principle of Fast Arrival

Guidelines for Teachers: This deal illustrates another example of two-over-one game forcing with the addition of the principle of fast arrival to avoid getting too high. In the play, declarer must be careful to take a safety play in the trump suit to avoid losing a trick.

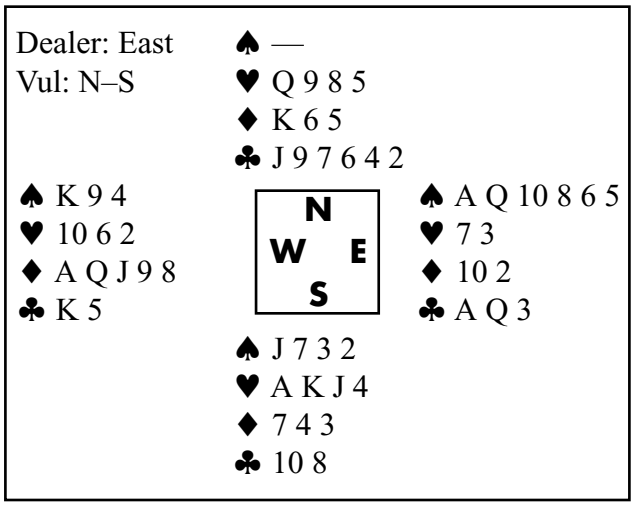
Introduction

"Let's play a deal that uses the principle of fast arrival when responder knows where the contract should be placed."

Instructions

"East is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 2 — Dealer, East)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

"After East's 1♠ opening, West makes a two-over-one response to show the diamond suit and create a game-forcing situation. After East makes a minimum rebid in spades, West has nothing extra to suggest the possibility of a slam. West should use the principle of fast arrival and take the partnership directly to 4♠. East has no reason to override partner's decision and bid any higher.

"Notice that East has the same hand as North in Deal 1. The first three bids are identical. The difference comes with responder's rebid."

When everyone understands the proper bids, have the students play out the cards in a contract of 4♠ by East.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"South is on lead. South would start with the ♥A, top of a broken sequence — or the ♥K, if the partnership leads the king from ace–king."

Suggested Play

"This appears to be an easy contract, but declarer should always be cautious when things look straightforward. The only apparent losers are two hearts and a potential diamond loser. Declarer may be able to make an overtrick by taking a finesse for the ♦K, after drawing trumps.

"Declarer should be careful, however, of assuming that the four missing trump will divide 2–2 or 3–1. Sometimes, they are 4–0. The presence of the ♠9 in dummy provides the opportunity for a safety play in the trump suit to guard against a 4–0 break. Suppose the defenders start with three rounds of hearts, and declarer ruffs the third round. Declarer should start the trump suit by playing the ♠A or the ♠Q from the East hand. If both defenders follow suit, the suit has broken 2–2 or 3–1, and declarer can finish drawing trumps and try the diamond finesse.

"North shows out on the first round of spades. Having discovered that South holds all four spades, including the ♠J, East can play a low spade toward dummy and finesse with the ♠9. Declarer then plays dummy's ♠K, comes to the East hand with a club and draws South's last trump. Now declarer can try the diamond finesse, which loses to North's ♦K.

"If North had held all four spades, South would discard on the first round of spades. Declarer could play a spade to dummy's ♠K and then finesse against North's ♠J. By first leading a high spade from the East hand, declarer can guard against either opponent holding all four trumps.

"If declarer starts by leading a spade to dummy's ♠K, South will get a trump trick. When the diamond finesse loses, declarer loses four tricks. Unlucky, but it is unavoidable."

Suggested Defense

"The defenders are entitled to two heart tricks and one diamond trick with North's ♦K. South will have to wait anxiously to see how declarer handles the spade suit. South might get a trick with the ♠J, if declarer isn't very careful."

Bid and Play — Deal 3 – One Notrump Forcing

> **Guidelines for Teachers:** This deal illustrates the use of a forcing 1NT response to show a three-card limit raise of opener's major. In the play, declarer again must handle the trump suit carefully to avoid an unnecessary loser.

Introduction

"Let's play a deal that illustrates the use of 1NT forcing."

Instructions

"South is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 3 — Dealer, South)

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

Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

"After South's pass, West opens the bidding 1♠, and North passes. East has enough strength for a limit raise, but only three-card support. Playing 1NT forcing, East responds 1NT. West makes a natural rebid of 2♦, and now East can make an invitational jump to 3♠. West has enough to accept the invitation.

"East–West must be careful to play in their eight-card major-suit fit, rather than their eight-card minor-suit fit. The partnership can make 4♠, but not 5♦, since they have to lose two heart tricks and one diamond trick."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, let the students play out the cards in a contract of 4♠ by West.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"North is on lead and should start with the ♥Q. Against suit contracts, it's safer to lead from a sequence than to lead away from an honor. Since neither clubs nor hearts have been bid by the opponents, choose the safer lead."

Suggested Play

"Declarer has two heart losers and one diamond loser, but the contract should be secure provided there is no loser in the trump suit. If the missing trumps are divided 3–2, there won't be a problem. If the trumps are 5–0 or North holds four trumps, there's not much that can be done. West should concentrate on safeguarding the contract in case South holds four trumps.

"After winning the ♥A, there are no sure entries left in dummy except for the ♠A. If declarer starts the trump suit by playing the ♠A and then a spade to the ♠K or the ♠Q, it will be too late to do anything if South turns up with four spades including the ♠J. West can't get back to dummy to finesse the spade.

"Instead, after winning the ♥A, South should play a spade to the ♠K or the ♠Q and then a spade to dummy's ♠A. If the trump divide 3–2, West can draw the remaining trump and drive out the ♦A to make the contract. When it turns out that South has four spades, declarer is in the right hand to lead the third round of spades and take a finesse against the ♠J. The last trump is drawn, and declarer loses only two heart tricks and a diamond trick."

Suggested Defense

"After an initial heart lead, the defenders are entitled to two heart tricks and one diamond trick. Their only hope for a fourth trick is in the spade suit. If declarer handles the trump suit carefully, the contract can't be defeated. If declarer is careless, the defenders have a chance.

"Suppose declarer leads the ♠A, after winning the ♥A, and then plays a spade to the ♠K or the ♠Q, getting the bad news. Declarer might try to recover by leading the ♦K, hoping to drive out the ♦A and create an entry to dummy with the ♦J. South must be careful to let declarer win the first diamond trick and then take the second trick with the ♦A. Now declarer can't get to dummy without giving South a trump trick."

Bid and Play — Deal 4 – More One Notrump Forcing

> **Guidelines for Teachers:** This deal illustrates the advantage of using the forcing 1NT response to find an appropriate partscore contract. The partscore can be defeated, but only with excellent defense. Discussing the defense to defeat the contract can be omitted, unless the students are quite experienced.

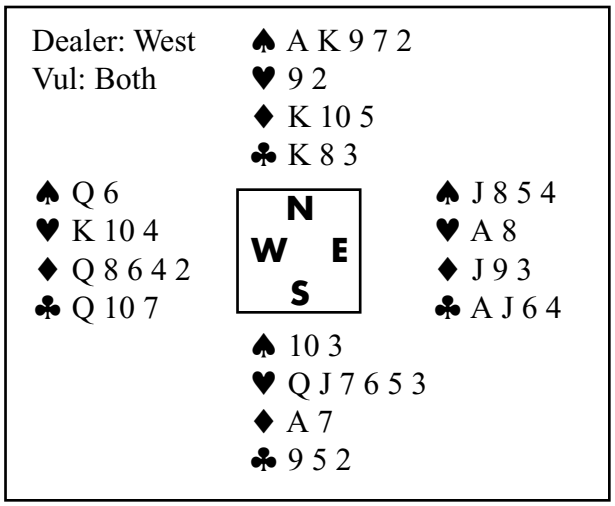
Introduction

"Let's play a deal where the use of the forcing 1NT response helps the partnership get to the right contract."

Instructions

"West is the dealer. Take your hands and start the bidding. Stop when you have completed the auction."

(E–Z Deal Cards: #8, Deal 4 — Dealer, West)



Suggested Bidding

When it appears that all of the tables have completed the auction, review how the bidding should have gone.

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

"After West's pass, North has a standard opening bid of 1♠. When East passes, South doesn't have enough to respond 2♥. That would be a two-over-one response committing the partnership to game. Instead, South starts with a 1NT forcing response.

"West passes again — the diamonds are too weak to risk a vulnerable overcall — and North must bid. With a minimum-strength hand and only five spades, North has to bid a three-card suit, 2♣. Now South has an opportunity to show the long heart suit by bidding 2♥. When the auction comes back to the opening bidder, North passes. South's bidding shows a weak hand with a five-card or longer heart suit. With a hand of invitational strength, South could have jumped to 3♥.

"Neither East nor West has the right type of hand to enter the auction, especially when vulnerable. They may be able to make 3♦, but getting into the auction is not easy. They will generally be better off trying to defeat 2♥.

"Holding a minimum-strength balanced hand, North would probably pass South's 1NT response if the partnership weren't playing 1NT forcing. 1NT would prove to be a poor contract after a diamond lead from West. South would likely be defeated two or three tricks."

When everyone understands the proper bids and the final contract, the students can proceed to play out the cards in a contract of 2♥ by South.

Suggested Opening Lead

"Turn up all of the cards and put each hand dummy style at the edge of the table in front of each player. Let's review the play and defense.

"West has a difficult choice of leads. Against this type of auction, where North has not shown a fit with South's hearts, the unbid suit usually works well. West might lead the ♦4, fourth highest."

Suggested Play

"Declarer has no losers in spades or diamonds, but has three potential losers in clubs if East holds the ♣A. South would like to restrict the trump losers to two in order to make the contract. Missing the ♥A, the ♥K and the ♥10, declarer's best plan is to lead hearts twice from dummy toward the ♥Q and the ♥J, hoping East holds either the ♥A or the ♥K and that the suit is divided 3–2.

"Declarer should win the first trick with dummy's ♦K and lead a heart. When East follows with a low heart, declarer should play the ♥J or the ♥Q to drive out West's high honor. If West leads another diamond, South wins the ♦A, crosses to dummy with a spade and leads another heart. East wins this trick with the ♥A, and the defense is helpless. If East leads a diamond, declarer ruffs low, draws the last trump and can try leading toward the ♣K for an overtrick. If East returns a spade, declarer can win in dummy, ruff a diamond to get back to the South hand and draw the last trump.

"There is some danger on this deal. West might be able to get a trick with the ♥10. Suppose, for example, declarer wins the first trick with the ♦A and leads a spade to dummy. Declarer leads a heart toward the ♥J, and West wins this trick with the ♥K. West might lead another spade. Declarer wins this in dummy and leads another heart toward the ♥Q. East wins this trick with the ♥A and can lead a third round of spades. Now South can't prevent West from getting a trick with the ♥10. If South ruffs low, West overruffs. If South ruffs with the ♥Q, West gets the ♥10 later. If South tries discarding clubs, West can also discard clubs, and East can eventually lead the ♣A and another club to promote West's ♥10.

"The same danger exists, if South wins the first trick with the ♦A and crosses to dummy with the ♦K. When the first heart loses to West's ♥K, West might lead a third round of diamonds. South ruffs, crosses to dummy with a spade and leads another heart. East wins the ♥A and leads another spade. Now declarer can't get safely back to the South hand without giving the defenders an opportunity to get a trick with the ♥10.

"While the defenders may not see the possibility of promoting West's ♥10, declarer makes it even more difficult by winning the first diamond in dummy and leading a heart right away."

Suggested Defense

"Can the defender's always defeat 2♥? As mentioned above, declarer may give the defenders an opportunity to get a trick with West's ♥10, if the first trick isn't won with dummy's ♦K. Even if declarer does this, however, the defenders can prevail — but it's not easy.

Suppose declarer wins the first trick with dummy's ♦K and leads a heart to the ♥J and West's ♥K. West could now switch to the ♣Q or the ♣10 to trap dummy's ♣K. Once the defenders have taken three club tricks, East can lead a fourth round to promote West's ♥10 as a winner. Will East–West find this defense? Probably yes, since declarer is known to hold the ♦A and has a limited point count."