

PATTERN BRIDGE HANDS

Major Suit Openings

by Robert Locke

(first two pages repeated for easier reference)

After playing a while, you begin to see patterns in Bridge hands: patterns of distribution of the suits, patterns of honors, and patterns of Play-of-the-Hand. These pages are an adjunct to my larger book *BITE-SIZED BRIDGE FOR MOM AND POP* but the intent here is to point out these patterns —paradigms actually— model hands with model suggestions for bidding and play, so that you can more easily recognize the patterns as they unfold in your hands.

The first pattern to deal with is the Opening Hand, but first you may need a quick familiarization with terms in Bridge, hence this front-pages Glossary:

Beginners' Glossary

Opening Hand	--	The first player to give a bid other than Pass
HCP	--	High Card Points: A=4; K=3; Q=2; J=1
Auction	--	The first period of play during which Opponents bid for the Contract, using a # plus suit name or NT, rank= C-D-H-S ♣ ♦ ♥ ♠ NT, e.g., 1 ♠.
Contract	--	The end of the auction, establishing a Trump suit based on Fit or Notrump
Fit	--	A suit in which partners have at least eight between them
Trump	--	"Wildcard" Suit established during auction; beats other three suits
Rotation	--	clockwise, both during the Auction and Play-of-the-Hand
Opener	--	Player who Opens the bidding
Responder	--	Partner of Opener
Overcaller	--	Opponent who bids over Opener
Advancer	--	Partner of Overcaller
Declarer	--	Player who wins the final contract
Dummy	--	Partner of Declarer, exposes hand after Opening Lead
Play-of-the-Hand	--	The second period of play, after the Auction and Opening Lead
Opening Lead	--	By LHO (left-hand opponent) of Declarer
Trick	--	During Play-of-the-Hand each player contributes a card to each trick, following suit; high card or trump wins the trick; 13 tricks possible
Discard (slough)	--	a card chosen from another suit when you have none of the led-suit
Book	--	The first six tricks, which do not count: 7=1; 8=2; 9=3; 10=4; 11=5; 12=6 Slam; 13=7 Grand Slam
Major Suits	--	Hearts ♥ and Spades ♠: each trick 30 points; 4♥ or 4♠=GAME
minor suits	--	Clubs ♣ and Diamonds ♦: each trick 20 points; 5♣ or 5♦= GAME
Notrump	--	No suit is trump; high card wins the trick: 40 points first trick, 30 each trick thereafter; 3NT=GAME
GAME	--	In caps because it is the hoped-for goal of every hand: 100 points earns a Game Bonus of 300 NV or 500 V
Vulnerability	--	V or NV=Vulnerable or Nonvulnerable; adds tension and risk, greater rewards v. greater penalties

Perhaps now you can now more readily understand what is involved with the Opening Bid at the 1-Level: 1-of-a-Major or 1-of-a-minor most commonly, or 1NT (perhaps 1 out of 20 deals).

Your Goal

Every hand you unfold you hope to achieve exactly the same goal: a GAME contract in a Major Suit. Major Suits are more valuable than minor suits (30 v. 20 points per trick) and usually Trump is easier to make more tricks than Notrump. Hence this goal, as simply as I can put it.

Therefore, as you sort your cards look first for a 5-card Major. You will want to tell Partner about that as soon as possible. Next look for honor cards, A,K,Q,J and begin a first evaluation of your hand's strength. You want, also, to tell your Partner how strong or weak you are.

Evaluating Your Hand

Beginners: To help bid more easily, use simple HCP evaluation: A=4, K=3, Q=2, J=1. Before you can develop any idea what to bid, let alone how high, you must have an idea of how strong your hand is, relative to the other hands around the table. There are 40 HCP total; if you have 10, you have your fair share; if you have 12 you have an advantage and you are ready to open the bidding. (It used to be 13 to Open, but inflation hits everywhere.)

One of my best bridge teachers told our class: **“Let us promise each other we will Open every 12+ HCP hand and Respond every 6+ HCP hand.”** I played a whole year on this simplistic agreement and did very well. Try it; you can change your plan any time. Soon you will want to use more sophisticated methods of re-evaluating for bidding purposes: Distribution, adding points first for LENGTH (1 point for each card more than 4) also, after finding Fit with partner, for VOIDS (3), SINGLETONS (2), DOUBLETONS (1). But at first, stick to simple HCP.

Here are the basic HCP ranges for GAME. (Remember GAME is always your first goal. Clearly you can't always reach it; in fact, fewer than half of deals will yield GAME.

25-26 — GAME in a major suit or Notrump

27-28 — GAME in a minor suit (rare, you should really try 3NT rather than 5-of-a-minor)

33-35 — SLAM (6 tricks; 1 in 144 deals) huge bonus

37+ — GRAND SLAM—(all 7 tricks; 1 in 5848 deals) hugest bonus

12-21 HCP: You Open 1of-a-Major or 1-of-a-minor. 15-17 HCP: You open 1NT.

There are other Opening bids: 20-21 HCP; you might open 2NT; 22+ HCP—you open 2C; also pre-emptive openings based upon a long suit in a weak hand: 6 cards, you open 2-of-a-suit; 7 cards, you open 3-of--a-suit, 8 cards—sheesh. Let's go back to the hands you usually get.

Look at these five most common distributions, 73% of all deals:

4-4-3-2—22%; 5-3-3-2—16%; 5-4-3-1—13%; 5-4-2-2—11%; 4-3-3-3—11%

Not a 6-card suit nor a void among them, but three of these deals contain a 5-card suit; so hope is high every time you unfold your cards that the pearl of a 5-card major will be among them and you will Open that blessed of all bids, 1-of-a-Major.

As Opener or as Responder, you want always to describe your hand as truthfully as you can. Yes, sometimes you must lie, but lie a little, not a lot. And lie about a minor, not a Major.

MAJOR OPENING BIDS
Pattern Hand #1 — Single Raise by Responder

Remember your goal: to find a Major Suit Fit (8+ between you and Partner). In the Standard American System, it takes 5+ to Open 1-of-a-Major.

In these sample deals, Spades is the suit at top, followed by Hearts, Diamonds, Clubs. The Opening Call, always by Dealer, is bolded. The Opening Bid is also bolded.

Pattern #1: very simple: Opener has a good strong hand: Responder has a supportive hand, 3-card support and 6-10 HCP; Opener invites to GAME; Responder accepts.

Dealer-E; Ignore vulnerability

	NORTH		
	AKJ92		
	2		
	A52		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	K854		1S , 3S, P
WEST		EAST	P,P,P,P
T7		653	P, 2S, 4S
AT87		KOJ3	
JT43		Q983	
QJT		93	
	SOUTH		FINAL CONTRACT: 4S
	Q84		(N as DECLARER must win 10 of 13 tricks.)
	9654		S=DUMMY; E/W=DEFENDERS
	K6		
	A762		

Bidding analysis

N after three passes, is happy to Open with a 5-card Major and 15 HCP.

E does not have a good 2-Level Overcall with less than 5 in any suit, no 5&Dime.

S has an exemplary bid by Responder of 2S, showing 3-card support and 6-10 HCP.

W ditto **E**

N with more than a Minimum Opening (12-14) dares to invite, saying, "Partner, are you at the top of your range? If so, take me to GAME."

S "You bet. I'm going to add a point for my doubleton diamond."

Why does **N** invite GAME, and why does **S** go to 4S GAME? They could have bought the contract at 2S, no competition. But a contract of 4S yields a GAME bonus; not so if you stop bidding below 4S.

OPENING LEAD (by **E**)— h-K (KQJ begs the lead of the K in order to get rid of the A, so the Q and even perhaps the J will take future tricks.)

Play-of-the-Hand likely sequence:

Trick 1: E wins h-K.

Trick 2: E leads h-Q, N trumps and wins

Trick 3: N leads and wins s-A.

Trick 4: N leads and wins s-K. RECONSIDER STRATEGY. Pull last trump now? No.

Trick 5: N leads d-2, Dummy wins d-K.

Trick 6: Dummy leads d-6, N wins d-A.

Trick 7: N leads d-5, E plays d-9, Dummy trumps with s-Q, wins.

Trick 8: Dummy leads c-2, N wins c-K.

Trick 9: N leads s-J to pull last trump from W (Dummy and W discard h-x)

Trick 10: N leads c-5, Dummy wins c-A

Trick 11: Dummy leads c-7, W wins c-Q (E discards h-x)

Trick 12: W leads d-J, N wins s-9 (last trump)

Trick 13: N/S win last trick with c-8 since all opponents' clubs have been played out.

2 losers, h-K and c-Q:

Final Score: 4S making $5 \times 30 = 150$ + NV Game Bonus (NV Bonus = 300 or **450 total N/S** or V Game Bonus of 500 or = **650 total N/S**. If N/S had stopped bidding at 2S or 3S, the final score would have been $5 \times 30 = 150$ + Partscore Bonus of 50 = only **200 total N/S**.

After Opening Lead, Declarer studies Dummy with these questions:

1. Count probable LOSERS:

S=0 (4 straight leads, AKQJ, probably no problem)

H=1 (sure loser, right off the bat)

D=0 (if I remember to save a trump in Dummy for N's third diamond. DO NOT PULL ALL THREE TRUMPS FROM DUMMY IMMEDIATELY, only two, saving a trump for d.

C=1 (if Opponents' split in their five clubs is an even split, 3-2. The odds are good:

Mnemonic is "5678!" (With five, the odds of a 3-2 split are 67.8%. If the club split is 4-1, the you may lose 2 clubs.

2. "Does this make my contract?" Yes, if you play the diamonds correctly.

3. "Can I squeeze out an extra trick or two?" PLAN THE PLAY AT THE START. You must take a close look at d and c from the beginning of the hand. You must save a trump in Dummy to trump N's third diamond. Also you must hope for a 3-2 split in clubs where you would then lose only one club.

4. Analyze Opening Lead: No problem; most of Opponent's strength is in N's singleton.

MAJOR OPENING BIDS
Pattern Hand #2 — Jump to Game by Opener

Dealer-S: Ignore vulnerability

NORTH

T52
 J5
 K976
 A984

SUGGESTED AUCTION:
 P, P

WEST

Q4
 AKQ432
 4
 KJ62

EAST

AK6
 876
 T832
 Q75

1H, 4H

P, P

2H, P

SOUTH

J9873
 T9
 AQJ5
 T3

FINAL CONTRACT=**4H**

(W as DECLARER must win 10 of 13 tricks.)

E=DUMMY; N/S=DEFENDERS

Bidding Analysis

West's jump to 4H is a matter of style. Less aggressive bidders might bid only 3H, inviting Responder to go to Game with a max. In this case, W re-evaluates after finding out Partner has 3 trump support; the sixth trump plus the singleton diamond makes Opener's hand much stronger. This is no longer a mere 17 point hand (15 HCP plus 2 for the length in hearts.) I would add another point for the "Quality Suit" (three honors) and at least 2 for the singleton; so the hand's value actually = 20 points. E shows 6-10 HCP with the 2H Response. "The One Who Knows Goes," and so if I were W, I would jump straight to GAME.

If W has a more timid style, W would bid 3H instead of jumping to 4H, and if so, E should definitely take the partnership to Game, with 9 great points. (The AK together in spades is really stronger than 7 HCP.)

OPENING LEAD (by N)— Problematic. If you were a computer and could see all hands, you would of course lead a diamond to collect Declarer's singleton before Declarer gets in the lead and sluffs that singleton on the third spade trick. Being only a human being, however, and seeing only one hand, and with no bid by Partner to indicate Partner's strong suit, you have only the usual dictums: "Don't lead an ace or king, unless you have them both; and don't lead away from an ace or king." The reasoning is that you want to sit behind the strong hand with your strong cards, so as to capture Declarer's honors in due time. That leaves you with the luckless spades or trump as a lead.

Play-of-the-Hand — With either a trump or spade lead, 6 is secured. You pull trump immediately because you have plenty, next play the s-Q, play to the s-AK and get rid of your d-singleton on the third spade. The clubs then play themselves, losing one trick to the A, and the fourth trick in Declarer trumped in Dummy.

MAJOR OPENING BIDS
Pattern Hand #3 — Limit Raise by Responder

Dealer-W: Ignore vulnerability

NORTH
987
KQ43
OJ752
K

SUGGESTED AUCTION:
P, 3H (skip bid), P

P, P, P P, P, P

1H, 4H

WEST
AT54
96
94
AT865

EAST
QJ632
T5
T63
QJ2

SOUTH
K
AJ872
AK8
9743

FINAL CONTRACT=4H
(S as DECLARER must win 10 of 13 tricks.)
N=DUMMY; E/W=DEFENDERS

Bidding Analysis

Double Raise (skip bid) by Responder — 1H to 3H— is one way to show a “Limit Raise”, 10-12 HCP plus Trump Support. (There are other options: my own preferred option is the “Reverse Bergen” skip to 3C, conveying the same information at a lower level with the welcome additional info that Trump Support is stipulated as 4+. But most players seem to prefer the Double Raise of the Major, either 1H-3H or 1S-3S.)

A Limit Raise of a Major Suit is inv. to GAME. “Partner, we have our FIT, and my HCP gets us almost to the 25-26 we need. Do you have a little extra in your Opening HCP?”

If Opener likes the prospect, being perhaps a little stronger than a Minimum Opening Hand, Opener goes to GAME. If Opener had stretched his hand to Open, Opener should now pass. In this Sample Hand Opener does bid GAME with 15 HCP and will probably lose one spade and one club, thereby making the contract with an extra trick.

OPENING LEAD (by W) — Again, with two Aces, the Opening Lead is problematic since you usually keep your A behind Declarer’s probable K. “Aces are meant to take Kings.” But in this case, N has shown strength as well as S, and so it could easily be that it is N who has those missing Ks; therefore I would lead the A from my longer suit, the c-A. Seeing the c-K fall on that first trick, and the diamonds so strong in Dummy, I would now lead my s-A and hope for an encouraging signal from Partner. When the s-K falls in Declarer, I would continue with a spade, knowing it will probably be trumped, but not jeopardizing any d/h honors of Partners.

Play-of-the-Hand — Get the lead ASAP and pull trump in order to run long diamonds. Lose to two Aces, make an overtrick.

MAJOR OPENING BIDS
Pattern Hand #4 – Temporizing Bid by Responder

Dealer-N; Ignore vulnerability.

	NORTH		
	AT76		
	86		
	T986		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	J98		P, P, P
WEST		EAST	2C, 4H
K32		Q4	P, P, P
T43		AKOJ2	1H, 2D, P
J4		Q73	
AKQ64		T52	
	SOUTH		
	J985		FINAL CONTRACT: 4H
	975		(E as DECLARER must win 10 of 13 tricks.)
	AK52		W=DUMMY; N/S=DEFENDERS
	73		

Bidding Analysis

With a weaker hand, W would want to show the 8-card Major Fit immediately, but it is more important to first show those 10+ HCP knowing Opener will remember the dictum: **“New suit by Responder is forcing for one round,”** and that W therefore can show the Fit on W’s second bid. To bid at the 2-Level shows 10+ HCP and usually 5+ of that suit, **5&Dime**.

Opener, not having 6 hearts, cannot rebid them, but is forced, and therefore bids the very weak 4-card diamond suit, waiting to hear which of these three bid suits Responder prefers, or NT.

Responder, knowing their FIT from the first bid, also their GAME HCP, was hoping to hear a jump bid from Opener, but now knows Opener is minimum, 12-14 HCP, and Slam is not in the cards. “The One Who Knows Goes” so W does not invite but jumps to GAME. Fast Arrival.

Note: Beginning Bidders often labor for a while in the mistaken belief that the Auction is a contest between Partners, and being polite, they allow their Partner to “win” the contest. No, the Auction is a time for communication showing truthful HCP and seeking a Major Suit Fit. Clubs is a great Fit also, with hearts as trump, those same 8 clubs will score at 30 points per trick instead of only 20.

Opening Lead (by S)— d-A. AK is a great Opening sequence, the best opportunity in a trump contract to collect these two winners. Some signal agreements are that a led-K shows either AK or KQ, but I don’t like the ambiguity and therefore standardly lead K from KQ and A from AK (except if it is a doubleton, then reverse it). Seeing the d-doubleton in Dummy, S continues with the K and then switches to spades, knowing that if Partner has the s-A this will be the only opportunity to cash it, those formidable clubs being runnable.

Play-of-the-Hand — After those three tricks are lost, there is no stopping Declarer who wins all the rest of the tricks easily. Bid 4; Made 4. 120 score + GAME bonus.

MAJOR OPENING BID leading to Slam
Pattern Hand #5 — Reverse Bergen 3C Limit Raise by Responder
Plus RKC 1430, Plus Elizabethan Finesse

Dealer-E; Ignore vulnerability

	NORTH		
	Q3		
	QT5		
	7532		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	J752		P, P, P, P
WEST	EAST	3C, 4D, 5C	1S, 3H, 4N, 6S
9854	AKJT72		P, P, P, P
K63	A74		
AK8	94		
Q96	A3		
	SOUTH		
	6		FINAL CONTRACT: 6S
	J982		E as DECLARER must win 12 of 13 tricks.
	QJT6		W=DUMMY, N/S=DEFENDERS
	KT84		

Bidding Dialogue (with N/S passing each time):

- E: **1S** — “I have an Opening Hand (12-21 HCP) with 5+ spades.”
- W: **3C** — “I have 10-12 HCP and at least 4-card trump support.” (Reverse Bergen Limit Raise)
- E: “Alert!” If RHO asks for explanation, continue: “We play Reverse Bergen, and Partner is showing 10-12 points and at least 4 spades.”
- E: **3H** — “All right! We are going at least to Game and—because I have a very big hand over here, I want to explore Slam. I have a h-Control. What Controls do you have, use Up-the-Line bidding to reveal them.”
- W: **4D** — “Up-the-Line my first Control is in d. I do not have a c-Control.” am Max, and I do have a control in diamonds.
- W: **4N** — “Any aces? What you do not know is that I have 4 of the 5 keycards, and so I will be able to determine by your response if your d-Control is the A.”
- E: **5C** — “I have 1-or-4 KEYCARDS (of the 4 aces and K of trumps).”
- W: **6S** — “Great. I now know that you do have d-A. Since you announced with your **3C** jump that you have 10-12 HCP, you likely have two of the three K I am missing, the h-K and d-K since you also told me you have no c-Control. Also, since you did not bid 4S—Fast Arrival—when you had the opportunity, I am deducing, Watson, that you are Max. for your 10-12 HCP. So, perhaps you have the c-Q in addition? Big risk here. Many might stop at 5S, but I am looking for Max. fun as well as Max. bonus, so I am chancing Slam.”

Opening Lead (by S): d-Q, top of sequence.

Play-of-the-Hand (requiring an Elizabethan Finesse of the c-Q)

Dummy wins first trick with K. Trumps fall easily with 10 between N/S. Diamonds are no problem. If not carefully played there could be a heart loser and club loser, putting the contract

down-1. However, if the Elizabethan Finesse is attempted and works (with c-K onside) either the club loser or the heart loser is mitigated.

N.B. I call this the Elizabethan Finesse tongue-in-cheek because the c-Q is unsupported by a K or J. The correct way to attempt an Elizabethan Finesse is the same as with all finesses, you lead low to the Q. Best to try this before playing your c-A so that S has questions as to whether the c-A is in Partner's hand. If S goes up with the K, you still have the Q for a later trick, on which you drop Declarer's losing heart. This requires advance planning. Don't rush into it. You need to keep your heart Controls until **after** you try the c-Q Elizabethan Finesse.

if Elizabethan Finesse works then 6S is possible with a final score of $6 \times 30 = 180 + 300$ NV
GAME Bonus = 480 or 500 V Game Bonus = 680 + 750 Slam Bonus = E/W 980 NV or 1430 V.

If Elizabethan Finesse is not attempted, 6S is down-1 = 50 N/S or 100 N/S if doubled.

**MAJOR OPENING BID leading to Slam
Pattern Hand #6 — Jacoby 2NT by Responder
Plus Control Bidding, plus 1430 Blackwood**

Dealer-S; Ignore vulnerability.

	NORTH		
	96		
	AT9		
	T963		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	5432		P, P, P, P
WEST		EAST	2N, 4C, 5H, P
KQT32		A754	P, P, P, P
KQ86		J2	
5		AJ2	
AQT		K876	
	SOUTH		
	J8		FINAL CONTRACT: 6S
	7543		W as DECLARER must win 12 of 13 tricks.
	KQ874		E=DUMMY, N/S=DEFENDERS
	J9		

Bidding Dialogue: (Skip over meaningless passes of N/S)

- W: **1S** — “I have an Opening Hand (12-21 HCP) with 5+ spades.”
 E: **2N** — “I also have 12+ HCP (unlimited) and at least 4-card trump support.”
 W: “Alert!” Jacoby 2NT is a conventional bid, requiring partner to use the blue Alert card. Explain the alert only if your RHO, next to bid, asks for an explanation. It may be enough to say simply, “Jacoby 2NT”, but if RHO appears quizzical, explain simply as in E’s interior dialogue above.
 W: **3D** — “All right! We are going at least to Game and—because I have better than a Minimum Opening Hand, we want to consider Slam. The Jacoby 2NT Convention asks Opener to make one of five different bids in response (see handout on main webpage). The 3D here shows singleton or void in diamonds.”
 E: **4C** — “All right! A positive response from partner, not a FAST ARRIVAL jump to Game! I shall start CONTROL BIDDING, up-the-line. I do not have a control in hearts--so I skip over hearts, which in itself is telling!—and by common agreement I skip over the home suit, spades.” See Control Bidding, Chapter 12, also GLOSSARY.
 W: **4N** — “Partner has no h-CONTROL, but I have second-round control of hearts. E’s c-CONTROL is most likely the K since I have c-A and it is doubtful that E has a void or singleton with the other distribution stated so far: E with 4+ spades and 2+ hearts, and my own d-singleton. I’ll ask for partner’s KEYCARDS, using the Blackwood prompt of 4NT.” (see handout).
 E: **5H** — “Aha, 1430 is our choice of Blackwood. I have two KEYCARDS without the Q of trump.”
 W: **6S** — “Since Partner lacks a h-CONTROL, Partner’s two keycards must be s-A and d-A.”

Opening Lead (by N)— h-A)

Trick 1: N leads h-A (often a mistake against a Slam contract since “Aces are meant to take Kings,” but with such a strong Declarer, it doesn’t really matter here.)

The rest of the tricks are solid. E pulls trump in 2 rounds (one huge advantage of having 4 trump in Dummy). The d-A clears E of his losing his singleton. KQJ of hearts are now all good. AKQ of clubs are all good. No problems at all.

1 loser: h-A: Final Score 6S making $6 \times 30 = 180 + 300$ NV Game Bonus = 480 or 500 V Game Bonus = 680 + 750 Slam Bonus = E/W: 980 NV or 1430 V.

N.B. If this hand were played in NT, with the h-A lead, it would have made 6NT just fine, making a final score of ten additional points, either V or NV, those ten dinky points accounting for a little in Party Bridge, but accounting for a top board in Duplicate. However, with a diamond opening lead there would have been big trouble for E/W. After the 5 spade and 4 club tricks, E/W would be forced to lose the lead in either hearts or diamonds and—without being able to trump and recapture the lead—E/W would lose the rest of the 4 tricks, down-3 V for a bottom board of minus 300.

N.B. Bridge is a timed game as well as a thinking game. When time can be saved by claiming obvious tricks—such as Declarer saying, “All the trump are gone, and all my other cards are high.”—everyone will be grateful.

However, if Declarer is mistaken, overlooking a trick on your side, then the Director should be called. DEFENDERS: do NOT show your hand or claim any tricks until the Director is present. Director should ask Declarer to table his cards and state the Line of Play. If you as Defender can win an overlooked trick, you might change the Line of Play considerably, winning more tricks for your side. It will take a Director at the table to sort out the contradictions.

MAJOR OPENING BIDS
Pattern Hand #7 — 1NT by Responder

Pattern Hands #1-6 all reached GAME or SLAM because these deals have trump support in Dummy and good HCP. I planned these stronger hands because I believe that GAME and SLAM deals are easier for beginners with their developing Play-of-the-Hand strategies because the tricks are easier to see, so many Aces and Kings.

But let's now take a look at deals in which a GAME contract is not reached, which is more than 50% of deals. These hands are harder to play because DECLARER loses the lead more often and must regain it. Strategy is much more complicated usually.

Dealer-E; Ignore vulnerability

	NORTH		
	AKJ952		
	72		
	A52		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	Q8		1S, 2S
WEST		EAST	P,P,P,P
T7		Q63	P, 1NT, P
AK8		QJT3	P,P,P,P
JT43		987	
JT54		K93	
	SOUTH		
	84		FINAL CONTRACT: 2S
	9654		(N as DECLARER must win 8 of 13 tricks.)
	KQ6		S=DUMMY; E/W=DEFENDERS
	A762		

Bidding analysis

N after three passes, is happy to Open with a 5-card Major and 14 HCP.

E does not have a good Overcall without a 5 card suit, no 5&Dime.

S does not have 3-card trump support but does have 6-10 HCP, must keep the bidding open in case Partner has a huge hand.

W ditto E

N rebids spades to show 6 but also announces, "I have only a minimum opening, 12-14 HCP."

E fears this is the end of the Auction but really is not strong enough to force N/S higher.

S "I am near the top of my range, and I do have two of your spades, but I don't think we have it."

W feels the same as E, fearing N will make the 2S contract, but having nothing to bid.

OPENING LEAD (by E)— h-Q (QJT is best lead; does not want to lead away from c-K, never a good lead and, in this case, would give N a finesse, allowing N to make 4S.)

Play-of-the-Hand likely sequence:

Trick 1: E wins h-Q, which marks W with AK.

Trick 2: E leads h-3, W wins h-K.

Trick 3: W leads h-A, which N trumps.

Trick 4: N leads and wins s-A and watches carefully how the spades fall from E/W, no tell-tale as to where the s-Q lies, but a finesse looks necessary, must get the lead into Dummy.

Trick 5: N leads d-2, Dummy wins d-K.

Trick 6: Dummy leads s-8 with N hoping to see s-Q fall from W. When W plays s-T, N decides to finesse s-J ("8-Ever; 9-Never" adage) which loses to s-Q in E. Bad luck, 50-50 chance, doesn't work.

Trick 7: E leads h-J, forcing N to trump and lead into Opponents.

Trick 8: N leads d-5 to Dummy's d-Q so as to try the other finesse in this deal, what I jokingly call the Elizabethan finesse to N's c-Q without a K or J to protect her. If W has the K, N's c-Q will survive to take a trick, but bad luck again.

Trick 9. Dummy leads c-2 to c-Q which falls to E's c-K, another 50-50 chance lost.

Trick 10: E leads low club through strength in Dummy, suspecting W has J. Dummy takes c-A.

Trick 11: Dummy leads d-6 to N's d-A which wins.

Trick 12: N leads s-K which wins.

Trick 13: N leads s-9 which wins.

Due to both finesses being *offside* and therefore losing, there are 4 losers for DECLARER, h-KQ, s-Q and c-K. DECLARER takes 5 trump tricks, 3 diamonds and c-A.

Final Score: 2S making $3 \times 30 = 90$ + Partscore Bonus of 50 = 140.

If S had invited GAME with his 9 very strong HCP (d-KQ add a point for adjacent honors) but without any distributional assets —and if N had accepted— they would have been Down-1. There was bad luck here with both finesses losing (one in spades and one in clubs). If either finesse had won —50-50 chance on either one— DECLARER would have made 4S.

MAJOR OPENING BIDS
Pattern Hand #8 — 1NT Contract by Responder

Dealer-S; Ignore vulnerability

	NORTH		
	52		
	9762		
	A652		SUGGESTED AUCTION:
	K83		1NT
WEST		EAST	P, P P
T97		K63	1S , P
KQJ		A83	
T43		K987	
QT54		J97	
	SOUTH		
	AQJ84		FINAL CONTRACT: 1NT
	T54		(N as DECLARER must win 7 of 13 tricks.)
	QJ		S=DUMMY; E/W=DEFENDERS
	A62		

Bidding Dialogue

- S: **1S** — "I have an Opening Hand (12-21 HCP) and 5+ spades."
- W: **P** — "I do not have an Overcall, no 5&Dime."
- N: **1NT** — "Sorry, Partner, I am weak over here, 6-10 HCP, and do not have 3+ spade support."
- E: **P** — "Ditto W."
- S: **P** — "I hate to leave you in 1NT, but I have no place else to go. We do not play 1NT as a forcing bid in our Standard American bidding system. This is probably our best contract."
- E: **P** — "Gee, I hate to let them have it for 1NT, but I have nothing over here to say."

Opening Lead (by E): d-7 perhaps, 4th from High against NT, or perhaps h-3, leading the unbid Major.

Play-of-the-Hand

A good strategy almost always for the NT DECLARER is to launch into the longest suit as soon as capturing the lead. That means spades. With 7 of them, DECLARER could hope for a 3-3 split (although that is only a 36% chance, a 4-2 split being more likely. There is also the 50-50 chance that s-K will be held by E.

I am not going to make any suggestions for Play-of-the-Hand because there are too many variables, and it depends so much on Opening Lead, plus transportation problems in order to try the spade finesse twice, capturing the K on the third round, whether or not the thirteenth heart in DECLARER sets up if E/W are foolish enough to lead their three solid hearts out immediately, etc. What does seem clear, however, is that 1NT is the optimal contract for this deal. 3NT would be highly unlikely, given 7 HCP opposite 14 HCP.