

# Improvers' Lesson 3: Declarer Play Techniques

**Board 1**  
North Deals  
None Vul

♠ A K 7 4 3  
♥ 8 7 6  
♦ A J  
♣ K 7 2

♠ J 6  
♥ K 9 3  
♦ Q 9 8 6  
♣ Q J 10 9

♠ 10 9 8 2  
♥ Q J 4 2  
♦ 4 2  
♣ A 8 6

♠ Q 5  
♥ A 10 5  
♦ K 10 7 5 3  
♣ 5 4 3

West	North	East	South
1 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass
	Pass	2 ♠	All pass

**Leading towards honours**

East's raise to 2 ♠ shows 6-9 HCP and four spades.

Lead: ♣ Q (top of sequence)

Declarer wins, draws trumps in two rounds and leads twice towards the ♥ Q and ♥ J.

**Board 5**  
North Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ J 10 9 8  
♥ 9 7 6 2  
♦ Q J 10  
♣ K 10

♠ K 4 2  
♥ K Q 8  
♦ K 6 5  
♣ 6 5 4 2

♠ 7 6 3  
♥ J 10 4  
♦ 9 4 3 2  
♣ A Q J

♠ A Q 5  
♥ A 5 3  
♦ A 8 7  
♣ 9 8 7 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1 NT
	2 NT	Pass	3 NT

**Establishing a long suit**

N/S have a simple auction to 3 NT.

Lead: ♦ Q or ♠ J

You have 8 quick tricks. The club suit offers the only chance of a ninth trick. Don't take your winners in the other suits until your club trick is established.

**Board 2**  
East Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ Q 7 2  
♥ A 10 9 8 5  
♦ K 3  
♣ J 7 2

♠ J 9 4 3  
♥ 6 2  
♦ Q 9 8 7 2  
♣ 8 5

♠ A 8 6  
♥ K Q J 4 3  
♦ J 6 5  
♣ A 9

♠ K 10 5  
♥ 7  
♦ A 10 4  
♣ K Q 10 6 4 3

West	North	East	South
3 ♥	Pass	1 ♥	2 ♣
		4 ♥	All pass

**Leading towards an honour**

Lead ♣ K

Declarer wins, draws trumps finishing in East. East should play ♣ 9 towards dummy, setting up the ♣ J to discard a spade. East knows from the opening lead that the ♣ Q is with South.

Later, East should lead a small diamond towards the ♦ K.

**Board 6**  
East Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ A 10 9 2  
♥ K Q 8 6 3  
♦ J 8  
♣ 8 3

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

♠ J 8 7 4  
♥ J 7  
♦ A K Q 7 6  
♣ A 4

♠ Q 5 3  
♥ 10 4 2  
♦ 9 5 2  
♣ K Q J 5

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠	All pass

**Finessing**

East's rebid of 1 ♠ shows an unbalanced hand. West invites game.

Lead: ♣ K

You have a club and a heart loser so you can't afford two trump losers. Lead ♠ J which will lose to the ♠ K. When in again, lead towards the ♠ 10 from East.

**Board 3**  
South Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ 8 7 5 2  
♥ A 10 9  
♦ Q 10 8  
♣ K 10 2

♠ A K 6  
♥ K 5 4  
♦ K 7 5  
♣ Q 8 6 4

♠ Q J 10 3  
♥ Q 7 3 2  
♦ J 4  
♣ A 9 5

♠ 9 4  
♥ J 8 6  
♦ A 9 6 3 2  
♣ J 7 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	Pass
Pass	1 NT	All pass	1 ♦

**Establishing a long suit**

Lead: ♠ Q

Declarer needs four diamond tricks and has to lose a trick in the suit. Best play is for declarer to play ♦ K and then **duck** a round of diamonds.

Later declarer should lead a heart from the South hand towards the king for the seventh trick.

**Board 7**  
South Deals  
Both Vul

♠ K Q J 10  
♥ A 4  
♦ 10 6 2  
♣ 10 9 8 2

♠ A 9 6 3  
♥ 8 7 3  
♦ A Q 7 5  
♣ 7 5

♠ 8 4  
♥ 10 9 6 5  
♦ J 9 3  
♣ Q J 6 3

♠ 7 5 2  
♥ K Q J 2  
♦ K 8 4  
♣ A K 4

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♠	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	3 NT	All pass	1 NT

**Promoting honours**

Lead: ♠ K

South counts 8 winners. The 9th will come from hearts or diamonds. South should duck a round of spades to cut communications. Declarer wins ♠ Q and plays a heart. West wins, cashes two top spades and plays ♣ 10. South wins, plays 2 high hearts and realises 9th trick must come from diamonds. ♦ K should be played first.

**Board 4**  
West Deals  
Both Vul

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

♠ 10  
♥ A Q 8 7 2  
♦ A K J 3  
♣ 9 4 2

♠ J 9 5 4 2  
♥ 9 4  
♦ 9 7  
♣ K Q 7 6

♠ A K 7 3  
♥ J 10 5  
♦ Q 6 5  
♣ J 8 3

West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	4 ♥	All pass	

**Finessing**

North's rebid of 2 ♦ shows an unbalanced hand with at least five hearts and four diamonds.

Lead: ♣ K (the unbid suit)

The defence takes three club tricks. Declarer wins trick 4 and should play ♥ J from the South hand to finesse the ♥ K.

**Board 8**  
West Deals  
None Vul

♠ A 4  
♥ 8 7 3  
♦ A 8 5 3  
♣ K Q 6 4

♠ Q 8 6 2  
♥ Q J 10 5 4  
♦ 7 6  
♣ 9 8

♠ K 9 7 3  
♥ A K 2  
♦ K Q 2  
♣ 7 5 3

♠ J 10 5  
♥ 9 6  
♦ J 10 9 4  
♣ A J 10 2

West	North	East	South
1 NT	Pass	3 NT	All pass

**Play towards honours**

Lead: ♥ Q

You have seven certain tricks. The other two can come from the club suit.

Play towards the ♣ K. If this wins, return to East and play towards the ♣ Q.

If the ♣ K is captured by the ace, the diamond suit may provide you with your 9th trick.