

Leads and Defence

By Chris Dixon

The Principles of Defence

- 1 PASSIVE OR ATTACKING?**
- 2 INFORMATION**
- 3 COUNTING**
- 4 TARGET?**

When to be Passive

- 1 No evidence of a strong side suit**
- 2 Cards lying badly for declarer**
- 3 Bidding suggests borderline values**

When to Attack

- 1 Evidence of a strong side suit**
- 2 Confident auctions**
- 3 Cards lying well for declarer**

How to get Information

- 1 Information from the Bidding**
- 2 Information from Declarer's Play**
- 3 Information from Signals (legal ones)**

What to Count

- 1 Count Missing High Card Points**
- 2 Count Declarer's Tricks**
- 3 Count Declarer's Distribution**

Easy Suit Preference Situations

- 1 When you are giving partner a ruff**
- 2 When you have 2 or 3 small trumps**
- 3 When you are discarding from known cards**
- 4 When partner leads and dummy has a singleton**

Which card to lead?

1	Honour Sequences	Full Broken Interior Short	Q J 10 8 K Q 10 4 K J 10 7 Q J 4
2	Long Suits	Goodish Poor	4th highest 2nd highest
3	3 Card Suits	Sequence Honour Low cards	Top Low Low (or MUD)
4	Doubleton	Honour Low cards	Top Top
5	Trumps	Usually low	

1) ♠ A Q 7 4 2
♥ Q 7 3
♦ 10 9 3
♣ J 3

2) ♠ 9 7 4
♥ A Q 5 2
♦ J 8 3
♣ Q 7 2

3) ♠ J 7
♥ Q J 9 5 2
♦ A 7 2
♣ 8 3 2

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

5) ♠ J 10 8
♥ Q 7
♦ A J 9 4
♣ 9 7 4 2

6) ♠ A K J 6
♥ 7 2
♦ 10 8 6 2
♣ Q 7 4

What do you lead to 1NT passed out on these hands?

1) ♠ 10 8 5 3
♥ K 3
♦ A Q 9 4
♣ J 3 2

2) ♠ A K 10 6 2
♥ 8 3
♦ J 8 3
♣ 9 8 2

3) ♠ A 3
♥ 10 8 3
♦ A Q 10 9 8
♣ Q 8 3

4) ♠ 9 7 6 3
♥ A K 6
♦ J 8 6 2
♣ Q 3

5) ♠ Q J
♥ J 5 2
♦ A Q 7 2
♣ J 7 5 2

6) ♠ 8 7 2
♥ 8 7 6 4 3 2
♦ Q 7
♣ 8 2

What do you lead to 3NT (Bidding 1NT P 3NT) on these hands?

1) ♠ 9863
 ♥ 762
 ♦ J2
 ♣ KJ72

1♥	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	2NT	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P			

2) ♠ K1062
 ♥ Q72
 ♦ 983
 ♣ A82

1NT	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3NT	P
P	P	P	

3) ♠ Q862
 ♥ J42
 ♦ 10862
 ♣ A3

2♣	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3♣	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

4) ♠ Q632
 ♥ J52
 ♦ 98
 ♣ Q632

1♥	P	2♦	P
3♥	P	4♦	P
4♠	P	4NT	P
5♠	P	6♦	P
P	P		

5) ♠ 976
 ♥ KJ92
 ♦ A1072
 ♣ A2

1NT	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

6) ♠ K4
 ♥ 876
 ♦ Q7532
 ♣ 982

1♥	P	2NT	P
3♥	P	4NT	P
5♦	P	5♥	P
P	P		

1) ♠ Q 9 6 3
 ♥ 7 6 2
 ♦ A K J 6
 ♣ 8 2

1♠	P	1NT	P
2♥	P	3♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

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

1♥	2NT	X	3♣
P	P	X	P
P	P		

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

1♠	P	2♦	P
2♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

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

1♦	P	1♠	P
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

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

1NT	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

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

1♥	P	2♦	P
2♠	P	3♣	P
3NT	P	P	P

Leading Partner's Suit

- 1 Normal when it was an overcall or defensive bid**
- 2 Lead low from xxx (unless you have supported)**
- 3 Lead high when declarer is probably short**
- 4 Avoid when dummy is obviously short**
- 5 Consider 3rd/5th leads**

Leading after trick one?

1. **Big advantage of having seen dummy**
2. **Lead K from AK**
3. **Much more opportunity for deceptive plays**
4. **Opportunities for entry creating or destroying**
5. **Consider 3rd/5th leads**

1) ♠ 10 9 3
 ♥ 9 7 3
 ♦ K J 6 2
 ♣ Q 7 2

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

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

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

5) ♠ 9 3 2
 ♥ A J 2
 ♦ K J 8 2
 ♣ 9 4 3

6) ♠ A J 7 6 4
 ♥ None
 ♦ 8 6 4 2
 ♣ Q 10 7 3

S	W	N	E
		1♣	P
1♥	P	2♣	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

What do you lead?

Clues from the Bidding

- 1 What partner bid**
- 2 What declarer bid**
- 3 What dummy bid**
- 4 What opponents didn't bid**

SIGNALLING

- 1 Count Signals**
- 2 Attitude Signals**
- 3 Suit Preference Signals**

What to do on partner's lead?

- 1 3rd hand plays high – BUT
- 2 Play the lowest of touching high cards (eg with QJ4, play the J)
- 3 Finesse against dummy's honour – not against partner's
- 4 Return higher of two remaining or 4th best from 4 or more originally
- 5 Overtake to unblock
- 6 Consider a switch

Q 5	
	K 10 2
4 led	

J 5	
	Q 9 2
4 led	

10 8 2	
	K J 6
4 led	

K 10 5	
	Q J 2
4 led	

8 5	
	A Q 2
4 led	

Q 7	
	K 10 6 3
4 led	

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

Which card should you play in 3rd position when declarer plays low from dummy?

Q J 8	
	A 10 2
4 led	

J 5	
	A 9 6 2
4 led	

10 2	
	K Q
4 led	

8 2	
	A K 7 3
4 led	

J 8 5	
	A 10 9 6
4 led	

A K 6	
	J 10 3
4 led	

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

How should you continue the suit led in these positions?

Cover an honour with an honour?

- 1. Is there any prospect of trick development?**
- 2. Don't cover the first of touching honours**
- 3. Covering can extend to covering 9s with Kings**

A J 10 3	
K 6 2	
9 led	

A 10 7 5	
Q 9 2	
J led	

A 10 7 4	
K 2	
Q led	

A 7 5	
K 4 2	
Q led	

A 10 7 5 2	
K 6 3	
J led	

A 8 6 5	
Q 2	
J led	

Do you cover the honour?

Q J 9 3	
	K 5 2
Q led	

Q J 9 2	
	K 3
Q led	

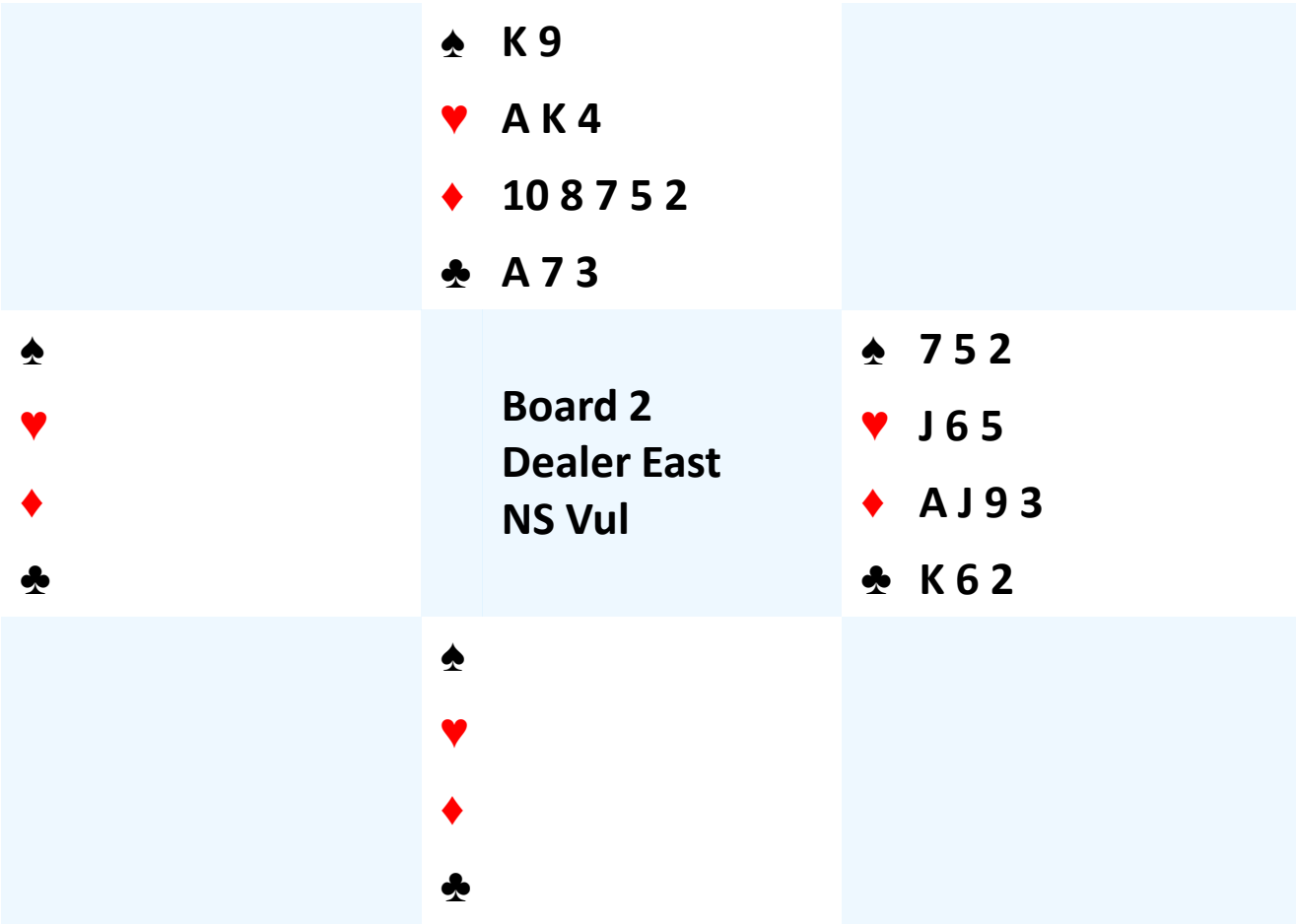
10 3	
	K 7 2
10 led	

Q 7 5 2	
	K 3
Q led	

K J 4 2	
	Q 6 3
J led	

10 4	
	A 7 2
10 led	

Do you cover the honour?



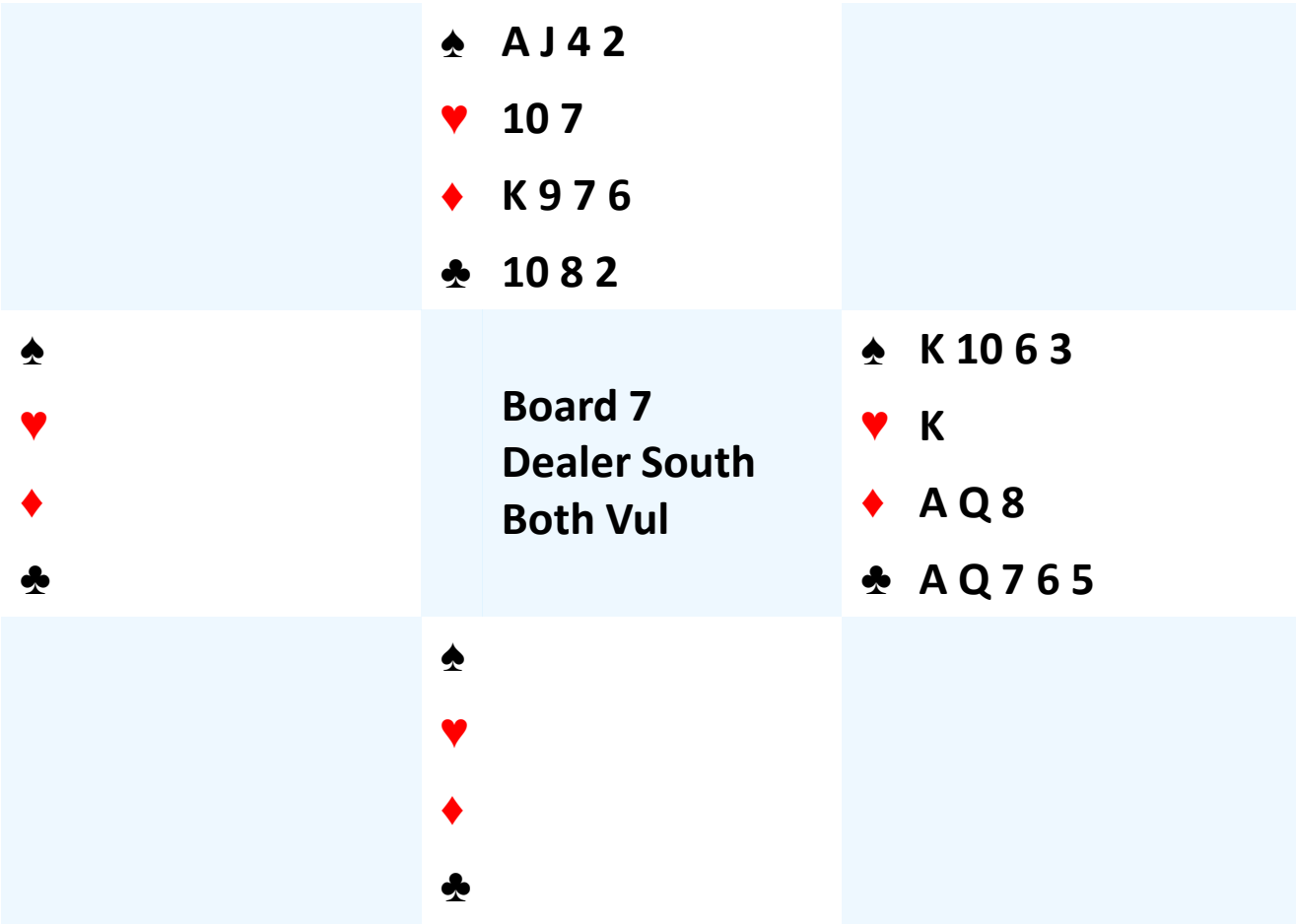
S	W	N	E
			P
1♠	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3♣	P
3NT	P	P	P

South plays in 3NT
 West leads J♣

	♠ K 9 ♥ A K 4 ♦ 10 8 7 5 2 ♣ A 7 3	
♠ J 8 4 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ Q 6 4 ♣ J 10 9 5	Board 2 Dealer East NS Vul	♠ 7 5 2 ♥ J 6 5 ♦ A J 9 3 ♣ K 6 2
	♠ A Q 10 6 3 ♥ Q 10 8 2 ♦ K ♣ Q 8 4	

S	W	N	E
			P
1♠	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3♣	P
3NT	P	P	P

South plays in 3NT
 West leads J♣



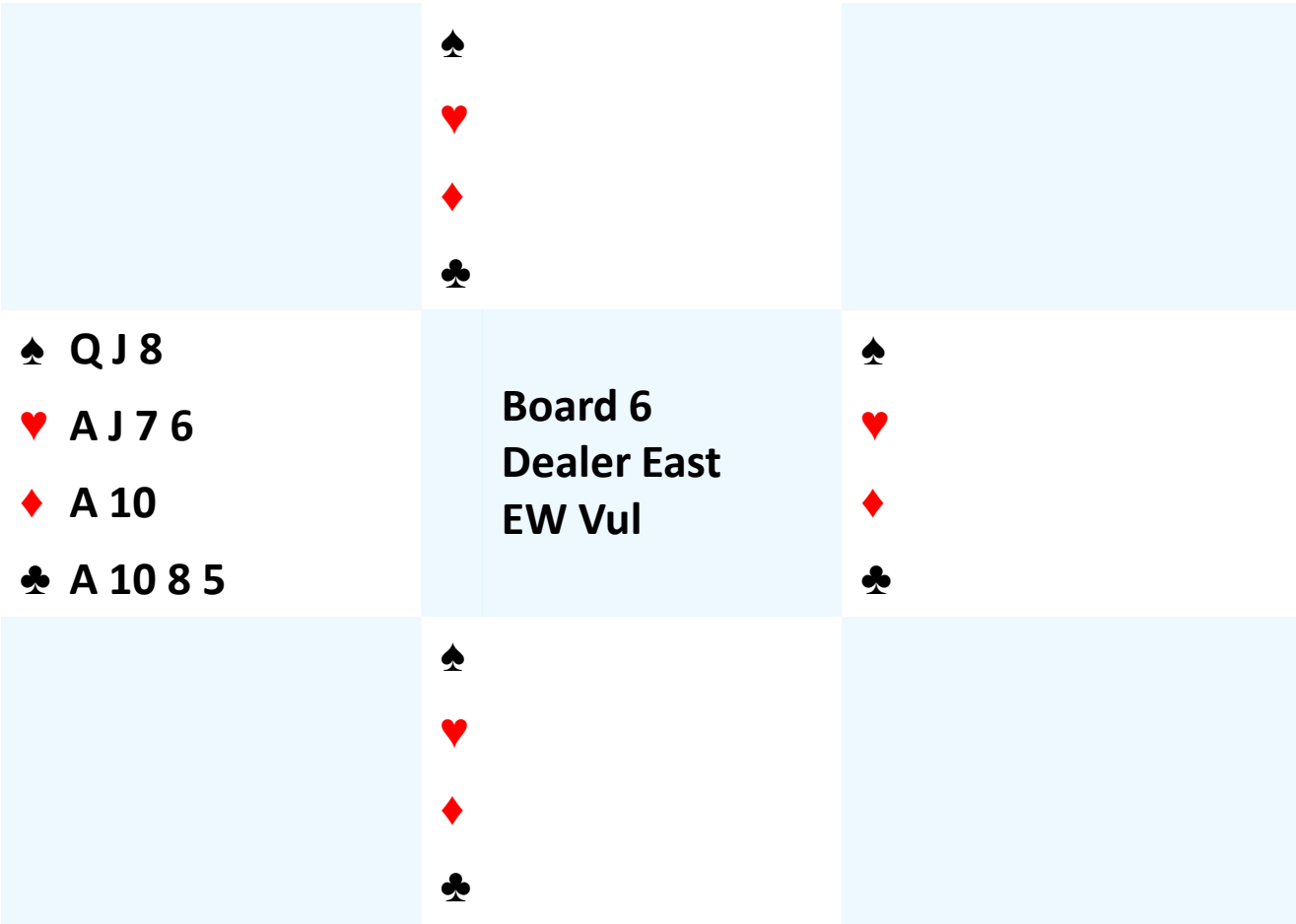
S	W	N	E
2♥	P	P	X
P	P	P	

South plays in 2♥ X
 West leads 7♠

	♠ A J 4 2 ♥ 10 7 ♦ K 9 7 6 ♣ 10 8 2	
♠ 7 5 ♥ A 9 8 5 ♦ J 5 2 ♣ K 9 4 3	Board 7 Dealer South Both Vul	♠ K 10 6 3 ♥ K ♦ A Q 8 ♣ A Q 7 6 5
	♠ Q 9 8 ♥ Q J 6 4 3 2 ♦ 10 4 3 ♣ J	

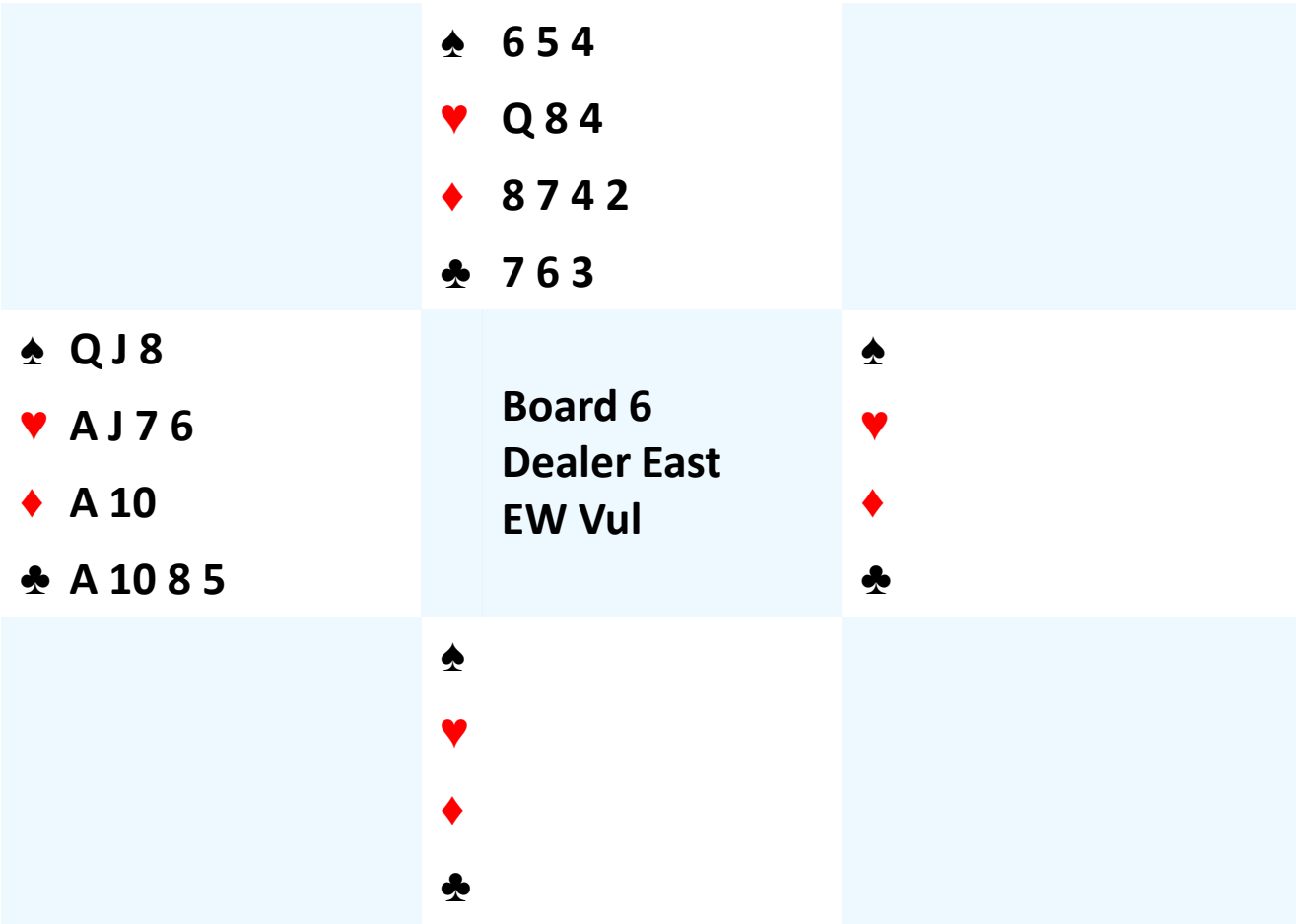
S	W	N	E
2♥	P	P	X
P	P	P	

South plays in 2♥ X
 West leads 7♠



S	W	N	E
P	1NT	X	P
P	P		P

South plays in 1NTX
West leads ?



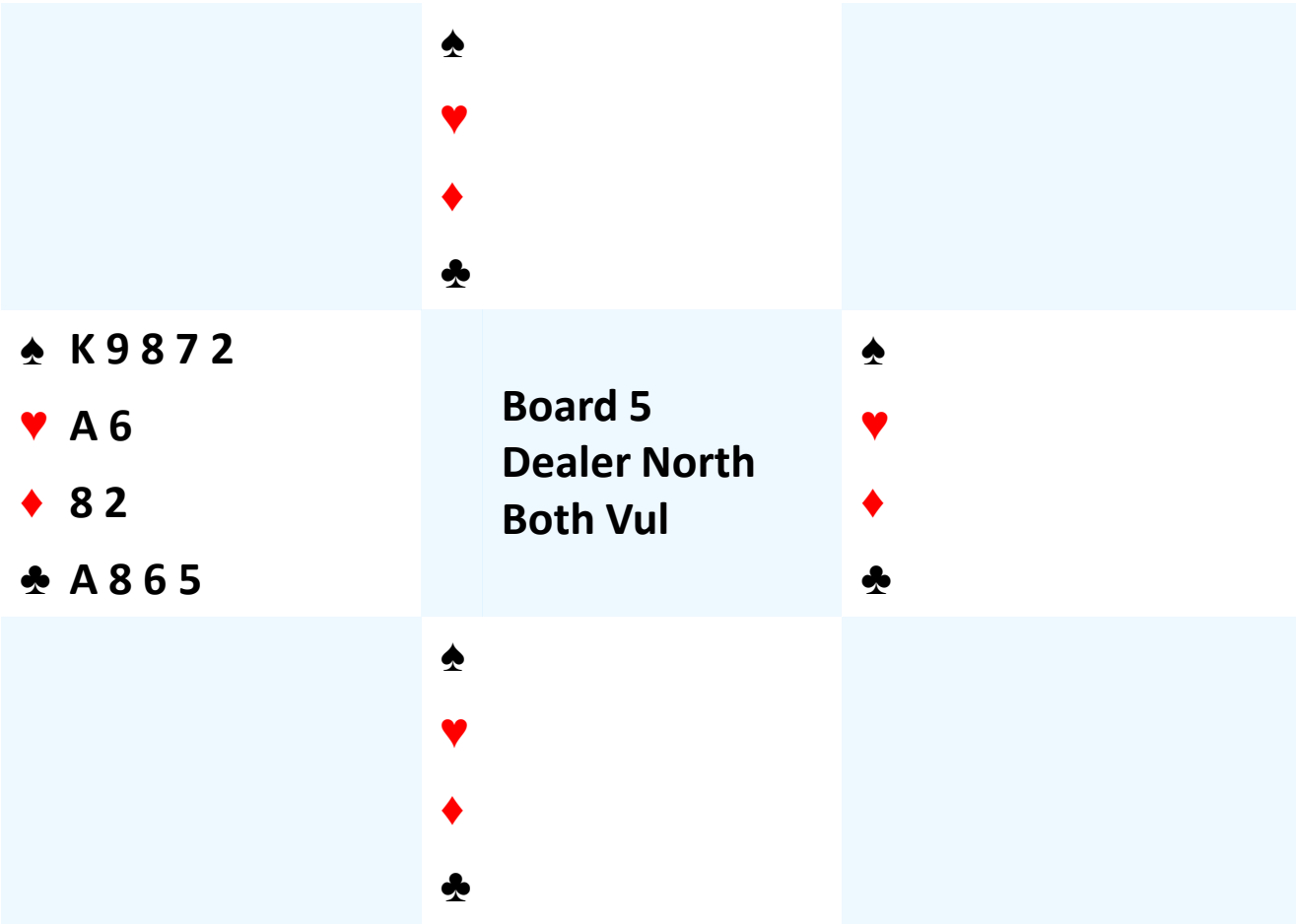
S	W	N	E
P	1NT	X	P
P	P		P

South plays in 1NTX
 West leads Q♠

	♠ 6 5 4 ♥ Q 8 4 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♣ 7 6 3	
♠ Q J 8 ♥ A J 7 6 ♦ A 10 ♣ A 10 8 5	Board 6 Dealer East EW Vul	♠ 10 7 3 2 ♥ K 9 5 ♦ J 5 3 ♣ Q J 9
	♠ A K 9 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ K Q 9 6 ♣ K 4 2	

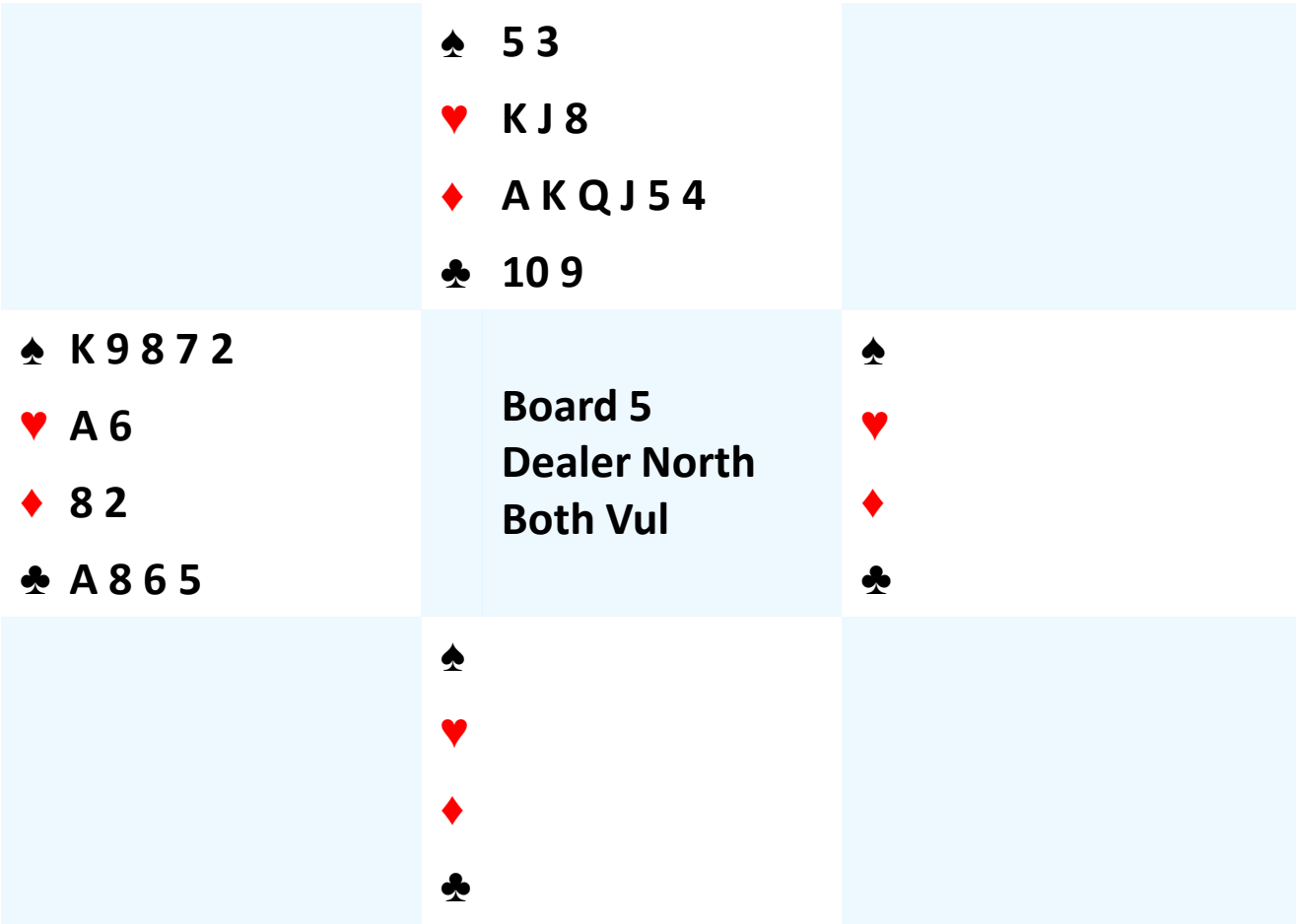
S	W	N	E
P	1NT	X	P
P	P		P

South plays in 1NTX
 West leads Q♠



S	W	N	E
		1♦	P
1♥	X	3♦	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥
West leads ?



S	W	N	E
		1♦	P
1♥	X	3♦	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥
 West leads 7♠ to the 3♠, J♠ and A♠
 Declare now leads the 2♥

	♠ 5 3 ♥ K J 8 ♦ A K Q J 5 4 ♣ 10 9	
♠ K 9 8 7 2 ♥ A 6 ♦ 8 2 ♣ A 8 6 5	Board 5 Dealer North Both Vul	♠ Q J 4 ♥ 9 5 ♦ 9 7 3 ♣ K 7 4 3 2
	♠ A 10 6 ♥ Q 10 7 4 3 2 ♦ 10 6 ♣ Q J	

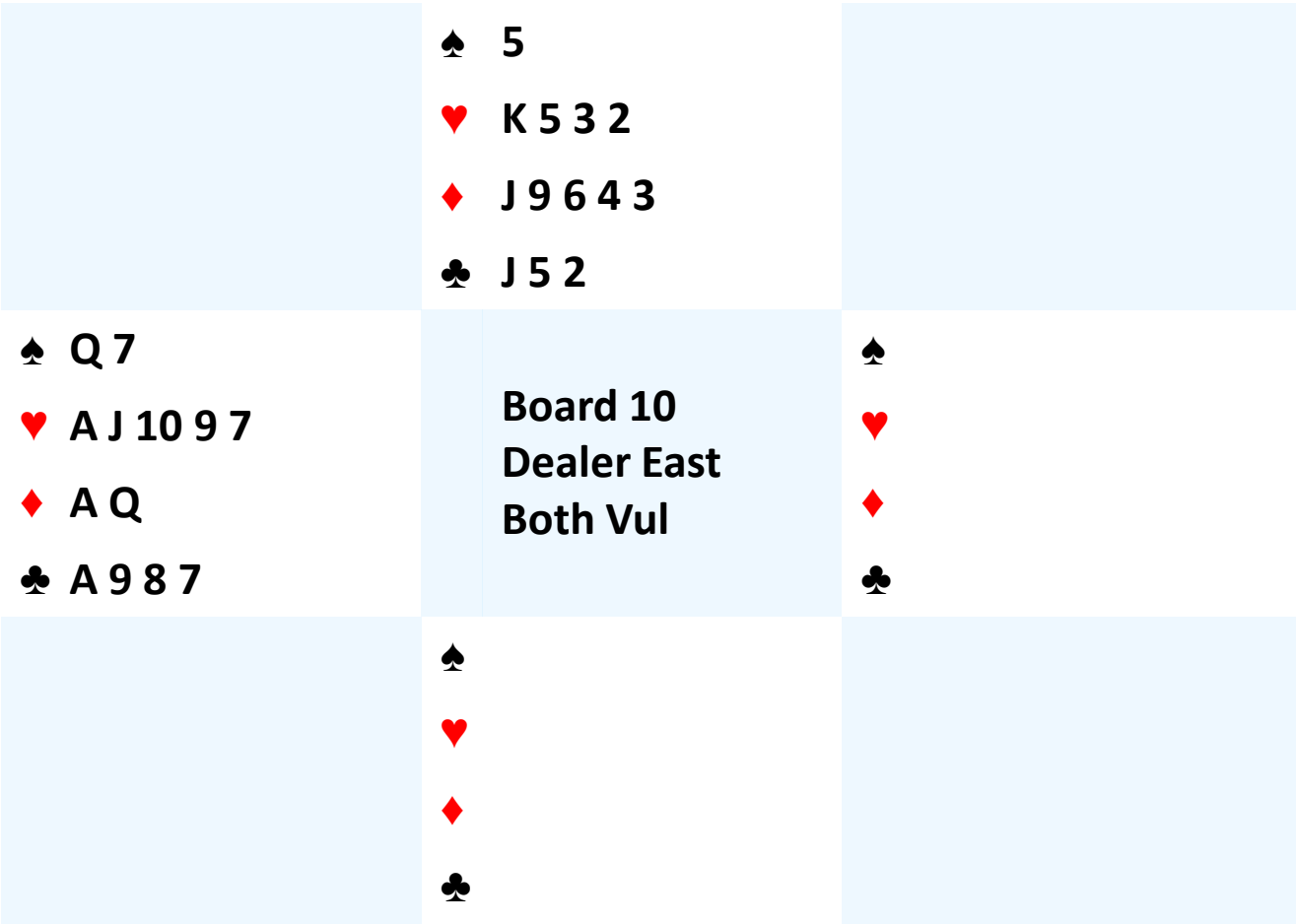
S	W	N	E
		1♦	P
1♥	X	3♦	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥
 West leads 7♠ to the 3♠, J♠ and A♠
 Declare now leads the 2♥



S	W	N	E
4♠	X	P	P
P			

South plays in 4♠ X
West leads ?



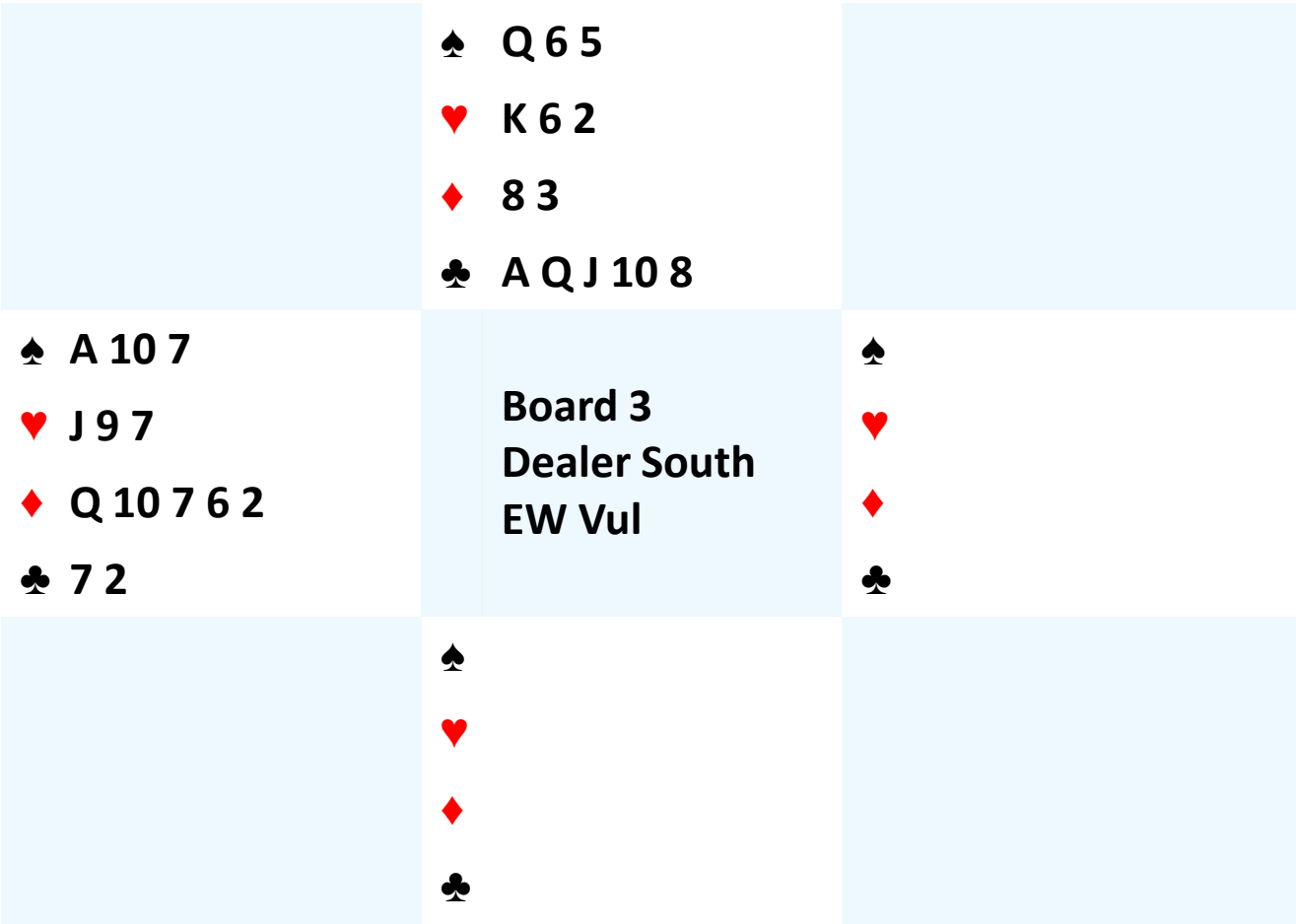
S	W	N	E
4♠	X	P	P
P			

South plays in 4♠ X
 West leads A♥

	♠ 5 ♥ K 5 3 2 ♦ J 9 6 4 3 ♣ J 5 2	
♠ Q 7 ♥ A J 10 9 7 ♦ A Q ♣ A 9 8 7	Board 10 Dealer East Both Vul	♠ 8 2 ♥ Q 8 6 ♦ K 7 2 ♣ K Q 10 6 3
	♠ A K J 10 9 6 4 3 ♥ 4 ♦ 10 8 5 ♣ 4	

S	W	N	E
4♠	X	P	P
P			

South plays in 4♠ X
 West leads A♥



S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 6♦ to the 8♦, 9♦ and J♦
 Declarer leads the 2♠ to trick 2

	<p>♠ Q 6 5</p> <p>♥ K 6 2</p> <p>♦ 8 3</p> <p>♣ A Q J 10 8</p>	
<p>♠ A 10 7</p> <p>♥ J 9 7</p> <p>♦ Q 10 7 6 2</p> <p>♣ 7 2</p>	<p>Board 3</p> <p>Dealer South</p> <p>EW Vul</p>	<p>♠ J 8 4 3</p> <p>♥ A Q 10 3</p> <p>♦ 9 5 4</p> <p>♣ 9 3</p>
	<p>♠ K 9 2</p> <p>♥ 8 5 4</p> <p>♦ A K J</p> <p>♣ K 9 5 4</p>	

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 6♦ to the 8♦, 9♦ and J♦
 Declarer leads the 2♠ to trick 2



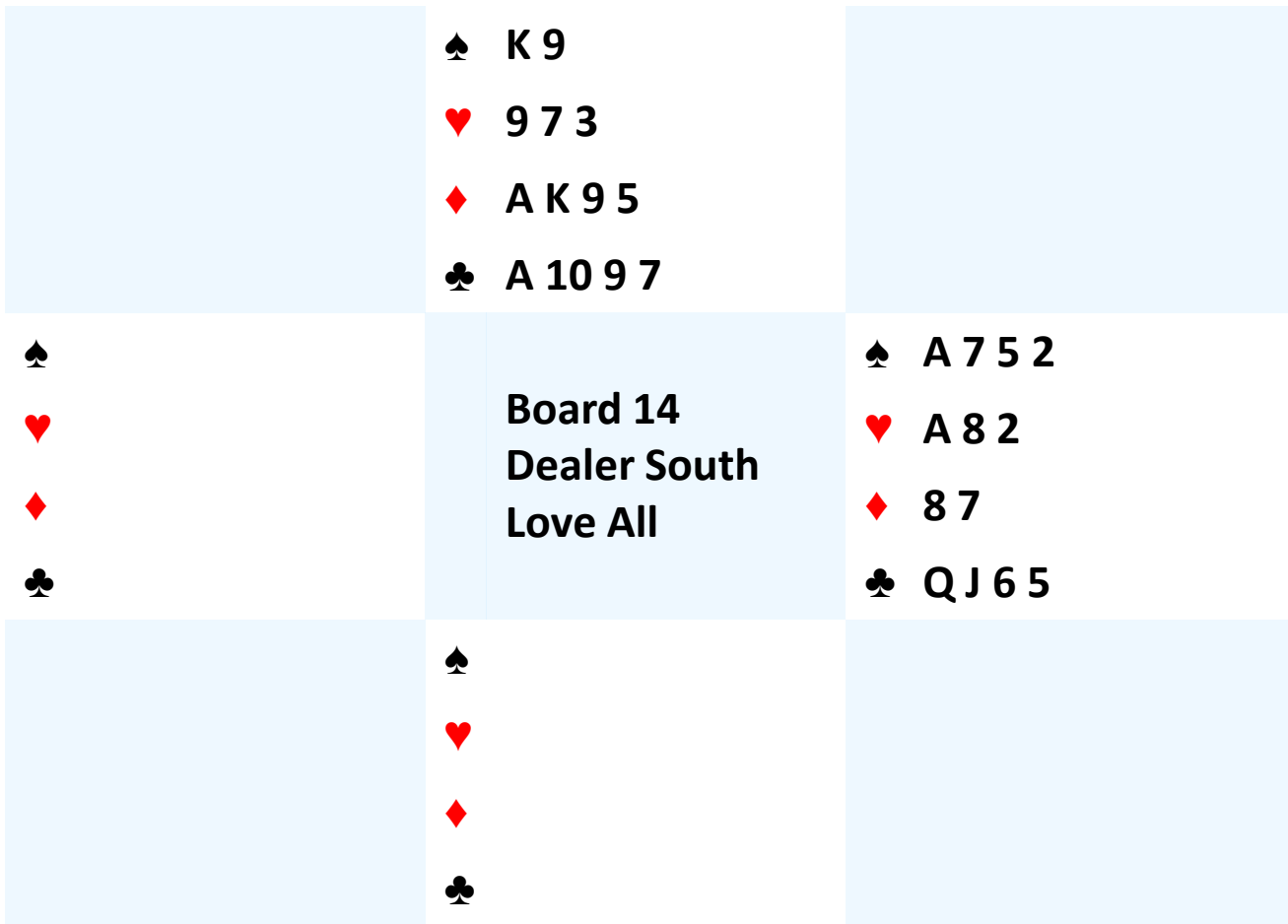
S	W	N	E
		1 ♠	P
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 5♦ to the 3♦, J♦ and K♦
 Declarer crosses to the A♣ and plays a low spade to the J♠

	♠ A K 7 5 2 ♥ J 8 ♦ 9 6 3 ♣ A K Q	
♠ Q 8 3 ♥ A Q 6 ♦ Q 10 7 5 2 ♣ 8 3	Board 1 Dealer North Love All	♠ 10 9 6 ♥ K 10 7 3 ♦ J ♣ J 10 7 5 4
	♠ J 4 ♥ 9 5 4 2 ♦ A K 8 4 ♣ 9 6 2	

S	W	N	E
		1 ♠	P
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 5♦ to the 3♦, J♦ and K♦
 Declarer crosses to the A♣ and plays a low spade to the J♠



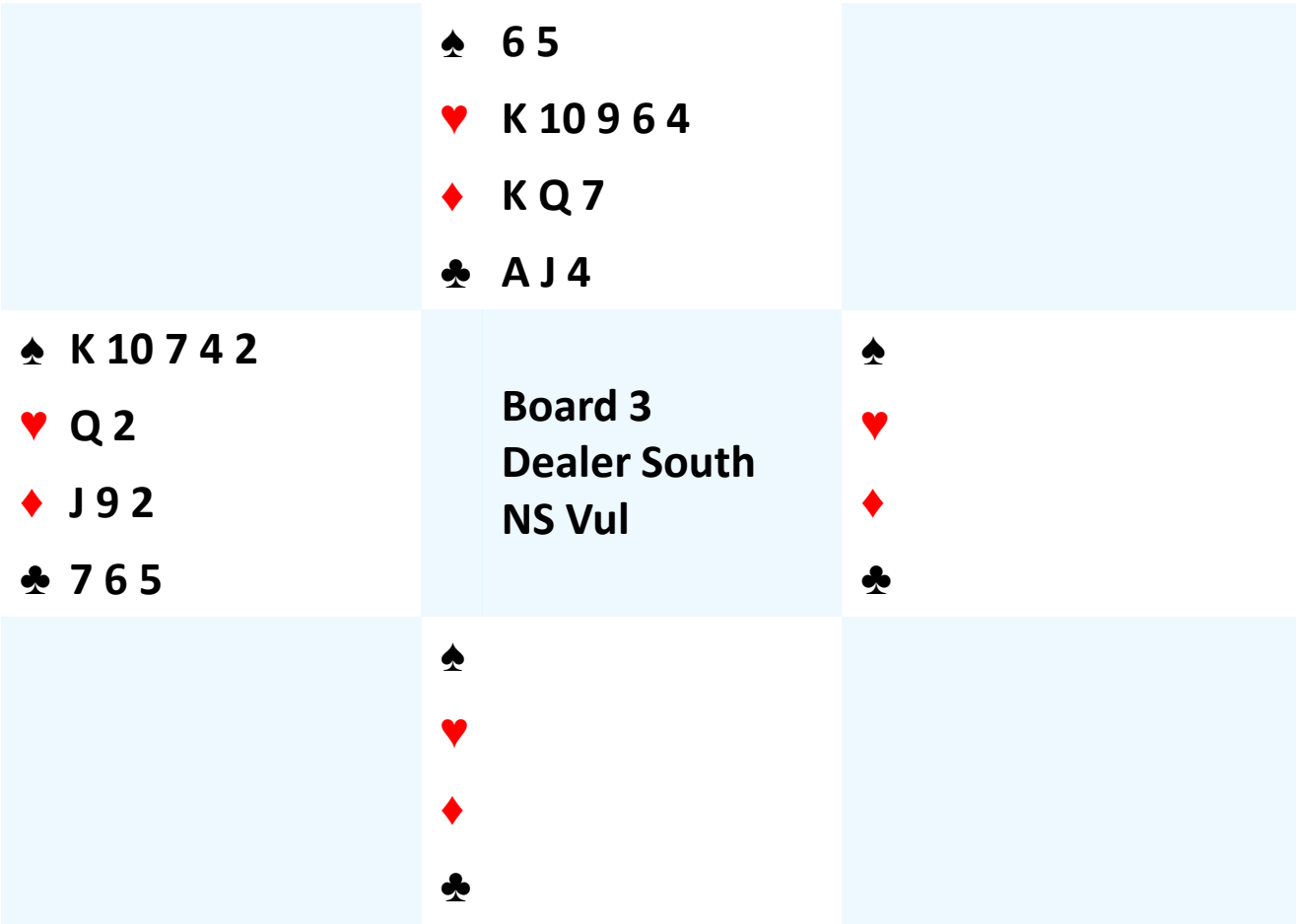
S	W	N	E
2♦	P	2♠	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥
 West leads Q♠ which holds the trick, then plays the 3♠

	♠ K 9 ♥ 9 7 3 ♦ A K 9 5 ♣ A 10 9 7	
♠ Q J 10 6 3 ♥ 5 ♦ Q 6 4 3 2 ♣ K 3	Board 14 Dealer South Love All	♠ A 7 5 2 ♥ A 8 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ Q J 6 5
	♠ 8 4 ♥ K Q J 10 6 4 ♦ J 10 ♣ 8 4 2	

S	W	N	E
2♦	P	2♠	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥
 West leads Q♠ which holds the trick, then
 plays the 3♠



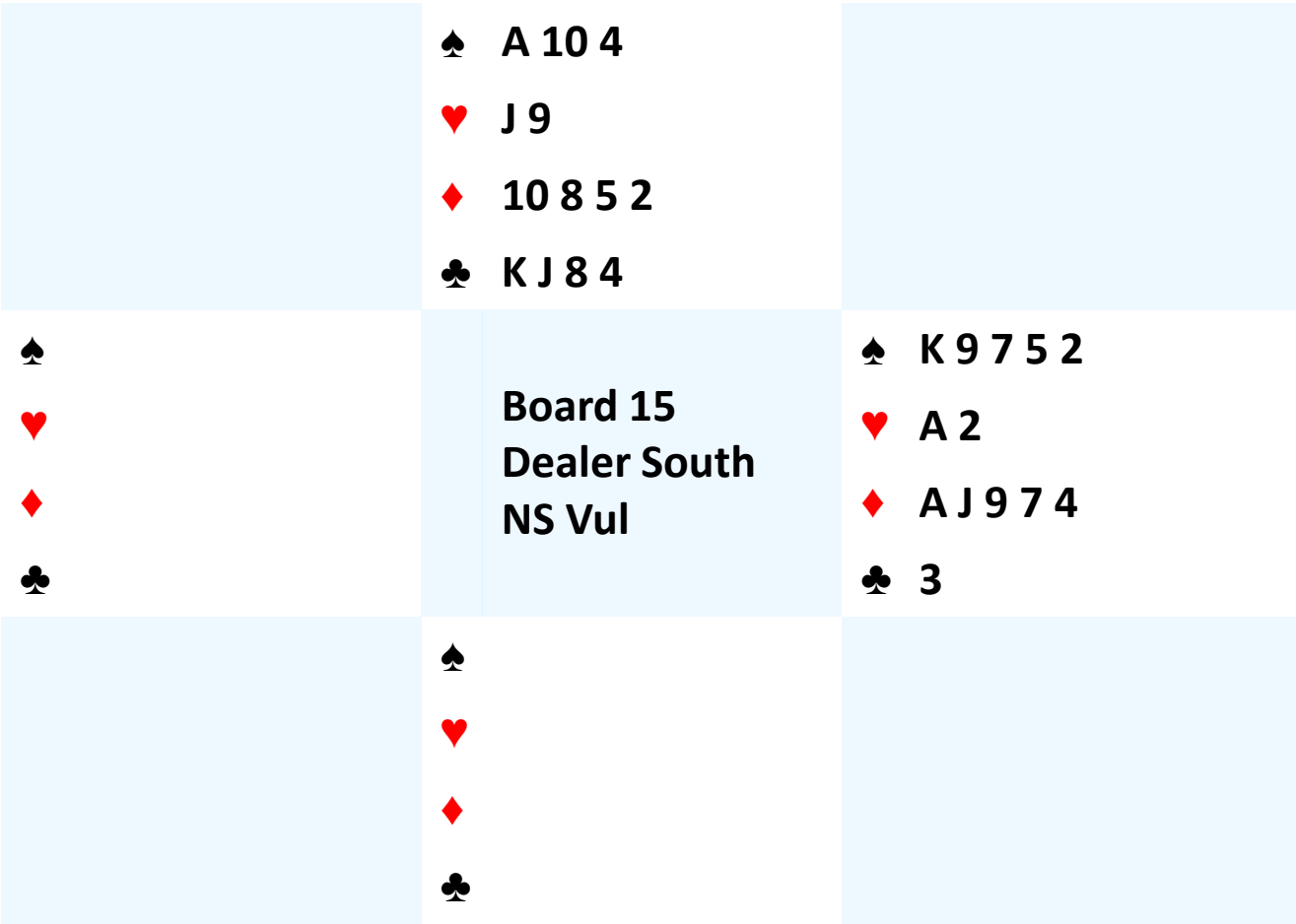
S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3NT	P
P	P		

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 4♠ to the 5♠ A♠ and 9♠
 East returns the 8♠ and South plays the Q♠

	♠ 6 5 ♥ K 10 9 6 4 ♦ K Q 7 ♣ A J 4	
♠ K 10 7 4 2 ♥ Q 2 ♦ J 9 2 ♣ 7 6 5	Board 3 Dealer South NS Vul	♠ A 8 3 ♥ J 8 5 3 ♦ 6 5 4 ♣ K 9 2
	♠ Q J 9 ♥ A 7 ♦ A 10 8 3 ♣ Q 10 8 3	

S	W	N	E
1NT	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3NT	P
P	P		

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 4♠ to the 5♠ A♠ and 9♠
 East returns the 8♠ and South plays the Q♠



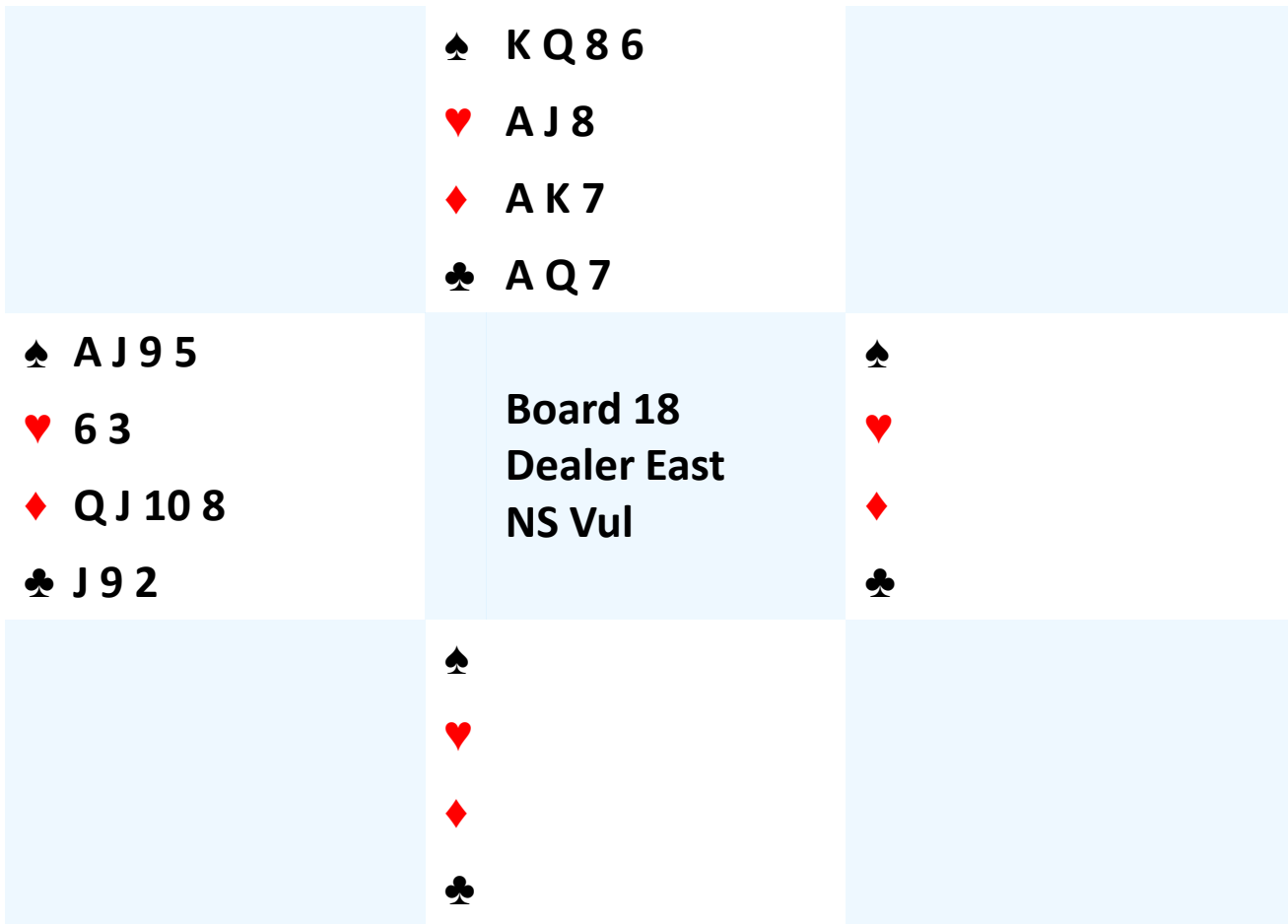
S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT	2♥
X	2♠	P	P
3♥	P	P	P

South plays in 3♥
 West leads 3♦ to the 2♦, A♦ and Q♦

	♠ A 10 4 ♥ J 9 ♦ 10 8 5 2 ♣ K J 8 4	
♠ Q J 8 3 ♥ 8 5 4 ♦ 3 ♣ Q 10 9 6 5	Board 15 Dealer South NS Vul	♠ K 9 7 5 2 ♥ A 2 ♦ A J 9 7 4 ♣ 3
	♠ 6 ♥ K Q 10 7 6 3 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ A 7 2	

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1NT	2♥
X	2♠	P	P
3♥	P	P	P

South plays in 3♥
 West leads 3♦ to the 2♦, A♦ and Q♦



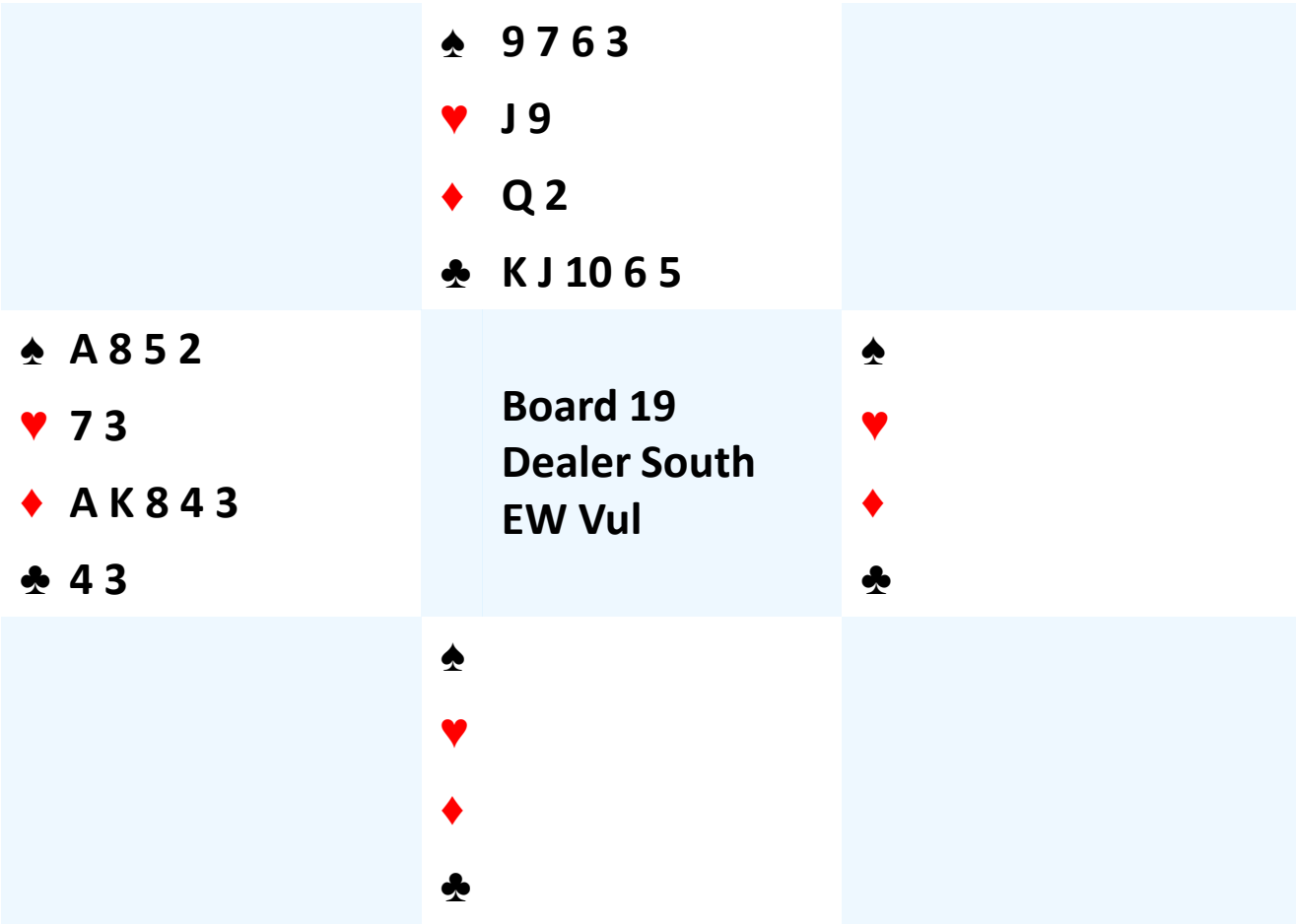
S	W	N	E
			P
3♥	P	6♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 6♥
 West leads Q♦ to the K♦, 3♦ and 2♦
 Declarer plays a heart to the A♥, a heart to the K♥ (East discards 7♠) and then leads the 2♠ from hand. Win or duck?

	♠ K Q 8 6 ♥ A J 8 ♦ A K 7 ♣ A Q 7	
♠ A J 9 5 ♥ 6 3 ♦ Q J 10 8 ♣ J 9 2	Board 18 Dealer East NS Vul	♠ 10 7 4 3 ♥ 7 ♦ 9 5 3 ♣ K 8 5 4 3
	♠ 2 ♥ K Q 10 9 5 4 2 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ 10 6	

S	W	N	E
			P
3♥	P	6♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 6♥
 West leads Q♦ to the K♦, 3♦ and 2♦
 Declarer plays a heart to the A♥, a heart to the K♥ (East discards 7♠) and then leads the 2♠ from hand. Win or duck?



S	W	N	E
2NT	P	3♣	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♠
 West leads A♦ to the 2♦, 10♦ and 5♦

	<p>♠ 9 7 6 3</p> <p>♥ J 9</p> <p>♦ Q 2</p> <p>♣ K J 10 6 5</p>	
<p>♠ A 8 5 2</p> <p>♥ 7 3</p> <p>♦ A K 8 4 3</p> <p>♣ 4 3</p>	<p>Board 19</p> <p>Dealer South</p> <p>EW Vul</p>	<p>♠ 4</p> <p>♥ 10 8 6 5 4 2</p> <p>♦ 10 9 7 6</p> <p>♣ Q 2</p>
	<p>♠ K Q J 10</p> <p>♥ A K Q</p> <p>♦ J 5</p> <p>♣ A 9 8 7</p>	

S	W	N	E
2NT	P	3♣	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♠
 West leads A♦ to the 2♦, 10♦ and 5♦



S	W	N	E
	P	P	P
1♥	P	2♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥
 West leads Q♦ to the 3♦, A♦ and K♦

	♠ A 9 3 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ 9 3 ♣ Q J 10 8 3	
♠ K 7 5 ♥ 10 5 ♦ Q J 10 6 2 ♣ K 7 4	Board 4 Dealer West Game all	♠ Q 10 8 6 ♥ 7 2 ♦ A 8 7 5 4 ♣ 6 2
	♠ J 4 2 ♥ A K Q 8 6 4 ♦ K ♣ A 9 5	

S	W	N	E
	P	P	P
1♥	P	2♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥
 West leads Q♦ to the 3♦, A♦ and K♦

Summary

- 1 Passive or Attacking?**
- 2 Clues from bidding or play**
- 3 Count points, distribution and tricks**
- 4 Don't over signal**
- 5 Don't always cover honours**
- 6 Think in advance**