

## §37. Defence Against Pre-empts.

**By the end of this chapter you should understand the following terms:**

**A double is for take-out:** A Double of a weak three bid is for take-out; showing support for the other three suits;

**3NT is a natural bid:** 3NT is a speculative call, bid on strong balanced hands or strong hands with a good suit;

**Overcalls are natural:** Overcalls show decent hands, maybe with only a five-card suit;

**Jump overcalls are strong:** Jump overcalls (e.g. 4♥ over 3♣) show strong hands.

This chapter is concerned with defending against pre-emptive bids. The focus here is how to cope with three-level openers, although much of what is said here applies against weak two openers as well.

Now, pre-empts are designed to create problems for the opposition; let's take a look at a hand where an opposing pre-empt creates difficulty. In Example 1, suppose your Right-Hand Opponent (or RHO for short) opens 3♠. You were about to open 1♦ and take the bidding slowly – now, if you want to bid, you'd have to enter the auction at the four-level. You could Pass 3♠ and allow the enemy to *steal the deal* or you could bid something, but what? 4♦ would risk ending up with egg on your face. That's why it's good to pre-empt when you can – you give your opponents awkward, sometimes insoluble, problems like this. Methods are required to defend against pre-emptive action.

**Ex 1.**

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

The basic, recommended methods are these:

1. Doubles are for take-out. They should be *shape-specific* in that they have shortages in the opened suit.
2. 3NT is a natural call, bid on a strong balanced hand or one with a long, strong suit
3. A simple overcall shows a decent, but far from overwhelming, hand. In essence, it's speculative
4. A jump overcall is strong, showing a fine suit.

These hands would make ideal take-out Doubles of your Right-Hand Opponent's pre-emptive opener:

**Ex 2.**

♠ A 10 8 5  
♥ 8  
♦ K 9 8 2  
♣ K Q J 4

If RHO opened 3♥  
you would Double.

**Ex 3.**

♠ K Q J 6  
♥ Q 10 9 6  
♦ A J 7  
♣ 8 3

If RHO opened 3♣  
you would Double.

**Ex 4.**

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

If RHO opened 3♠  
you would Double.

Note that if your Right-Hand Opponent opened with a pre-empt in another suit you would Pass as you'd be unable to support the other three suits.

These hands would overcall 3NT after an opponent's pre-emptive opening bid:

**Ex 5.**

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

If RHO opened 3♣  
you would bid 3NT.

**Ex 6.**

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

If RHO opened 3♥  
you would bid 3NT.

**Ex 7.**

♠ Q 5 2  
♥ K 4 2  
♦ A Q  
♣ A K 9 8 6

If RHO opened 3♦  
you would bid 3NT.

Now, in each case, 3NT is something of a gamble. If partner has nothing this gamble will fail, but the alternative is to Pass and allow the enemy to steal the deal at the three-level.

If you consider the point-count, then your Right-Hand Opponent has about 8 points. Counting up the points in the case of Example 5 gives a total of 25. As likely as not, the remaining 15 points are as going to be split evenly between your Left-Hand opponent and partner. If all 15 are on your left, you will be Doubled and will concede a massive penalty. It happens sometimes – *c'est la vie*.

These example hands would overcall at the three-level over an opponent's pre-emptive opening bid:

<b>Ex 8.</b> ♠ Q J 4 2 ♥ J 8 ♦ A K 8 7 3 ♣ K 9 If RHO opened 3♣ you would bid 3♦.	<b>Ex 9.</b> ♠ 10 8 ♥ A Q 10 5 3 ♦ J 9 ♣ A Q J 6 If RHO opened 3♦ you would bid 3♥.	<b>Ex 10.</b> ♠ A K 9 7 6 3 ♥ K 7 6 ♦ Q 10 4 ♣ 2 If RHO opened 3♣/3♦/3♥ you would bid 3♠.
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In each case you are hoping to hit something good in partner's hand. If he doesn't have a fit for your suit and he has nowhere else to go then you may well fail in your venture. Well, that's what pre-empts are designed to do – they sometimes jostle you into a bad spot.

These hands would bid game directly after an opponent's pre-emptive opening bid:

<b>Ex 11.</b> ♠ A K Q J 9 5 ♥ 5 3 2 ♦ A K J ♣ J If RHO opened 3♥ you would bid 4♠.	<b>Ex 12.</b> ♠ 8 ♥ A K Q 10 9 6 ♦ 10 8 ♣ A K Q 7 If RHO opened 3♦ you would bid 4♥.	<b>Ex 13.</b> ♠ K Q J 9 7 5 2 ♥ A K 8 ♦ K 9 ♣ 8 If RHO opened 3♣ you would bid 4♠.
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The rationale here is that you cannot put pressure on partner to dredge up a raise on minimum values. With plenty of playing tricks you have to blast game yourself and hope dummy turns up with a useful card or two.

We finish this section with an observation about responses to take-out Doubles. You have to remember that you are compelled to bid by a take-out Double, not to have a good hand. Thus, a minimum bid promises minimum values – *if you don't have nothing, you have to show it.* (If you see what we mean).

Some examples may make this clear.

Ex 14.

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 8 6 4 2

♥ K 9 7

♦ 6 4 3

♣ J 8

West	North	East	South
3♥	Dble	Pass	?

3♠. You don't want to bid on this muck, but you have little choice once partner has made a take-out Double. Bear this sort of hand in mind when you make a take-out Double and partner replies; you are putting a gun to his head and forcing him to bid.

Ex 15.

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A K J 5 3

♥ 8 5 2

♦ K 5 2

♣ K 6

West	North	East	South
3♥	Dble	Pass	?

4♠. With an opening bid yourself, you must jump to game, confident that your side has both a *fit* and ample values. North has promised some Spades and an opening bid, so 3♠ would leave him in limbo. *When you don't have nothing, you have to show it.*

Ex 16.

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 7

♥ A Q J 4

♦ J 10 7

♣ A 10 4 2

West	North	East	South
3♦	Dble	Pass	?

4♥. As in Ex. 15, you have an opening bid, so a minimum response of 3♥ would be inappropriate, suggesting a hand akin to Ex. 14. With sufficient values between the partnership you have to take a pot at the most likely game. If it fails, *c'est la vie*.

Ex 17.

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q

♥ 10 6 3

♦ A Q 9 8

♣ Q 9 7 5 3

West	North	East	South
3♦	Dble	Pass	?

**Pass.** It may be rare to Pass a take-out Double, but there is no law against it. To do so, you must have **trump tricks**. You Pass with the aim of penalising the enemy. Here, how is West going to make nine tricks when you have his long suit sewn up?

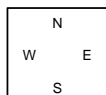
Note that, as responder, you must jump to game if you think you might make it. The Doubler has said his piece and will often Pass if you respond with a minimum reply. Note also that you can Pass a take-out Double if you think that you can take a penalty off the opponents. If you do so, (Ex. 17) you are said to be making a **penalty Pass**.

### §37. Quiz A on Defence Against Pre-empt

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz A your Right-Hand Opponent (East) opens the bidding with a pre-empt.  
What action, if any, do you take?

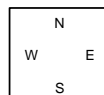
1.



West	North	East	South
		3♣	?

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

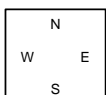
2.



West	North	East	South
		3♥	?

♠ A 10 8 5  
♥ 7  
♦ K J 4 3  
♣ K J 10 8

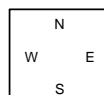
3.



West	North	East	South
		3♦	?

♠ A 10 8 5  
♥ 7  
♦ K J 4 3  
♣ K J 10 8

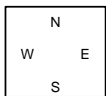
4.



West	North	East	South
		3♠	?

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

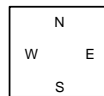
5.



West	North	East	South
		3♥	?

♠ A Q  
♥ 10 9 6  
♦ A 10 7 6  
♣ A 10 7 5

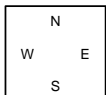
6.



West	North	East	South
		3♣	?

♠ A Q  
♥ K 9 6  
♦ A 10 7 6  
♣ A 10 7 5

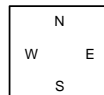
7.



West	North	East	South
		3♦	?

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

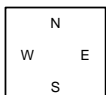
8.



West	North	East	South
		3♣	?

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

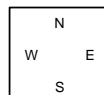
9.



West	North	East	South
		3♠	?

♠ A 9 6  
♥ K J  
♦ A K 9 7 5  
♣ Q J 8

10.\*



West	North	East	South
		3♥	?

♠ Q 7  
♥ Q 10 8  
♦ A 5  
♣ A K Q J 9 6

## §37. Quiz A on Defence Against Pre-empts Answers

1.



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

West	North	East	South
		3♣	?

**Double.** A take-out Double, naturally enough, asking partner to compete the auction in his best suit. Your hand is just about spot-on for this action with short Clubs, two four-card majors and 15 points. Whichever suit partner chooses is fine by you – you will Pass that.

2.



♠ A 10 8 5  
♥ 7  
♦ K J 4 3  
♣ K J 10 8

West	North	East	South
		3♥	?

**Double.** Another take-out Double, this time with only 12 points. You are minimum in terms of values, but you are *shape-specific* in that you have the ideal 4-1-4-4 pattern with short Hearts. When you have shortage in the enemy's main suit, you should strain to compete.

3.



♠ A 10 8 5  
♥ 7  
♦ K J 4 3  
♣ K J 10 8

West	North	East	South
		3♦	?

**Pass.** You may think 3♦ is sure to fail, but you can't Double as that would be for take-out. North would be sure to bid Hearts (maybe by jumping to 4♥) and it would all end in tears. When you have the enemy's suit well held, you either have to Pass or gamble 3NT.

4.



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

West	North	East	South
		3♠	?

**Double.** Here, where East-West have Spades, you are compelling North to bid at the four-level. To do that you have to have a pretty chunky hand. This collection (16 points and a 4-4-3-2 pattern with short Spades) just about qualifies. It is minimum for the action, mind.

5.



♠ A Q  
♥ 10 9 6  
♦ A 10 7 6  
♣ A 10 7 5

West	North	East	South
		3♥	?

**Pass.** It may stick in your craw to have to Pass with 14 good points but what is the alternative? Double invites disaster as North is surely going to bid Spades, and you may end up in a silly contract. Pre-empts make life awkward, and here East has succeeded in his aim.

6.



♠ A Q  
♥ K 9 6  
♦ A 10 7 6  
♣ A 10 7 5

West	North	East	South
		3♣	?

**3NT.** Your only other option is to Pass as Double without support for the other three suits invites trouble to come knocking. Sure, 3NT is a gamble and is dangerous. However, Passing is just as dangerous as your side may well miss an easy game contract.

7.



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

West	North	East	South
		3♦	?

**3♥.** You have to take some action on this hand with 14 points and a Diamond shortage. Some might think of a take-out Double, but it is generally better to bid your five-card suit. Yes, it could all go horribly wrong, but that's why opponents pre-empt – to make you guess.

8.



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

West	North	East	South
		3♣	?

**4♥.** A simple 3♥ would put too much pressure on partner to raise to game with very little. With eight *playing tricks* you have to hope for something useful in the dummy and take a punt at game. Yes, it could all go sour, but after a pre-empt it's a guessing game.

9.



♠ A 9 6  
♥ K J  
♦ A K 9 7 5  
♣ Q J 8

West	North	East	South
		3♠	?

**3NT.** It's this or Pass. Yes, 3NT is a perilous punt that could go awry should North have next to nothing. On the other hand, Passing risks allowing East-West to steal the deal cheaply in Spades with game available your way. Passing is often as dangerous as bidding.

10.



♠ Q 7  
♥ Q 10 8  
♦ A 5  
♣ A K Q J 9 6

West	North	East	South
		3♥	?

**3NT.** Trying for the nine-trick game is a common theme in bridge. 4♣ is unlikely to get you very far, and 3NT may have nine top tricks. Yes, you need North to have something over there, but the same is true in order to make 4♠/5♣. Risks have to be taken after a pre-empt.

## §37. Quiz B on Defence Against Pre-empt

In each case you are **South**

In Quiz B your Left-Hand Opponent (West) opens the bidding with a pre-empt and your partner takes some action. What is your best continuation?

1.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♣	Dble	Pass	?

♠ Q 10 5  
♥ J 9 7 5 2  
♦ 9 7  
♣ J 10 7

2.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♥	Dble	Pass	?

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

3.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♦	Dble	Pass	?

♠ 9 7 5  
♥ A 2  
♦ K 6 5  
♣ K Q 7 6 2

4.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♠	Dble	Pass	?

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

5.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♥	Dble	Pass	?

♠ 6 5 3  
♥ A J 9 7  
♦ A 5 2  
♣ 9 6 2

6.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♥	3♠	Pass	?

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

7.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♦	4♠	Pass	?

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

8.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♠	3♥	Pass	?

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

9.

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♠	3♥	Pass	?

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

10.\*

N		
W		E
S		

West	North	East	South
3♠	3♥	Pass	?

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

## §37. Quiz B on Defence Against Pre-empt's Answers

1.

N		E
W		
S		

♠ Q 10 5  
♥ J 9 7 5 2  
♦ 9 7  
♣ J 10 7

West	North	East	South
3♣	Dble	Pass	?

**3♥.** Partner's Double is for take-out, obliging you to bid your best suit. You might not relish bidding anything on this heap, but Passing the Double of 3♣ could prove very expensive if West were to make his contract. You should be grateful that you have a five-card suit!

2.

N		E
W		
S		

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

West	North	East	South
3♥	Dble	Pass	?

**4♠. Not 3♠,** as North could very well place you with rubbish, akin to the hand depicted in Q1. Partner could well Pass 3♠, if you bid that. With 12 points facing a good hand (North must have good values to justify lurching in at the three-level) you must bid game.

3.

N		E
W		
S		

♠ 9 7 5  
♥ A 2  
♦ K 6 5  
♣ K Q 7 6 2

West	North	East	South
3♦	Dble	Pass	?

**3NT.** 4♣ wouldn't do justice to the values of this hand (it is an opening bid, after all) and, in any case, who wants to play the hand in Clubs? With a protected ♦K it must be right to try 3NT with the hope of running off nine winners. Nine tricks are easier than eleven.

4.

N		E
W		
S		

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

West	North	East	South
3♠	Dble	Pass	?

**4♥.** What choice do you have? Partner has made a take-out Double, obliging you to choose a suit at the four-level. From your perspective, ten tricks in Hearts are a million miles away, but you cannot Pass 3♠ Doubled. *Yours not to reason why* (and all that jazz).

5.

N		E
W		
S		

♠ 6 5 3  
♥ A J 9 7  
♦ A 5 2  
♣ 9 6 2

West	North	East	South
3♥	Dble	Pass	?

**Pass.** Second choice 3NT. Although North's Double is for take-out there is nothing in the rules that says you can't Pass. Here, with good Hearts, it is best to do so, making a *penalty Pass*. 3♥ Doubled looks like being socked for 500 points or so, a worthwhile investment.

6.

N		E
W		
S		

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

West	North	East	South
3♥	3♠	Pass	?

**4♠.** Easy enough. Partner has five or six Spades and enough values to justify coming in at the three-level. Given that, it is easy enough to raise to game. You are just short of an opening bid and North has shown a robust opening bid – what more do you need?

7.

N		E
W		
S		

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

West	North	East	South
3♦	4♠	Pass	?

**Pass.** Quickly. This has nothing whatsoever to do with you. Partner has shown long, strong Spades and a good hand. Be grateful that you have an Ace and a potentially valuable singleton Diamond. Put the dummy down and wish partner good luck as you do so.

8.

N		E
W		
S		

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

West	North	East	South
3♣	3♥	Pass	?

**Pass.** This hand with its *soft values* (Queens and Jacks) is unlikely to be of much use to partner. North's 3♥ was bid under pressure and he may be hoping for a better collection in your hand. Yes, you have three-card Heart support, but not much else of worth.

9.

N		E
W		
S		

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

West	North	East	South
3♣	3♥	Pass	?

**3♠.** Partner has Hearts (which you loathe) and a decent hand. He may have something in Spades, and this may be the way to find out if that is the case. 4♠ may be the spot, if North has secondary Spade support. You might Pass 3♥, but that would be a little too pessimistic.

10.

N		E
W		
S		

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

West	North	East	South
3♣	3♥	Pass	?

**3NT.** You have a protected ♠K and a source of tricks in the form of that Diamond suit. Yes, 3NT might prove difficult, but what's the alternative? If you Pass 3♥ you may go minus in that contract. So, may as well try a game contract and get hung for a sheep as for a lamb.

## §37. Example hands 1 to 4.

**Hand 1** Love all, dealer North

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

West	North	East	South
	3♠	Dble	Pass
4♥	Pass	Pass	Pass
4♥ by West		Opening lead: ♠K	

North has a typical first in hand pre-empt of 3♠; what should East do over that? Well, with a very good hand and pronounced Spade shortage he has the ideal hand for a take-out Double. South has nothing to say and the spotlight turns to West. That player probably thought that he would become declarer until at least the next deal, but here he is forced to bid at the four-level. Well, what else can he do but bid 4♥? Take-out Doubles should be taken out, and West does have the haven of a five-card suit, after all. 4♥ actually makes, even after the best defence of two rounds of Spades. Declarer ruffs, takes one high trump and knocks out the ♠A. He should escape for the loss of one Spade, one Heart and one Club.

**Hand 2** North-South game, dealer East

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

West	North	East	South
	3♠	3♥	Dble
Pass		All Pass	
3♠ by North		Opening lead: ♣5	

It is East's turn to open with a pre-empt as dealer (3♥ this time) and it's South's turn to enter the fray at the three-level. Here, with a 4-1-4-4 pattern with shortage in the opponents' suit, South has the ideal hand for a take-out Double. He should remember, though, that he has said his piece by forcing his partner to take action at a high level. Here, when North bids 3♠, South should Pass and not be tempted to go on to 4♠. North actually has more than he might have for a 3♠ reply to the take-out Double; think of the West cards of Hand 1. With a significantly better hand, North would (should) jump to 4♠. As it is, East-West can hold North to nine tricks if they defend accurately (Club lead, Club ruff, Heart to the ♥A, Club ruff).

**Hand 3** East-West game, dealer South

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

West	North	East	South
			3♥
Dble	Pass	4♠	All Pass
4♠ by East		Opening lead: ♣3	

South opens 3♥ and West has to decide what to do. Well, he might be forgiven for Passing but it's usually right to get into the action with a shortage in the enemy suit. Here, with a 4-1-3-5 hand it is reasonable to Double, albeit minimum for the action; West would be unlucky to find that his side had no trump fit at all. Here, he hits a nine-card Spade fit, so all is well. East mustn't make the mistake of responding with a tepid 3♠ (which West would Pass). With an opening bid, East must jump to 4♠ as he knows of a decent fit and of game values. The defence can take the ♠A and a Club ruff and then the ♥A, leaving the contract "tight". However, East should then cash the ♠K and take the marked Spade finesse for his contract.

**Hand 4** Game all, dealer West

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

West	North	East	South
3♦	Dble	Pass	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3NT by South		Opening lead: ♥J	

West opens 3♦ and North has an ideal hand for a take-out Double with a 4-4-1-4 hand and 14 points. East has nothing to say and now it's up to South. What should he do? 4♠ is neither fish, fowl nor good red herring – North would probably Pass that and South would record a paltry part-score. With game values between the North-South hands (South does have an opening bid, note) South should bid a game. 5♣ is a possibility but (to wheel out the old phrase) nine tricks are easier than eleven. Thus, South tries 3NT. West knows South has a Diamond stopper, so leads the ♥J. South must be careful not to take the ♥A and cash the ♠K or he risks *blocking* the Clubs; he must cash the ♠A first or chuck the ♠8 on the ♠K.



## §37. Example hands 5 to 8.

**Hand 5** North-South game, dealer North

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	3♠	3NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3NT by South		Opening lead: ♠3	

(In Hands 5-8 the pre-emptor is in second seat. Also, the hands are identical to the openers' in Hands 1-4). North Passes as dealer and East opens 3♠; what should South do? A take-out Double is misguided with such a stubby 3-4-3-3 pattern. North would respond at the four-level and then where? The best, practical action on this type of hand is to try 3NT, hoping that the outstanding points are split between West and North. As it happens, 3NT buys the hand, dummy presenting with a useful 6 points. Declarer Hearts to duck a round of Spades (they are surely 7-2) and then knock out two Aces. As East has no entry to his long Spades, 3NT comes home with one Spade, three Hearts, two Diamonds and four Clubs.

**Hand 6** East-West game, dealer East

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

West	North	East	South
3♠	Pass	Pass	3♥
4♠ by West	Pass	4♠	All Pass
4♠ by West		Opening lead: ♥8	

East Passes as dealer and South opens with a pre-emptive 3♥, giving West a small problem. A take-out Double with a singleton Diamond is out of the question and a 3NT punt would be bizarre. West just has to chance his arm with 3♠ and hope the sun shines. Today is his lucky day – East has 11 points and secondary Spade support, so has an easy raise to the Spade game. Thus, East-West arrive in the contract nature intended. After a Heart lead West should aim to draw trumps and play to make five Spades, one Heart, one Diamond and (at least) three Clubs. That totals ten winners. In point of fact, playing for a Heart ruff in the *short trump hand* is a viable line of play and would indeed net an overtrick.

**Hand 7** Game all, dealer South

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

West	North	East	South
3♥	4♠	All Pass	Pass
4♠ by North	Pass	Pass	
4♠ by North		Opening lead: ♥Q	

South Passes as dealer with his freakish 1-1-5-6 hand and West tries to muddy the waters with a 3♥ opening bid. What now, North? Well, 3♠ wouldn't get the strength of this hand across at all – South would probably Pass and an easy game would wither on the vine. When you have a powerful hand with a strong suit you just have to jump to game and hope to find dummy with *something*. Here, 4♠ wins the pot (no surprise there!) and dummy displays its wares. The ♠A and the ♦Q are both valuable cards, as is the ♠10. After the ♥Q lead the defenders have to lead the ♠K at trick two to hold 4♠ to ten tricks; anything else allows North to draw five rounds of trumps, unblock the ♦A K J, cross to the ♣A and make twelve tricks.

**Hand 8** Love all, dealer West

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	3♦	3NT	Pass
Pass	Pass	Pass	
3NT by East		Opening lead: ♦9	

West Passes as dealer on his collection of tram tickets and North opens 3♦, giving East a problem. Well, what should he do? 4♣ is a waste of time; what would you want West to do over that? With a decent *source of tricks*, a Diamond stopper and overall good hand, East should try his luck in 3NT. Yes, it's a punt, but so is 4♣ (or a wild 5♣). West needs to have a decent card or two, but why shouldn't he have them? North has a pre-empt and South and West have about 14 points to split between them; West's allocation is about 7. As it is, West has two pearls beyond price in his hand – the ♠K and the ♣Q fit East's hand oh so neatly. After the ♦9 lead East has nine topplers, even after the ♦A and a Heart switch.