

Profitable Leads

By Chris Dixon

The Principles of Leading

- 1 PASSIVE OR ATTACKING?**
- 2 GIVING INFORMATION**
- 3 DEVELOPMENT TECHNIQUE**
- 4 ENTRIES (ATTACKING AND PRESERVING)**

The 4th Best Myth

- 1 First decide which suit to lead**
- 2 Second decide whether to lead a high or low card**
- 3 If you decide to lead a LONG suit AND you have decided to lead a low card, then lead 4th best**
- 4 Always prefer to lead from a sequence headed by an honour (Full, broken or interior)**
- 5 Lead from 3 small cards (middle-up-down is as clear as MUD). Prefer a high card if the middle card is ambiguous. Lead lowest if you don't want to suggest a doubleton.**

Sequences

- 1 Full 3 card sequence**
3 cards in sequence headed by an honour
- 2 Broken Sequence**
K Q 10, Q J 9 etc
- 3 Interior Sequence**
K J 10, A 10 9, Q 10 9 etc
- 4 2 card Sequence**
2 cards in sequence headed by an honour

Long suit leads

- 1 4th highest with at least one honour**
- 2 2nd highest with no honour**
- 3 Lead low from Hxx**
- 4 Good attacking lead against NT with 5+ cards**
- 5 Avoid with 4 card suits or against suit contracts unless an attacking lead is indicated**
- 6 The MUD debate**

Partner's Suit

- 1 Most of the time this is best**
- 2 Lead high from 2, low from 3**
- 3 Defensive bids generally show good suits**
- 4 Constructive bids merely show length**
- 5 Remember the strange behaviour of the dog in the night**

Leading Short Suits

- 1** Singletons are attractive leads but avoid if
Partner is unlikely to have an entry
Ruffing will weaken your trump holding
You will be setting up declarer's side suit
- 2** Lead from small doubleton is passive(ish)
- 3** Lead from Hx only when no other lead is indicated

1) ♠ QJ6
♥ K1042
♦ 8
♣ J10862

1♥	P	1♠	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

2) ♠ AK1082
♥ K102
♦ J542
♣ 2

1♠	2NT	X	3♦
X	P	P	P

3) ♠ 862
♥ AQ52
♦ 4
♣ KJ752

1♠	P	2NT	P
3♦	P	3♠	P
4♣	P	4♦	P
4♠	P	P	P

4) ♠ A72
♥ K8
♦ J842
♣ 8752

1♠	P	2♣	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

5) ♠ 3
♥ J92
♦ AQ1072
♣ 8632

2NT	P	3♣	P
3♦	P	3♠	P
4♥	P	6♥	P
P			

6) ♠ J732
♥ 98
♦ AK1093
♣ J2

1♥	P	1NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

Leading Trumps

- 1 When declarer has shown 2 suits**
- 2 When your side has the balance of high card points**
- 3 When dummy has given preference**
- 4 As a totally safe lead**

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

1NT	X	2♦	X
P	P	2♠	P
P	X	P	P
P			

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

1♥	P	1♠	P
2♦	P	2NT	P
3♦	P	3♥	P
P	P		

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

2♣	P	2♦	P
2♠	P	3♣	P
3♠	P	4♠	P
P	P		

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

1♠	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	2♠	P
4♠	P	P	P

11) ♠ 8 6 2
 ♥ J 7
 ♦ A Q 10 7
 ♣ K J 9 8

1♠	P	4♣	P
4♥	P	4♠	P
P	P		

12) ♠ 4
 ♥ A K 10 8 3
 ♦ A Q 7 3
 ♣ K 10 8

1♥	X	2NT	3♠
4♥	4♠	X	P
P	P		

Leading to 1NT (opening bid)

- 1 PASSIVE**
- 2 Generally lead a 5 card suit**
- 3 Avoid leading from broken 4 card suits headed by Ace or King**
- 4 Lead top of a 3 card sequence or broken sequence**
- 5 Lead from 3 small cards**

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

14) ♠ 9 7 4
♥ A Q 5 2
♦ J 8 3
♣ Q 7 2

15) ♠ J 7
♥ Q J 9 5 2
♦ A 7 2
♣ 8 3 2

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

17) ♠ J 10 8
♥ Q 7
♦ A J 9 4
♣ 9 7 4 2

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

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

Leading to 1NT (opponents have bid)

- 1 Prefer unbid suits**
- 2 Lead partner's suit (even if they have not bid it)**
- 3 Lead LHO's suit with xxx**
- 4 Lead RHO's suit from length**

19) ♠ 9 8 6
♥ K 10 2
♦ K 7 4 2
♣ Q 10 4

1♥	P	1♠	P
1NT	P	P	P

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

1♦	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	1NT	P
P	P		

21) ♠ Q 8 6 2
♥ A 2
♦ 6 2
♣ K J 7 5 2

1♦	P	1NT	P
P	P		

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

1♥	P	1♠	P
1NT	P	P	P

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

1♠	P	1NT	P
P	P		

24) ♠ J 7 3 2
♥ 9 8
♦ A K 10 9 3
♣ J 2

1♥	P	1NT	P
P	P		

Leading to 3NT

- 1 ATTACK if cards are lying well for declarer**
- 2 PASSIVE if cards lying badly**
- 3 ATTACK if there is evidence of a long suit**
- 4 PASSIVE if no suits bid**
- 5 PARTNER'S SUIT (Even if they didn't bid it)**

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

1NT	P	2♥	P
2♠	P	3NT	P
P	P		

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

1♦	P	1♥	P
2♦	P	3NT	P
P	P		

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

1♦	P	1♥	P
1♠	P	3NT	P
P	P		

28) ♠ J 7
 ♥ K 10 8 2
 ♦ 9 8 2
 ♣ A J 7 2

1♥	P	1♠	P
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	

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

1♠	P	2♣	P
3♠	P	3NT	P
P	P		

30) ♠ J 7
 ♥ Q 8 6 4 2
 ♦ 10 7 6 2
 ♣ Q 6

1♥	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3NT	P
P	P		

31) ♠ Q 10 7 2

♥ K 9 7 2

♦ J 7

♣ K 8 2

1NT	P	2♣	P
2♠	P	3NT	P
P	P		

32) ♠ K Q 6 2

♥ 5 4 2

♦ Q 3

♣ 10 8 7 2

1♦	P	1♥	P
3♦	P	3NT	P
P	P		

33) ♠ J 8 4 2

♥ K 10 7

♦ 9 7 2

♣ 8 6 3

1NT	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	3NT	P
P	P		

34) ♠ J 9 7 2

♥ 2

♦ A 6 3

♣ A Q 10 9 6

1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	

35) ♠ 4 2

♥ J 8 3

♦ A K 8 4 2

♣ 8 6 2

1♠	P	2♣	P
2NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

36) ♠ A J 7 3

♥ Q J 9 4

♦ K 10 3

♣ 8 5

1♥	P	2♥	P
2NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

Leading to Suit Contracts (Part Score level)

- 1 **ATTACK** if cards are lying well for declarer
- 2 **PASSIVE** if cards lying badly
- 3 **ATTACK** if there is evidence of a long suit
- 4 **Lead Trumps** when declarer has two suits
- 5 **Partner's suit is usually best**
- 6 **Singletons?**
- 7 **The Forcing Game?**

37) ♠ 9 8 6
 ♥ A Q 8
 ♦ J 3
 ♣ Q 10 7 5 2

1♠	P	1NT	P
2♦	P	2♠	P
P	P		

38) ♠ K 9 6 2
 ♥ 7 5 2
 ♦ 4
 ♣ K J 10 9 2

1♠	P	2♥	P
2♠	P	P	X
P	3♣	3♠	P
P	P		

39) ♠ 9 7 2
 ♥ K J 7 2
 ♦ Q 10 5
 ♣ 8 6 2

1♦	P	1♠	P
2♦	P	2♠	P
P	P		

40) ♠ A 6 2
 ♥ K J 10 7
 ♦ A J 3
 ♣ 9 8 2

1NT	2♣	P	2♠
P	P	P	

(2♣ = majors)

41) ♠ A Q 7 2
 ♥ Q 8 2
 ♦ J 8 3
 ♣ 7 4 2

1♣	P	2♣	P
2♦	P	2♥	P
3♣	P	P	P

42) ♠ A K 9 2
 ♥ 9 8 2
 ♦ 3
 ♣ J 9 6 5 2

1♥	P	2♥	P
3♣	P	3♥	P
P	P		

Lead Directing Bids or Doubles

- 1 Be daring when not vulnerable or when opponents have found a fit**
- 2 Make tactical openings 3rd in hand but only with a good suit**
- 3 Don't bid bad suits on bad hands**
- 4 Double artificial bids for the lead (Stayman, transfers, 4th suit, cues etc)**

43) ♠ 10 3
 ♥ 9 7 2
 ♦ 10 5 2
 ♣ A K J 10 7

1♥ P 3♥ ?

44) ♠ 2
 ♥ 8 5 2
 ♦ A 5 4 3
 ♣ K J 9 7 2

P P 1NT P
 2♣

45) ♠ A 2
 ♥ Q J 9 6 2
 ♦ 8 5 2
 ♣ J 7 2

1♦ P 1♠ P
 2♣ P 2♥

46) ♠ 7 2
 ♥ 10 8 7 2
 ♦ 10 9 4 2
 ♣ A Q J

1♥ P 1♠ P
 4♣

47) ♠ K 3
 ♥ 10 7 2
 ♦ Q 8 7 6 2
 ♣ K 9 3

1♥ 1♠ 2♠

48) ♠ K J 7
 ♥ 9
 ♦ Q 8 7 5 4 3
 ♣ 10 9 3

2NT P 3♦

Final Contract Doubles

- 1 Out of the Blue doubles of 3NT**
 - a) When no-one has bid a suit**
 - b) When dummy has bid a suit**
 - c) When you have bid a suit**
 - d) When partner has bid a suit**
- 2 Doubling a slam**

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

1NT P 3NT ?

50) ♠ A Q 10 8
 ♥ J 8
 ♦ J 10 8
 ♣ 10 7 5 2

1♥ P 1♠ P
 1NT P 2♣ P
 2♦ P 2NT P
 3NT P ?

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

1♠ 1NT P 3NT
 ?

52) ♠ J 10 8 5 2
 ♥ Q 9 3
 ♦ A 2
 ♣ 8 6 3

1NT 2♥ X P
 3NT P P ?

53) ♠ K 10 5
 ♥ K J 9 6
 ♦ J 10 8 7
 ♣ 10 2

1♥ P 1NT P
 3♥ P 3NT P
 P ?

54) ♠ 8 3
 ♥ A K J 9
 ♦ Q 8 7 5 4
 ♣ 10 2

P P ?

Leads during the play

- 1 Lead top when leading up to a shortage**
- 2 Surrounding plays**
- 3 Lead high to hold the lead**
- 4 Some deceptive 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**
6. **Surrounding plays when you hold a tenace and RHO holds the card immediately below the LOWER card of your tenace**
7. **Lead a high card to hold the lead when cashing out**
8. **Lead your top card when leading round to a known shortage**

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

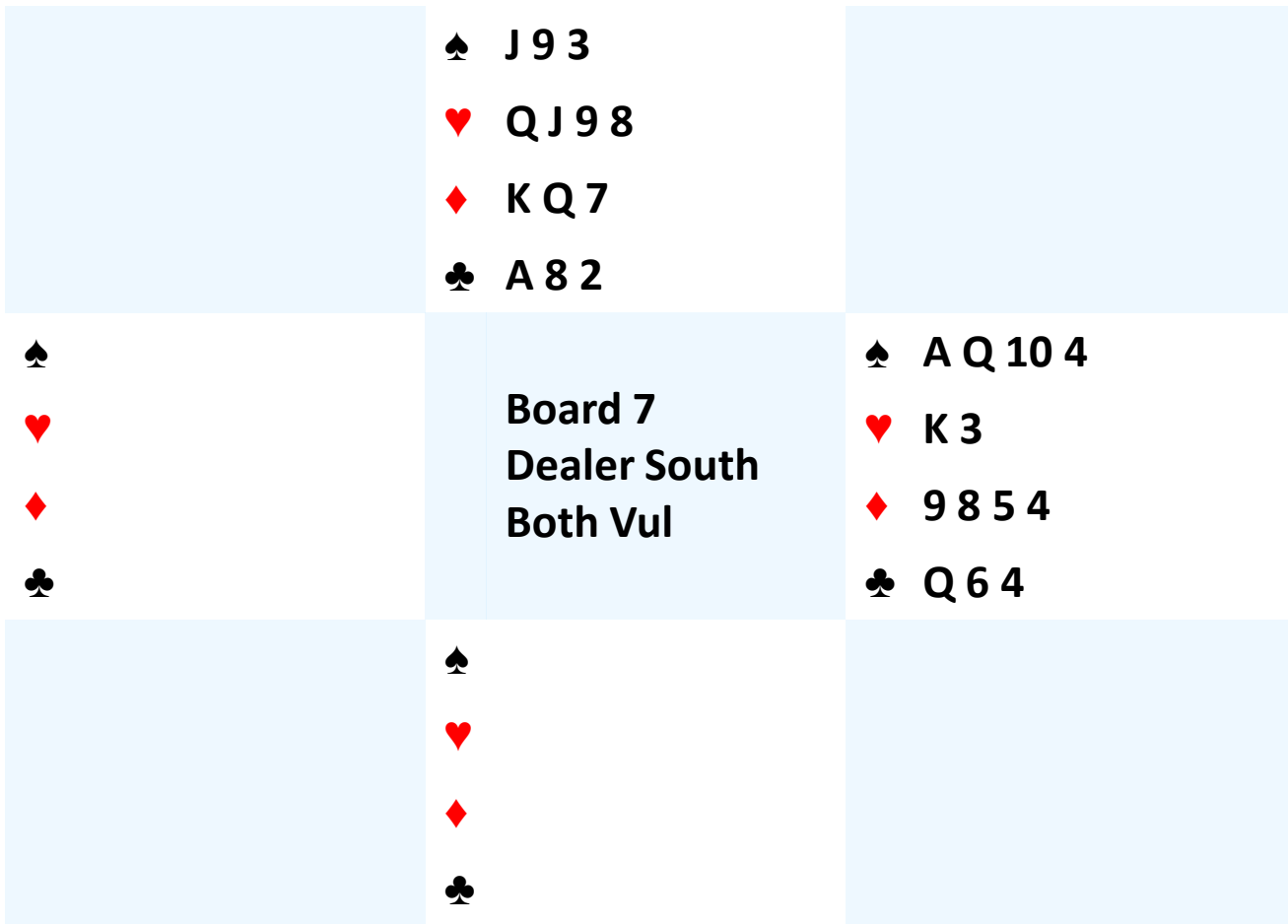
S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

South plays in 3NT
West leads 10♠ to the 7♠, Q♠ and K♠
Declarer then leads the K♦, 6♦ and 4♦

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

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

South plays in 3NT
West leads 10♠ to the 7♠, Q♠ and K♠
Declarer then leads the K♦, 6♦ and 4♦



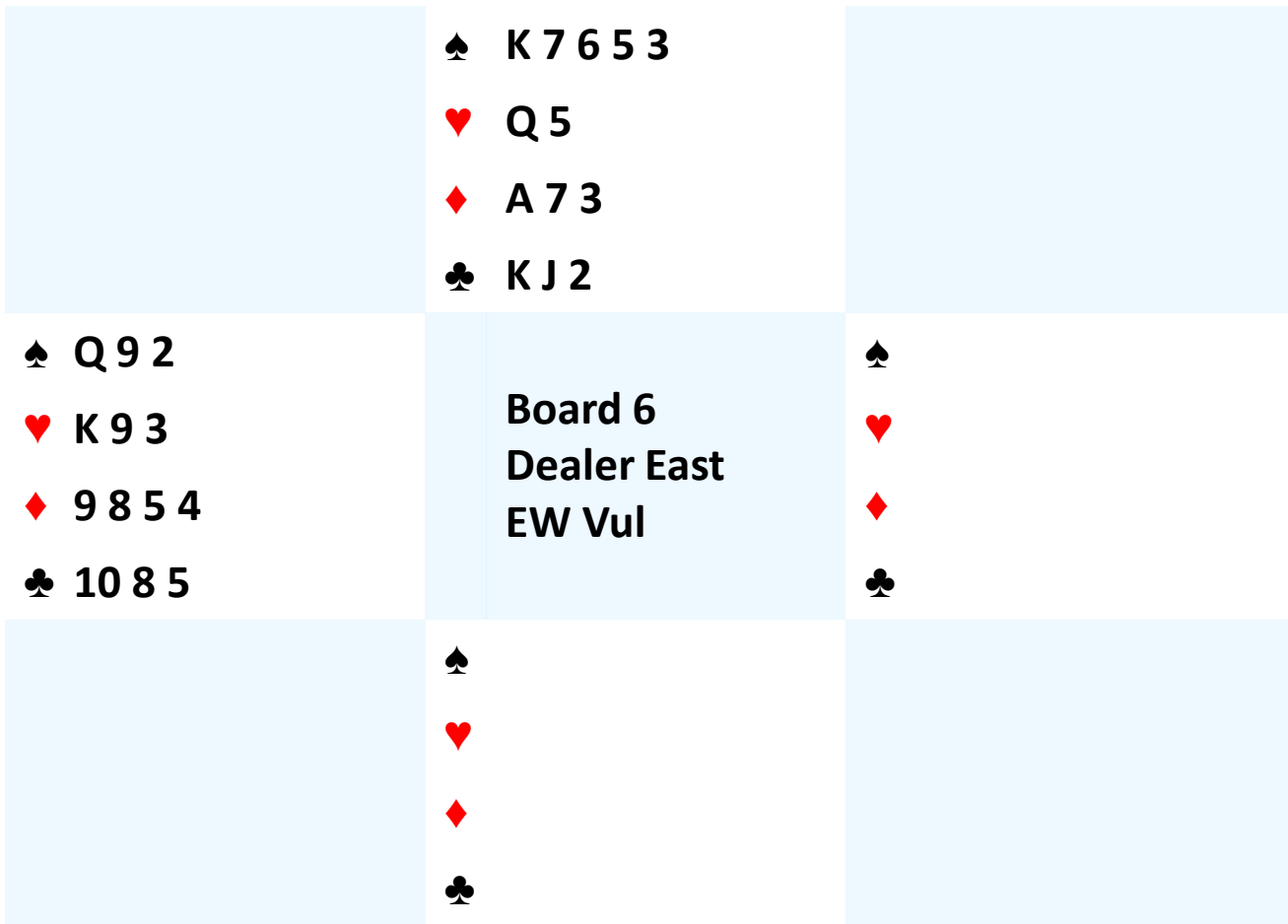
S	W	N	E
1NT	P	3NT	P
P	P		

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 4♥ and dummy plays the Q♥
 Your K♥ wins the first trick

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

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

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 4♥ and dummy plays the Q♥
 Your K♥ wins the first trick



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

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 8♦ to the 3♦, Q♦ and K♦
 Declarer crosses to dummy with the K♣ and runs the Q♥

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

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

South plays in 3NT
West leads 8♦ to the 3♦, Q♦ and K♦
Declarer crosses to dummy with the K♣ and runs the Q♥



S	W	N	E
	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	2♦	P
3NT	P	P	P

South plays in 3NT

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

S	W	N	E
	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	2♦	P
3NT	P	P	P

South plays in 3NT

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

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

South plays in 3NT
 West leads Q♠.
 Declarer wins with the K♠ and leads the 8♦
 To the 5♦, and Q♦

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

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

South plays in 3NT
 West leads Q♠.
 Declarer wins with the K♠ and leads the 8♦
 To the 5♦, and Q♦



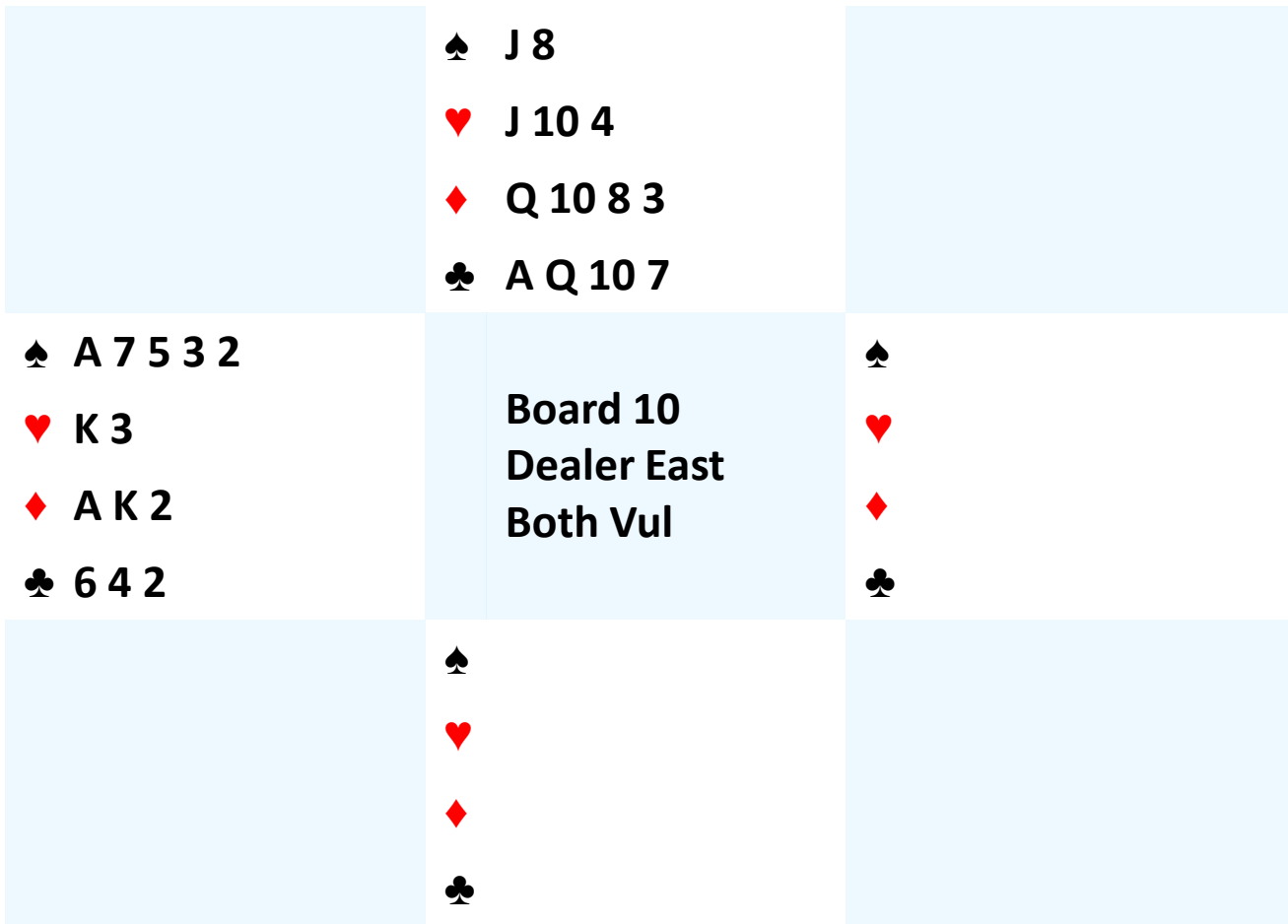
S	W	N	E
			P
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♦	P	3NT	P
P	P		

South plays in 3NT
 West leads J♥ to the K♥, 7♥ and 3♥
 Declare now leads the 8♦ to the 7♦ and 5♦

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

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

South plays in 3NT
West leads J♥ to the K♥, 7♥ and 3♥
Declare now leads the 8♦ to the 7♦ and 5♦



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

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 3♠. Dummy wins with the J♠,
 East playing the 9♠.
 Declarer plays the J♥ to the 5♥, and 7♥ and
 your K♥

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

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

South plays in 3NT
 West leads 3♠. Dummy wins with the J♠,
 East playing the 9♠.
 Declarer plays the J♥ to the 5♥, and 7♥ and
 your K♥

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

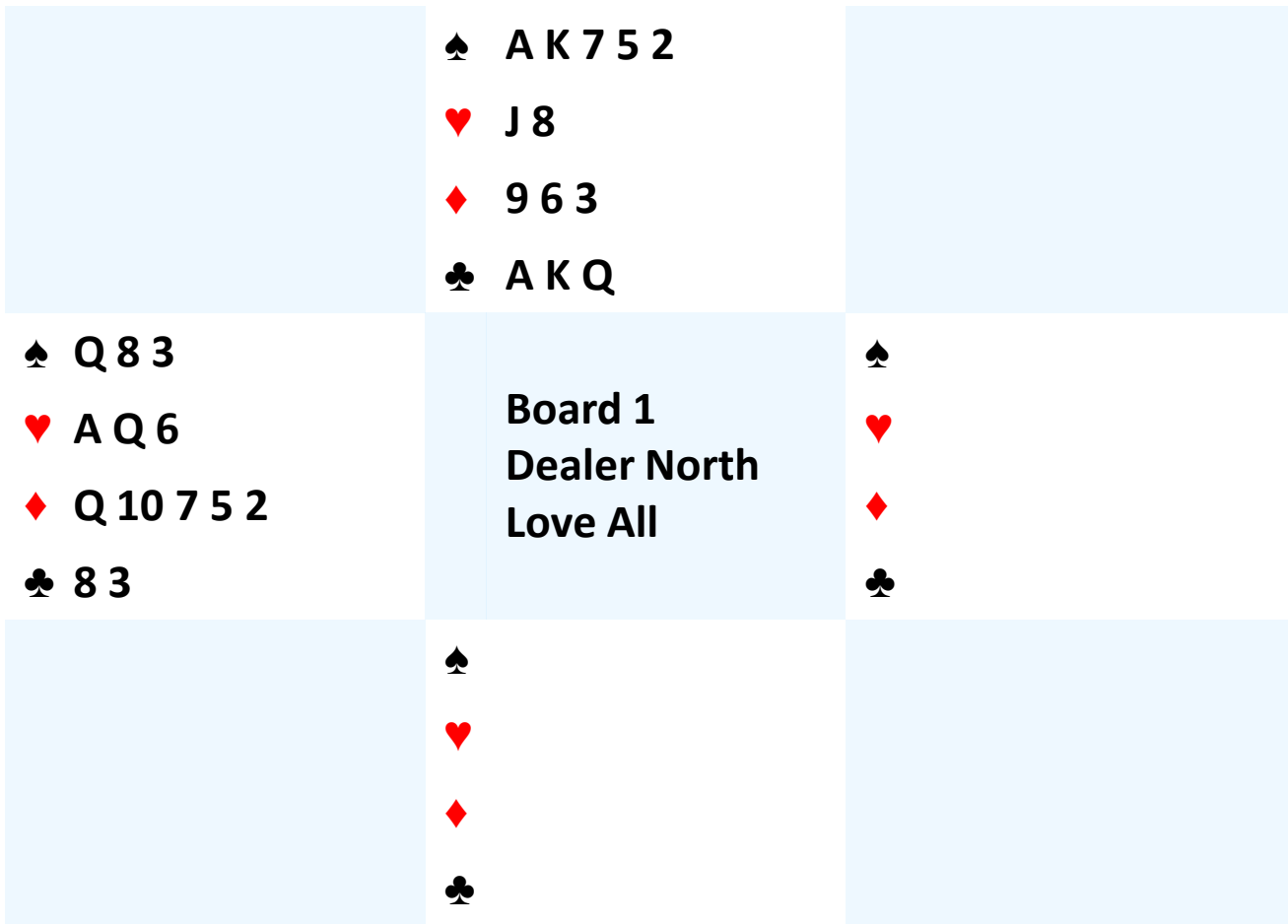
S	W	N	E
1♥	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥
 West leads Q♣ to the 3♣, 6♣ and K♣
 Declarer draws 2 rounds of trumps and
 then leads the 3♦ from dummy

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

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	2♦	P
2♥	P	3♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥
 West leads Q♣ to the 3♣, 6♣ and K♣
 Declarer draws 2 rounds of trumps and
 then leads the 3♦ from dummy



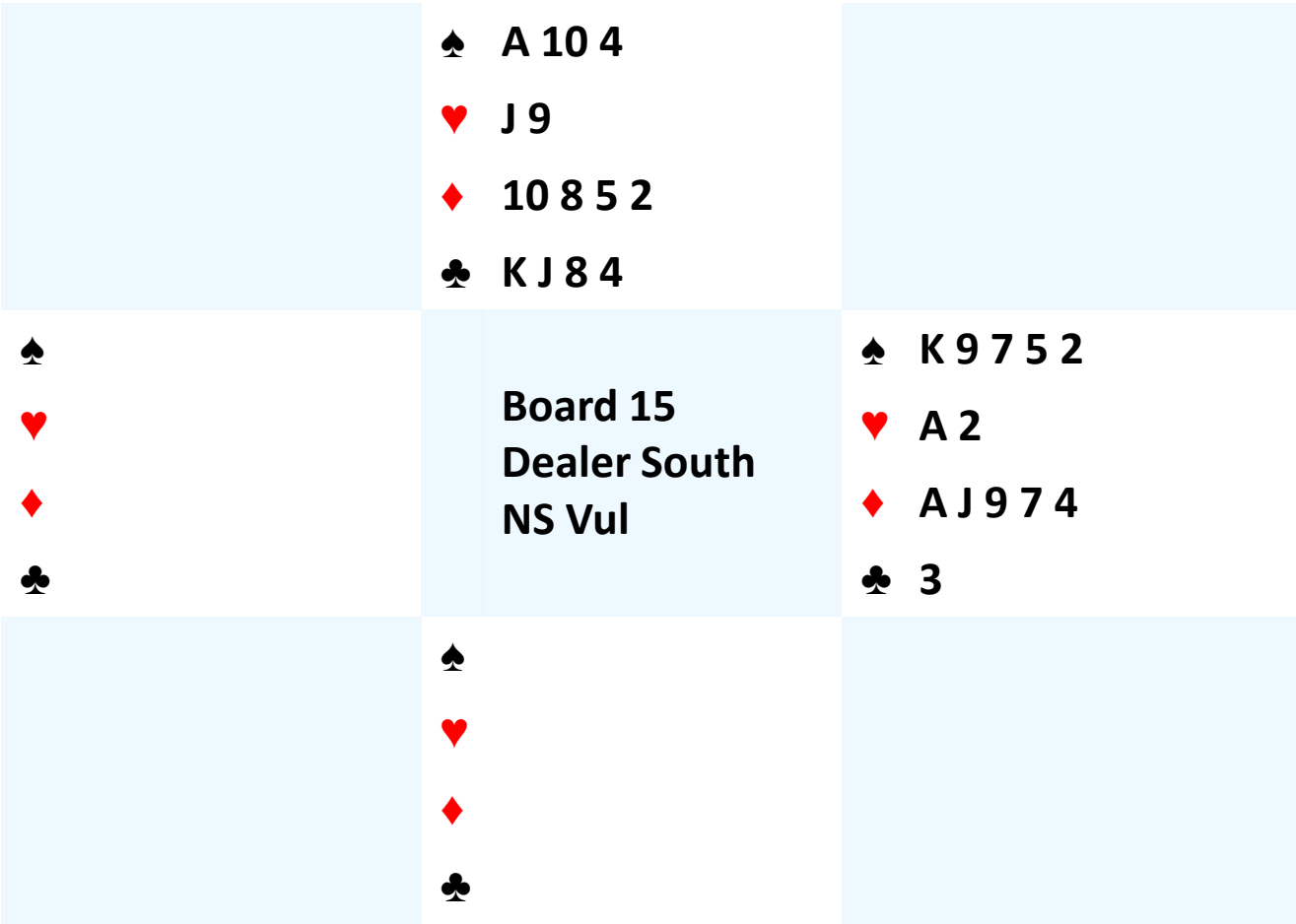
S	W	N	E
		1 ♠	P
1NT	P	2NT	P
3NT	P	P	P

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
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♦

Summary

- 1 Passive or Attacking?**
- 2 Clues from bidding or play**
- 3 Partner's suit whenever possible**
- 4 Help partner during the bidding by overcalling or doubling**