

Rule: A player must have 12 or more pts to “open” or start the bidding (to put the first bid on the table). A Pass card is not considered to be a bid.

The Coach’s conversation with the group is as follows:

Which player has 12 or more points? (Answer: North)

Okay, so North is allowed to start the bidding.

North, which suit is your best suit? (Answer: Hearts)

Rule: You must have 5 or more cards in a major suit (♥ or ♠) to bid it.

We’ll equate bidding to bragging. North, do you have enough hearts to brag about hearts? (Yes)

Okay, so North, you can “open” the bidding because you have 12 or more points and you have 5 or more hearts, so put the 1♥ bid on the table. Well done!

(Players should be shown the correct way to place the bid on the table, pointing towards the center of the table, removing the bid from the box with all bidding cards behind it.)

East, it is now your turn to bid. How many points do you have? (Answer: 10) So East, you must Pass. East should place the Pass card on the table.

South, because your partner “opened” the bidding, you can now respond to your partner if you have 6 pts or more. How many points do you have? (Answer: 7)

Rule: With 6 or more points, the partner of the Opener should respond with a bid.

South, if you have 3 or more of the same major suit that North bid, you can agree with your partner.

North bid hearts. Do you have at least 3 hearts? (Yes)

South, you will agree by placing the 2♥ bid on the table. You have now found an 8-card fit in hearts.

South, you know you have 8 cards together because North opened the bidding with 1♥. North will know you have 6 or more points because you bid something (any bid) and North will know you have at least 3 hearts because you agreed with him. This is how you communicate to show your suits and your points.

When you have discovered that you have 8 cards together in a major suit, that is a very good thing. You should be happy about that.

Rule: If your partner opens with 1♥ or 1♠ (major suits) and you have 3 of that major to support your partner and 6 or more points, you can agree with your partner by bidding the same suit, one level higher (2♥ or 2♠).

It is now West’s turn to bid. How many pts do you have, West? (10)

Sorry, West, you cannot bid because you do not have enough pts, so you will Pass.

North, you have only 13 pts, which is just 1 more than you needed to open, so you will Pass. There is no use in bragging too much!

East will Pass again. Now there are 3 passes in a row on the table so that means the bidding is finished.

Rule: When there are three players who pass without anyone bidding in between, the bidding is finished. No one else can bid now.

Rule: The last bid on the table before the 3 passes becomes the contract.

What is the contract? (2♥)

Rule: The first player who bid the suit of the contract becomes the Declarer.

Who first bid the hearts? (Answer: North) So North becomes the Declarer. Instead of Declarer, we will call this player the "Pilot." It's an easier name to remember. The Pilot will be in charge of North and South hands. He is "piloting" the North/South plane.

We describe the contract this way: "2♥ by North." The suit of the contract is called the Trump suit. Hearts are trump. They are stronger than any other suit in the deck now.

All bids should now be placed back into the bidding boxes, the same way they were before the bidding started.

The player to the left of the Pilot will be starting the game. Who is sitting to the left of the Pilot? (East) East is the Pilot's left-hand opponent. East will start the game by taking a card from his hand and placing it on the table, but wait a moment while this is explained in more detail.

We call this first card played "the opening lead." This card is very important. It should be chosen carefully and we have a certain protocol (way of doing things) to follow when doing this.

East will select a card from his hand and place it on the table, face down. He will ask, "Is it my lead?" This is a way to confirm that it is his turn. His partner or any other player at the table can stop him, if he is not the person who should be leading. East could also ask, "Any questions, partner?" As soon as West responds and East is absolutely sure it is his turn to start, he will turn the card over.

Rule: A card laid is a card played. (East cannot change his card once it is put on the table, face up.)

Which card should East start with? Here are some ideas. Usually, you do not lead a suit which the opponents bid. So, the three possible suits for East to lead are: spades, diamonds or clubs (the unbid suits). East, which is your longest, strongest suit? (Diamonds) So a diamond will be a good lead.

Guideline for Opening Leads: Lead a suit which the opponents did not bid (an unbid suit). Lead a card from your longest, strongest suit.

East, what cards do you have in diamonds? (King/Queen/Jack/2) Very good suit!
When you have two or more touching honor cards (no gap between them), a good lead is the top of touching honors. Which card is the top of touching honors? (the King) Very good!

Guideline for Opening Leads: Lead the top of touching honors.

1st Round: East, take the ♦King from your hand, place it on the table face down, ask if there are any questions or if it is your lead. Since there are no objections, turn the card over, face up. This is now a played card and cannot be taken back.

The Pilot's partner (South) will now put his hand on the table for everyone to see. We will call South the Co-pilot and his hand is the dummy hand. South will be assisting the Pilot and the Pilot will tell him which cards to play from his dummy hand. The cards should be placed in "dummy style." The suit named in the contract, hearts, is placed on South's right, which is North's left side. (See the "Starting the Game" instructions for a picture of "dummy style," if you are not sure what that means.)

North will tell South which card to play. South has nothing to say about which card North selects. South just does as he is told by North! North is the Pilot!

Rule: All players must "follow suit" when they play their cards unless they have no cards in that suit.

This means that they must play from the suit which has been led, in this case, diamonds. They should play a higher card if they have one. If not, they can play a low card.

North will play a higher card than the ♦King, the ♦Ace. He will tell South to play it and South can hold it in his hand, face up for everyone to see, until the round is finished. A round is when 4 cards are played, one by each player. West will play a low diamond, the ♦6. Now the first round is finished. There will be 13 rounds in a game and each time one side/one pair wins the trick.

Whoever played the highest card in that suit, wins the trick. Which card won the trick? (the ♦Ace) It came from South's hand so North/South both won the trick, but South took the trick.

The Coach should make sure that each player keeps their played card at their side of the table, turned face down, and showing it as a winner or loser. (Again, refer to the "Starting the Game" instructions.)

The player who took the trick gets to lead the card for the next round. The winning card came from South's hand, the dummy hand, so the Pilot will tell the Co-Pilot which card to play from the dummy.

It is often a good idea for the Pilot to "pull trump." That means to take all the trump out of the opponent's hands. In order to do that, he needs to lead a trump card. He also needs to be aware of how many trump cards are in the opponents' hands and count them as they are played. To start, there are 13 hearts (trump) between all the hands. North knows that he has 8 trump in total (with his hand and the dummy hand together). That means that the opponents have 5 trump. Once their 5 trump are gone, he has pulled all the trump.

2nd Round: North will lead a low card from the dummy hand toward a high card in his own hand. This is often a good strategy. North should tell South to play a low heart (the ♥2). West will play the ♥7, North will play the ♥King, ♥Queen or the ♥10 (they are all equal because the dummy hand has the ♥Jack) and East should take the trick with the ♥Ace.

3rd Round: East has won the 2nd trick and all players will place their played cards as shown in the "Starting the Game" instructions. East will now lead from his hand since he won that trick. He should next play his ♦Queen. The ♦King was previously taken by the ♦Ace, so now the ♦Queen should be a winner. Each player will play a diamond and the ♦Queen will take the trick.

4th Round: East should lead the ♦Jack. He can see that the dummy hand still has a low diamond and he knows his ♦Jack is the highest diamond left. North will tell South to play the low diamond. He can do this by saying to South, "Play low." Because North has no more diamonds in his hand, he will trump in and

take the trick with the ♥3. South is allowed to speak and he might remind North, since he did not follow suit, “No more diamonds, partner?”

Sometimes a player will not have a card in that suit. He is said to be “void” in that suit. In that case, he can discard from another suit or he can use a trump card which is stronger than any card in any other suit. After diamonds were played for two rounds, North is void in diamonds, so he can trump or “ruff”.

5th Round: North should continue to pull trump until East/West have no more. He needs to count them as they are played. Play the ♥Queen and other players will follow suit, unless they are void, in which case they will discard a low card from another suit.

6th Round: Play a low heart over to dummy’s hand taking it with the ♥Jack. North now knows that all the trump are gone from the opponents’ hands. He should now stop pulling trump and save them to “ruff” other suits.

7th Round: North can now try a finesse. He will play the ♠Queen from dummy’s hand toward his ♠Ace/♠Jack. If West does not play the ♠King, play low from North’s hand. If West does play the ♠King, take it with the ♠Ace. If East had the King, the finesse would not be successful. This is a way of “capturing” the King. A finesse will work only 50% of the time but it is worth a try. This time it works.

Continue playing the cards until all 13 rounds have been played. Players should count how many tricks each side took. North/South should have taken 8 tricks. East/West should have taken 5 tricks. Sometimes it might not work out exactly like that. Everyone at the table should agree on the number of tricks each side took before moving their cards.

Rule: When the contract is at the 2 level, the Declarer needs to take 8 tricks to “make the contract.”

For now, it is enough to know that we always add the number 6 to the contract level to know how many tricks are needed to make the contract (6 + 2♥ contract = 8 tricks required). If the Declarer takes more than 8 tricks, it is said that he made an over-trick. If he is not able to take 8 tricks, then the opponents have defeated the contract. The outcome depends on many factors (e.g., skill of all the players, where some of the high cards are, how many trump the opponents have and where they are, etc.).

Coach: Before continuing, it is a good idea to review the rules which were covered in Game #1. Repetition helps with learning, but if you see that everyone is understanding a concept well, use your judgment as to how much repetition is needed.

East should now place his hand on the table, dummy style, spade suit on his right which is the left side from West's perspective. West is the Pilot and will be guiding the play of the hand. East will play whichever card West tells him to and will always wait until the Pilot tells him.

1st Round: The ♣King is played by North. West asks East to play the ♣9 or says "Play low." West could also just say, "play" which means the same as "Play low." South should play a low card because the ♣Ace is the same strength as the ♣King. West cannot have a higher card than the ♣King. West plays his singleton ♣2. (A singleton is one card of a suit.) North takes the first trick.

2nd Round: North plays the ♣Queen. West tells East to "play." South, again, plays low because West cannot have a higher card than the ♣Queen. West is void in clubs so can now trump with a small spade and take the trick. East should ask, "No more clubs, partner?" just to remind West that he cannot trump unless he is void in clubs.

Now West is on lead and will pull trump. He should know there are 5 trump in opponent's hands (subtract the number of trump in his and dummy's hand from 13), so he needs to lead a trump only enough times to take all of them (Rounds 3, 4 and 5).

Hint for Playing: Play the high cards from the short side first.

North should play the ♠Queen from the dummy hand which has only 3 spades (is shorter than the 4 trump cards now in his hand) and then play the ♠Ace/♠King from his own hand.

When finished pulling trump, West should be in his own hand, and try the heart finesse. Lead the ♥Queen towards the ♥Ace/♥Jack. If the ♥King appears from North's hand, play the ♥Ace from dummy. If the ♥King is not played, then play low from the dummy. This time the finesse does not work to the Pilot's advantage, but it's worth a try. It will only be successful 50% of the time. South will take the trick with the ♥King.

Continue to play out the hand with the Coach's guidance. West should be able to take 8 or 9 tricks, depending how it's play. The number of tricks taken should be verified before moving the cards. West needs to take at least 8 tricks to make the contract.

The Coach should review any important points before continuing.

Game #4:

Coach: You should continue with the same procedures and same style of instruction. You may not need to repeat everything; that will depend on how fast your group is able to learn. You should “go with the flow.”

This time East has the hand with more than 12 pts, so East will open the bidding. He has 5 hearts, so should open with 1♥. The hearts are not strong, but he has 5 of them, and the bid of 1♥ shows length, not strength. (5 cards in the suit, not necessarily the high cards)

South has 9 pts and will pass. West has 6+ pts and 3 hearts to support his partner in a major suit, so will agree with East and bid 2♥. North, East and South will pass. Three passes and the bidding stops. Bids are put back into the boxes.

Game #4

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

		HCP
		9
8		14
		9

The contract is 2♥ by East. East must take 8 tricks to make the contract.

South is on lead and should now know that a good lead is the top of touching honors from his longest, strongest unbid suit. So, his lead should be the ♣King. South will put the card on the table, face down, and ask “Any questions, partner?” and when there is no one stopping him, will turn the card face up and the playing of the hand begins. Then the dummy hand goes down on the table. East can spend a moment or so to think about his strategy for playing the game.

East will take the trick with the ♣Ace. Pull trump next. Try a finesse, playing the ♥Jack and only playing the ♥Ace if South plays a card higher than the ♥Jack. South might “cover an honor with an honor” and play the ♥Queen, in which case East will ask for the ♥Ace to be played from the dummy hand. Either way, East/West will take one trick in hearts. If South does not play the ♥Queen, North’s ♥King will take the trick and East will try the finesse again, capturing the ♥Queen with his ♥Ace.

East needs to take 8 tricks to make the contract, but he should take two over-tricks (10 tricks), losing one heart, one diamond and one spade only. Well done, East!

Review: So far, we have shown how to open with a major suit and how to respond with 6+ pts and at least 3 cards to support the Opener.

Game #6:

Coach: Here are the hands for the next game.

Same procedure. West has 12+ pts and will open the bidding. Which suit does West like the most? (Clubs) West does not have a 5-card major so should open with a minor suit. West's club suit is longer than the diamond suit, so he should open 1♣. This tells East that he has at least 3 clubs, no 5-card major, and at least 12 pts.

Rule: Opening 1♣ or 1♦ shows at least 12 pts, 3+ cards in the minor suit and no 5-card major suit.

When Opener bids a minor suit, he is not denying having 4 cards in a major suit. The first goal for bidding is to find an 8-card fit in a major suit.

North will pass. East knows that West does not have 5 spades because he didn't open with 1♠, but he might have 4 spades. East should bid 1♠ to show that he has at least 6 points and at least 4 spades.

South will pass. West will agree with the spades since he has 4 of them. They have found their 8-card fit in spades. West will bid 2♠. North will pass, East will pass and South will pass. There are now 3 passes on the table so the bidding is finished. What is the contract? (2♠ by East) Bids are put away and the playing begins.

Who is on lead? (South) Which card should South lead? (♦Ace, top of touching honors)

He has another choice, too. A good lead against a suit contract is a singleton in a side suit. (A side suit means any suit except trump.) South has a singleton club (♣2). However, West bid clubs, so clubs is not an unbid suit. With this hand, it will not make a difference whether South leads the ♣2 or the ♦Ace.

Guideline: A good lead against a suit contract can be a singleton in a side suit.

South plays the ♦Ace. The dummy hand goes down and South can see the singleton diamond. South will take the trick. Leading another diamond would not be a good idea because it can be trumped. South's next lead could be the singleton club. If West does not take the ♣2 with the ♣Ace, North can take the trick with the ♠King or ♠Queen. He would then lead back a club. South can ruff it! Therefore, it is not always smart to "duck" the Ace. ("Ducking the Ace" means not to play it when it can take a trick.)

In this game, North will take a trick with the ♠King (trump) because the finesse will not succeed. North should then lead back a club before any more trump are pulled. A smart play for E/W is to play the ♣Ace and then play the three winner hearts and discard a losing club. The Coach can decide whether to teach this strategy at this time. It might be too much for beginners at this point.

Rule: You should lead back the same suit your partner led, if you take the first trick. If you do not lead back the same suit as your partner, you should have a good reason why not. (Sometimes you see a void in dummy, for example.) Your partner's lead could be a singleton and he may be able to ruff in the next round before the Pilot takes all the trump away.

East needs to take 8 tricks to make the contract. He should be able to take 8 or 9 tricks.

Game #6			
	♠ K 10		
	♥ J 7 5		
	♦ 10 8 6 4		
	♣ K Q 5 3		
♠ A 7 6 5		♠ Q J 9 3	
♥ K Q 8		♥ A 10	
♦ 3		♦ J 9 7 5	
♣ A 9 8 6 4		♣ J 10 7	
	♠ 8 4 2		
	♥ 9 6 4 3 2		
	♦ A K Q 2		
	♣ 2		
			HCP
			9
		13	9
			9

