

Improvers' Lesson 4: Notrump Play

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ Q J 2
♥ K 9 8 5
♦ A K J
♣ 5 4 2

♠ A 5 4
♥ 10 4 2
♦ 7 5 4
♣ 10 8 6 3

♠ 9 8 3
♥ Q 7 3
♦ Q 8 6 3 2
♣ K Q

♠ K 10 7 6
♥ A J 6
♦ 10 9
♣ A J 9 7

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

Promoting honours

Lead ♦ 2

A lucky lead for declarer which allows time to drive out the ♠ A.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K 5
♥ Q 9 3
♦ A Q 10 7 4
♣ K 7 4

♠ 9 7 6
♥ J 10 7
♦ K 8 5 2
♣ J 6 2

♠ Q J 10 8 3
♥ 8 6 5 2
♦ 6
♣ A Q 8

♠ A 4 2
♥ A K 4
♦ J 9 3
♣ 10 9 5 3

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

Finessing

Lead ♠ Q

Declarer has 6 certain tricks and needs to finesse the diamonds.

After winning in dummy, run the ♦ J and then the ♦ 9 if West plays low.

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A 9 8 2
♥ 10 2
♦ Q 6 5 4
♣ Q 7 2

♠ Q 7 3
♥ A Q 9 4
♦ 10 7 2
♣ K 6 3

♠ K 10 4
♥ K J 5
♦ A J 9 8
♣ 10 9 5

♠ J 6 5
♥ 8 7 6 3
♦ K 3
♣ A J 8 4

West	North	East	South
2 NT	All pass	1 NT	Pass

Finessing

Lead ♣ 4

Declarer should play low from dummy and when in with the ♣ K, run the ♦ 10. When in next, play 4 rounds of hearts ending in dummy.

Now lead up to the ♦ 9 and exit with a spade to the ♠ Q to knock out the ♠ A

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ K J 8 7 2
♥ 5 4 3
♦ 2
♣ K 10 8 6

♠ A 4 3
♥ Q 10 8
♦ 10 9 3
♣ Q 9 5 3

♠ 6 5
♥ A K J 9
♦ K Q J 7
♣ A J 4

♠ Q 10 9
♥ 7 6 2
♦ A 8 6 5 4
♣ 7 2

West	North	East	South
1 NT	Pass	1 ♦	3 NT
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

Hold up play

Lead ♠ 2

Declarer can see that they need diamond tricks to make the contract.

Declarer should hold up the ♠ A until the 3rd round hoping that South has the ♦ A or that spades split 4-4.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A 9 4 2
♥ J 9 6
♦ 9 3
♣ 9 7 6 4

♠ K 6 5
♥ A K 8
♦ K 7 4
♣ A K J 8

♠ Q J 10
♥ 5 4 3
♦ Q J 10 8 2
♣ 5 2

♠ 8 7 3
♥ Q 10 7 2
♦ A 6 5
♣ Q 10 3

West	North	East	South
2 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass
Pass	3 NT	All pass	

Setting up a long suit

Lead ♠ 2

Declarer needs to drive out the ♦ A so must win the first trick with the spade King. This preserves an entry to dummy so declarer can enjoy the diamond suit later.

The ♦ K should be played first.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ 8 6 3
♥ K J 9 5
♦ K 8 7 5 2
♣ 5

♠ Q J 10 9 5
♥ 7 6 4 2
♦ 4 3
♣ Q 10

♠ K 7
♥ A 8
♦ J 10 9 6
♣ J 8 6 3 2

♠ A 4 2
♥ Q 10 3
♦ A Q
♣ A K 9 7 4

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

Hold up play

Lead ♠ Q

East overtakes the ♠ Q with the ♠ K and leads back the ♠ 7. Declarer must hold up the spade until the third round to stop the defender's communications. Now, when the ♥ A is lost to East, there will be no more spades to lead to West. Note that South should play the ♦ A and ♦ Q first before you attack hearts.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ 5
♥ A J 8 5 2
♦ K 10
♣ A K Q J 9

♠ 10 7 3 2
♥ K 6 4
♦ 9 8 3 2
♣ 6 5

♠ A J 9 8
♥ Q 10 9 7
♦ Q J
♣ 10 7 3

♠ K Q 6 4
♥ 3
♦ A 7 6 5 4
♣ 8 4 2

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

Where to win trick one

Lead ♦ 9

Declarer has 8 tricks - two diamonds, five clubs and a heart. A spade must be set up quickly so, to preserve the entry, the ♦ lead must be won with the king.

A spade is then led towards the ♠ KQ.

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ 7 5 4 3
♥ 10 7 3 2
♦ A 4 2
♣ A 2

♠ A 6
♥ K 4
♦ K 10 6
♣ Q J 10 8 6 5

♠ K 2
♥ A Q J 5
♦ Q J 5 3
♣ 9 4 3

♠ Q J 10 9 8
♥ 9 8 6
♦ 9 8 7
♣ K 7

West	North	East	South
1 ♣	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	3 NT	All pass

Counting tricks

Lead ♠ Q

There are 6 immediate winners. The diamond suit will provide three more so play this suit first, because you can only afford to lose the lead once.

If declarer plays clubs first, the contract will go down as the lead has to be lost twice.