

1.	♠ 9 6 3 2		
	♥ A 7 5		
	♦ Q 4		
	♣ A 8 7 4		
♠ Q 10 8 7 4		♠ J 5	
♥ J 8		♥ Q 10 9 4 3	
♦ A 10 6 3 2		♦ 9 8 7	
♣ 5		♣ K 9 3	
	♠ A K		
	♥ K 6 2		
	♦ K J 5		
	♣ Q J 10 6 2		

You are declarer in 3NT and West leads the ♠7. How do you plan the play?

This hand may look deceptively easy but you have to be careful to go about things in the right order. Suppose you take a club finesse at trick two and it loses to East who returns a spade. Then with only eight tricks now readily available, you will have to lead a diamond at some stage and if West produces the ace he may well have enough spade winners left to defeat you. The answer is obvious – once you see it. Play a diamond at trick two but if it holds then take a club finesse. If the diamond loses then you will be taking the club finesse into the hand with short spades. And if spades divide 4-3 all along then there is no way you could ever be defeated.

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

You are declarer in 6♥ after West opens a weak 2♠. West leads the ♣J. How do you plan the play?

At first glance it looks as though you have to find the diamond queen to bring home your slam. It seems you have a spade loser and a potential club loser and need to discard a club from hand somewhere. In fact the contract is guaranteed providing that West has the ace of spades for his opening weak two. Win the club lead in hand, draw trumps and lead your low spade from hand. If West plays the ace you have two spade tricks and twelve in all, but if he plays low then you win in dummy and play three rounds of diamonds pitching your spade if the diamond queen hasn't appeared. You will make one spade, six hearts, three diamonds and two clubs – twelve tricks in all.