

Thinking Like Declarer
January 9, 2021

Buck Buchanan
rcb722322@gmail.com

<p>♠ AJ93 ♥ 765 ♦ QJ94 ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p> <p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>	<p>Dealer: South Neither Vulnerable</p> <table> <tr> <th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>1 NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>1 ♠</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>3 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>2 ♥</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♥</td></tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	1 NT	Pass	1 ♠	Pass	3 ♥	Pass	2 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	4 ♥	<p>♠ A754 ♥ J75 ♦ K862 ♣ 93</p> <p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p> <p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>	<p>Dealer: South Neither Vulnerable</p> <table> <tr> <th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>2 ♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1 ♥</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>3 ♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>2 ♦</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>4 ♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>3 ♥</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr> </table>	West	North	East	South	Pass	2 ♣	Pass	1 ♥	Pass	3 ♣	Pass	2 ♦	Pass	4 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
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♠ Q83
♥ AQ73
♦ J432
♣ 96

♠ K92
♥ 108
♦ 1086
♣ KQ1032

♠ 64
♥ KJ95
♦ Q975
♣ A85

♠ AJ1075
♥ 642
♦ AK
♣ J74

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	Pass
3 ♣	3 ♠	Pass	Pass
Pass			

♠ KJ6
♥ 64
♦ KQ
♣ A87543

♠ A52
♥ K108
♦ J109
♣ KJ106

♠ 94
♥ J972
♦ 865432
♣ 2

♠ Q10873
♥ AQ53
♦ A7
♣ Q9

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

♠ K1087
♥ 8
♦ KQJ108
♣ 974

♠ 94
♥ AK96
♦ 632
♣ K1062

♠ 32
♥ J7432
♦ A74
♣ Q83

♠ AQJ65
♥ Q105
♦ 95
♣ AJ5

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	4 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

♠ AK
♥ 1095
♦ Q832
♣ J642

♠ 953
♥ J862
♦ K7
♣ 9873

♠ QJ762
♥ 743
♦ A54
♣ A5

♠ 1084
♥ AKQ
♦ J1096
♣ KQ10

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

West	North	East	South
			1 NT
Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass
Pass			

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<p>♠ AJ93 ♥ 765 ♦ QJ94 ♣ 85</p>	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>
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Dealer: South			
Neither Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
Pass	1 NT	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	2 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	4 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening Lead: ♥ 7

1. South has 9 cards in the majors. North has 4+ hearts and is short in spades.
2. The bidding was invitational. NS have nothing to spare.
3. Declarer may have to ruff spades in dummy instead of relying on brute strength.
4. You can lead trump twice to hinder declarer's ability to set up the spade suit.

<p>♠ A754 ♥ J75 ♦ K862 ♣ 93</p>	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>
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Dealer: South			
Neither Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	1 ♥
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	4 ♥	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening Lead: ♠ A

1. South has 6 hearts and 4 diamonds. North has 6 clubs and 2 hearts.
2. Neither suggested notrump.
3. Declarer might try to throw spade loser(s) on dummy's clubs.
4. You can lead the top spade, trying to collect spade trick(s) while you still can.

<p>♠ Q1054 ♥ 865 ♦ K962 ♣ Q5</p>	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>	<p>♠ ♥ ♦ ♣</p>
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Dealer: South			
Neither Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
Pass	2 ♣	Pass	1 NT
Pass	2 NT	Pass	2 ♦
Pass	Pass	Pass	3 NT
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Opening Lead: ♥ 8

1. North does not have a 5-card major and may not even have a 4-carder. South has no biddable major. (Either could have a 5-card minor.)
2. North has 8-9 HCP. South has 16-17. Not a point to spare.
3. Declarer may have to work for tricks, driving out high cards or taking finesses. Avoid giving declarer any help.
4. Play it safe by leading a top-of-nothing heart.

<p>♠ AQ108 ♥ A964 ♦ 64 ♣ Q83</p>	<p>♠ J97 ♥ J1073 ♦ J109 ♣ AKJ</p>
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Dealer: North			
N-S Vulnerable			
West	North	East	South
Pass	1 ♣	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	2 NT
Pass	3 ♥	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

Opening Lead: ♣ 5

1. Where are the HCPs? Give the opponents 22-24, not quite enough for game. You have 6. Partner must have 10-12.
2. Does partner's apparent strength tip the balance toward an attacking lead away from one of your kings? No, your suits need too much help to take that risk.
3. Go passive. Lead a trump (best) or a club (almost as good).

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Source: Audrey Grant, Audrey Grant's Better Bridge Nov-Dec 2017

1. West, with no idea of how declarer is likely to play, makes the standard ♣K lead.

2. East notes that declarer can't establish either red suit, nor can red-suit honors be promoted. Declarer might, however, try to ruff a club.

3. The defense needs to remove some trumps from dummy to prevent this line of play from succeeding. East must overtake West's ♣K to lead a trump.

Source: Audrey Grant, Audrey Grant's Better Bridge Nov-Dec 2017

1. West knows that declarer can't establish clubs, so leads a safe ♦J.

2. When in with the ♥K, West suspects declarer is trying to ruff hearts in dummy.

3. The ♠A and another spade are led, limiting declarer's ruffs and setting the contract.

<p>♠ K1087 ♥ 8 ♦ KQJ108 ♣ 974</p> <p>♠ 94 ♥ AK96 ♦ 632 ♣ K1062</p> <p>♠ 32 ♥ J7432 ♦ A74 ♣ Q83</p> <p>♠ AQJ65 ♥ Q105 ♦ 95 ♣ AJ5</p>	<p>Dealer: South Neither Vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>3 ♣</td><td>Pass</td><td>1 ♠</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td><td>4 ♠</td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♥ A</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	3 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass	4 ♠	<p>♠ AK ♥ 1095 ♦ Q832 ♣ J642</p> <p>♠ 953 ♥ J862 ♦ K7 ♣ 9873</p> <p>♠ QJ762 ♥ 743 ♦ A54 ♣ A5</p> <p>♠ 1084 ♥ AKQ ♦ J1096 ♣ KQ10</p>	<p>Dealer: South Neither Vulnerable</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>West</th><th>North</th><th>East</th><th>South</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1 NT</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td>3 NT</td><td>Pass</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Opening Lead: ♠ 9</p>	West	North	East	South				1 NT	Pass	3 NT	Pass	Pass	Pass			
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Source: Audrey Grant, Audrey Grant's Better Bridge Nov-Dec 2017

1. West, the opening leader, knows very little about the hand, so leads the obvious top heart.

2. Both East and West can see that declarer will try to use dummy's diamonds and that club tricks must be established quickly.

3. Time to defend actively. Knowing that a club switch by West would be safe, East plays a suit preference ♥2. The defense collects ♥A, ♦A, and 2 clubs.

Source: Barbara Seagram & David Bird, "Defensive Play at Bridge: A Quizbook"

1. Partner rates to have as many as 11 HCP. Entries will be in partner's hand, not yours. Don't try to make something of your measly hearts.

2. North made no effort to find a major suit fit. Good chance partner has 4+ spades. Lead a top-of-nothing spade.