

12/28/10 Regular Game

**Board 1**

North Deals

None Vul

♠ J 2		♠ 10 9									
♥ K Q 7 5		♥ A 8 4									
♦ Q 7 6 3		♦ K 9 8 5									
♣ 9 3 2		♣ 7 6 5 4									
♠ Q 7 6 3	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td style="background-color: green;"></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9
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W		E									
	S										
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♣ 10 8		♣ 7 6 5 4									
♠ A K 8 5 4											
♥ 10 9 2											
♦ A											
♣ A K Q J											

NS 5♠; NS 4N; NS 4♥; NS 5♣; NS 2♦

This hand does not have the strength to open 2♣: it lacks a strong suit to rebid, and needs help to make game. Each of opener's new suits is forcing, so bidding two suits after opening 2♣ is basically forcing to game. It's worse than that: after 2♣ - 2♦ [waiting]; 2♠ - 3♣ [artificial second negative], a typical auction when responder is broke, opener would be in a fine pickle.

The correct start to the auction is 1♠ - 1NT; 3♣. Some Norths would then bid 3NT, ending the auction. A preference to 3♠ should result in a possibly higher scoring contract of 4♠. At the club, two of three Souths declared 4♠, going down one or two. North played 3NT, down a trick.

Play at 3NT would be straightforward, except on the likely small diamond lead. First thing in any notrump contract is to count your top tricks. Two spades, a diamond and four clubs makes seven. Either major suit could easily produce two more. Lead a low spade to the J, and the suit comes home on any 3-3 split, or a 4-2 when the ♠Q is onside, roughly 60%. However, in winning, this line loses, since West now puts the ♦J through, and the opponents can cash out five tricks. To avoid this risk, declarer can play on hearts, leading twice to the honors. Including the chance of the doubleton ♥J popping up in front, this is also about 60%; the ♥A onside means the ♦J comes whistling through, but only netting four tricks as the cards lie. If declarer believes diamonds are 5-3, he may choose the winning line of running the ♥10 at trick two. This keeps the danger hand off lead, and may still produce nine tricks when the ♥J wins this trick.

At 4♠, the opening lead of the ♣10 holds no menace. As usual, its better to lead a long suit (♦) when holding long trumps. The trump bashers will lose two trumps outright and likely lose control after trying to split the suit. Better would be to leave the last two trumps out and guess the heart suit for the contract. The winning line at 4♠ is to lead low toward the ♠J. West should rise and lead another diamond. Opener does not cover, ruffs, and draws trumps. Now in NT, opener has nine tricks in, and needs but one more. The obvious play is low to a heart honor, for ten tricks, unless West can pop the ace and put a diamond through. A greedy play with some merit, assuming East has the ♥A, is to run the ♥10. This loses big time, if West was snoozing with the ♥A, and East has the ♥J.