Intro to Negative Doubles

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

	♠ A K 8 4 ♥ 9 8 3 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ K Q J	
♠ 7 2 ♥ 5 2 ♦ Q 10 5 3 ♣ 10 5 4 3 2	N W E S	♠ 10 9 5 ♥ K J 7 6 4 ♦ A K J ♣ 7 6
13 **2 12** **13**	♠ Q J 6 3 ♥ A Q 10 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ A 9 8	

West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♣	1 ♥	Dbl
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

4 ♠ by North
Lead: ♦ A

When East overcalls 1 ♥, South should make a negative double to show four spades (as a priority is to locate a 4-4 major fit if it exists). Over South's negative double, North should rebid 2 ♠ (as if partner had responded 1 ♠ without the overcall), which promises four-card support and 12-14 points. This is all South needs to bid game.

After the defence take the first three diamond tricks, declarer must take two heart finesses to make the contract, covering East's heart as cheaply as possible each time. Knowing that East had overcalled 1 ♥, declarer should draw trumps before undertaking the 2nd heart finesse to avoid West ruffing, in case West started with a stiff heart.

Play theme: Finessing for the tricks you need

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Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

	♠ Q J 9 6 ♥ J 9 6 5 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ 7 4	
♠ 5 4 3 2 ♥ K Q 4 3 ♦ 4 3 ♣ A K 8	N W E S	♠ A 7 ♥ A 10 7 2 ♦ Q J 10 ♣ Q J 10 3
4 **12 14** **10**	♠ K 10 8 ♥ 8 ♦ A K 9 6 5 ♣ 9 6 5 2	

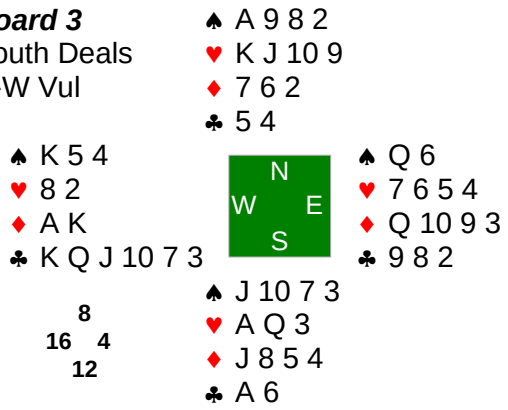
West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♣	1 ♦
Dbl	Pass	2 ♥	Pass
4 ♥	All pass		

4 ♥ by East
Lead: ♦ A

When South overcalls 1 ♦, West should make a negative double to show 4-4 in both majors. With this information, East can see that their side has a heart fit and should rebid 2 ♥ (as if partner had responded 1 ♥ without the overcall), which promises four-card support and 12-14 points. West has enough to bid game.

In order to bring in the trump suit without loss, declarer must be careful to cash ♥ K and ♥ Q first, in case trumps break badly and North has four to the ♥ J (if South is the one with four trumps, nothing can be done). When South shows out on the 2nd round of trumps, declarer can then take the marked finesse against North.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
			1 ♦
2 ♣	Dbl	Pass	2 ♠
All pass			

Lead: ♣ K

When West overcalls 2 ♣, North must make a negative double to show enough points to compete and promising at least one four card major.

With four spades, South should rebid 2 ♠ which promises 12-14 points. North has both majors, but not enough to raise/invite game, so they are happy to play here.

After taking the ♣ A, declarer should draw trumps by running the ♠ J. When this loses to East's ♠ Q, declarer should repeat the finesse, playing for split honours (which will be successful 75% of the time).

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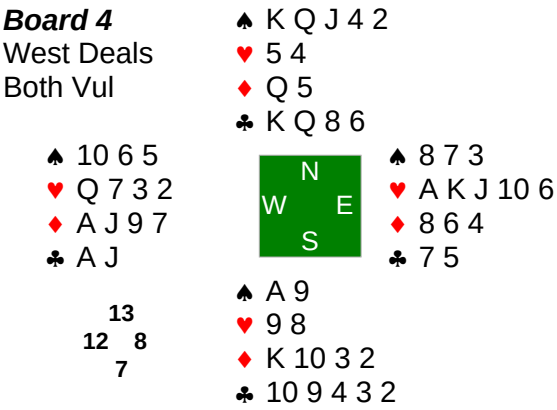
Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
1 ♦	1 ♠	Dbl	Pass
2 ♥	All pass		

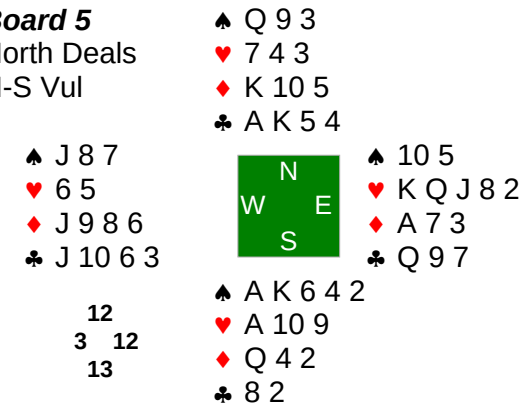
Lead: ♠ K

East would like to show their heart suit but they don't have enough to bid 2 ♥ (requiring 10 points to do so), so they must make a negative double.

With four hearts, West should rebid 2 ♥ which promises 12-14 points. East is happy to have found a fit and to play there.

Declarer has to lose three spades and a club, so they must aim to hold their diamond losers to one. This is possible as declarer has good diamond spots: all they need is for the ♦ 10 to be onside with split honours. After drawing trumps, declarer should play a diamond to the ♦ 9.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
	1 ♣	1 ♥	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♠	Pass	4 ♠
All pass			

Lead: ♥ 6

With five spades, South has a straightforward 1 ♠ bid over East's 1 ♥ overcall (as a negative double promises exactly four spades). North, with 3-card support, raises this to 2 ♠ to show that they have a fit. Following partner's raise, South has enough to bid game directly.

West leads a heart (partner's suit). Declarer probably does best to take the ♥ A straightaway and draw trumps. Declarer can see that they will have to lose two heart tricks, and they need to avoid losing two diamond tricks. To make the contract declarer should draw trumps ending in hand and finesse the ♦ 10, hoping for ♦ J onside.

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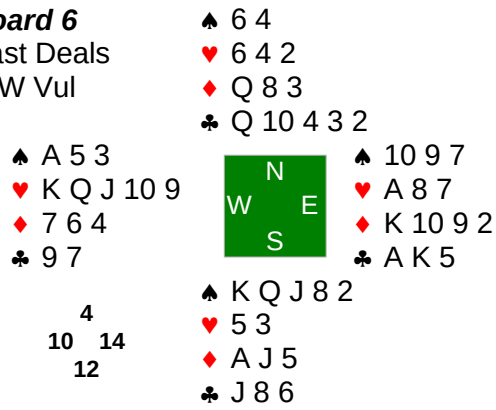
Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul



West	*North*	*East*	*South*
		1 ♦	1 ♠
2 ♥	Pass	3 ♥	All pass

Lead: ♠ 6

With five hearts and 10 points, West has enough to bid 2 ♥ over South's 1 ♠ overcall. (West would make a negative double only if they had 5+ hearts and less than 10 points, or if they had 10+ points but only four hearts).

East raises to 3 ♥ to show that they have a fit and a minimum opening hand (12-14 points). Note that East must not pass, as 2 ♥ is forcing for one round. West has a minimum for their 2 ♥ bid, so they pass too.

North leads a spade (partner's suit). After taking the ♠ A and drawing trumps, declarer must not lose more than two diamond tricks in order to make the contract. Declarer should play a diamond to the ♦T (or ♦ 9), and return to hand to repeat the finesse, playing for North to hold one of the ♦ Q or ♦ J.