

# Playing Trump Contracts

By Chris Dixon

# The Problems of Card Play

**1 TRICKS**

**2 ENTRIES**

**3 CONTROL**

## Ways of Making Tricks

1	Top Tricks	A 6 2 A Q 7	K J 8 K J 2
2	High Card Promotion	K J 7 J 9 7 2	Q 10 6 3 K 10 3
3	Long Suit Promotion	A K 7 5 3 K 8 4 2	9 6 2 A 6 5 3
4	Finesse	A 7 2 A 10 7	Q 6 5 Q 5 2
5	Ruffing	Without reducing trump length	

## Reasons for Having Trumps

- 1 Extra Control**
- 2 Make Tricks by Ruffing**
- 3 Establish Long Suits Without Loss**
- 4 Entries**
- 5 Elimination Plays**

## **STAGE 1 – Count Tricks**

- 1 Estimate probable tricks in each suit**
- 2 Assume normal breaks but ignore extras from finesses**
- 3 First Count Trump Tricks**
- 4 Assess Potential Extra Tricks**
- 5 Check on Losers**

## **STAGE 2 – Determine Plan Type**

- 1 Draw Trumps and Establish Tricks**
- 2 Ruff Losers with shorter or Equal Trumps**
- 3 Ruff out a Long Suit**
- 4 Cross Ruff**

## **STAGE 3 – Drawing Trumps?**

- 1 Trumps Needed for Ruffs?**
- 2 Trumps Needed for Control?**
- 3 Trumps Needed for Entries?**

1)

♠	K 9 7 5 2
♥	A 9 3
♦	8 7 3
♣	J 9

♠	A 3
♥	K Q J 10 8 4
♦	A Q 2
♣	8 3

4♥, Lead 2 top ♣ then  
5♦ from East

2)

♠	K Q J 10 9
♥	7 5 2
♦	A Q 7
♣	6 3

♠	8 7 5 2
♥	4
♦	K 9 2
♣	A 8 7 4 2

4♠, Lead A♠ and  
another, trumps are  
3-1

3)

♠	Q J 10 6
♥	Q J 8 2
♦	A 8 4
♣	K 3

♠	9 8
♥	A K 10 4
♦	9 3 2
♣	A Q 7 6

4♥, Lead K♦

In each case, estimate your probable tricks and determine Plan Type

4) ♠ K J 9 8 4  
♥ A Q 4 2  
♦ 9  
♣ K 5 3

♠ A Q 10 2  
♥ 4  
♦ K 8 5 2  
♣ A 8 7 2

6♠, Lead J♦

5) ♠ K Q J 4  
♥ Q 7 2  
♦ A Q 7  
♣ K 8 7

♠ A 10 8 6 2  
♥ A 10 4  
♦ K 9 2  
♣ 9 2

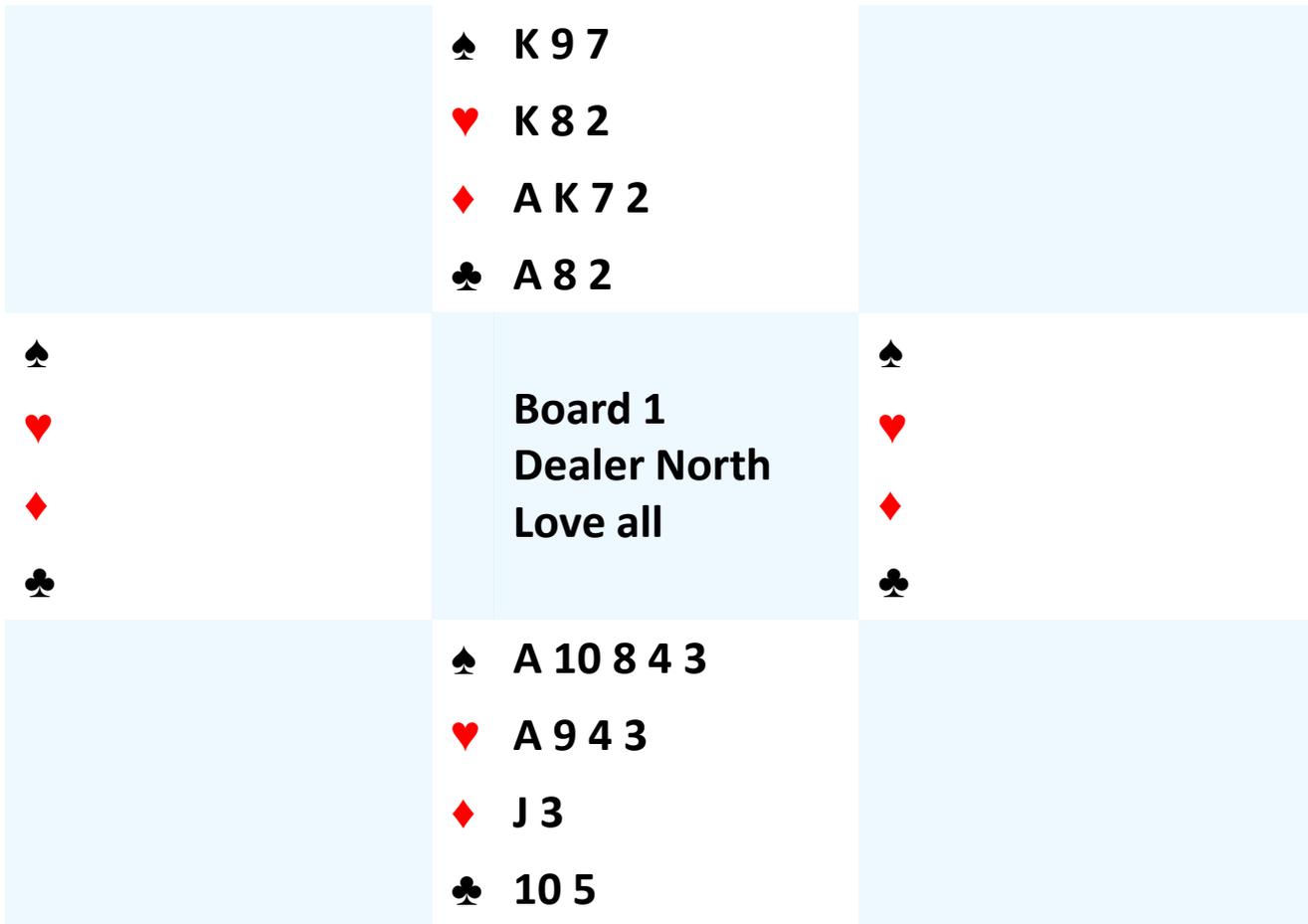
4♠, Lead 5♠

6) ♠ K J 8 4 3  
♥ 7 5 2  
♦ K Q 7  
♣ K 3

♠ A Q 9 2  
♥ 4  
♦ A 10 2  
♣ A 8 7 4 2

6♠, Lead Q♣

In each case, estimate your probable tricks and determine Plan Type



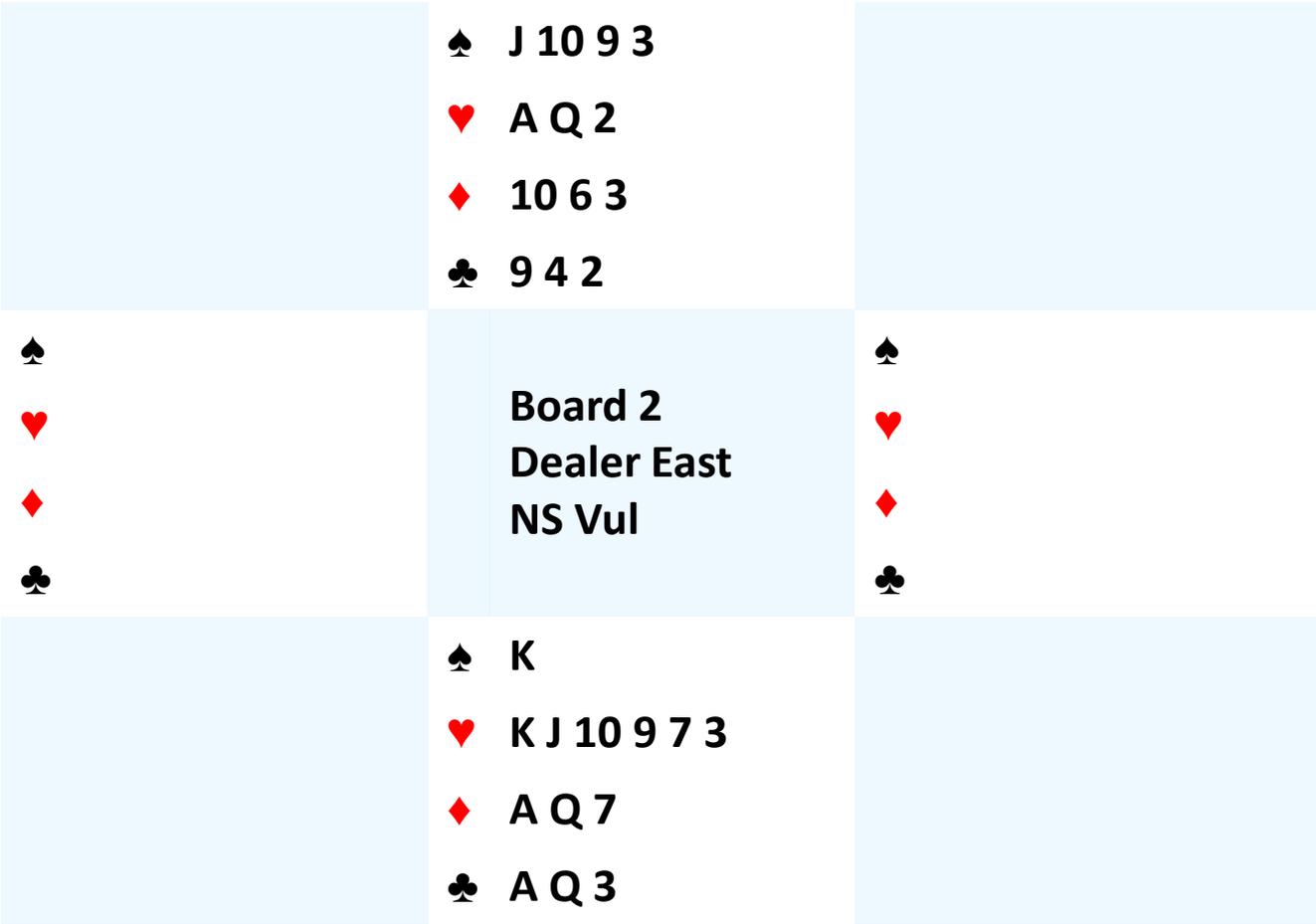
S	W	N	E
		1♦	P
1♠	P	1NT	P
2♣	P	2♠	P
4♠	P	P	P

South plays in 4♠  
 West leads Q♣  
 Trumps are 3-2

	♠ K 9 7 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ A K 7 2 ♣ A 8 2	
♠ J 5 2 ♥ Q 10 7 6 ♦ Q 9 8 ♣ Q J 9	<b>Board 1</b> <b>Dealer North</b> <b>Love all</b>	♠ Q 6 ♥ J 5 ♦ 10 6 5 4 ♣ K 7 6 4 3
	♠ A 10 8 4 3 ♥ A 9 4 3 ♦ J 3 ♣ 10 5	

S	W	N	E
		1♦	P
1♠	P	1NT	P
2♣	P	2♠	P
4♠	P	P	P

South plays in 4♠  
 West leads Q♣  
 Trumps are 3-2



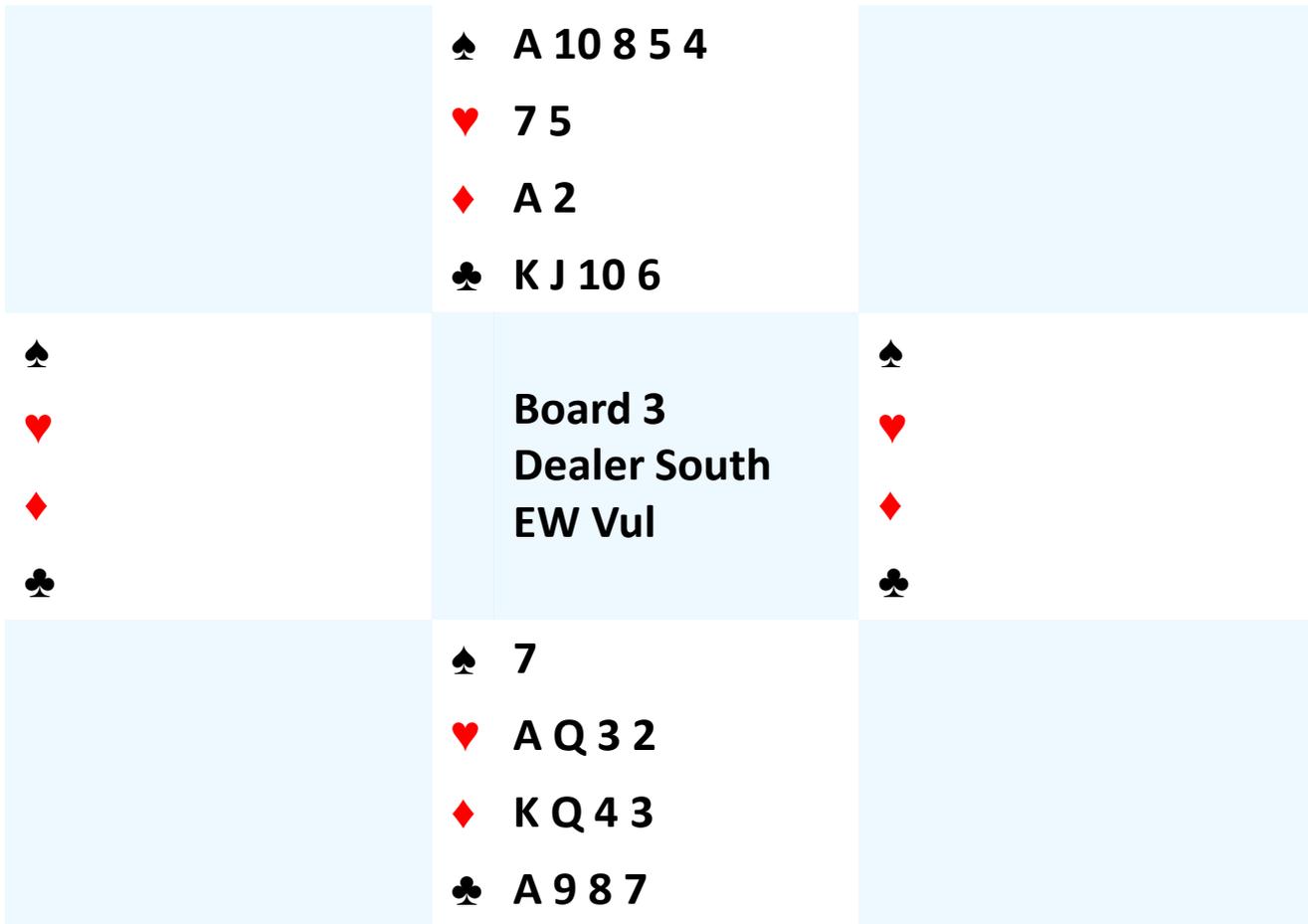
S	W	N	E
			P
1♥	P	2♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads 5♥  
 Trumps are 3-1

	♠ J 10 9 3 ♥ A Q 2 ♦ 10 6 3 ♣ 9 4 2	
♠ Q 6 5 ♥ 8 6 5 ♦ K J 2 ♣ K 7 6 5	<b>Board 2</b> <b>Dealer East</b> <b>NS Vul</b>	♠ A 8 7 4 2 ♥ 4 ♦ 9 8 5 4 ♣ J 10 8
	♠ K ♥ K J 10 9 7 3 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ A Q 3	

S	W	N	E
			P
1♥	P	2♥	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads 5♥  
 Trumps are 3-1



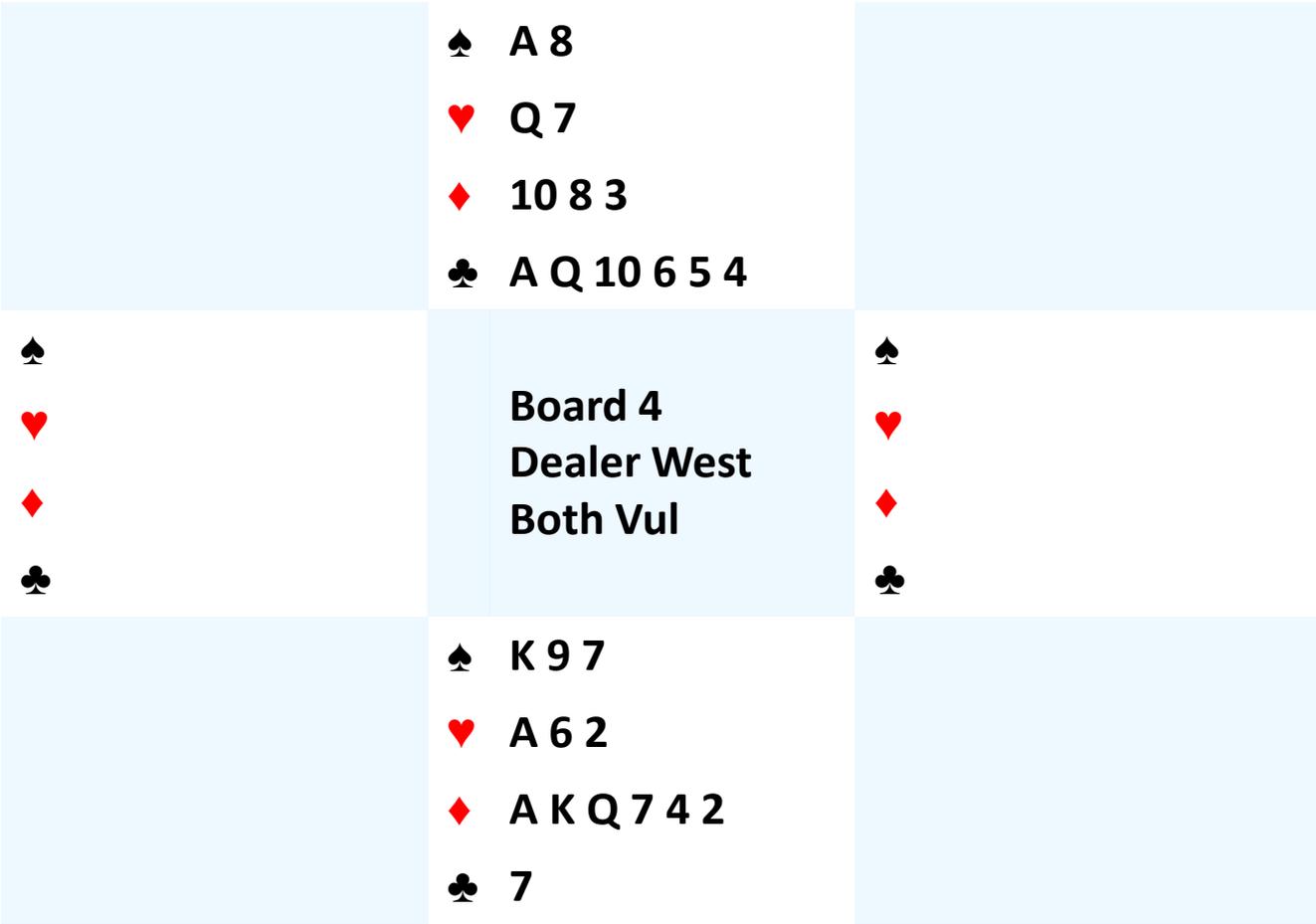
S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	3♦	P
4♦	P	6♣	P
P	P		

South plays in 6♣  
 West leads J♦  
 Trumps are 3-2

	<p>♠ A 10 8 5 4</p> <p>♥ 7 5</p> <p>♦ A 2</p> <p>♣ K J 10 6</p>	
<p>♠ J 6 3</p> <p>♥ K 10 9 6</p> <p>♦ J 10 8</p> <p>♣ Q 3 2</p>	<p>Board 3</p> <p>Dealer South</p> <p>EW Vul</p>	<p>♠ K Q 9 2</p> <p>♥ J 8 4</p> <p>♦ 9 7 6 5</p> <p>♣ 5 4</p>
	<p>♠ 7</p> <p>♥ A Q 3 2</p> <p>♦ K Q 4 3</p> <p>♣ A 9 8 7</p>	

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1♠	P
2♣	P	3♦	P
4♦	P	6♣	P
P	P		

South plays in 6♣  
 West leads J♦  
 Trumps are 3-2



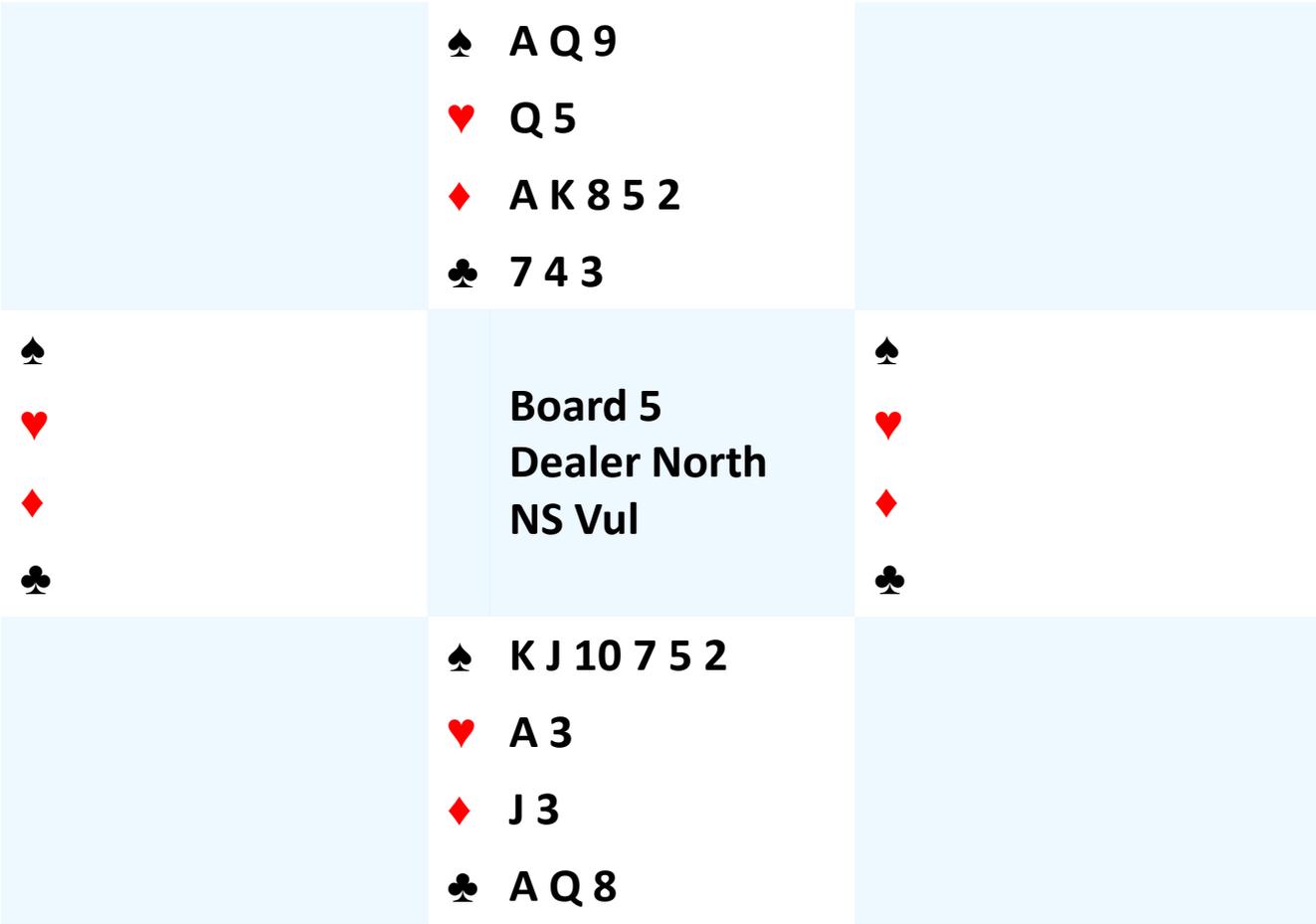
S	W	N	E
	2♠	3♣	P
3♦	P	3NT	P
4♦	P	4♠	P
6♦	P	P	P

South plays in 6♦  
 West leads Q♠  
 Trumps are 3-1

	♠ A 8 ♥ Q 7 ♦ 10 8 3 ♣ A Q 10 6 5 4	
♠ Q J 10 6 5 4 ♥ K 9 5 3 ♦ 5 ♣ 3 2	Board 4 Dealer West Both Vul	♠ 3 2 ♥ J 10 8 4 ♦ J 9 6 ♣ K J 9 8
	♠ K 9 7 ♥ A 6 2 ♦ A K Q 7 4 2 ♣ 7	

S	W	N	E
	2♠	3♣	P
3♦	P	3NT	P
4♦	P	4♠	P
6♦	P	P	P

South plays in 6♦  
 West leads Q♠  
 Trumps are 3-1



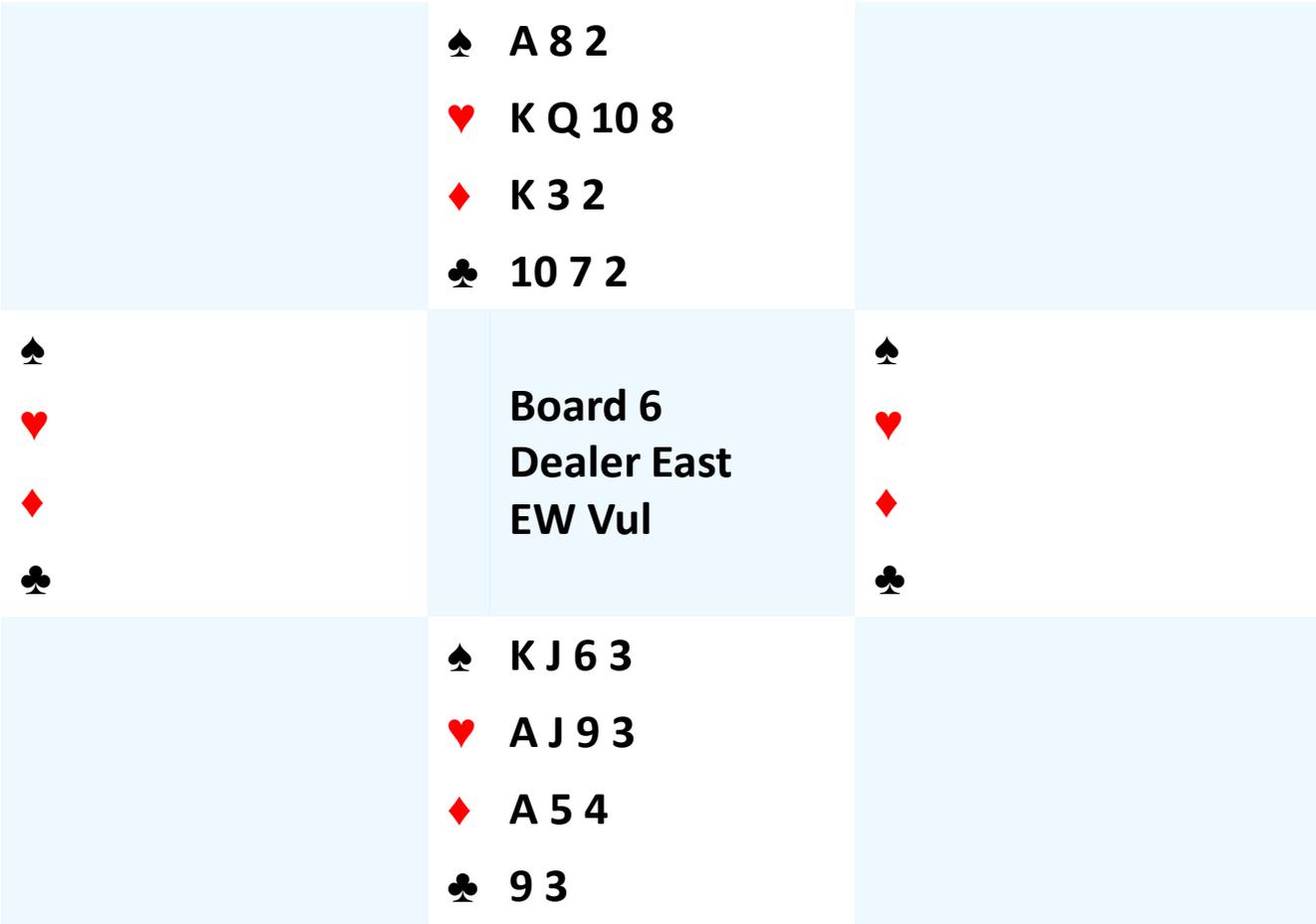
S	W	N	E
		1♦	P
1♠	P	2♠	P
3♣	P	4♠	P
4NT	P	5♠	P
6♠	P	P	P

South plays in 6♠  
 West leads J♦  
 Trumps are 3-1

	♠ A Q 9 ♥ Q 5 ♦ A K 8 5 2 ♣ 7 4 3	
♠ 8 6 3 ♥ 9 8 4 2 ♦ Q 10 7 4 ♣ J 9	<b>Board 5</b> <b>Dealer North</b> <b>NS Vul</b>	♠ 4 ♥ K J 10 7 6 ♦ 9 6 ♣ K 10 6 5 2
	♠ K J 10 7 5 2 ♥ A 3 ♦ J 3 ♣ A Q 8	

S	W	N	E
		1♦	P
1♠	P	2♠	P
3♣	P	4♠	P
4NT	P	5♠	P
6♠	P	P	P

South plays in 6♠  
 West leads J♦  
 Trumps are 3-1



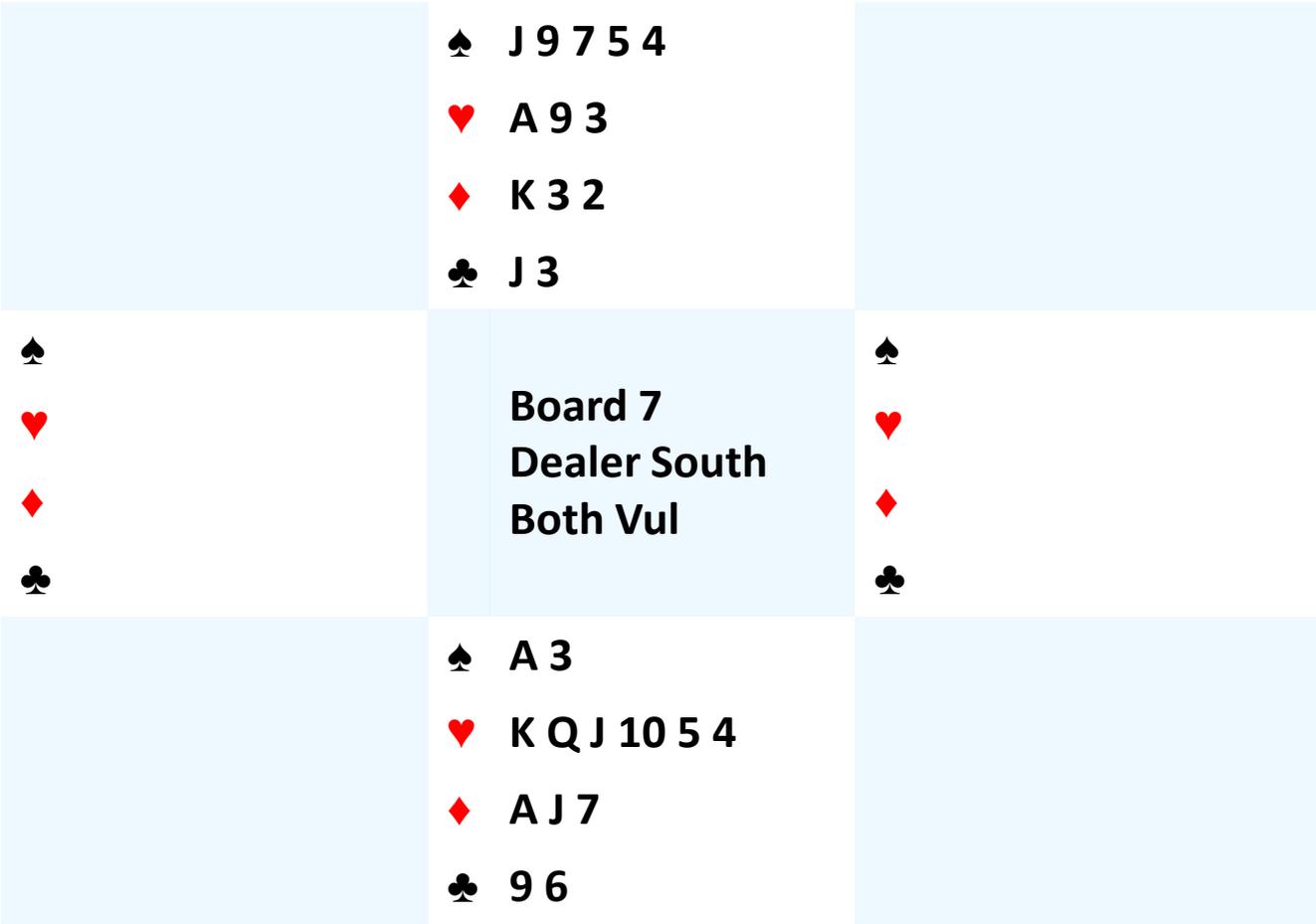
S	W	N	E
			P
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	4♥	P
P	P	P	

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads A♣, followed by K♣ and another  
 Trumps are 3-2

	♠ A 8 2 ♥ K Q 10 8 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ 10 7 2	
♠ Q 4 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ Q 9 8 6 ♣ A K 8 6	Board 6 Dealer East EW Vul	♠ 10 9 7 5 ♥ 6 5 ♦ J 10 7 ♣ Q J 5 4
	♠ K J 6 3 ♥ A J 9 3 ♦ A 5 4 ♣ 9 3	

S	W	N	E
			P
1NT	P	2♣	P
2♥	P	4♥	P
P	P	P	

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads A♣, followed by K♣ and another  
 Trumps are 3-2



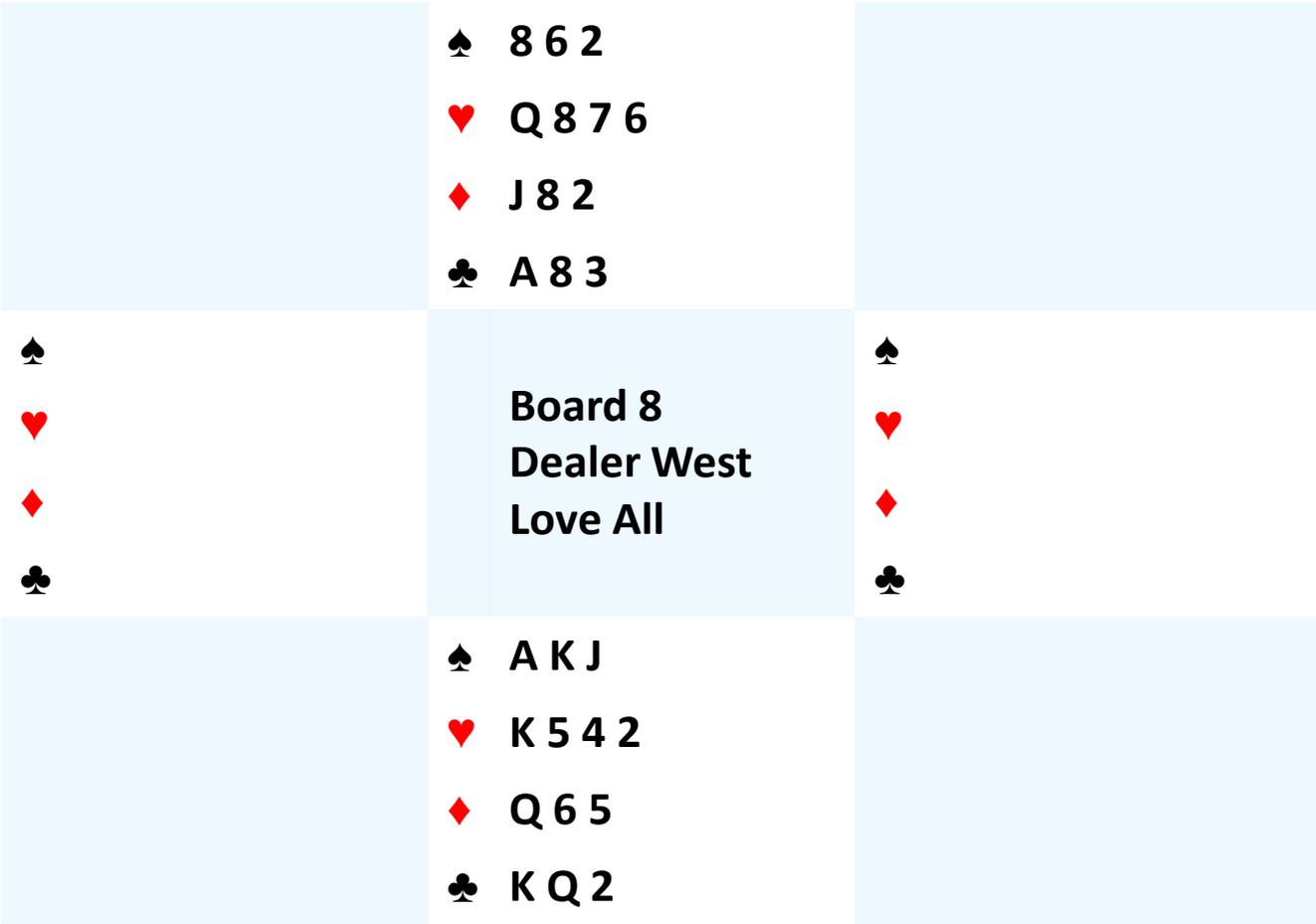
S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1♠	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥  
 West cashes AK♣, followed by a trump  
 Trumps are 3-1

	♠ J 9 7 5 4 ♥ A 9 3 ♦ K 3 2 ♣ J 3	
♠ Q 8 ♥ 7 6 2 ♦ Q 10 6 5 ♣ A K 8 4	Board 7 Dealer South Both Vul	♠ K 10 6 2 ♥ 8 ♦ 9 8 4 ♣ Q 10 7 5 2
	♠ A 3 ♥ K Q J 10 5 4 ♦ A J 7 ♣ 9 6	

S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1♠	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥  
 West cashes AK♣, followed by a trump  
 Trumps are 3-1



S	W	N	E
	P	P	P
1♥	P	2♥	P
2NT	P	3♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 3♥  
 West leads J♣  
 Trumps are 3-2

	♠ 8 6 2 ♥ Q 8 7 6 ♦ J 8 2 ♣ A 8 3	
♠ Q 10 9 4 ♥ A 10 ♦ K 10 7 ♣ J 10 9 5	Board 8 Dealer West Love All	♠ 7 5 3 ♥ J 9 3 ♦ A 9 4 3 ♣ 7 6 4
	♠ A K J ♥ K 5 4 2 ♦ Q 6 5 ♣ K Q 2	

S	W	N	E
	P	P	P
1♥	P	2♥	P
2NT	P	3♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 3♥  
 West leads J♣  
 Trumps are 3-2

## **STAGE 4 – Control**

- 1 Equality of Controls and Losers**
- 2 Discard Losers**
- 3 Hold Up**
- 4 Keep the Danger Hand Out**
- 5 Finesse**

7)

♠	A 6 2
♥	A 9 3
♦	A Q J 7
♣	Q J 9

♠	8 5 4
♥	K 10 8 4 2
♦	8 3
♣	A K 2

4♥, Lead K♠ (West bid 1♠)

8)

♠	Q 10 9 4
♥	A K J
♦	Q 8
♣	A 10 8 4

♠	K J 8 6 2
♥	4
♦	A 9 2
♣	K Q J 2

6♠, Lead J♦ (East has K♦)

9)

♠	7 5 2
♥	Q J 8 2
♦	A J 7 5 2
♣	2

♠	K 8 3
♥	A K 10 9 4
♦	K 9 8
♣	A 8

4♥, Lead K♣

In each case, how do you deal with the problem of losers?

## **STAGE 5 – Trump Control**

- 1 Don't Draw Trumps**
- 2 Don't Ruff**
- 3 Don't Overruff**
- 4 Let the Defence Ruff**

10)

♠ A 6 2  
 ♥ Q 8 5  
 ♦ 9 5 4  
 ♣ Q 8 6 5

♠ K Q J 7 3  
 ♥ 7 2  
 ♦ A K 3  
 ♣ A K 2

4♠, Lead A♥, K♥ and a  
 3<sup>rd</sup> round ruffed by  
 East with 9♠

11)

♠ Q 10 9 4  
 ♥ A 2  
 ♦ Q 8 2  
 ♣ A 10 8 4

♠ A K J 7  
 ♥ J 3  
 ♦ J 10 9 3  
 ♣ K Q 2

4♠, Lead K♥ (Trumps  
 are 4-1)

12)

♠ Q J 7 3  
 ♥ 9 7 2  
 ♦ A K 8  
 ♣ K 6 2

♠ A 8 2  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ Q J 9 7 2  
 ♣ A Q J 3

5♦, Lead AK♥ (Trumps  
 are 4-1)

In each case, how do you deal with the problem of trump control?

## **STAGE 6 – Entries**

- 1 Needed to establish and access a side suit**
- 2 Needed for Finesses**
- 3 Needed for Ruffing**

13) ♠ A 2  
♥ A 9 5  
♦ A K Q J 7  
♣ A 8 3

♠ K 9 7 5 4 3  
♥ K 10  
♦ 6 5 4  
♣ 10 7

7♦, Lead 6♥  
(Trumps are 4-1)

14) ♠ K Q J 9 6 2  
♥ A 5  
♦ K Q  
♣ A 10 2

♠ A 8  
♥ K J 3  
♦ A 10 9 5 2  
♣ 9 6 3

7♠, Lead 4♥ (Trumps  
are 3-2)

15) ♠ 3  
♥ 9 7 2  
♦ K 10 4  
♣ Q J 10 9 8 2

♠ A K Q J 8 2  
♥ K 7 3  
♦ A Q 2  
♣ A

6♠, Lead 5♠ (Trumps  
are 4-2)

In each case, how do you deal with the problem of entries?



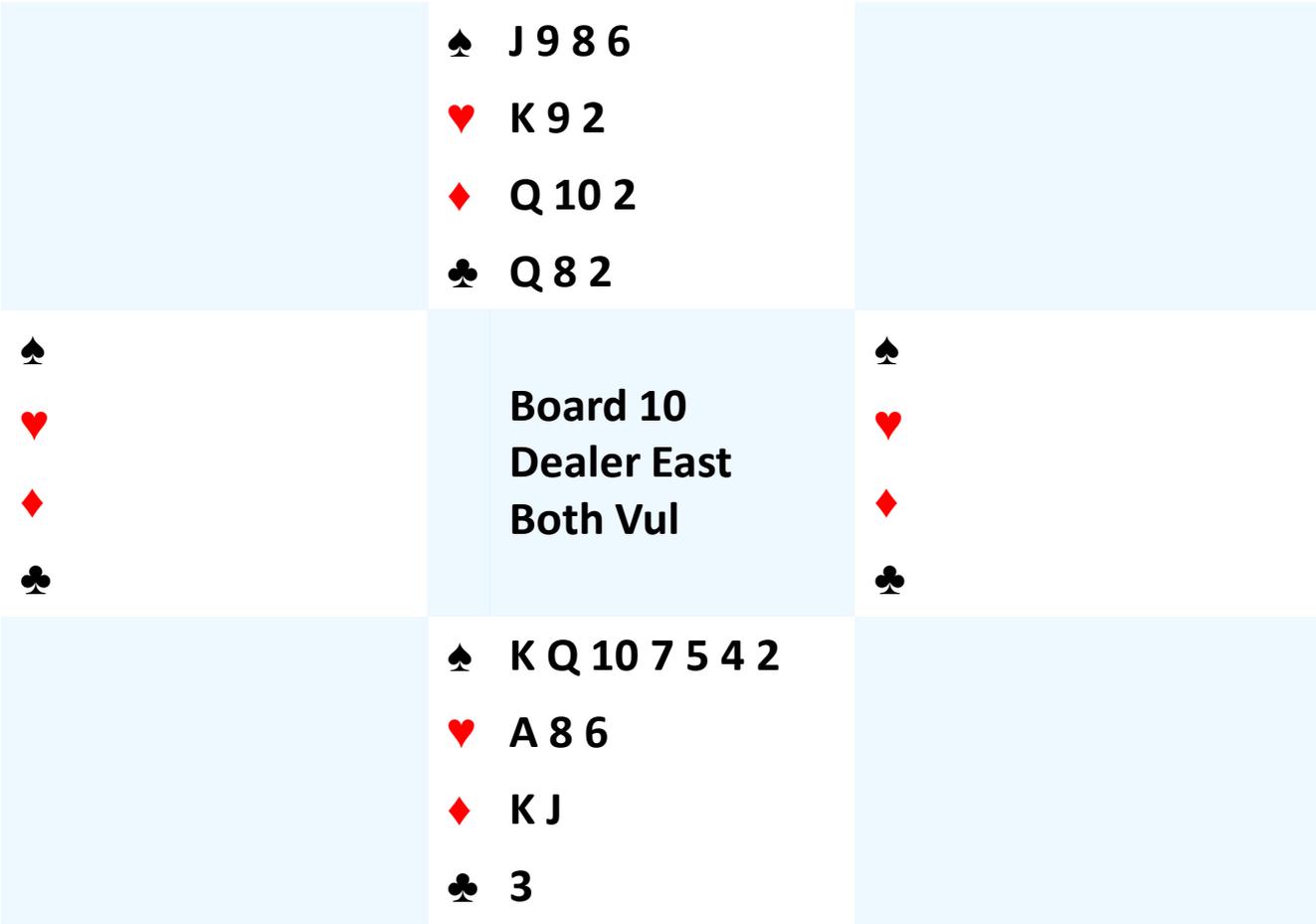
S	W	N	E
		P	1♣
1♥	2♣	X	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads A♣ and another  
 Trumps are 3-2

	♠ K Q 10 9 5 ♥ 7 4 ♦ A 10 2 ♣ J 8 2	
♠ 8 2 ♥ 10 9 2 ♦ J 9 8 7 ♣ A 9 4 3	<b>Board 9</b> <b>Dealer North</b> <b>EW Vul</b>	♠ A J 7 6 ♥ 8 5 ♦ Q 4 ♣ K Q 10 6 5
	♠ 4 3 ♥ A K Q J 6 3 ♦ K 6 5 3 ♣ 7	

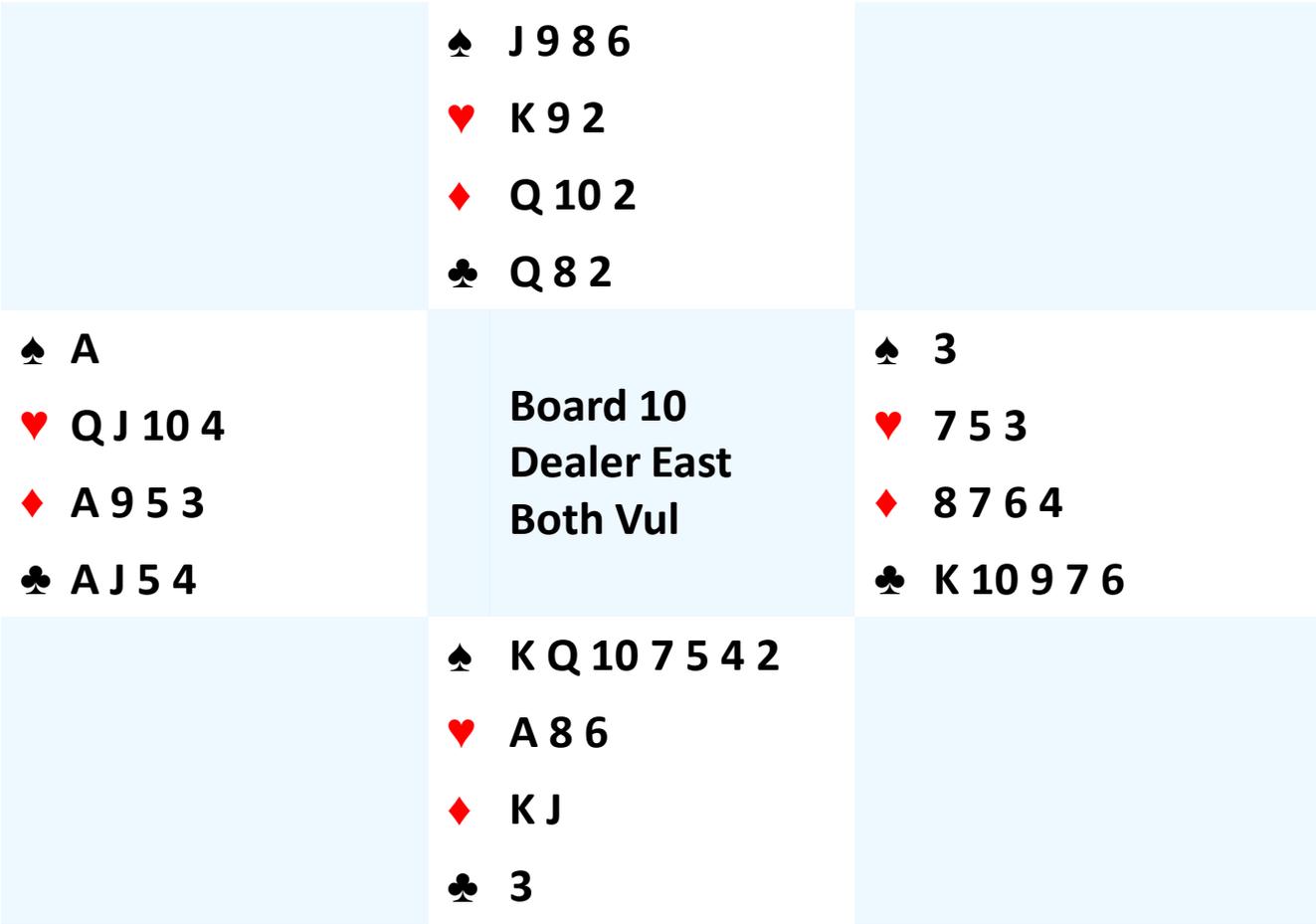
S	W	N	E
		P	1♣
1♥	2♣	X	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads A♣ and another  
 Trumps are 3-2



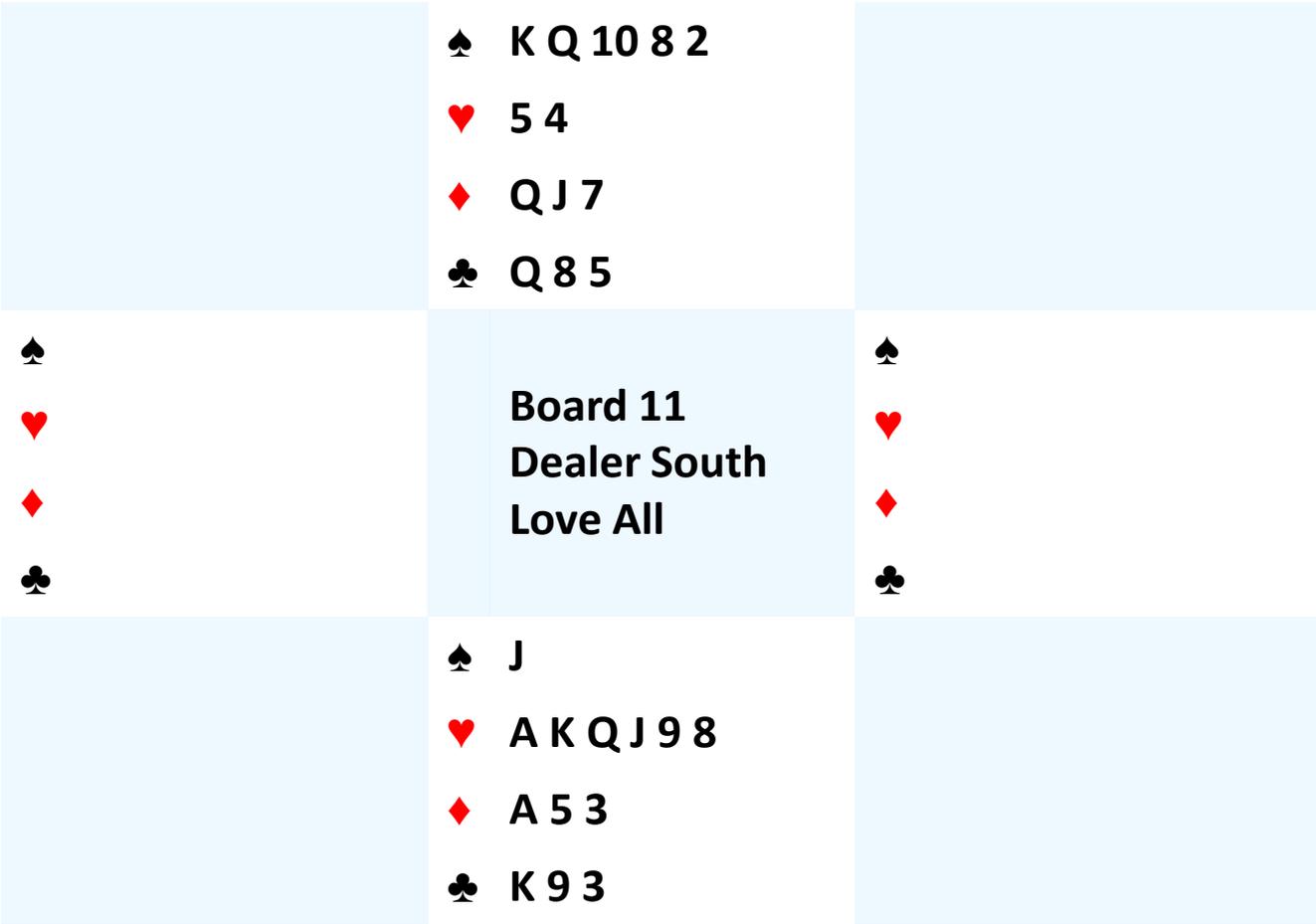
S	W	N	E
			P
1♠	X	2♠	P
4♠	P	P	P

South plays in 4♠  
 West leads Q♥  
 Trumps are 1-1



S	W	N	E
			P
1♠	X	2♠	P
4♠	P	P	P

South plays in 4♠  
 West leads Q♥  
 Trumps are 1-1



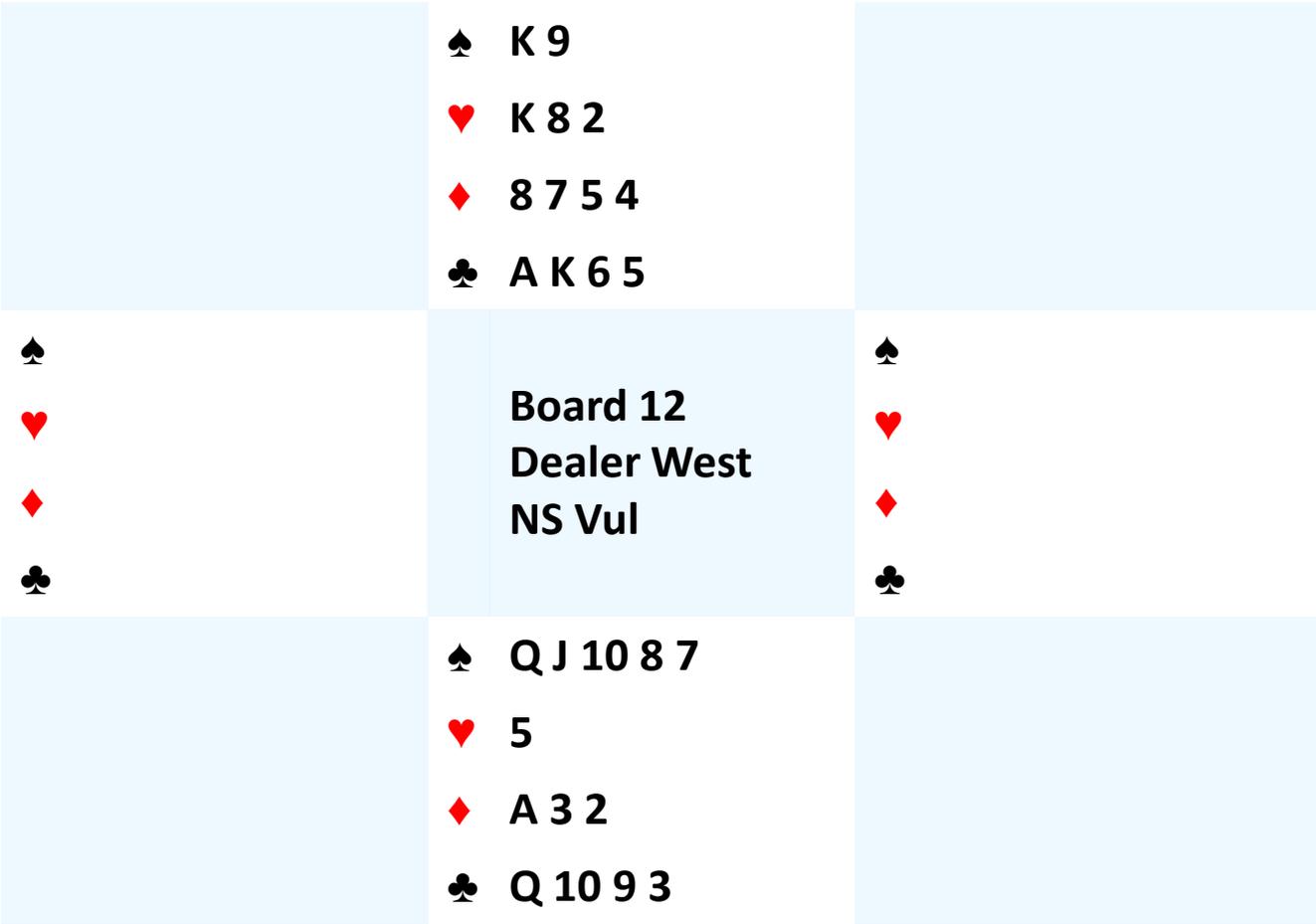
S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1S	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads 2♦  
 Trumps are 3-2

	♠ K Q 10 8 2 ♥ 5 4 ♦ Q J 7 ♣ Q 8 5	
♠ A 9 4 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ 8 6 2 ♣ J 7 4 2	Board 11 Dealer South Love All	♠ 7 6 5 3 ♥ 7 6 ♦ K 10 9 4 ♣ A 10 6
	♠ J ♥ A K Q J 9 8 ♦ A 5 3 ♣ K 9 3	

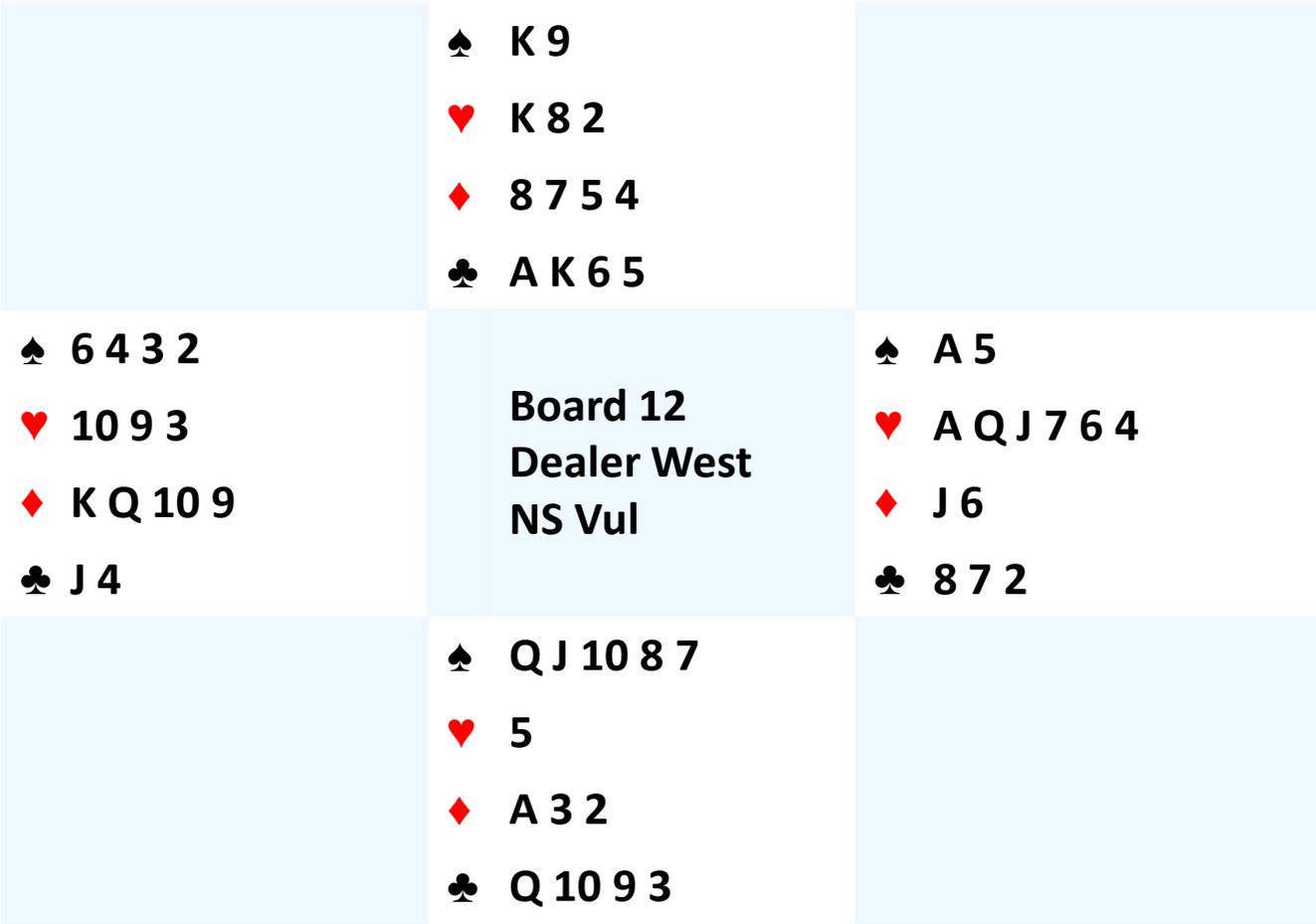
S	W	N	E
1♥	P	1S	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
P	P		

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads 2♦  
 Trumps are 3-2



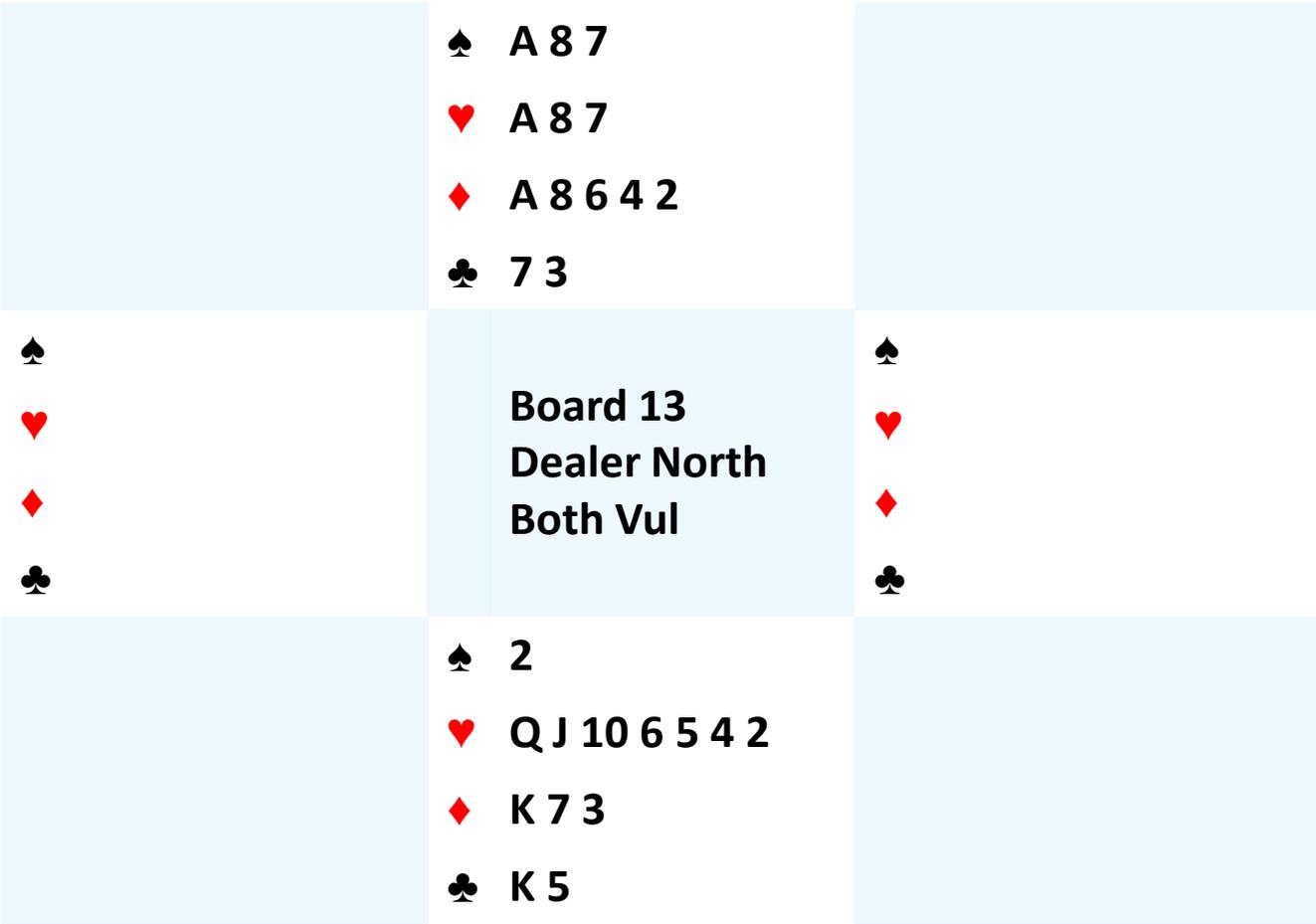
S	W	N	E
	P	1NT	2♥
2♠	3♥	P	P
3♠	P	P	P

South plays in 3♠  
 West leads 10♥  
 Trumps are 4-2



S	W	N	E
	P	1NT	2♥
2♠	3♥	P	P
3♠	P	P	P

South plays in 3♠  
 West leads 10♥  
 Trumps are 4-2



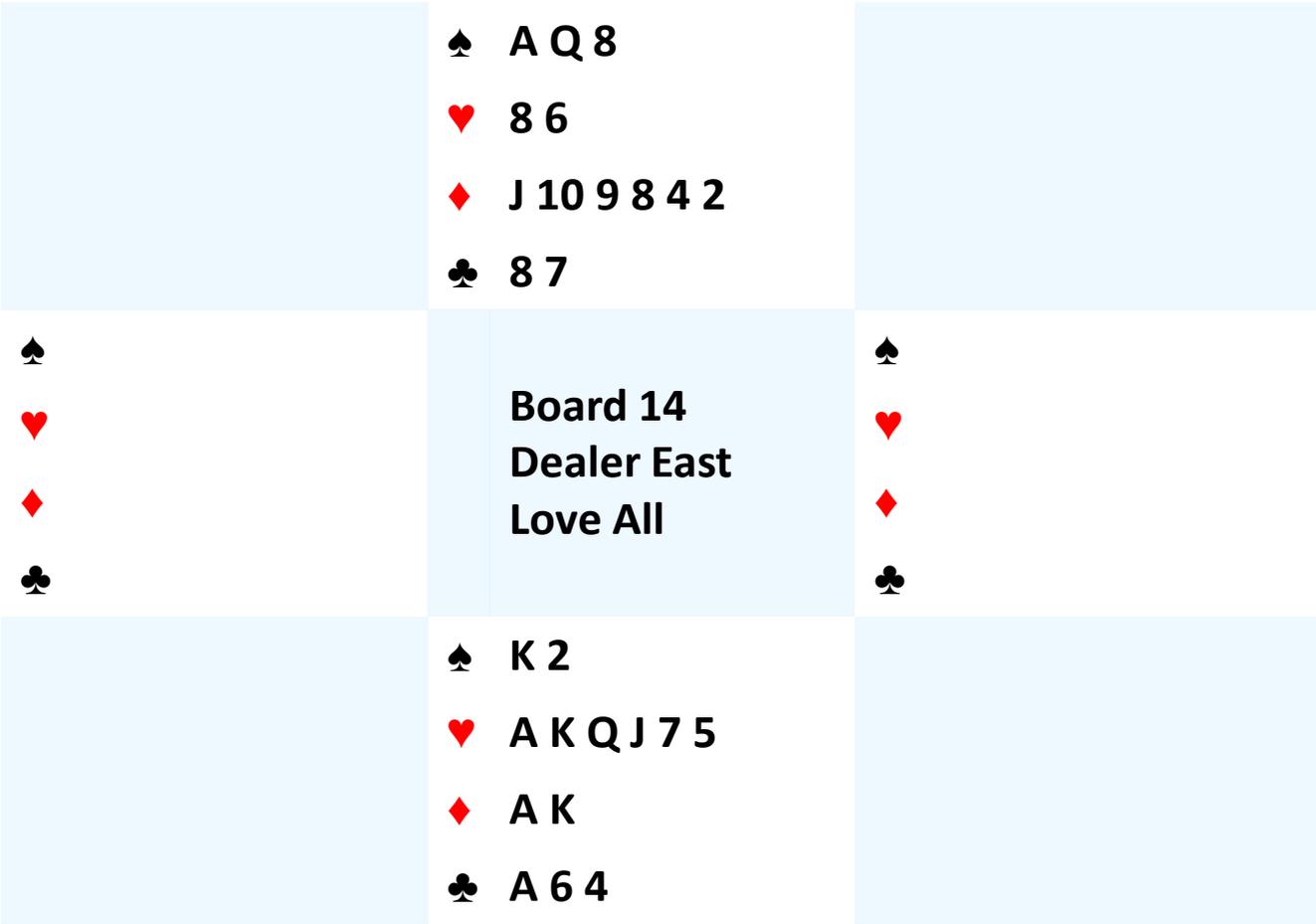
S	W	N	E
		1NT	P
2♦	2♠	P	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads K♠  
 Trumps are 2-1

	♠ A 8 7 ♥ A 8 7 ♦ A 8 6 4 2 ♣ 7 3	
♠ K Q J 10 6 5 ♥ 3 ♦ J 5 ♣ A Q J 8	<b>Board 13</b> <b>Dealer North</b> <b>Both Vul</b>	♠ 9 4 3 ♥ K 9 ♦ Q 10 9 ♣ 10 9 6 4 2
	♠ 2 ♥ Q J 10 6 5 4 2 ♦ K 7 3 ♣ K 5	

S	W	N	E
		1NT	P
2♦	2♠	P	P
4♥	P	P	P

South plays in 4♥  
 West leads K♠  
 Trumps are 2-1



S	W	N	E
			P
2♣	3♣	3♦	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
4NT	P	5♦	P
7♥	P	P	P

South plays in 7♥  
 West leads K♣  
 Trumps are 3-2

	♠ A Q 8 ♥ 8 6 ♦ J 10 9 8 4 2 ♣ 8 7	
♠ J 9 3 ♥ 4 3 ♦ 6 3 ♣ K Q J 10 3 2	<b>Board 14</b> <b>Dealer East</b> <b>Love All</b>	♠ 10 7 6 5 4 ♥ 10 9 2 ♦ Q 7 5 ♣ 9 5
	♠ K 2 ♥ A K Q J 7 5 ♦ A K ♣ A 6 4	

S	W	N	E
			P
2♣	3♣	3♦	P
3♥	P	4♥	P
4NT	P	5♦	P
7♥	P	P	P

South plays in 7♥  
 West leads K♣  
 Trumps are 3-2

# Summary

- 1 Count Tricks**
- 2 Determine Play Plan Type**
- 3 Decide whether to draw Trumps?**
- 4 Check Losers/Control**
- 5 Check Trump Control**
- 6 Check Entries**