Reopening Doubles & the Trap Pass

Six lesson boards with analysis

Board	Theme	Right call
1	The basic trap pass	Double, partner passes
2	Reopening with a doubleton	Double, partner passes
3	A pass is not always a trap	Responder bids 2♥
4	Three of their suit: don't reopen	Pass
5	Short in their suit, but bid, don't double	Bid 3♦, then 4♠
6	Reopening at the three level	Double, partner passes

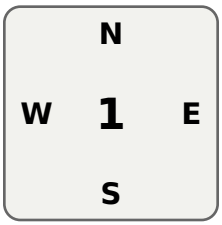
Results are **double-dummy** (perfect play by all four players), so table results may differ by a trick. Bids marked * are the key decisions on each board. Dealer and vulnerability follow the standard board numbers.

Board 1 — The basic trap pass

Dealer: North Vulnerable: None

North (12 HCP)
♠ 5
♥ K 10 8 7
♦ A K 6 5 4
♣ Q 3 2

West (6 HCP)
♠ 8 2
♥ J 6 4 2
♦ J 9 3
♣ A 10 9 4



East (12 HCP)
♠ A J 6 4 3
♥ Q 9 5
♦ Q 10 7
♣ K 8

South (10 HCP)
♠ K Q 10 9 7
♥ A 3
♦ 8 2
♣ J 7 6 5

Expected auction

West	North	East	South
	1♦	1♠	Pass*
Pass	Dbl*	Pass	Pass*
Pass			

Double-dummy tricks

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
North	8	8	8	8	8
South	8	8	8	8	8
East	4	5	5	5	5
West	4	5	5	5	5

Teaching point

South has a classic trap pass: five good spades sitting over the overcaller, and a doubleton in partner's suit. North has a singleton spade and a minimum 12 HCP, and should reopen with a double anyway.

Result

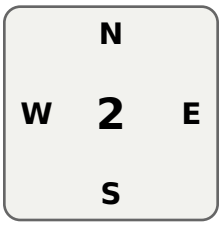
1♠ doubled goes down 2 (East takes 5 tricks): **N–S +300**. North–South can make only 8 tricks in any denomination, so the best they can do by declaring is a partscore of about +90.

Board 2 — Reopening with a doubleton

Dealer: East Vulnerable: N–S

North (3 HCP)
♠ Q 9 3 2
♥ 8 4 2
♦ J 10 7 6 5
♣ 4

West (11 HCP)
♠ K 10 8 6
♥ A 9 7
♦ 4
♣ K J 10 5 3



East (14 HCP)
♠ A 7 5
♥ K J 6
♦ A Q 9 3 2
♣ 8 2

South (12 HCP)
♠ J 4
♥ Q 10 5 3
♦ K 8
♣ A Q 9 7 6

Expected auction

West	North	East	South
		1♦	2♣
Pass*	Pass	Dbl*	Pass
Pass*	Pass		

Double-dummy tricks

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
North	3	5	4	4	4
South	4	5	4	4	4
East	9	8	9	9	9
West	9	8	8	9	9

Teaching point

West has ♣KJ1053 sitting behind the overcaller and a singleton diamond, so a trap pass. East has two clubs. That's the “almost always reopen” holding in Bergen's 1♦–(2♣) series.

Result

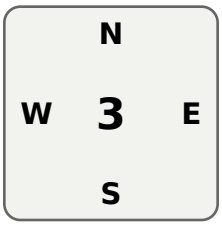
2♣ doubled goes down 4 against vulnerable opponents: **E–W +1100**. East–West's best contract is 3NT, worth +400.

Board 3 — A pass is not always a trap

Dealer: South Vulnerable: E–W

North (5 HCP)
♠ 6 2
♥ Q J 8 7 4
♦ 9 7 3
♣ Q 10 4

West (15 HCP)
♠ K 8
♥ A 9
♦ A K J 10 6 4 2
♣ 8 7



East (7 HCP)
♠ 10 9 5 3
♥ 5 2
♦ Q 8
♣ A J 6 5 3

South (13 HCP)
♠ A Q J 7 4
♥ K 10 6 3
♦ 5
♣ K 9 2

Expected auction

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

Double-dummy tricks

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
North	5	3	8	8	3
South	5	3	8	8	3
East	7	10	4	5	9
West	7	10	4	5	9

Teaching point

South's reopening double is right: a singleton diamond and 4 hearts. North passed 2♦ because 5 HCP is too weak to act at the two level, not because of a trap. North must take the double out to 2♥. (East–West may compete to 3♦.)

Result

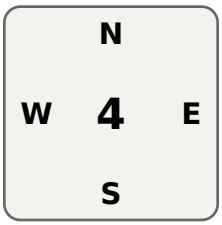
If North passes, West makes 10 tricks. 2♦ doubled with two overtricks is **–580** for N–S. North–South's 2♥ makes (8 tricks, +110). If East–West bid on to 3♦ they make it with an overtrick, but that is only –130.

Board 4 — Three of their suit: don't reopen

Dealer: West Vulnerable: Both

North (12 HCP)
♠ 10 5
♥ K 9 6
♦ Q 5
♣ A Q J 8 6 2

West (14 HCP)
♠ K 8 2
♥ A Q J 7 4
♦ A 6
♣ 10 9 3



East (7 HCP)
♠ Q J 7 6
♥ 8 5
♦ J 10 8 4
♣ K 5 4

South (7 HCP)
♠ A 9 4 3
♥ 10 3 2
♦ K 9 7 3 2
♣ 7

Expected auction

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♣	Pass	Pass
Pass*			

Double-dummy tricks

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
North	8	7	6	6	5
South	8	7	6	6	5
East	5	5	6	6	6
West	5	5	6	6	6

Teaching point

West has three small clubs, so East can't have a trap pass, and a double asks a weak partner to bid. Follow Bergen's rule: with three cards, avoid doubling; with four or more, never double.

Result

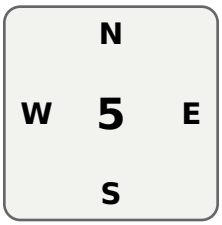
2♣ makes 8 tricks: **E–W –90**. If West doubles, East has to bid 2♠ (6 tricks, down 2 vulnerable: –200) or 2♦ (5 tricks, down 3: –300). Passing is the least bad score.

Board 5 — Short in their suit, but bid, don't double

Dealer: North Vulnerable: N–S

North (13 HCP)
♠ A K J 10 8 6
♥ —
♦ K Q 10 5 4
♣ 7 2

West (6 HCP)
♠ 9 5 2
♥ K 7 2
♦ 9 3
♣ Q J 10 9 5



East (14 HCP)
♠ 7 3
♥ A Q 10 8 6 4
♦ J 8
♣ A K 4

South (7 HCP)
♠ Q 4
♥ J 9 5 3
♦ A 7 6 2
♣ 8 6 3

Expected auction

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	3♦*	Pass	4♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

Double-dummy tricks

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
North	3	11	4	11	5
South	3	11	4	11	5
East	7	0	8	2	2
West	7	0	8	2	2

Teaching point

North has a void in hearts and a 6-5 hand that is all offense. Doubling invites South to pass with a weak 4-card holding like ♥J953, which defends badly. Bid the second suit instead.

Result

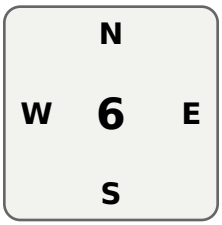
4♠ (or 5♦) makes 11 tricks: **N–S +650**. If North doubles and South passes, East makes 8 tricks: 2♥ doubled, making, is **–470**.

Board 6 — Reopening at the three level

Dealer: East Vulnerable: E–W

North (9 HCP)
♠ J 8 5
♥ 7 2
♦ Q J 6 4
♣ K Q 10 3

West (5 HCP)
♠ 9 6
♥ 10 4
♦ 8 5
♣ A J 9 8 7 5 4



East (11 HCP)
♠ A 10 3 2
♥ K 9 6 3
♦ A 10 7 3
♣ 2

South (15 HCP)
♠ K Q 7 4
♥ A Q J 8 5
♦ K 9 2
♣ 6

Expected auction

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♥
3♣	Pass*	Pass	Dbl*
Pass	Pass*	Pass	

Double-dummy tricks

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
North	7	9	8	9	9
South	7	9	8	9	9
East	6	4	4	4	3
West	6	4	4	3	3

Teaching point

North has ♣KQ103 behind the preemptor and no good bid at the three level, so a trap pass. South has a singleton club and 15 HCP, so the reopening double is automatic.

Result

3♣ doubled goes down 3 against vulnerable opponents: **N–S +800**. North–South's 3NT makes for +400.