

# ACBL-wide International Fund Game #2

## Thursday Evening – September 12, 2019 – Set 226029



American Contract  
Bridge League



Analysis by Frank Stewart

Syndicated columnist, author and Bridge Bulletin contributor  
Frank Stewart analyzed this set of deals, directing his comments  
toward advancing players.

### Board 1

North Deals  
None Vul

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

If South opens 1♣ in third position, West has little to gain by overcalling 1♦. After North responds 1♥ and South rebids 1♠, some Norths will be willing to bid 2♦; a new-suit bid by responder would ordinarily suggest more strength, but here, North might risk it since he is a passed hand. South's 2♥ preference will end the auction. Other Norths will limit their strength by rebidding 1NT, and they may be marooned there since South has no reason to think a contract of 2♥ would be superior. (Therefore, a case exists for South to raise North's 1♥ response directly to 2♥.) At a heart partial, North will often be +140, but in some play variations, the defense must be careful to hold him to only nine tricks. Norths at 1NT should take only eight tricks, and E/W will score well for minus 120.

### Board 2

East Deals  
N-S Vul

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

We expect E/W to bid 1♣, 1♦-1NT, 2NT ... and East will like his good five-card suit, prime honors and heart spots and go on to 3NT. South's opening lead could make a difference of two tricks. If South leads a textbook low heart, East wins with the 10 and can lead a low club to the ace and a club back (conceding the slim chance of winning five tricks in the suit to keep communications fluid). South wins and may exit passively with a club. East can take the ♦K and pass the ♦9 next, and whether North takes his ♦J or ducks, East should end with 10 tricks. If East starts the clubs by passing the 10, best defense can hold him to nine tricks. N/S will get a top if South finds a spade opening lead to win five tricks for his side. Will a few Norths overcall 1♠, vulnerable, on that miserable hand?

### Board 3

South Deals  
E-W Vul

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

South deals and opens 1♦, North responds 1♥ and East overcalls 1♠. If South passes with his minimum, North may pass also, and East will escape for minus 100 and win a lot of matchpoints. Many Norths will be reluctant to sell out at the one level. North might bid 2♦ - with the friendly lie of the cards, South could do well at a diamond partial - and if North tried 1NT despite his lack of a spade stopper, he would do even better. At some tables, South will rebid 1NT freely over 1♠ though his high-card values are minimum. Then N/S could be +150 for a good matchpoint result. And if after two passes, East ignores the hazardous vulnerability and competes with 2♠, N/S will be +200 at least. If somebody sniffs out a penalty double, they will be +500 for an icy top.

**Board 4**West Deals  
Both Vul

♠ J 6 2  
♥ A J 4 2  
♦ K 9 6 2  
♣ 7 3

♠ K Q 8 5  
♥ 5 3  
♦ Q 10 3  
♣ K Q 10 6



♠ A 10 4  
♥ 8 7  
♦ A J 7 5 4  
♣ A 5 4

♠ 9 7 3  
♥ K Q 10 9 6  
♦ 8  
♣ J 9 8 2

North will usually open 1♣ in second seat. To pass with four good spades courts trouble, risking a passed-out deal when N/S could make a spade partial. East will overcall 1♦, South responds 1♥ and West raises to 2♦. After two passes, South may try 2♥ or 3♣, and since West has four-card diamond support and a decent hand, he is likely to compete with 3♦, passed out. If South leads the ♥K. East can take the ace and may proceed to guess right in trumps based on the N/S bidding. (South may have shown length in hearts and clubs and holds at least three spades.) Then East will lose only three side-suit tricks, making four. E/W may score only average for +130; they could be +150 if they wander into notrump and could be +200 defending against a N/S heart or club partial.

**Board 5**North Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ J 6 4 3  
♥ 6  
♦ Q 10 6 4  
♣ K J 7 2

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



♠ 10 9 7  
♥ K 10 8 4  
♦ K J  
♣ A Q 10 4

♠ 2  
♥ Q 9 7 3 2  
♦ A 9 8 5  
♣ 9 6 3

Many results are possible, including a 2♦ contract played in both directions. When North opens 1♠, some Easts will double. They will survive if West advances with 2♣ - he could win eight tricks there - but if he tries 2♦, East will have to pass at an odd contract. Other Easts will pass over 1♠ instead of assuming the risk of a diamond advance. Then if South responds 1NT, forcing, North must grit his teeth and rebid 2♦, passed out - and down. If 1NT is not forcing or semi-forcing, North may pass it, and the defense will prevail with a minor-suit opening lead. We think any pair with a plus score will win some matchpoints. A few N/Ss may have a mechanism to reach 2♥. South can take eight tricks despite the unfavorable trump break, and +110 may be worth a N/S top.

**Board 6**East Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ K J 10 5 4  
♥ K 10 5 2  
♦ -  
♣ A Q 5 3

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



♠ A 8  
♥ A 8 6 4  
♦ K J 10 9 5 4  
♣ J

♠ 6  
♥ J 9  
♦ Q 7 2  
♣ K 10 9 8 7 4 2

When East opens 1♦, South may preempt with 3♣. West will think of pursuing a penalty and might do so at IMPs, but at matchpoints, the vulnerability suggests that he look for game. (South would be minus 500 at 3♣ doubled, less than the value of an E/W game.) If West bids 3♠, East will continue with 4♦, and West can try 4♥ and find a home there. If North leads the ♣6 to the jack, king and ace, West has routes to 11 tricks. He could set up dummy's diamonds with two ruffing finesses, losing one diamond and one trump, or he could take the ♥A K and go after the spades, reaching a position at the end where North would have to concede a diamond trick to dummy. (If West led the ♣Q at trick two and North erred by ruffing, West could win 12 tricks.) We expect E/W to get about a 60% board for +650.

**Board 7**South Deals  
Both Vul

♠ K 8 3  
♥ K 9 5 2  
♦ Q 6 5 4  
♣ 10 2

♠ A 6  
♥ A  
♦ K 9  
♣ A K Q J 7 6 5 4



♠ 10 9 5  
♥ J 7 6 4 3  
♦ A J 10 2  
♣ 9

♠ Q J 7 4 2  
♥ Q 10 8  
♦ 8 7 3  
♣ 8 3

A fault among learning players is to overbid with big hands, but we could sympathize with North here. After 2♣-2♦, 3♣-3♠, North would have a chance at 6♣ opposite ♠KJ742 ♥1082 ♦873 ♣103. But since partners seldom have what you want them to, North could take a conservative position to settle for 3NT. That timid view turns out best. If East leads the ♥3 against 3NT, and dummy plays the 8 or 10, West should withhold his king. After North takes the ♥A, he can peel off eight clubs. If West's last four cards are the ♠K 8, ♥K and ♦Q, North can exit with a low diamond, snaring West in an endplay to make two overtricks. But if East has pitched an informative ♦J, West can let go his ♦Q, holding North to 10 tricks. Many N/Ss will get overboard, so N/S may score 75% of the matchpoints for +630.

**Board 8**West Deals  
None Vul

♠ K Q 8 7		♠ A 10 9 3
♥ K 8 5 3		♥ A Q 2
♦ —		♦ A K J 7 2
♣ A Q 10 6 4		♣ K
	♠ 2	
	♥ 10 9 6	
	♦ 10 8 5 3	
	♣ 9 7 5 3 2	

When West opens 1♣, East will have visions of a grand slam, but he should respond 1♦, saving room to look for the best strain. East should jump shift only with a solid suit, support for West's suit or with a good suit in a balanced hand. After 1♣-1♦, 1♥-1♠, 2♠, East could reasonably wheel out keycard Blackwood, find West with an ace and the K-Q of trumps, and bid 7♠, gambling intelligently that West will have the ♥K and a minor-suit queen for his opening bid. As an option, East might bid a direct 5NT, placing West with the ♣A and asking him to bid 7♠ with two top honors in trumps (spades by implication). Many pairs will conduct scientific auctions to a grand slam. The best matchpoint spot is 7NT, which has many chances and succeeds as the cards lie. We think E/W should score only average for +1510.

**Board 9**North Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ 7 6		♠ Q J 8 5 4
♥ 10 4		♥ 7 5
♦ K J 10 6 2		♦ 8 7
♣ J 9 7 2		♣ A 6 4 3
	♠ A K 9	
	♥ K J 8 6 3	
	♦ Q 5 3	
	♣ K 5	

If N/S start 1♣-1♥, 2♥, South may jump to 3NT, offering a choice of games. With four-card support, North would usually convert to 4♥ but might judge to play for nine tricks here with such a barren hand. If West leads the ♦J against 3NT, South can ride it to his queen and can win 12 tricks with fearless play. If in practice he leads a heart to dummy and a club to his king, he may abandon clubs, lest East hold AJxxx. Many Souths will play at 4♥, and West may lead a trump. The play may be stressful here also. South might start with the ♣K. If East takes the ace and shifts to a diamond - queen, king, ace - South can lead a trump to his hand, finesse with the ♣10 to get a diamond discard on the ♣Q and double-finesse in spades for 11 tricks. South might start with a club to his king and back to dummy's 10. If East takes the ace and shifts to a diamond - queen, king, ace - South can pitch a diamond on the ♣Q and double-finesse in spades for 11 tricks.

**Board 10**East Deals  
Both Vul

♠ 10		♠ J 8 6 5 3 2
♥ 10 5 4 3 2		♥ J 8 6
♦ J 10 9 3 2		♦ 7 6
♣ 7 4		♣ 9 8
	♠ 7 4	
	♥ A Q 9	
	♦ K Q 4	
	♣ A K J 6 5	

N/S should make short work of this grand-slam deal. South opens 1♣, North responds 1♠ and South jumps to 2NT, showing balanced pattern with about 19 points. North can get out his abacus, add up the partnership's assets and bid 7NT. A few Souths may fudge by opening 2NT even though their range is 20 or 21 points; we find such a practice deplorable. The play should take less time than the bidding; South starts with 14 top tricks. We hope +2220 will be a dead-average result.

**Board 11**South Deals  
None Vul

♠ J 9 8 6		♠ Q 7 5
♥ J 4 2		♥ 8 6 5
♦ 8 6		♦ A K Q
♣ A 8 6 2		♣ K 10 7 4
	♠ 10 2	
	♥ A Q 10 7	
	♦ 7 5 4 2	
	♣ Q 5 3	

Most roads seem to lead to a diamond partial declared by North. Not every North would open in first seat, but in third seat, with four cards in spades, North will surely open 1♦. East has 14 points but is not compelled to act; his hand is better for defense. If he passes, South responds 1♥, and if North continues with 1♠, South will take a 2♦ preference, passed out. If instead North passes the 1♥ response, East can balance with 1NT. He would make that contract, but South will try 2♦ again. At tables where East is willing to double 1♦, South will respond 1♥, and even if West scrapes up a 1♠ advance, South will compete with 2♦ after two passes. North should make 2♦ on the nose for +90, a maximum result that should yield a good matchpoint score. We expect plenty of results of plus 50 and minus 50.

**Board 12**West Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ 8 7 5  
♥ K J 7 2  
♦ Q 3  
♣ A 10 3 2

♠ K J 10  
♥ 3  
♦ J 10 8 2  
♣ J 9 7 5 4



♠ 6 3  
♥ A Q 10 4  
♦ K 9 7 6 4  
♣ K 8

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

Active competition can gain by disrupting the opponents' auction. It can lose, among other ways, by pushing the opponents into a winning contract they would not have reached. If East opens 1♦, most Souths will routinely overcall 1♠. West will double, and North will raise to 2♠. Then East may feel obliged to compete with 3♥, and West will innocently raise to 4♥. If the defense starts with three rounds of spades, East ruffs, leads a diamond to the queen and ducks a diamond to South's ace. If South then leads a trump, East wins the rest for +420 with a crossruff or by squeezing North in the minors. A trump opening lead will make no difference. But if South restrains himself and passes over 1♦, West will respond 1♥, East will raise to 2♥ and West will pass. N/S may score well above average for minus 170.

**Board 13**North Deals  
Both Vul

♠ J 8 4  
♥ 10 8 4 3  
♦ J 7 4  
♣ J 3 2

♠ K 7 6  
♥ 9 2  
♦ Q 10 8 3  
♣ A 10 9 5



♠ Q 3 2  
♥ Q 7 6  
♦ K 9 6 5 2  
♣ K 8

♠ A 10 9 5  
♥ A K J 5  
♦ A  
♣ Q 7 6 4

If N/S start 1♣-1♦, South lacks the strength to force to game by jumping to 2♥; he must rebid 1♥ and hope not to miss a game. If North bids 1NT next, South may raise to 3NT. If instead North returns to 2♣, South can look for the best contract with 2♠, and since North has a maximum for his 2♣ preference with diamonds well stopped, he may jump to 3NT. After East leads a diamond to the ace, it's hard to see North winning any more or fewer than 10 tricks. He will attack the clubs for three tricks there (with any reasonable approach) and later finesse in hearts. He should end with three clubs, three hearts, two spades, a diamond and either a third spade or a second diamond, and +630 should score average. Few N/Ss will reach 6♣, but that contract is makeable with luck and perfect play.

**Board 14**East Deals  
None Vul

♠ A 6  
♥ 8 6 5  
♦ 8 6 3 2  
♣ K Q 10 4

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



♠ K Q 5 4 2  
♥ A 9  
♦ 10  
♣ A 8 7 6 3

♠ 10 8  
♥ Q 7 4 3  
♦ A J 9 7 5  
♣ 9 5

Many E/Ws will be embarrassed to play a magical slam at a partscore. If East opens 1♠, West responds 1NT and East bids 2♣. Then some Wests will take a 2♠ preference to play at the higher-scoring strain at matchpoints, and East can go no further. Other Wests will raise to 3♣, a more realistic action with such suitable values. East might try for game with 4♣ or 3♥ but might also pass, visualizing West with a low singleton spade. Though most experts tend to open 1♠ with 5-5 in the black suits, some Easts will open 1♣. If West raises to 2♣ (his hand is not a good advertisement for inverted minor-suit raises) and East tries 2♠ next, West can jump to 4♣, and E/W might reach 6♣ if East follows up with a 4♥ cuebid and West cooperates with 4♠. We think E/W will score well if they bid game.

**Board 15**South Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ A 10 5 4  
♥ K Q J 4  
♦ 10 2  
♣ Q 10 3

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



♠ J 8 7  
♥ 10 9 8  
♦ Q 9 3  
♣ A 9 6 5

♠ K 9 6 3  
♥ A 6 3 2  
♦ 8  
♣ K 7 4 2

West will often open 1♣. To pass in second chair when he has a decent hand with length in both majors is courting trouble; he might risk a passed-out deal when E/W could make a major-suit partial. Most Norths will overcall 1♦. If East bids 1NT, and two passes follow, North will rebid 2♦, passed out. If instead East passes over 1♦, West might decline to act since his hand is so minimum. If he reopens with a double, East will bid 1NT, and after two passes, North will try 2♦, passed out. Some Norths will ignore the threatening vulnerability to preempt with 2♦ or 3♦ directly. They will survive when everyone passes and dummy produces some useful honors. North loses a trick in each suit, and +110 to N/S may be a common result. A few E/Ws may play at 3♣, down two for minus 100.

**Board 16**West Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ —	♠ Q 9 7 6	♠ A K J 10 5 4 2
♥ K J 6 4	♥ 10 9 3 2	♥ A
♦ J 6 2	♦ K 10 8	♦ 9 5 3
♣ A Q J 9 8 4	♣ 6 5	♣ K 7
	♠ 8 3	
	♥ Q 8 7 5	
	♦ A Q 7 4	
	♣ 10 3 2	

Here is a tough bidding nut for E/W to crack. When West opens 1♣, we think East should jump to 2♠, inviting slam and enlisting West's cooperation. It's better to show slam interest immediately than to start with a "space-saving" 1♠ response and have to catch up later. West rebids 3♣, and when East continues with 3♠, West may try 3NT. Then East must make an inspired decision to pass, resisting the urge to "correct" to 4♠. Easts at 4♠ can survive if South leads a heart, but if South tries the ♦A, the defense will get three diamonds and the ♠Q for down one. Wests at 3NT he can be held to nine tricks but may win 10 even if North leads the ♦8. If South takes the ace and returns the 4, North must win with the king and lead the 10. Still, E/W may get a good matchpoint result for +600.

**Board 17**North Deals  
None Vul

♠ K 10 7 4 2	♠ 6	♠ Q 9
♥ K Q 5	♥ 10 7 6 2	♥ J 8 3
♦ K 10 5	♦ A Q J	♦ 8 6 4 3 2
♣ 9 2	♣ K 10 7 6 5	♣ Q J 8
	♠ A J 8 5 3	
	♥ A 9 4	
	♦ 9 7	
	♣ A 4 3	

When South opens 1♠, North will usually respond 1NT. If that is not forcing or semi-forcing, South will pass. If 1NT is forcing though North is a passed hand, South will rebid 2♣, North will raise to 3♣ and South will pass. If North is systemically able to respond 2♣, South may rebid 2♠ and pass when North continues with 2NT. A club or notrump partial should produce the same score. At notrump, North can take nine tricks: four clubs, three diamonds and the major-suit aces. At clubs, South can time the play well to finesse in diamonds for a heart discard, concede a heart and set up dummy's fourth heart with a ruff, winning 11 tricks. We think N/S will score average for +150. Some pair may bid to 3NT. We see no way N/S can reach the double-dummy spot of 4♥(!), which succeeds with the cards sitting well.

**Board 18**East Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ A 10 6 5 3	♠ K J 9 7 2	♠ —
♥ 10 9	♥ 5 3 2	♥ J 7 6 4
♦ 8 3	♦ 10 9	♦ A K Q 7 5 4
♣ Q 8 7 4	♣ K 3 2	♣ J 10 9
	♠ Q 8 4	
	♥ A K Q 8	
	♦ J 6 2	
	♣ A 6 5	

South has an awkward call over East's 1♦. To pass with 16 points risks missing a game or letting E/W steal the deal for a small penalty. Some Souths might overcall 1NT, which could work well if North furnishes diamond help but not so well if he raised to 3NT with none — and the defense cashed a bunch of diamonds. Many Souths will double 1♦, and if West passes, North will respond 1♠. (Even if West bids 1♠ over the double, North can double, and after East rebids 2♦ and two passes follow, North should bid 2♠.) N/Ss who play at a spade partial can be held to eight tricks with perfect defense. If East wins the first trick with a high diamond, he must shift immediately to clubs. More likely, declarer will win nine tricks despite the 5-0 trump break, and N/S will score only a bit above average for +140.

**Board 19**South Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ Q 9 8 7	♠ A K J	♠ 10 6 3
♥ Q 6	♥ A J 10 3 2	♥ K 4
♦ K 10 7 2	♦ 9	♦ Q 8 6 3
♣ 10 9 8	♣ 7 6 4 2	♣ K Q 5 3
	♠ 5 4 2	
	♥ 9 8 7 5	
	♦ A J 5 4	
	♣ A J	

When North opens 1♥, South's hand is worth a limit raise to 3♥. North's hand is a minimum in high cards, but he will like his distribution and go on to game — perhaps visualizing club shortness in dummy that will provide ruffs. If East leads the ♣K, North can duck, win the next club and cash the ♥A. When both defenders follow low, North will probably lead a hopeful second trump; if he tries for immediate club ruffs instead, the defenders may score their two high trumps separately. When the ♥K Q come crashing down and a finesse with the ♠J wins later, North will make an overtrick. We think N/S will score only a little above average for +450.

**Board 20**West Deals  
Both Vul

♠ Q 9 4 3  
♥ 9 5  
♦ A K J 7 3  
♣ 10 2

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



♠ 10 5  
♥ 10 6 4  
♦ 6 5  
♣ A K Q 8 7 6

♠ K J 8 6 2  
♥ A K Q 7 2  
♦ 10 8  
♣ 5

N/S need to find their heart fit or beat an E/W contract +200 or more. If East were not vulnerable, he might open 3♣ after two passes. If he prefers a disciplined pass, N/S may land at an inferior 2♠ contract, but many Easts will open 1♣ for the lead-directing benefit. Then some Souths will try a Michaels 2♣ cuebid, showing length in both majors. West might double to show strength or bid 2♦, but N/S should play at a heart partial. Since many pairs use Michaels only with weak or strong hands, and South's hand is in between, other Souths will overcall 1♠, planning to bid hearts next. Then West might bid 1NT or 2♦, but South should get a chance to bid hearts. A heart partscore should produce nine tricks; we predict that N/S will score about average for +140.

**Board 21**North Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ A 9 6 3  
♥ A  
♦ A Q 2  
♣ A J 10 4 3

♠ 5 4 2  
♥ Q J 10 7 4 2  
♦ 9 6 3  
♣ 8



♠ K Q J  
♥ K 9 6 3  
♦ K J 7 4  
♣ K Q

♠ 10 8 7  
♥ 8 5  
♦ 10 8 5  
♣ 9 7 6 5 2

E/W can make 7NT (indeed, they can make 9NT), and with a combined 37 points, getting there should present no problem. The vulnerability will discourage any preemptive adventures by North. If E/W play a 1NT range of 15 to 17 points, East may start with 1♦. When West responds 2♣, East can jump to 3NT next, suggesting a hand too strong to open 1NT, and West should put him in seven. A few Easts may, quite reasonably, downgrade their hand to open 1NT; the East hand is aceless, and the black-suit honors are marooned in short suits. Still, West should be alert to the chance of a grand slam. He can raise to 5NT - forcing to 6NT and inviting seven - and since East has a high-card maximum, he should trustingly bid 7NT. We predict that most E/Ws will be +1520, scoring only a bit above average.

**Board 22**East Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ A J 8 5 2  
♥ 5 4  
♦ Q 10 7  
♣ 6 5 2

♠ K Q  
♥ 7 6 2  
♦ K J 5 4 3  
♣ A 9 8



♠ 7 3  
♥ A K J 10 9  
♦ A  
♣ Q J 10 7 4

♠ 10 9 6 4  
♥ Q 8 3  
♦ 9 8 6 2  
♣ K 3

If E/W bid 1♥, 1♠-2♣, 2♥, most Easts will pass. Say South leads the ♦9, making dummy's 7 a factor. Dummy's 10 covers, North will surely play the jack, and East takes the ace, goes to the ♠A and returns a trump to his jack. South wins and can't afford to lead another diamond. If he leads a spade, North can win and shift to a low club, letting the defense obtain a third-round ruff and five tricks in all. East could take nine tricks by cashing the ♥A K, refusing the finesse. If South's opening lead were the ♦2 and North somehow withheld his jack, East could still make an overtrick with crystal-ball play. Norths who were absent when fear was passed out may stick in a 2♦ overcall, but East can rebid 2♥ on his chunky suit, passed out. E/W should get an excellent matchpoint result for +140.

**Board 23**South Deals  
Both Vul

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

♠ 7 4 3  
♥ 10 5 4  
♦ Q J 8 6  
♣ J 10 7



♠ 10 5  
♥ Q 9 6  
♦ A 9 7 3 2  
♣ Q 5 2

♠ K Q J 2  
♥ K J 7  
♦ K 4  
♣ A K 4 3

We are averse to opening 2NT because it is a space-consuming action, but most Souths will do so here. North will probably pass since the play will be taxing when South lacks entries to the North hand to lead toward his high cards. N/S often have a better chance for nine tricks with 12 points opposite 12 than with 20 opposite 4. The play at 2NT may be predictable. If West leads the ♠6 to the 10 and queen, South will lead the ♦K, ducked, and a diamond to the jack, won by East as West signals count. East returns a spade - king, ace - and another spade forces out South's jack. South exits with his last spade. If West then leads the ♥2, East will hold declarer to eight tricks even if he plays the queen instead of the 9. We think N/S will score about average for +120.

**Board 24**West Deals  
None Vul

♠ Q 7  
♥ 10 9 3  
♦ 8 7 3 2  
♣ Q 7 6 5

♠ K 10 8 5 2  
♥ K 7 6 2  
♦ A Q 9  
♣ K



♠ A 6 4  
♥ A 8 5  
♦ 10 6 5 4  
♣ 8 4 2

♠ J 9 3  
♥ Q J 4  
♦ K J  
♣ A J 10 9 3

When North opens 1♠, some Easts will overcall 2♣, accepting the risk and reasoning that they must act directly or not at all. South will raise to 2♠, presumably passed out since West can't afford to bid with his junkpile. If East leads the ♥Q, North might duck in both hands, preparing a ruff. He can win the next heart with the ace, take the ♠A K and the ♥K, and reach dummy by ruffing his good heart. He can finesse with the ♦Q (or 9) with no success but will be gratified when he has to cash the ♦A later - and drops East's remaining honor, making three. Other Norths will use dummy's aces as entries for two diamond finesses and lose five tricks in all, though if East has bid, declarer might save a trick by placing him with the ♦K. We predict that N/S will get about a 60% result for +140.

**Board 25**North Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ K 10 9  
♥ K 9 8 3  
♦ 10 9 6  
♣ 9 8 5

♠ A Q 7 2  
♥ A J 6  
♦ Q  
♣ A Q 7 3 2



♠ 6 4 3  
♥ Q 10 7 4 2  
♦ A 5 4 3  
♣ 4

♠ J 8 5  
♥ 5  
♦ K J 8 7 2  
♣ K J 10 6

When North opens 1♣ and hears South respond 1♥, he may be encouraged by his heart fit and jump to 2♠, forcing to game, even though he would trade his ♦Q for a more useful honor. When South bids 3♦ next, North will take a 3♥ preference, and South must go on to 4♥. It looks as if most roads will lead to 10 tricks. If West leads a passive ♣9, South can take the ♣A, come to his ♦A, finesse successfully with the ♠Q, cash the ♠A and proceed with a crossruff. Even a trump opening lead, which West might choose based on the bidding, won't help the defense since West will never be in again to lead a second trump. We predict +420 to N/S, but a few Norths will decline to force and will bid 1♠ at their second turn. Then some Souths may pass, stranding N/S at a losing contract.

**Board 26**East Deals  
Both Vul

♠ A 8 7 5 3  
♥ 10 7 4 2  
♦ A  
♣ K 10 8

♠ J 10 4  
♥ Q J 8  
♦ 10 7 6 5 4  
♣ J 4



♠ 9 2  
♥ K 5 3  
♦ K 8 3  
♣ 9 7 5 3 2

♠ K Q 6  
♥ A 9 6  
♦ Q J 9 2  
♣ A Q 6

East will open 1♦ and jump to 2NT over West's 1♠, showing 18 or 19 points, usually balanced. When West bids 3♥ next, East will take a 3♠ preference. (With maximum, slamish values and good three-card support, he would jump to 4♠.) Then many Wests will go to 4♠ and play there, +650. We think West can make an excellent decision at his third turn by bidding 3NT. He has extra high-card strength and weakish holdings in both majors, and the same number of tricks may be available at notrump and spades. So it proves. If South leads a club against 3NT, East easily takes 11 tricks. Even if South happens to lead a heart, East could duck North's jack. Then if North continues hearts, East wins a second heart trick; if North shifts, East sets up a second diamond. Good judgment will net E/W +660 and most of the matchpoints.

**Board 27**South Deals  
None Vul

♠ A Q 6  
♥ 8 5 4 3 2  
♦ K 4  
♣ 9 7 4

♠ J 10 8 4 3  
♥ Q J 10 7  
♦ 6  
♣ A K J



♠ K 7 5 2  
♥ —  
♦ Q 10 9 8 3  
♣ 6 5 3 2

♠ 9  
♥ A K 9 6  
♦ A J 7 5 2  
♣ Q 10 8

After 1♠ by North, double by East, South can jump to 3♠, preemptive. With a good hand, South could redouble or show his hand with some conventional action. If West passes, East doesn't have enough to act again. (West may huddle before judging to pass, and then East certainly must pass.) If North plays at 3♠, East can beat the contract with a good trump lead. Wests who stretch to bid 4♥ will play there, and North will lead a high club and shift to the ♠J. If West wins with the queen and leads a trump, North can always prevail by splitting his honors, but even if he follows low, West is likely to play an honor from dummy and go down one. (North might shift to the ♥7 at trick two; that play looks attractive but could let West make his game.) Pairs with a plus score should do well in the matchpoint column.

**Board 28**West Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ 7 4 2	♠ Q 10 6 5 3	♠ J 9 8
♥ J 5 2	♥ A 8 7	♥ K 9 4 3
♦ 4 2	♦ Q 10 6	♦ K J 9 8 3
♣ A K 10 8 3	♣ 6 4	♣ 7

  

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

When South opens 1NT, North will often transfer with a 2♥ response. When South obliges with 2♠, some Norths will pass. Others will try for game with 2NT, and South is likely to bid 3NT, encouraged by his top spades, five-card suit and good intermediates. The opening lead may be a frustrating experience for West. A low diamond beats 3NT two tricks – a high club and a diamond shift isn't good enough – but if West leads a low club, South makes 3NT with some good guessing and could make an overtrick with double-dummy play. If South plays at 2♠ and West takes the ♣A K and leads a third club, he promotes a trump trick for East's jack, but South will lose only one more trick, making three, when a different defense could hold him to eight tricks. N/S will need +600 for a good matchpoint result.

**Board 29**North Deals  
Both Vul

♠ K 4 3 2	♠ A J 8 7	♠ 10 6
♥ A K Q 10	♥ J	♥ 8 5 3 2
♦ Q 10 6	♦ K 2	♦ A J 7 3
♣ K 4	♣ 10 9 8 6 5 3	♣ A Q 2

  

♠ Q 9 5	♠ 10 6
♥ 9 7 6 4	♥ 8 5 3 2
♦ 9 8 5 4	♦ A J 7 3
♣ J 7	♣ A Q 2

If West opens 1NT, some Easts will respond 2♣, locate the 4-4 heart fit and raise to 4♥. North leads the ♣10, and West will take the king and cash the ♥A. When North's jack falls, West might lead the ♦10, covered by the king and ace. If he leads a spade to his king next, North can win and lead a second club, and West wins only 10 tricks when the diamonds fail to break 3-3. If he draws trumps, he loses a spade ruff in dummy; if he doesn't draw them, South will be able to ruff dummy's third club winner. Either way, no overtrick. Over 1NT, some Easts will raise to 3NT, declining to use Stayman with their poor hearts. North will lead the ♣10 again, and West will take the king and lead the ♦10: king, ace. He has 10 tricks and will take no more, but E/W will get a fortunate matchpoint result for +630.

**Board 30**East Deals  
None Vul

♠ A 10 6 5	♠ K J 4 2	♠ Q 9 7 3
♥ 6 2	♥ J 10 8 3	♥ K
♦ Q 10 5	♦ J 2	♦ K 9 4 3
♣ Q J 3 2	♣ 8 5 4	♣ K 9 7 6

  

♠ 8	♠ 10 6
♥ A Q 9 7 5 4	♥ 8 5 3 2
♦ A 8 7 6	♦ A J 7 3
♣ A 10	♣ A Q 2

North will raise South's 1♥ opening to 2♥. If East passes, South might jump straight to 4♥. Instead of counting points, he could use his powers of visualization. Game will be cold if North has a suitable minimum such as ♠xxx ♥Kxxx ♦Kx ♣xxxx. If instead South settles for a try for game – 3♥ or 3♦ – it's doubtful North will accept. Against 4♥, West will lead the ♣Q, and South will make the contract exactly unless West plays low when declarer leads a spade toward dummy. A few Easts will double 2♥ as a passed hand, even though their ♥K is wasted for offense, and then South might be slightly less willing to blast into game. If he does bid 4♥, a few E/Ws will sacrifice at 4♠, and they might get out for -300, obtaining a fair matchpoint result.



**Board 31**

South Deals  
N-S Vul

♠ A 10 8 5  
♥ J 10 8 6  
♦ K 10 7  
♣ 6 2

♠ K J 9 7 2  
♥ 7 4  
♦ A 9 5 4  
♣ 9 5



♠ —  
♥ A K 5  
♦ Q 8 6 3 2  
♣ A K 10 7 3

♠ Q 6 4 3  
♥ Q 9 3 2  
♦ J  
♣ Q J 8 4

A 5♦ contract looks like a reasonable undertaking, and we think many N/Ss will get there. A possible auction is 1♦-1♠, 2♣-2♦, 3♣-4♦, 4♥-5♦. A few N/Ss may miss game when South's bidding induces North to discount the value of his spade honors. If West leads the ♥J, South can win with the king, cash the ♣AK and lead a third club, ruffing low in dummy when West discards. South comes back to the ♥A, ruffs a fourth club in dummy, cashes the ♦A, ruffs a spade and ruffs his low heart. He can ruff a spade and lead his good fifth club at the 11th trick, losing only two trump tricks. Actually, 6♦ can be made with remarkable play: Declarer must finesse in clubs against East's Q-J and handle the trumps for one loser as well. We think N/S will score well above average for +600.

**Board 32**

West Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ K J 7 5  
♥ K 8 2  
♦ 8 2  
♣ Q 9 4 2

♠ A 9 3  
♥ A Q 6 5 4  
♦ J 9 3  
♣ 6 5



♠ —  
♥ J 9 7  
♦ K 10 7 6 4  
♣ A K J 8 3

♠ Q 10 8 6 4 2  
♥ 10 3  
♦ A Q 5  
♣ 10 7

N/S need to reach 4♥. If after two passes, East shoots out a weak 2♠ opening in the face of the vulnerability, South will double, and North can jump to 4♥. If East passes in third seat, South may think fleetingly of passing the deal out since E/W may have a big spade fit. But if South opens 1♦, North responds 1♥, and South should raise to 2♥. With a minimum opening bid, he should take his convenient chance to support the hearts. (Suppose South rebids 2♣ instead, and North continues with 2NT. Then South lacks the values to bid 3♥, which should logically be forcing.) If East leads a spade against 4♥, North will do well to assemble 10 tricks. He could take 11, for +450 and a top, with perfect play; he would need to win the first spade with the ace, pitching a diamond from dummy.

**Board 33**

North Deals  
None Vul

♠ 6  
♥ A Q  
♦ Q 10 7 2  
♣ J 10 9 6 5 2

♠ K 9 7 2  
♥ K J 10 9 4 2  
♦ 9  
♣ A K



♠ A J 8 5 3  
♥ 8 7 5  
♦ A 3  
♣ Q 7 4

♠ Q 10 4  
♥ 6 3  
♦ K J 8 6 5 4  
♣ 8 3

When North opens 1♥, South will issue a temporizing 1♠ response, planning to jump to 3♥, invitational, if North rebids two of a minor, or to bid 2♥ (suggesting 10 or 11 points with real heart support) if North rebids 1NT. Then if North raises to 3♠, South will go to 4♠. West will lead the ♣J, and unless West has been busy in the auction, South will probably cash the K-A of trumps. He will fail to drop the queen, but the hearts will treat him kindly. Making five. Not many E/Ws will find their paying sacrifice at 5♦, and if they did, N/S could always push on to the five level. We predict that +450 will score about average. A few Souths will, for whatever reason, take a winning view in spades; a few others will reach 6♠, minus 50.

**Board 34**East Deals  
N-S Vul

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

♠ Q J 10 8 6 3 2  
♥ 8 4  
♦ Q 10  
♣ J 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9  
♥ A 10 9 6 3  
♦ 9 6 2  
♣ A 7 6 2

♠ 7 5  
♥ Q J 7  
♦ K 7 5  
♣ K Q 10 5 4

West can open 1NT in third chair. If the vulnerability stifles North, East may transfer with 2♦ and pass West's 2♥. Some Easts will continue with 2NT to try for game, but West may sign off at 3♥ – though a jump to 4♥ would not be wrong with his prime honors and ruffing feature in clubs. (If East invited game, he would prefer to try 3♣, but most pairs treat a new-suit bid after a transfer as forcing.) At 4♥, West can win North's spade lead with the ace, go to the ♥A and return a diamond to his 8. North wins and leads the ♣J, winning, and a second club. West takes dummy's ace, comes to his ♥K, cashes the ♦A, pitches dummy's last diamond on his ♠K and ruffs a diamond. He can ruff a club and discard dummy's last club on a good diamond, making four. We think E/W will get a 75% result for +420.

**Board 35**South Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ 9 6  
♥ K 8 5 4 2  
♦ A 10 6 3  
♣ K 5

♠ A Q 4 3  
♥ 3  
♦ 7 2  
♣ A Q 8 7 6 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ J 10 8 2  
♥ J 10 7 6  
♦ K Q J 9 5  
♣ –

♠ K 7 5  
♥ A Q 9  
♦ 8 4  
♣ J 10 9 4 2

North will open 1♣ after two passes, and if East passes, many Souths will come forth with a 3♣ limit raise. If South's red-suit holdings were reversed, North would have a fighting chance at 6♣, so North will surely bid as high as 5♣, perhaps stopping to test the water with a 3♠ bid on the way. Some Souths may respond 1NT, making game a bit harder to reach. (A few Souths will respond 2♣, using inverted minor-suit raises even by a passed hand.) Against 5♣, East will cash two diamonds and shift to the ♥J. North will face a guess in trumps, and unless E/W have been active in the bidding, North may have little reason to disdain the percentage play of leading to his ace. Norths who somehow judge to finesse and rack up +400 should win 90% of the matchpoints.

**Board 36**West Deals  
Both Vul

♠ K Q J 3  
♥ A Q  
♦ Q 7 2  
♣ 7 6 4 2

♠ 10 5 4  
♥ J 10 6  
♦ 10 8 5 4 3  
♣ 10 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

♠ 7 2  
♥ K 5 4  
♦ K 9 6  
♣ A K J 9 5

After E/W tee off with 1♣–1♥, 1♠, East will raise to 3♠, invitational. With two aces and a “working” ♣Q, his hand is too strong for a chance-giving raise to 2♠. West's hand is slightly better than it might have been, but his minor-suit holdings are discouraging. Still, his trumps are strong. We think either a pass or a lift to game would be defensible. Against 4♠, North will lead a diamond; dummy's jack loses to South's king. South cashes the ♣K A and exits with a diamond. West can win a finesse with the ♥Q and cash the ♥A. He can then take the rest, making game, by drawing trumps and setting up dummy's long hearts with a ruff, or by maneuvering a successful crossruff. We expect most E/Ws to bid and make 4♠, so +620 will score only a little above average for E/W.