

# Canada Olympiad Fund Game #2

## Thursday Afternoon – October 11, 2018 – Set 218034



American Contract  
Bridge League

Analysis by Barry Rigal



Barry Rigal is a player, author, commentator and syndicated columnist. Born in London in 1958, he has been a professional bridge player since moving to New York in 1994. Rigal has written many books, as well as magazine and newspaper columns and has contributed to the world championship books for two decades. He has also served as the Chief Vugraph commentator for the World Bridge Federation for 10 years.

He has won two North American championships, as well as EC Mixed Teams and multiple UK titles. As a professional player, he claims to be the only pro ever to have been shut out by his client from declaring a single board in a session – not for want of trying! At college, Rigal reached the quarterfinal round of the University Challenge for Queen's Oxford – where he suffered the indignity of losing to Queen's Cambridge – and a team headed by the comedian Stephen Fry. He also claims that his tutors awarded him the title of "The laziest man in Oxford."

### Board 1

North Deals  
None Vul

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

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



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

♠ A 10 9 8  
♥ 8 4 3  
♦ 3  
♣ A K 10 4 3

Even the most Culbertsonian of Easts would open their hand – wouldn't they? After East opens 1♣ and rebids 1♠ in response to West's bid of 1♥, West seems to have a straightforward invitational jump to 2NT. East has no reason to bid on now, and North will surely lead a diamond, letting declarer win the second or third diamond and take the club finesse. When the finesse fails, West has eight tricks off the top with very few chances for more. The occasional E/W pair will over-reach to 3NT; others may play less rewarding partscores, so +120 should score E/W well.

### Board 2

East Deals  
N-S Vul

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

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



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

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

A few Easts' preemptive style will allow them to act at once; a few more may double after hearing 1♣ to their left and 1♠ to their right. Either way, you'd expect North to drive his side to game, most likely 4♠, since the lack of a diamond stop ought to become apparent. If the defenders cash out their diamonds, they hold N/S to 620. After a heart or club lead, declarer can make the overtrick by drawing two rounds of trumps then running the clubs. If North plays to ruff a heart before drawing trumps, East will ruff in from the short spades, so the defenders still get three tricks.

### Board 3

South Deals  
E-W Vul

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

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



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

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

With a combined 28 HCP, N/S really belong in 3NT, but if they do want to aim higher, the most practical slam today appears to be 6♣ from the South seat. If clubs break 3-2 and spades behave, declarer may conceivably be able to avoid the heart finesse. In practice, though, slam is less than 50 percent, and a 1NT response to South's 1♠ opener will surely see North declare 3NT on a heart lead. He can win the heart finesse, then clear clubs, thereby coming to 11 tricks for what looks to be close to an average result.

**Board 4**West Deals  
Both Vul

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

In third seat, East may find a practical (if inelegant) 2NT call, as opposed to opening 1♥. Transfers now get 4♠ played from the right side. You could hardly blame South for leading a heart to the jack and ace, and now declarer might play a low trump from hand, retaining the ♠A as a later re-entry. If he does, he can be defeated by the club ruff. East's winning line is to pitch two clubs from dummy on the hearts, ruff out diamonds and then lead the fourth heart to pitch a club. 4♠ by West is doomed on a club lead, of course.

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

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

When N/S start out 1♥ - 2♣, any West worth his salt should preempt to at least 4♦. Will that inconvenience his opponents unduly? North will bid 4♠ if he can, but it may be hard for South to work out that his ♦K does not need protecting. 6NT simply requires clubs to break - not the worst slam you've ever seen - but only the lead of ♦A will let it through. Still, that lead wouldn't be absurd if the club 10 and eight were switched. 6♥ comes home when spades split. Anyone who judges to play there will earn their good result.

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

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

Another deal, another delicate slam. On this occasion, East can be defeated in a heart or club slam on the lead of the ♠Q. But clubs, hearts and notrump handle well enough from the West seat - though they all need clubs to break 2-2. In practice, you could imagine N/S coming into the bidding and finding their double fits in spades and diamonds; perhaps sacrificing against game or slam. Absolute par is for North to sacrifice in diamonds over a slam by West, but in real life E/W are generally going to play 5♣ by West for 620 or hearts by East for 650.

**Board 7**South Deals  
Both Vul

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

A typical auction will see South open 1♣, with East overcalling 1♠ over North's 1♥ response. When South cannot make a support double, North will jump to 3♣. That rates to end the bidding, and the defenders are likely to lead spades rather than diamonds and concede 130. Heart partscores by North figure to come home with 140, but N/S's best results may come from East overbidding in spades and South lowering the boom on him. Unless the defence slips, East can be held to seven tricks in spades.

**Board 8**West Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

In third seat, East will open 1♥, in response to which West will bid 1NT. Should North risk overcalling 2♠? It is dangerous, even at favourable vulnerability, and it is not clear whether the action would be successful because the cards lie so well for N/S that they might do better to defend here. Against West's 1NT, an initial heart lead generates nine tricks for the defence, with a spade lead probably just earning seven tricks. So, perhaps North will score better in 2♠ after all, where taking all the finesses in the right order produces +140. I suspect +110 may be a more common result.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

East will probably show the majors if North opens 1NT but bid spades over a 1♣ opener. After that, the issue seems to be who will win the battle of the auction, South in diamonds or E/W in spades. Even though spades lie very well for E/W, club ruffs hold them to seven tricks. Meanwhile N/S have eight tricks on top in diamonds (four diamonds, aces and kings), but maneuvering a ninth trick looks impossible on accurate defence, thanks to the 4-1 trump break. Anyone making a contract here will score very nicely.

**Board 10**East Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

East has a classic 3♥ preempt (non-vulnerable, some might even open 4♥), perhaps raised to 4♥ by West as a two-way shot, hoping either that 4♥ or 4♠ would come close to making. North must double 4♥, primarily for takeout, letting South bid 4♠. After a top diamond lead, declarer will lose ♠A and a diamond trick. On a heart lead, South can come to 12 tricks in the form of two hearts ruffs, four spades, five clubs and one diamond trick. That overtrick, or East's escaping for -500 in hearts, will be worth quite a few matchpoints.

**Board 11**South Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

When West opens 1♣, being well outside the strong notrump range, North will be able to overcall in diamonds for the lead. East should still eventually drive the hand to 4♠, but South will now know what suit to attack. If declarer guesses to set up clubs, then take the spade finesse, he can come to 12 tricks painlessly enough. That line is not entirely without risk though, because if the spade finesse loses might there be a trump promotion in diamonds? Today simplest is best and results in +480.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 9 8 6 2  
♥ K J 8 4 2  
♦ J 8 2  
♣ 4

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

East will surely drive to game in response to a 2NT opening bid by West. He can either transfer into hearts and bid spades or use Smolen (Stayman followed by bidding his four-card major to show 5-4 in the majors). Either way, E/W rate to end up in 4♥ — a wise decision in theory, since on a club lead 3NT is very fortunate to succeed. Against 4♥, North ought to attack diamonds, and declarer will simply have to avoid losing three heart tricks to make his game. Alas for him, the trumps lie in such a way that quite a few Wests will end up with egg all over their faces.

**Board 13**North Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

There seems little reason for North to do anything but open 2♠, which East will double for takeout. South can redouble — planning to double whatever E/W run to — or pass and double the next time if that is more unequivocally penalty. If South passes, initially, might West cross his fingers and pass as well? The defenders have three trump tricks and two clubs, but no more. Even conceding -670 may be cheap by comparison to the fate of a doubled E/W contract, all of which go for at least 800. Any East who manages to pass 2♠ will be richly rewarded for his discretion.

**Board 14**East Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

South is too good to open 4♥ and not good enough to open 2♣, so will settle for a call of 1♥. However, when his partner responds 1NT, will he be able to stay out of game (be it 4♥ or 3NT)? Surely not, but the defenders have four tricks to cash against 4♥, and 3NT by North does still worse on a spade lead. So is any game makeable here? Yes and no...with spades 2-2 and the king onside, together with a major miracle in diamonds, plus a 4-2 club break, West can technically bring home 4♠ on very careful play.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 7 6 4  
♥ 9 8 2  
♦ 10 4 2  
♣ 10 8 6

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

North should double a 1♠ opener, then rebid 2NT to show 18-20 points after South bids his clubs. South can now raise to 3NT, hoping to run the clubs. Once the ♣Q behaves, E/W can do no better than take their top hearts. Worse, if West parts with his ♠K at trick one, declarer has a strip-squeeze to make 690 if he reads the position. Still, +660 will surely score N/S pretty well. At a few tables, East could get creative by raising spades or inventing another suit. But he would do well to stay low, as his side can take no more than six tricks in spades.

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

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

  

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

Despite his maximum values and small doubleton, few Wests will prefer to open 1♦ to 1NT. A 1NT call is likely to end the auction, and it rates to escape for down one on a spade lead. Some Norths will come in to show the majors, but if they bid 2♣, they may play there if South guesses to pass. Equally, pairs using DONT may get to 2♣ by North via a different route, when South shows a one-suiter by doubling 1NT. N/S can make a partscore in either black suit, and West might emerge with eight tricks in diamonds on friendly defence.

**Board 17**North Deals  
None Vul

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

  

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

North has a pretty good strong notrump but has no obvious reason to upgrade out of the range. After South transfers to hearts, North will play 2♥ at most tables, giving East a blind opening lead. A club looks most effective today; declarer should duck the first, take the next, then go after trumps. When West wins the second, he can take no more than the ♦A and an eventual second trump trick. If North makes the mistake of winning the first club, the defence ought to come to five tricks. Anyone reaching game will find 3NT simple to bring home, 4♥ almost impossible.

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

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

  

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

At this vulnerability, West may decide to preempt to 3♦ over 1♥, despite that ominous heart holding. If he does, North will bid 3♥, and East can throw in a lead-directing 3♠ call, prepared to play 4♦. That action may backfire, though, since the last thing he wants to do today is push N/S to 4♥, where 10 tricks are easy to make, despite dummy's wasted ♦K and the real possibility of a defensive trump promotion. Par is the sacrifice in 5♦ doubled for 500. But many will stay out of game on the N/S cards.

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

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

  

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

When South opens 1♦, any West who overcalls 2♣ should wash his mouth out with soap and water because his hand is nowhere near good enough. If West passes, North will respond 1♥, then either go low by raising 2♦ to 3♦ or drive to game with a call of 2♠. The former action would be wise today; the limit of the N/S cards is 3♦, though there is little wrong with playing 4♥ — except that it goes down when diamonds do not break. If the defenders try for diamond ruffs, they can actually hold hearts to eight tricks.

**Board 20**West Deals  
Both Vul

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

  

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

E/W have only 21 HCP including a wasted ♦K, but 4♠ is cold, thanks to a very favourable lie of the trumps. You'd imagine pessimistic Wests might simply raise 1♠ to 2♠, while others will reach game after a limit-raise sequence, whether or not North acts. If the defenders cash their three red-suit winners and lead a third heart, declarer must work very hard for his game. He has to take two trump finesses, North covering the second. East then plays the ♣K to the ♣A, takes ♦K and ruffs a diamond, finesses in clubs and catches North in a trump coup.

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

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

  

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

At the vulnerability, surely every East will open 3♣ here. South must double to get all the suits into play, and West might well raise to 4♣, tempting South to re-open. If South doubles again, North will buy the hand in 4♦. After the lead of the ♠Q, declarer needs both to ruff a club and prevent the opponents getting a ruff and cannot to do both. The best he can do is to take eight tricks. However, this may not be a complete disaster, since the preempt will generate problems at every table. E/W may also end up doubled in 4♣ at a few tables for +510.

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

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

  

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

West's intermediates may tempt him to open 1NT, but at this position and vulnerability, opening 1♣ looks to be more discreet. After a 1♣ call, North will overcall 1♦, letting East bid spades and South bid hearts. At this point, it will be "Last bidder gets the zero!" as Bobby Wolff would say. N/S are able to take eight tricks in a minor, while E/W cannot take more than seven tricks in any strain, despite holding the majority of the high cards. So you'd expect very few pairs to succeed in a contract here.

**Board 23**South Deals  
Both Vul

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

  

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

When North overcalls 1♦ over 1♣, East can bid hearts and West can either raise hearts or bid spades, then support hearts. Raising hearts has much to recommend it and it gets East to the best strain. On the face of it, East has four losers in hearts, but the combination of the fall of the ♣8 and the ♠J-10 apparently lets declarer take two finesses in clubs and tackle that suit for no loser to come to 10 tricks. However, after two top diamonds, North can avoid this fate by shifting to a spade intermediate or top club. The play may be too complex to analyze here!

**Board 24**West Deals  
None Vul

<p>♠ 7 2 ♥ J 3 ♦ Q 10 7 5 4 2 ♣ 7 4 2</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; 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		<p>♠ K 10 9 8 ♥ A K 8 ♦ 9 ♣ A J 10 9 3</p>	<p>♠ Q J 5 4 ♥ Q 10 7 4 2 ♦ A J ♣ Q 5</p> <p>♠ A 6 3 ♥ 9 6 5 ♦ K 8 6 3 ♣ K 8 6</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

The North hand poses a severe rebid problem after a forcing notrump response to a 1♥ opener. Today, though, East will doubtless act over 1♥ (be it with a suit bid, double or notrump overcall). While E/W can make 2♣, N/S will surely buy the contract in hearts at the two or three level. Against 3♥ by North, East might well lead his singleton, hoping to get his partner in later for a ruff. Declarer now ought to play a club at trick two toward dummy's king in order to be able to lead a trump to his 10. He can even (luckily) afford to play a diamond and concede the ruff, since East gets endplayed later to lose either his club or spade trick.

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

<p>♠ A 7 ♥ 10 7 ♦ J 8 6 4 3 2 ♣ J 10 2</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; 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		<p>♠ K 10 6 ♥ K Q 5 3 ♦ A 10 9 ♣ 8 7 4</p> <p>♠ Q J 8 5 2 ♥ A J 4 2 ♦ K 5 ♣ Q 3</p> <p>♠ 9 4 3 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ Q 7 ♣ A K 9 6 5</p>	<p>♠ K 10 6 ♥ K Q 5 3 ♦ A 10 9 ♣ 8 7 4</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

You'd expect a highly contested auction here, with N/S bidding clubs, and E/W getting at least two of the other three suits into play. Against 2♠, N/S have five top winners, and early trump leads by the defence leave declarer with too much to do in the red suits. For example, if East tackles diamonds before trumps, he could run into a trump promotion. 3♣ by North is also a plausible final contract, but declarer has five top losers, even on a fortunate ♦K lead. A spade lead and continuation leaves North struggling to come even to eight tricks there.

**Board 26**East Deals  
Both Vul

<p>♠ 3 ♥ A 9 8 4 ♦ 8 7 5 3 ♣ A J 5 4</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; 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		<p>♠ J 9 8 5 2 ♥ J 5 ♦ K Q 10 6 4 ♣ K</p> <p>♠ K Q 4 ♥ K 10 3 ♦ A 9 2 ♣ 9 8 7 6</p> <p>♠ A 10 7 6 ♥ Q 7 6 2 ♦ J ♣ Q 10 3 2</p>	<p>♠ J 9 8 5 2 ♥ J 5 ♦ K Q 10 6 4 ♣ K</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

What should North bid after hearing 1♣ to his left and 1♥ to his right? Some will double, some will be able to bid 1NT and others might risk a 2NT call, which seems far too rich to me. In what seems to be a trend this set, the key on these partscore battles is to sell out and let the opponents go down quietly. Here, E/W can scramble to eight tricks in clubs, while N/S are off five top winners in spades. If N/S compete to the three level, the best E/W results are likely to come from doubling them there and collecting 200 or more.

**Board 27**South Deals  
None Vul

<p>♠ K 7 ♥ A 8 5 ♦ A 7 2 ♣ A K 10 5 2</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; 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		<p>♠ 10 8 5 3 ♥ Q 6 2 ♦ Q 9 3 ♣ Q 7 4</p> <p>♠ A 4 2 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ K 10 6 5 4 ♣ 8 6</p> <p>♠ Q J 9 6 ♥ K 10 9 7 ♦ J 8 ♣ J 9 3</p>	<p>♠ A 4 2 ♥ J 4 3 ♦ K 10 6 5 4 ♣ 8 6</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

When West opens 1♣, some Norths will overcall 1♦; others will require a better hand or suit for a non space-consuming overcall. You'd envisage quite a few Wests will declare 2NT, and while a heart lead may be best, North rates to lead a diamond. When West wins the ♦Q and runs five rounds of clubs, North has to pitch one heart, one spade and one diamond. Declarer can then try to endplay him in diamonds for his eighth trick, but North can shift to ♥J and get out of the trap. Any E/W going plus here ought to score well for so doing.

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

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

A few Wests might open 3♥, but it looks normal to bid 2♥. North really has to pass, and what can East do now? He might bid 5♦, but passing and awaiting a balance from South looks reasonable, too. If he does bid 5♦, he should buy it there, probably three down undoubled. If he passes, will South re-open with 2♠? I'd guess so, and North rates simply to bid 4♠ now. After a diamond lead, the defence can shift to a heart to the ace for West to return the queen. E/W can take their heart ruff, then sit back and wait for their club winner. Any East balancing into 5♦ over 4♠ will surely get doubled and score very poorly here.

**Board 29**North Deals  
Both Vul

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

In third seat, South will open 1♦. If West passes, North is likely to respond 1NT, but now either East or West may balance into their major. This in turn gives North the option to compete to 3♦. Of the three possible suit strains, the eight-card heart fit is the contract most likely to succeed. West can set up spades whatever the opponents do and hold his losers to four in the red suits plus a club. Spades and diamonds each play for seven tricks, as does notrump, so one might expect to see a lot of small penalties being recorded here.

**Board 30**East Deals  
None Vul

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

A simple auction (at last), in the form of 1NT by West raised via Stayman to 3NT. On lead, North's diamond sequence should look far more attractive to him than his broken heart suit. After a diamond lead, there may appear to be no obvious reason for declarer not to cash out his nine or 10 winners. But one could certainly make a strong case for winning the diamond with the ♦Q and trying to pass ♠9. When North takes the king and continues diamonds, coming to hand and playing a second spade would embarrassingly turn 10 tricks into nine.

**Board 31**South Deals  
N-S Vul

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

South's 1♣ opener may let West produce a stopperless 1NT overcall or a 1♦ overcall. Either way, North will bid spades. If East has bid 1NT, East may elect to compete in hearts. Equally, if West has bid diamonds, East is likely to raise to at least 4♦. South will have the option to raise spades or repeat his clubs. With both pairs having a big double fit, one side or other rates to bid to at least the four level. The minors make 10 tricks, a defensive ruff holds each major to nine. However, game could easily be let through here by either side.



**Board 32**West Deals  
E-W Vul

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

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



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

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

After West opens 1NT, South should show hearts in a one- or two-suiter. Regardless, West must drive his side to 3NT, and after a heart lead, West will have his work cut out. He must duck one heart and win the second; what next? With an endplay unlikely to succeed, the winning line is to play on spades (not obvious); the losing line to take a club finesse. It does appear hard to combine chances here, but you do have the option of advancing a spade early and seeing if North splits his honors. If he doesn't, you can eventually fall back on the club finesse.

**Board 33**North Deals  
None Vul

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

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



♠ A J 10 8 7 3  
♥ 10 7  
♦ 8 7 3  
♣ Q 10

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

East has a classical second-in-hand preempt of 2♠. When South overcalls 3♥, West can either raise to 4♠ or bid 4♥ to show a sound raise to game. I prefer the latter (it prevents North from doubling an artificial call), but 4♠ rates to be the final contract at almost every table. The defenders have four top tricks to cash in the round suits and a slow diamond trick that won't go away. Meanwhile N/S can take 10 tricks in hearts or clubs if they negotiate the ♣Q but they might well not do so. This is yet another deal where you would not expect to see many successful declarers.

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

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

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



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

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

While a few Easts might stretch to bid here, you'd generally imagine North will be allowed to open 1♣. N/S may now have a sequence such as 1♣ - 1♦ - 2♠ - 3♣ - 3NT. When the defenders lead hearts against 3NT, declarer's best bet is to win the second heart, unblock ♦A and try a low club towards the jack. Now he can come to eight tricks by using his dummy entry to take just one top diamond and reverting to clubs. Again, this feels like a deal where plus scores will be at a premium, since it will not be simple for N/S to stop in 2NT or 3♣.

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

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

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



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

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

At favourable vulnerability, South might stretch to open 1♦. If he passes, East will open 1♣ and South can overcall 1♦, after which North can respond 1NT to end the auction. The defenders cannot hold him to seven tricks; after a club lead declarer has his eighth winner, while if the defenders clear spades, the 13th spade represents the overtrick. A passive diamond may actually work best for the defence. Doubtless, after a 1♦ opener from South, a few Norths will reach 2♥ on a support double auction and struggle there.

**Board 36**

West Deals  
Both Vul

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

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



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

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

In third seat, East can either open 1♠ or 2♠. In either instance, South has the choice of doubling or bidding notrump; his doubleton spade and four-card holding in the other major argue for the more cautious approach. Either way, we should see a competitive sequence in which E/W may compete to 3♠, against which N/S ought to prevail by setting up their club winner in time. By contrast, defeating 4♥ is not so easy. With clubs and hearts lying so favourably, the defenders must lead diamonds on the go to defeat the game.