

# ACBL-wide Senior Pairs Game #1

Monday Afternoon – March 2, 2020 – Set 240029



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.

Married to Sue Picus. He has won two North American championships as well as EC Mixed Teams and multiple UK titles. As a professional player 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 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 9 6 3 2  
♥ A Q 8 6  
♦ 3 2  
♣ 9 4

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

W N  
S E

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

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

How high should North preempt? System may prevent some from opening 2♦ — but in any event, the combination of a decent suit with low defense when nonvulnerable might argue for North bidding 3♦. If North tries 3♦, then East really has to bid 3NT. On a diamond lead, he can endplay South in spades for +430. A 2♦ call will probably see East overcall 2NT; then West can steer his side via Stayman to 4♥. However, a few pairs may get too high if West starts with a cuebid in response to a double from East. 6♥ needs at least the club finesse and does not get it.

## Board 2

East Deals  
N-S Vul

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

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

W N  
S E

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

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

South will overcall 2♥ over East's 1♠, letting West decide how many spades to bid. One can imagine any number between two and four, with some making a cuebid-raise, and even a few stretching to produce a splinter raise. Rather more E/W pairs will bid to 4♠ than miss game — one can certainly argue for West driving to 4♠ as a two-way shot that one side or the other might take a lot of tricks. The result justifies this theory: despite the spade finesse losing, declarer can bring home his game with a minimum of discomfort, when one club honor is onside.

## Board 3

South Deals  
E-W Vul

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

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

W N  
S E

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

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

West has a normal, if minimum, opener. If he bids 1♣, North will overcall 1♦, leaving West a favorite to end up at the helm in 1NT. After a top diamond lead, declarer might well win in dummy and take a spade finesse, letting North in to clear diamonds. Now declarer can be held to six tricks — and he could get fewer if he misguesses clubs. If West passes initially, North can either bid his long suit or distort his hand to open 1NT. Either way, his side should play 1NT, and after a heart lead, E/W will have to work hard to take even six tricks.

**Board 4**West Deals  
Both Vul

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

When West opens 1♠, most Norths will overcall 2♥ (rather than the more troublesome 3♥). Now over East's 3♦ response West should rebid 3NT rather than 3♠. That action might lose a good 5-2 spade fit, but it will ensure his side plays 3NT whenever that is a feasible spot. This would certainly be sound strategy today: 3NT has 10 top tricks, while 5♦ is awkward on a heart lead. East must win the ace and pitch a heart on the top spades. Then he can ruff out the ♠Q and draw trump ending in dummy, in order to pitch a loser on the good spade.

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

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

The majority of E/W pairs will open a strong notrump and either blast out 3NT or get to the same contract via Stayman. South might well opt for a passive spade lead, rather than a high or low diamond. East has nine top winners on any defense, but unless the defenders lead or shift to a club or get too active and set up an additional diamond winner for declarer, nine tricks seem to be the limit. In theory, the seven-card major fits might play for 10 tricks, but very few pairs will find their way to either spades or hearts.

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

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

East's balanced 11-count does not look much like an opening bid, does it? At this vulnerability most will pass, and South can then choose to preempt either to 2♦ or even 3♦. Being in second seat argues for restraint, the vulnerability for aggression. This is the sort of deal where if East does open, his side rates to fail in game, be it clubs or notrumps. If East passes, then N/S will probably go down in a diamond contract, unless West overcalls and turns his plus score on defense into a minus. Making club partscores should be a fine result for E/W.

**Board 7**South Deals  
Both Vul

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

South has far too much for a 4♠ opener (this unilateral action might work — but could equally easily miss a slam). If he opens 1♠, North can go low with a forcing notrump sequence or set up a game force via a 2/1 call. In the latter case there would be a real risk that N/S could climb to the five level, off three top losers. It may be hard for N/S to stop low, and even harder for them to bid to their optimum denomination at pairs; notrump has the same 10 top tricks as spades. I suspect few will bid with confidence to the highest scoring strain.



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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

With E/W able to make 1NT or a partscore in either black suit, the question is if N/S will steal the hand in 2♥. South rates to balance over 1NT to show the majors, with 2♥ playing better his way up. A spade lead for a trump shift would be necessary to beat that contract. An initial trump lead from West lets declarer go after diamonds. Eventually he can maneuver to ruff a spade in dummy — though his first spade play may need to be to lead up to the eight! 2♥ by North on a trump lead looks a sure down one.

**Board 13**North Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

♠ 9 3  
♥ K 10 8 5 3 2  
♦ 8  
♣ K 10 8 2

Despite the vulnerability, many Souths will stretch to come in over East's 1NT opener. If South passes, West should be able to transfer to diamonds and bid 3♥ to show shortness. If South overcalls, then Wests using Lebensohl can bid 3♦, forcing. Either way, E/W may now avoid 3NT and settle in 5♦, for +600. 4♠ is harder to bid, and after a heart lead, even harder to play. Best is to win ♥A, then play the ♠K then ♠10. If they both hold, take the club finesse. South will win and press on with hearts, but declarer ruffs and run winners, conceding two trump tricks.

**Board 14**East Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

You'd expect North to see his partner show 12-14 balanced without four spades. New minor forcing will disclose South's secondary spade fit, after which North is on the cusp of making a slam try. Slam is clearly against the odds today, because not only are you missing an ace and the trump queen, you also need to right-side slam to protect the ♥Q. It is somewhat random that slam might succeed from the North seat, but that South can be defeated on a heart lead. Anyone taking 12 tricks in notrump will lose out only to those who bid and make slam.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

When Easts opens 1NT, West is on the cusp of inviting game. Some can use Stayman followed by 2♠; others will transfer then either pass or bid 2NT. E/W might still reach game if East can break the transfer to 2NT, showing a maximum and three good trumps. 4♠ hinges on the spade guess, while a highly unlikely low club lead beats 3NT. After the normal top club lead against 3NT, declarer must lead a spade to his hand, then go back to dummy in diamonds for a second spade play. After the normal top club lead against 3NT, declarer must lead a spade to his hand then either guess to pin the ♠J or play to set up diamonds. After a heart play at trick three, E/W can prevail.

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

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

The N/S auction rates to start: 1♠-2♥; 4♦. North would be just about worth a further try over a signoff, but South has enough to do more at his second turn. A cuebid of 5♣ might be sensible, since Blackwood with a void is always dangerous. One way or another, I'd anticipate a plurality will reach the heart slam here. The defenders do best to play two rounds of diamonds, but with hearts and clubs breaking, there is no defense to 12 tricks. In fact, there may be quite a few pairs bringing home the overtrick after an unsuccessful opening lead.

**Board 17**North Deals  
None Vul

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

A very few Norths might open their hand. If so N/S may climb to 3NT, when the defenders will have to be careful to cash out accurately. If North passes, East also has an opener of sorts, as indeed does South. The latter will surely bid 1♥ if given the chance, and that should let N/S end up safely in partscore. No-trump produces at least +120, while diamonds makes +110 or +130. This is a splendid pairs deal, as the overtricks in diamonds or notrump are worth their weight in gold. And Wests who come to seven tricks in 2♠ could score surprisingly well.

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

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

Many Wests will open 1♥ in third seat, both for the lead and for its obstructive effect. While North has a comfortable overcall of 1♦ over a 1♣ opener, he might double 1♥, hoping to survive a response in clubs, rather than overcall 2♦ and potentially lose the spades. Either way, E/W have two playable strains at the two level, while N/S can scramble eight tricks in spades. Best in 2♠ is to duck a trump, then cash ♠A and cross-ruff. Collecting +110 would be a fine result for N/S; in practice, though, any plus score will matchpoint reasonably.

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

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

There will be plenty of preempts here, from 2♦ (wild) to 3♦ (wilder). At this vulnerability many will ignore the poor suit and side four-card major. Would they be right to do so? Yes, in abstract, because E/W can make 3NT; but — and it is a huge “but” — both major-suit games are doomed. Given that 5♦ doubled goes for at least 300 (unscrambling the top trump honors may be harder than it looks for the defenders!), the preempt figures to work out far worse than expected. 4♥ or 4♠ down at least 100 rates to be a very normal entry on the traveler.

**Board 20**West Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

Though both North and South have full, shapely openers, no game their way is that attractive. If South declares 3NT, the defenders must set up their major-suit winners early to set him. 3NT by North may be even harder to beat, since the closed hand's club honors are concealed. The defenders must avoid attacking clubs, or declarer will be in fine shape. As for the suit games, 4♥ needs trumps 3-3, 4♠ has four top losers, and the defense of early trump leads prevents a successful cross-ruff in 5♦. So you'd presume small penalties will be the norm here.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

South has two strategies after East overcalls 2♣ over North's 1♠ opener. A mixed raise — if one is available — is on point; South has too much to raise preemptively. An alternative is to bid 2♠, planning to compete to 3♠ if pushed. East may balance over 2♠ with 2NT, for the minors, but will probably sell out to 3♠. Declarer has just eight tricks in 3♠, unless the defenders slip. Equally, a club partscore has only three top losers, but achieving +130 might need East to locate one or both of the ♥J or ♦10, and quite a few pairs will not succeed.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

When South doubles 1♣, it should not stop E/W from locating their heart fit and playing game in that denomination. 4♥ by East, with the diamond tenace protected, stands an excellent theoretical chance of success. But with every minor-suit honor offside, passive defense (playing on clubs at every turn, or taking the top spades and exiting in that suit) leaves declarer with too much to do. If the defenders ever open up a red suit, then East can come home easily enough. Curiously, 3NT by East cannot be defeated.

**Board 23**South Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

Optimistic Souths will open 2♣, since they almost have game in hand; others may prefer to start with 1♠, then jump shift in diamonds. When the spade fit comes to light, it will be hard to hold South back from using Blackwood and driving to slam. That is especially so if he can be sure his side has at least 10 trumps, when the possession or absence of the trump queen is far less important. Every declarer is going to take 12 tricks, I imagine. However, the difference between reaching slam and not doing so will swing about half a top.

**Board 24**West Deals  
None Vul

♠ A Q 8 2  
♥ 5 2  
♦ K 6 5  
♣ A K 5 2

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

Whatever East does in response to a strong notrump, he should locate the spade fit, then drive to game. (He cannot work out if the two hands fit nicely, so he might as well follow the route with the highest return if he is correct.) North has a logical heart lead, after which declarer will take the ♥A and might then unblock clubs and play a spade to the ... ace? He can then pitch dummy's diamonds and give up a heart; this line produces 11 tricks. If West risks the trump finesse, he might go down against a hostile lie of the cards but will end up with 12 tricks today.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

Most Wests who do not have a death wish will pass South's 1♥ opener. A Drury sequence of some sort will then see South declare 4♥ on an unrevealing auction, leaving West the choice of three plausible side-suit leads. If East has doubled a 2♣ call, the choice is easy. If not, a diamond looks reasonable. After a club or spade lead, +420 would be the expected outcome, but after a diamond lead, 11 tricks are straightforward. The overtrick could be worth as much as half a top (though there may perhaps be a few pairs who climb to the no-play slam).

**Board 26**East Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

Those West cards do not look a third-seat vulnerable opener to me — though I admit I may be suffering from presbyopia when I say that. Some will choose a 1♠ or 2♠ call and defend a heart partscore after a takeout double from North. Most will pass and let N/S have an unopposed transfer auction to 2♥. They look almost certain to lose a spade, a trump and two diamonds there. You could see a few declarers doing worse; it is hard to see any of the defense's four winners getting away. For the record, E/W take just six tricks in spades.

**Board 27**South Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

If ever you might upgrade a 14-count to open 1NT, it should be this North hand. At this vulnerability, where the aim is often to steal the contract, the chunky five-card suit makes 1NT the value call. East will want to have a penalty double available; if not, will he go past the two level on his own? It turns out dummy's limited values are really pulling their full weight, but unless the defenders lead a major suit, eight tricks look to be the limit. And even if South doesn't find the best opening salvo, North can hold East to 110 by ducking the ♠A twice.

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

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

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



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

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

N/S will have an unopposed auction where South is likely to extract secondary spade support from his partner, then probably make at least one try for slam. However, a club lead dooms 6♠, even if spades split. As it is, in 4♠, declarer should duck the first club and play to ruff a club, then cash two top spades to find the bad news. Now he cannot quite reduce his trumps sufficiently for a trump coup. That is, unless West cooperates in South's plan after the winning ♦K, by playing a card for declarer to ruff, instead of exiting in hearts.

**Board 29**North Deals  
Both Vul

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

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



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

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

When North opens 1♦, East should double rather than overcall 2♣. He may not have four-card support for either major, but he must act, and his clubs are not good enough to bid at the two level. The auction figures now to become quite competitive, with South likely to drive to at least 4♦ and maybe to take a shot at game facing North's six-card suit. The defense to a diamond contract should see East lead a top club and shift to hearts; otherwise, declarer's slow heart loser vanishes on dummy's spades. Thus par on the deal is +130 for N/S.

**Board 30**East Deals  
None Vul

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

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



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

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

East may have a chunky five-card major, but with 16 HCP he should not up-value or down-value his hand out of the 15-17 range. Opening 1♠ would surely force a lie on the next round, so best is to describe the nature of the hand and hope not to lose spades. As it is, the 1NT call will buy the pot. South might start with the ♥A, and when North discourages, he should shift to clubs. Now East will struggle to take more than his four top tricks. Since a notrump partscore by North will also fetch +150, that could be a very common result here.

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

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

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



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

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

Most N/S pairs will bid to 3NT, after North produces either an inverted 2♦ raise or a 2♣ response. In each case, South might choose to rebid 2NT as the least lie. If South declares 3NT on a spade lead, he may win and return the suit. Now East must shift to the ♥10 to set up the defense's fourth winner. After an initial heart lead, E/W can take four tricks more easily. Diamonds produces +600, though on a spade lead declarer must discard his losing spades on dummy's clubs, using the ♦A as the entry to dummy, then keep East off play for further trump leads.



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

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

N		
W	E	
S		

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

When West opens 1♦ and East responds 1♥, South can jump to 2♠. East and West now each have a problem as they have extra shape but a minimum. So while both will want to compete further, each may decide to go low and sell out. (Using 2NT as good/bad would allow either player to take another call). Either way, N/S should buy the hand in spades, be it at the two or three level, on a deal where game hinges on the club finesse. Once West turns up with 12 points in the red suits, declarer might be able to locate the ♣Q from the bidding.

**Board 33**North Deals  
None Vul

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

N		
W	E	
S		

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

East figures to open 1♣ rather than 1NT, allowing South to overcall 1♦. Then West can introduce his hearts and North his spades. After a support double from East, West can rebid 1NT — thus technically achieving par on the board. That said, South might compete to 2♠, where seven tricks are easy and eight tricks possible if the defenders do not lead trumps early enough. If they don't play on spades, declarer can arrange one or two heart ruffs in dummy. After a notrump opening from East, North may show the majors, to get to 2♠ by a different route.

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

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

N		
W	E	
S		

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

South will double East's normal weak 2♥, hoping to play game in spades or notrump, depending on how the auction develops. Whether West introduces his clubs or not, North can bid his spades, letting N/S settle in 4♠, without looking for higher things. The defenders have two aces and a trump trick, so N/S are highly unlikely to achieve anything but 620 in spades. Notrump takes 10 tricks easily on a heart lead, but life is harder on a club lead. Now declarer has to drive out the ♦A to dislodge West's entry before playing on either major.

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

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

N		
W	E	
S		

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

In third seat North will open 1♦, and East ought to pass, letting N/S find their heart fit. However, North has an awkward choice of rebids; does he emphasize his own suits, or support hearts? The eight-card diamond fit plays much better than the Moysian heart fit, while notrump will prove highly unsuccessful if the defenders go after the weak spots in the black suits. A few E/W pairs may find clubs and regret it. They should take no more than seven tricks, assuming the defenders do not allow declarer a scramble or cross-ruff.

**Board 36**West Deals  
Both Vul

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

N		
W	E	
S		

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

South can balance over West's 1♥ by jumping to 3♣ to show 13-16 with a good long suit. Now North has an ideal hand to gamble 3NT. With length in his weak suits, he can see he is likely to have decent play for nine winners. Indeed, only a diamond lead from East holds North to 430. If East tries a heart, West is squeezed dry on the run of the clubs. To keep the major-suits guarded, he must discard both top diamonds. Now declarer exits in diamonds, forcing East to return one major or the other. West can next be endplayed with a heart to concede 11 tricks.