

Canada-wide Olympiad Fund Game #2

Thursday Afternoon – Oct. 10, 2019 – Set 226003



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

♠ A 3
♥ 6 5 3
♦ A K J 8
♣ K 8 4 2

♠ Q 9 7 4
♥ A K Q J
♦ 10 7 3
♣ J 5



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

Most Norths will open an inelegant 1♦. When South responds 1♠, West should risk overcalling 1NT. North must raise to 2♠ of course, after which East will have to find the best way to compete. The E/W cards fit so well that when clubs break, they can emerge with 11 tricks in either minor or nine tricks in notrump, but few pairs will manage to reach game. Moreover, if North breaks the rules and opens 1♥, might South bounce to 4♥ and play there undoubled? Minus 100 will lose only to the Souths who buy the contract in a spade partscore and take nine tricks there.

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K 4
♥ Q 10 6 5
♦ K Q J 2
♣ K Q J

♠ A 10 8 7 6
♥ 8 3
♦ A 7 4 3
♣ 7 3



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

Once E/W find their heart fit, West's main concern will be whether to settle in the best game or probe for slam via keycard Blackwood — but if partner has 12-14, he won't have four keycards, will he? Blackwood would establish that E/W are indeed missing two keycards. But would East accept a signoff, when looking at three, not zero, keycards? This might be a very embarrassing accident to have. Note: if North finds a passive lead against slam, declarer can draw trumps and pitch his spades on the clubs — and that might be even more embarrassing.

Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q 4
♥ J 7 6 5 4
♦ J 8 2
♣ J 8 7

♠ A 5
♥ A
♦ K 9 6 5 4
♣ Q 9 6 5 3



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

I can't think why South would do anything but open 3♠ here — can you? North might raise to game to shut out the hearts, after which it feels right for East to double as a sort of two-way shot: maybe one or both sides can make game, maybe his side has a cheap save or a penalty coming? Not today! 5♥ can be doubled and set 500 or 800 easily enough. Meanwhile N/S can take 11 tricks in spades if South guesses both black suits — though he might well not guess either. Any E/W pair who hold their opponents to 10 tricks should score pretty decently.

Board 4West Deals
Both Vul

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

After West opens 1♣, he will hear his RHO compete to 2♥ over East's 1♠ response. 3♠ now would be an underbid in terms of playing strength, but is the hand worth a jump to 4♥? Absolutely, since if West doesn't make that call, East will never work out his hand-type. Over 4♥, East might use keycard and play 6♠ after the void-showing 5NT reply. Slam is excellent here; declarer can draw trumps and try to combine chances in the minors — though an early diamond shift by South may reduce East's options. Today all routes seem to produce 12 tricks.

Board 5North Deals
N-S Vul

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

When South responds 2♣ to North's 1♠ opener, he will hear a rebid of 2♦. He should now keep the bidding low with 2NT or 2♥, rather than raise diamonds, to let his partner describe his hand more efficiently. Once South finds five diamonds opposite he can use Blackwood to reach 6♦, the best and safest of the slams. The 2-2 trump division makes slam very simple today. Even against a 3-1 trump break, slam would need little more than the ♥A onside or a spade break. Will any matchpoint hogs attempt the almost hopeless 6NT?

Board 6East Deals
E-W Vul

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

After South shows the minors and North forces to game and shows spades, you'd expect most pairs to diagnose the missing ace and play slam ... but which? Reaching 6♠ is easy, getting to 6NT confidently is not so straightforward. North would have to find out about South's strong diamonds, while South would need to locate the ♥K. At least half a top may ride on reaching the highest-scoring strain, particularly given the bad spade break. 6♠ can be made on a trump coup, by ruffing a diamond early, then cashing two clubs and running diamonds. Many will miss the best line and go down.

Board 7South Deals
Both Vul

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

This deal will test everyone's methods; when South opens 1♠ and raises 1NT to 2NT, how does North get his shape across? If playing transfer rebids here, he might show both his suits (slam could be cold facing the right mesh of honours) or he could bid hearts then offer the choice of games. A third choice is simply to insist on hearts — which could easily be right if North had fewer side entries. Today, both major suits play for 11 tricks, while 3NT takes no more than nine winners after a club lead. Unlucky Easts will kick off with a diamond against 3NT and rue the day.

Board 12West Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

When West opens 1♥, it will be very hard for his side to stop in a making partscore. You'd imagine the majority of pairs will get too high in one black suit or the other. 2♠ might even get doubled for takeout by North and passed out by South. In spades, declarer has four winners in the side suits and can build two trump tricks for himself. But finding a seventh trick against passive defence may be very challenging. All things considered, minus 100 for E/W figures to be a very popular result.

Board 13North Deals
Both Vul

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

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

This is a vicious bidding problem for E/W. Today the clubs are almost as hostile as they could be, so that 3NT by West, which is probably about a 75% contract — in that it makes whenever clubs break or South has the club length, or even the ♣10 — goes down. Meanwhile, with spades and diamonds breaking, and the heart finesse succeeding, E/W can bring home slam in diamonds. Frankly, I have no idea at pairs if West should try to play diamonds rather than notrump, but today it would be very desirable to do that or declare 4♠ today.

Board 14East Deals
None Vul

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

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

Part II of the 19-count 2NT saga. This time, whatever South does, he is surely going to declare 3NT when no major-suit fit comes to light. West would do well not to attack hearts, but the temptation of leading such a good suit might be too much for him. After winning the heart lead in hand, South may try a spade to the king early on, as his easiest route for an 11th trick. That would work fine, but according to Deep Finesse, our double-dummy analyst, 11 tricks are available against any defence. However, that does require inspired play in the club suit.

Board 15South Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

Some Wests will pass over their RHO's 1♥ opening bid, others will attempt to shut out the spades by preempting to 3♣. N/S would have a relatively simple task to locate their nine-card spade fit if left to their own devices, but if West intervenes, East might raise to 4♣ in competition. That would actually be the par contract, since N/S can take nine tricks in spades (though just eight in hearts). After a 3♣ preempt from West, it is hard to see many pairs managing to put on the breaks in 3♠. So N/S may easily end up with a minus score.

Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

Part III of the 2NT dilemma. West's five-card suit may tempt him to open 2NT. If he does, might East produce a diamond slam try? It would be a bad moment for E/W to get aggressive, because 5♦ by West goes down on a heart lead and spade shift. Equally, after a heart lead, nine tricks are the limit in notrump, whatever route West takes to get there. On that defence, declarer would unblock diamonds and advance the ♣Q, doubtless rising with the ace when North plays low. Declarer should be held to 600, but the defenders may misjudge the ending.

Board 17
North Deals
None Vul

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

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

When North opens 1♣ and rebids 1♠ over his partner's 1♥ response, South will use fourth suit then set spades as trumps. Even if North does not cooperate, South is probably going to drive him to 6♠, a delicate spot after a diamond lead. Declarer should cash the top spades, then try to run clubs to discard dummy's diamonds. This line may not be a great deal better than 50%, but North comes home with his 12 tricks today when East has to follow to the first three clubs. +980 will certainly score N/S very nicely.

Board 18
East Deals
N-S Vul

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

	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A Q 3										
	♥ 7 6										
	♦ A 9 7										
	♣ A J 10 8 5										

When South opens 1NT, North will use Smolen to show his major-suit length, letting South settle in 3NT. It is not clear if West should lead diamonds here, but nothing else looks remotely attractive. On repeated diamond leads, declarer will take the third round, then need to decide whether to play on clubs or hearts. Clubs looks better, in abstract, but South may need the spade finesse whichever route he follows. If he goes after clubs, then when the suit does not break, he will need to read the ending very accurately to make his game. Plus 600 is likely to earn N/S a respectable result.

Board 19
South Deals
E-W Vul

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

	<table border="1"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ 10 7 5 2										
	♥ K Q 9 7 2										
	♦ A										
	♣ J 5 4										

When North opens 1♠ in third seat and East passes, there are many sensible responses South might give, be it Drury, fit-jumps or a spade raise to one level or another. However, no matter what route South follows, North should settle in 4♠. Indeed, you'd anticipate only those E/W pairs finding a diamond sacrifice to create a different final contract. Virtually every single N/S pair in spades will take 11 tricks, while collecting 800 from 5♦ doubled would require the defenders to find their heart ruff — by no means guaranteed.

Board 20West Deals
Both Vul

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

When South opens 1NT, West might want to double for penalty; but few can do that these days. Failing that, the vulnerability argues for passing, after which no one else will act. Against 1NT, West's ♥10 lead will travel round to South's jack. Declarer should tackle clubs by taking the ace and king and be delighted by the result, since that gets him to seven tricks immediately. Indeed, West may have to discard two hearts to have a shot to try to prevent overtricks. Even so, South might work out to endplay him in diamonds to collect an extra winner from the majors.

Board 21North Deals
N-S Vul

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

While this deal may occasionally be passed out, there will be plenty of players stretching to open the East cards. That will persuade West either to bid game, or at the very least invite it strongly. 3NT may well avoid a spade lead, but the defenders should be able to get in with the ♥A and might then find the killing shift. Since 4♥ is a sensible contract till it encounters a 5-1 heart break, it may be hard for E/W to stay low enough to go plus. Still, if North opens the bidding, you can imagine East overcalling 1♠; might West now try 2♥ or 1NT and play there?

Board 22East Deals
E-W Vul

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

The Ann Gallagher finesse is the stuff of legend. Your author didn't believe a genuine deal existed where one should finesse each opponent in turn for the same queen. But to quote Frankie Howard: "My flabber has never been so gasted" as on this board. In 6♠ after a top heart lead from South, who has opened a weak 2♥, declarer should ruff, then try a spade to the 8. If it holds, he must finesse the other way in spades by playing to the ♠10! Anyone who takes 12 tricks in spades by following this line should have a story to take to the grave.

Board 23South Deals
Both Vul

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

The South hand does not (repeat: NOT) constitute an opening bid. Anyone who breaks the rules here may be heavily punished. Once North diagnoses the 5-3 diamond fit, won't he drive his partner to a very poor and non-making slam. Of course, if South had the ♠10 instead of the three, slam would be very playable — except on an initial heart lead, but he doesn't. If South passes, then a strong notrump sequence should see North settle in 3NT and take 10 tricks after a club lead, but probably 12 tricks after a spade lead.

Board 24West Deals
None Vul

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

Talking of breaking discipline: will any West step out of line and preempt to 2♥ here? It might work fine, in that it could get East to play 3NT, which handles very comfortably, even after a club lead. Should West pass, then North will open 1♣, and now East may be a little reluctant to overcall 1NT. But if he does, then E/W ought to have no problem reaching 3NT — and again, the club lead might not appear especially attractive to South. Since a few pairs will find their way to an overtrick in 3NT, +400 rates to be a good score for E/W, but not a top.

Board 25North Deals
E-W Vul

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

In third seat not vulnerable, South has considerable discretion as to what to open. I vote for 3♣, to try to make the opponents' lives harder. You can see that after a 1♣ call, West would bid 1NT. Now whether or not North doubles, East should use Stayman and settle in 2♠ or defend clubs. But over a 3♣ preempt, won't West overcall 3NT and play there? After a club lead, South does best to put in the jack. If he does, declarer must give up on making and simply go after hearts. Even so, he will do well to come to as many as seven tricks.

Board 26East Deals
Both Vul

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

This time it is West with a tough third-seat opener. Most will try 4♥, combining preemption with bidding what they think or hope they can make. That call should end the auction; North can hardly come in to show the minors, can he? Dummy produces a very helpful collection, such that after a diamond lead declarer has 11 top tricks, and will be trying for a 12th. Meanwhile, on the lead of the ♠Q, West has his 12 tricks without a struggle. Only a club lead makes declarer's pursuit of an 11th trick a challenge. Note that 5♣ does escape for minus 500; a triumph for indiscipline!

Board 27South Deals
None Vul

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

In second seat, West should pass rather than preempt. In any event, E/W will locate hearts; now the sole issue will be whether they look for slam, and if South can find a spade lead against 4♥. Fortunately for him, South has an enticing sequence to attack from. East can pitch a spade on ♣A, then either run the ♦10 or ♣Q. In the former case, North can play a spade to his partner for a club shift, leaving declarer with a lot of work to do, though +620 is still possible. If declarer takes an early ruffing finesse in clubs, dummy can be forced in spades, holding East to +620.

Board 28West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 8	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 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 9 7 5 4
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ A Q 10 6 4 3		♥ 8 2									
♦ Q 10 8 3	♦ 9 7 6										
♣ A 2	♣ 3										
		♠ 10 2									
		♥ K J 9 5									
		♦ A J									
		♣ K Q J 8 6									

After West bids 1♥, it is hard to imagine East settling for a contract other than 4♠. No matter what assets dummy provides, surely game will have respectable chances? This time West has a minimum opener with a singleton spade, but his aces and diamond values are all working overtime. After a club lead against four spades, East will win the ♣A, draw trumps and play a diamond up. Now the defenders take just their two diamond tricks. Only an initial diamond lead nets the defenders three winners via the ruff.

Board 29North Deals
Both Vul

♠ 9 8 7 4	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 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 Q 6
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ 9 8		♥ K Q 5 3									
♦ K Q J 9 7 3	♦ 2										
♣ 4	♣ Q J 8 7 5										
		♠ A J 2									
		♥ J 10 7 6 2									
		♦ A 4									
		♣ K 10 3									

When East opens 1♣, South has a normal 1♥ overcall. West might now double (planning to introduce diamonds later, perhaps) or preempt directly to 3♦, ignoring the feeble spades. If West doubles, North can redouble to show values and a doubleton heart, but he would probably be silenced by a direct 3♦ bid. If you looked only at the N/S cards you might not want to compete beyond 2♥. But the fall of the heart spots allows nine tricks to be taken in both hearts and notrump. In practice, many Wests will play diamonds in peace and quiet, down 100 or 200.

Board 30East Deals
None Vul

♠ Q 4	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 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		♠ 8
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ J 7 4		♥ A Q 8 6									
♦ 9 8 4	♦ A J 10 3 2										
♣ K J 10 7 4	♣ A 3 2										
		♠ A K J 10 9 6									
		♥ 10 9 5 2									
		♦ 5									
		♣ Q 6									

In second seat you'd anticipate South would overcall 1♠ over 1♦, leaving West with no good call. He may pass (planning to balance over a 2♠ raise with 2NT, to suggest this minor-suit pattern). North is too good to preempt but might make a mixed raise with a call of 3♦ — and now will E/W be able to come back in? Selling out to 3♠ nets them +50 at best, but they can take 11 tricks in either minor if they find the ♣Q. 4♥ on the 4-3 fit looks unmakeable on repeated spade leads, despite the fall of the ♥K in two rounds.

Board 31South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ J 10 9 4	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 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		♠ Q 6 5 2
		N									
W			E								
		S									
♥ 8 4		♥ A J 9									
♦ 7 5 4	♦ A K Q 10 6										
♣ A K J 4	♣ 10										
		♠ K 8									
		♥ K Q 7 6 2									
		♦ 9									
		♣ 8 7 6 3 2									

At unfavourable vulnerability, few Souths will open unless they have a gadget to show a two-suiter. That will allow East to open 1♦ in fourth chair, after which disciplined Souths will overcall 1♥, while indiscreet ones may risk an unusual 2NT call. Since accurate defence holds club or heart partscores to at most seven tricks, N/S had better not get too frisky. And which game should E/W attempt? 4♠ makes when trumps break, while 3NT by East is proof against heart leads. But 5♦ would not be a success today.

Board 32West Deals
E-W Vul

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

With E/W silent, a typical N/S auction will start out: 1♦-1♥; 2♣ ... then what? South has to choose between a 2NT rebid or a club raise. At pairs one might expect a majority to opt for the 2NT call and finish in 3NT. If instead South bids 3♣, North has a few extras but no real source of tricks, so he would probably pass. The club raise works best, in theory, because the defenders should be able to get hearts going against 3NT in time to beat it. Meanwhile, the diamond break allows 3♣ to come home with 11 tricks against any defence.

Board 33North Deals
None Vul

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

Is there any North who would perpetrate a 1NT opener here? If so, please, please don't tell me about it: I'd like to preserve some illusions. When North bids 1♦, some Easts will preempt to 3♣, some will try 4♣. N/S ought still to find their heart or spade game whatever the level of opposition, but no doubt a few might fall by the wayside when North is tempted to protect his ♣K and play 3NT. Curiously, the 5-0 heart break shouldn't prevent South from taking 11 tricks in hearts, but a heart ruff holds N/S to 10 tricks in spades.

Board 34East Deals
N-S Vul

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

Another chance for an aggressive preempt: how many Easts will risk 3♥? I'd not be surprised to find it to be a common choice, after which West will ask for aces and settle in 6♥, making East repent his frivolity — until dummy comes down! Even after a club lead, declarer can ruff out spades and take at least 13 tricks. The deal is far harder if East passes initially. Might some Wests open 1♠ and play there? Even if West opens 2♣, it may be hard for East to show both a weak hand and long hearts. Thus simply reaching the heart slam should score E/W very respectably here.

Board 35South Deals
E-W Vul

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

Unless North pushes the envelope to act in third seat, you'd imagine East will open 1♠, and West will buy the contract in 1NT. If North does act, he might well persuade South to join in, and push his side into dangerous territory. As the cards lie so favourable for E/W, they can certainly collect 500 against any venture at the two level. If West plays 1NT on a low club lead to the king, and a shift to a low heart, he can put in the 10. Now he might even set up the diamonds with the aid of a finesse for the 10, and come to nine tricks.

Board 36West Deals
Both Vul

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

In third seat some Easts will bid 1♣, some will open 1NT; put me in the first category, planning to introduce spades, then invite game facing a 1NT response or rebid. The 1♣ call might see South bounce to 4♥, envisaging taking nine tricks in his own hand. And so he can, but dummy is virtually irrelevant. If East balances over 4♥ with a double, West does best to pass and hope to get lucky, rather than removing to 4♠ — whereupon the sky would fall in on him. 4♠ doubled goes down at least 800 — and to rub it in, N/S's only makeable game is the unlikely 3NT.