



## HELEN SHIELDS CANADIAN ROOKIE-MASTER GAME

THURSDAY, APRIL 13, 2023 -- ANALYSIS BY Neil Kimelman

The CBF would like to thank expert Neil Kimelman of Winnipeg, MB for preparing this year's analysis. Neil has written three successful books on bidding advice for intermediate and advanced players. He is also a former Canadian champion and, despite not playing regularly, has many Regional wins and top finishes in NABC events.

**Helen Shields**, who died in 1987, was one of the finest players at the Lake Head. She served on the CBF Board of Directors from 1976-1984 and was CBF President in 1981. In her roles on the CBF Board, Unit 228 President and Thunder Bay DBC President, Helen did all she could to encourage and welcome new players to duplicate bridge. Trophies for the National Winners are provided by the Thunder Bay Unit 228 in memory of Helen.

We hope you enjoyed the game and that you will mark Tuesday, October 17, 2023 on your calendar – that is the date of the Erin Berry fall Rookie-Master game.

Welcome all! I hope you had a wonderful experience playing in this event today. I hope this analysis will add to this experience, and facilitate improving your bridge game, as well help you understand the nuances of Duplicate. Enjoy!

|                                     |                                    |                                    |                                                              |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>                            |                                    | ♠ Q83<br>♥ KQ864<br>♦ 87<br>♣ 1074 | Dir: N<br>Vul: None                                          |
| ♠ A106<br>♥ J10952<br>♦ Q<br>♣ AQ52 | ♠ 97<br>♥ 7<br>♦ KJ10942<br>♣ KJ86 | ♠ KJ542<br>♥ A3<br>♦ A653<br>♣ 93  |                                                              |
| 7<br>13 8<br>12                     |                                    |                                    | ♠♦♥♣NT<br>N - - 12 -<br>S - - 12 -<br>E 4 4 - -<br>W 4 4 - - |

advised to run to their 6-card suit, which plays magnificently.

|                                     |                                    |                                    |                                                                |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>2</b>                            |                                    | ♠ 642<br>♥ AJ4<br>♦ QJ64<br>♣ 942  | Dir: E<br>Vul: N-S                                             |
| ♠ KQJ1075<br>♥ Q109<br>♦ A8<br>♣ 73 | ♠ A83<br>♥ K87652<br>♦ K103<br>♣ A | ♠ 9<br>♥ 3<br>♦ 9752<br>♣ KQJ10865 | ♠♦♥♣NT<br>N 2 - - -<br>S 2 - - -<br>E - 1 6 5 3<br>W - 1 6 5 3 |
| 8<br>12 14<br>6                     |                                    |                                    |                                                                |

bit and bid 4♠, leaving any further action to West. West is worth asking for aces, thus placing their side in a decent slam. 6♠ can be defeated with the ♥A lead, but it is unlikely. This time the pre-empt by South will aid declarer in guessing the hearts, and earning a near top for +980.

1. The bidding should start with two passes, followed by 1♠ by South. A 3♦ opener by east is enterprising, and may work on this deal, but is not recommended. West has a tough choice, but 2♥ gets the nod with a decent suit and 13 HCPs. This gives north a problem - pass and 2♠ are both reasonable. In any case, the bidding should quickly die with no great fit and high cards by either side. Against a spade contract West does best by leading a heart, and most declarers will fail to score as many as 8 tricks. If N-S try to penalize 2♥, East is well

2. The bidding should start 1♥-3♣, a standout preempt with a superb suit and 7-4 shape. West has a decision as to whether to raise hearts or bid their spades. I would bid 3♠ with this excellent suit. West can always support hearts on their next bid. However, East will raise spades. 4♠ is a good bid, but a cue bid of 4♣ is better. East is strong enough to issue a mild slam invite. West likes their hand, great suit, heart support and side ace, and should show their interest with a return cue bid of 4♦. Now East is best to slow down a

|                                   |                                     |                    |                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>3</b>                          | ♠ 9<br>♥ AK10962<br>♦ 85<br>♣ Q764  |                    | Dir: S                                                                 |
|                                   | ♠ 1074<br>♥ J53<br>♦ 10643<br>♣ J93 |                    | Vul: E-W                                                               |
| ♠ Q852<br>♥ Q74<br>♦ A72<br>♣ AK8 | ♠ AKJ63<br>♥ 8<br>♦ KQJ9<br>♣ 1052  | ♠ 9<br>♥ 2<br>♦ 14 | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N 3 2 3 2 2<br>S 3 2 3 3 2<br>E - - - - -<br>W - - - - - |

3. Another difficult bidding decision by West – should they overcall 1♠ with 1NT? If you asked an expert poll the response would be 50% for 1NT and 50% for pass. I am 1NT bidder – anytime you get a chance to show your hand type and values do so, even if it is a minimum, as here. Unfortunately.... It is not your hand. North should double 1NT which should be the final contract, and not a happy one. ☹ West will only muster 4 tricks on normal defence. -800 will be a clear top and bottom.

|                                    |                                      |                            |                                                                        |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>4</b>                           | ♠ 93<br>♥ 8743<br>♦ AKJ62<br>♣ K6    |                            | Dir: W                                                                 |
|                                    | ♠ J5<br>♥ A109652<br>♦ 10<br>♣ A1094 |                            | Vul: Both                                                              |
| ♠ KQ1072<br>♥ QJ<br>♦ Q985<br>♣ Q2 | ♠ A864<br>♥ K<br>♦ 743<br>♣ J8753    | ♠ 11<br>♥ 12<br>♦ 9<br>♣ 8 | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N - 1 - - -<br>S - 1 - - -<br>E 1 - 3 1 2<br>W 1 - 3 1 2 |

4. This board gives all players an opportunity to overbid! West has an UGLY opening bid. 12 HCPs, but no aces. I have no problems with opening 1♠, but with the master suit, my plan would be to pass and bid my spades on the next round. In that way, partner should not get overly excited. North will either overcall or open with their 11 HCPs and decent diamond suit. East should bid hearts. Despite holding only 9 HCPs, their hand includes two aces a good six card suit and 6-4 distribution. South does not want to get left out, so will raise

diamonds if north overcalls, make a negative double if west passed originally. Despite this start, the bidding should die quickly. A diamond contract is bound to fail, and E-W should be proud if they found trump leads at every opportunity. 3♥ should make. Any plus score should score well.

|                                   |                                      |                            |                                                                        |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>5</b>                          | ♠ Q1062<br>♥ K98532<br>♦ Q42         |                            | Dir: N                                                                 |
|                                   | ♠ KJ875<br>♥ J<br>♦ AKQ6<br>♣ A87    |                            | Vul: N-S                                                               |
| ♠ A43<br>♥ A74<br>♦ J8532<br>♣ J5 | ♠ 9<br>♥ Q106<br>♦ 10974<br>♣ K10963 | ♠ 7<br>♥ 10<br>♦ 18<br>♣ 5 | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N - - 2 - -<br>S - - 2 - -<br>E 1 6 - 5 6<br>W 1 6 - 5 6 |

5. The scoring on this deal will likely be fairly flat – 4♣ making five. Slam is slightly against the odds, and the bad trump break sinks 6♣. An interesting aspect on this hand is what should West do opposite a 1♠ opening by partner. I recommend 2♠. It is only slightly conservative, while bidding 2♦ may easily get you overboard on many deals. Although 6♦ makes, playing in minor suit fits when an 8 card major suit is available is a long term losing strategy playing matchpoints.

|                                      |                                    |                            |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>6</b>                             | ♠ K9<br>♥ QJ876<br>♦ Q2<br>♣ QJ86  |                            | Dir: E                                                             |
|                                      | ♠ QJ107<br>♥ 95<br>♦ K943<br>♣ K75 |                            | Vul: E-W                                                           |
| ♠ 53<br>♥ AK103<br>♦ A10<br>♣ A10932 | ♠ A8642<br>♥ 42<br>♦ J8765<br>♣ 4  | ♠ 11<br>♥ 15<br>♦ 9<br>♣ 5 | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N - - - -<br>S - - - -<br>E 3 1 1 2 3<br>W 3 1 1 2 3 |

6. N-S should be silent on this deal, and West faces an opening bid choice. 1NT simplifies the hand, and is probably the best choice. 1♣ is absolutely fine if that was your choice. All roads lead to 3NT, likely by West. Some Norths will count points and overcall 1♥ on this 'yucky' hand. Some E-W pairs will reasonably stop in 2NT. The auction will affect the opening lead. If the bidding starts 1NT-2♣-2♥-2NT-3NT/P North should heed the signs and avoid a heart lead. Alas, a club start is unlucky, and will allow declarer to score four tricks. It also allows

declarer the timing to play on spades. +180 will likely be just over average, but will lose to the pairs who manage +600. +150 should garner very few matchpoints.

|                                    |                                    |                             |                                                                        |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>7</b>                           | ♠ 5<br>♥ KQJ<br>♦ KQJ976<br>♣ Q103 |                             | Dir: S                                                                 |
|                                    | ♠ A4<br>♥ 962<br>♦ 10432<br>♣ 8752 |                             | Vul: Both                                                              |
| ♠ KJ9732<br>♥ A1073<br>♦ 85<br>♣ A | ♠ Q1086<br>♥ 854<br>♦ A<br>♣ KJ964 | ♠ 14<br>♥ 12<br>♦ 4<br>♣ 10 | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N 4 3 - - -<br>S 4 3 - - -<br>E - - 1 2 -<br>W - - 1 2 - |

7. South should pass, with West opening 1♠. North has enough to bid. The question is what is better: 2♦ or double. If North had one less diamond and one more club, double would have been better. Here 2♦ is the best bid with a great 6 card suit. This gives South a problem: He has enough points to invite game, but no clear path. 3♣ is ok, but 2NT is better. Even though South does not have a heart stopper, nobody bid them! The opponents bid spades which is doubled stopped. North has a borderline hand to accept or not.

Close, but the answer should be no. North has a lot of points, but not a lot of aces. South cannot have enough: good spade stopper and time to set up nine tricks. However, North should choose to play in 3♦ not 2NT. North's 3♦ says, 'Sorry, I don't think we can make 3NT, and I think we can do better playing in diamonds than notrump. That is very true as 3♦ will make with an overtrick, unless East finds the clairvoyant lead of a small club. +130 will be a very fine score.

|          |          |             |
|----------|----------|-------------|
| 8        | ♠ KJ74   | Dir: W      |
|          | ♥ 963    | Vul: None   |
|          | ♦ 1065   |             |
|          | ♣ AQ8    |             |
| ♠ 10852  | ♠ A963   |             |
| ♥ J      | ♥ Q8542  |             |
| ♦ AKQ872 | ♦ J9     |             |
| ♣ 109    | ♣ 54     |             |
|          | ♠ Q      |             |
| 10       | ♥ AK107  | ♠♦♥♣NT      |
| 10       | ♦ 43     | N 4 - 2 - - |
| 13       | ♣ KJ7632 | S 4 - 2 - - |
|          |          | E - 2 - 2 - |
|          |          | W - 2 - 2 - |

8. Another hand where it pays to sit West tonight, as they are getting some very interesting hands! Despite an excellent diamond suit, pass is the best initial action. It is inadvisable to preempt with a side 4 card major, especially when partner is an unpassed hand. I expect most tables will start with 3 passes. West can now overcall 1♦ over South's 4<sup>th</sup> seat 1♣ opener. North will bid 1♠ and East doesn't quite have enough to bid a red suit, and should pass...for now. South will rebid their clubs and West is not out of line rebidding their suit.

North has enough to raise to 3♣, and almost, but not quite, has enough to cue bid 3♦. Now East, knowing partner has at least 6 good diamonds, can aggressively compete to 3♦. What happens now will likely differ from table to table. The winner for N-S is to compete to 4♣ for +130. E-W will be rewarded for competing to the three level as careful declarer play will come home for 8 tricks. -50, or if doubled, -100 will be worth a good chunk of the E-W matchpoints.

|         |         |                    |
|---------|---------|--------------------|
| 9       | ♠ AJ86  | Dir: N<br>Vul: E-W |
|         | ♥ 8763  |                    |
|         | ♦ A43   |                    |
|         | ♣ 102   |                    |
| ♠ K10   | ♠ 743   |                    |
| ♥ Q94   | ♥ KJ10  |                    |
| ♦ J107  | ♦ KQ    |                    |
| ♣ J9873 | ♣ KQ654 |                    |
|         | ♠ Q952  |                    |
| 9       | ♥ A52   |                    |
| 7 14    | ♦ 98652 |                    |
| 10      | ♣ A     |                    |

|             |
|-------------|
| ♠♦♥♣NT      |
| N - 3 3 3 1 |
| S - 3 3 3 1 |
| E 2 - - -   |
| W 2 - - -   |

9. I jinxed West – dull hand! Board 9 is a classic matchpoint battle: I predict the bidding will start with E-W bidding 1♣-2♣. South will be in the pass out seat and should reopen with a double. It is important to balance when the opponents have found a fit, but did not invite game. Partner is guaranteed to have values, and here, South has support for all unbid suit. North will bid spades and East should compete to 3♣. South has enough to bid 3♠. Normally once you balance, you do not compete further. However, this South hand is so

pure, and their side is not vulnerable, this is the time to go against the normal action. Why is the vulnerability important? Down one, even doubled, is -100, less than if the opponents can make at least 3♣ for +110. Here E-W can do nothing about an adventurous South. Bidding to 4♣ is down one and should be doubled for the dreaded -200. Matchpoints strategy rewards aggressive bidding!

|         |          |             |                     |
|---------|----------|-------------|---------------------|
| 10      | ♠ 97     |             | Dir: E<br>Vul: Both |
|         | ♥ J64    |             |                     |
|         | ♦ KQ5    |             |                     |
|         | ♣ K10765 |             |                     |
|         |          |             |                     |
| ♠ A85   | ♠ K1063  |             |                     |
| ♥ 72    | ♥ Q1098  |             |                     |
| ♦ 98632 | ♦ J74    |             |                     |
| ♣ Q92   | ♣ 83     |             |                     |
|         | ♠ QJ42   |             |                     |
| 9       | ♥ AK53   | ♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT  |                     |
| 6       | ♦ A10    | N 5 3 3 3 5 |                     |
| 19      | ♣ AJ4    | S 4 2 3 2 4 |                     |
|         |          | E - - - -   |                     |
|         |          | W - - - -   |                     |

10. All roads lead to 3NT, but North's response to 1♣ will determine from which direction. 2♣ is the best response. It is a maximum, but better than 1NT, which is right on points, but lacking high cards in either major. West will usually lead a diamond, which may cause declarer to guess the clubs right, as there are some communication issues. Now South can set up an 11<sup>th</sup> trick by leading spades from dummy twice. +430 should be close to average. Misguessing clubs may result in only +400, and very few matchpoints.

|                                      |                                    |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>11</b>                            | ♠ 72<br>♥ A863<br>♦ J542<br>♣ J92  | Dir: S<br>Vul: None                                                |
| ♠ AK1098<br>♥ 10<br>♦ A107<br>♣ K653 | ♠ J43<br>♥ J752<br>♦ K86<br>♣ Q108 |                                                                    |
| 6<br>14 7<br>13                      | ♠ Q65<br>♥ KQ94<br>♦ Q93<br>♣ A74  | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N - - - -<br>S - - - -<br>E 4 1 1 4 2<br>W 4 1 1 4 2 |

easy for declarer. With the spade queen on-side there are 10 tricks. +170 should be over average for E-W. Any E-W pairs who overbids to game will be rewarded with a very fortuitous lie of the cards. +140 will be close to a bottom for E-W.

|                                      |                                    |                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>12</b>                            | ♠ J9754<br>♥ KJ10<br>♦ AK<br>♣ 962 | Dir: W<br>Vul: N-S                                                 |
| ♠ K1062<br>♥ Q52<br>♦ 1085<br>♣ J107 | ♠ Q<br>♥ 9873<br>♦ Q97643<br>♣ 84  |                                                                    |
| 12<br>6 4<br>18                      | ♠ A83<br>♥ A64<br>♦ J2<br>♣ AKQ53  | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N 6 2 5 6 6<br>S 6 2 5 6 6<br>E - - - -<br>W - - - - |

really want. South should now show spade support and North will bid game. Is South done? I would not fault one more slam try. South after all has three aces. The master choice is 5♥. Why not 4NT? The reasoning is twofold: 1) 5♥ allows partner to give their opinion about bidding slam, and 2) you highlight the need for a diamond control. It would be embarrassing to bid slam off two cashable diamond tricks. Plus, your partner might expect you to buy the drinks after the game! North should continue to refuse with their anemic suit. As in board 12, a lucky lie of the trump suit enables 6♠ to make. Remember, just because the recap sheet says you can make 12 tricks, doesn't mean you should be in slam! Consider if East and West's spade holdings were reversed. You would only make 10 tricks!

|                                   |                                     |                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>13</b>                         | ♠ 864<br>♥ AQ1064<br>♦ A2<br>♣ Q105 | Dir: N<br>Vul: Both                                                |
| ♠ AKQ53<br>♥ J975<br>♦ 84<br>♣ 97 | ♠ J<br>♥ 83<br>♦ KQ1097<br>♣ AK432  |                                                                    |
| 12<br>10 13<br>5                  | ♠ 10972<br>♥ K2<br>♦ J653<br>♣ J86  | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT<br>N - - - -<br>S - - - -<br>E 1 2 - 2 -<br>W 1 2 - 2 - |

their own. My choice: 3♣. Alas, it was the wrong time for the unusual notrump, as E-W cannot make a 3-level contract against good defence. However, that is easier said than done sometimes, so any plus will result in a very good score for E-W and the opposite for N-S. Many North's will lead a safe spade against a minor suit contract, allowing the contract to make. South has an easy K♥ start if on lead. A great start for the defence!

A helpful hint: When declarer has shown a two suiter, leading trumps is often the best choice.

11. South will open 1♣, and West should overcall 1♠. North has a minimum negative double, and East has a minimum raise 2♠, but should do so as we learned earlier playing pairs you will score better with more aggressive competitive bidding. Despite holding 4 hearts, South is wise to pass with minimum high card and 3-4-3-3 shape. West's hand reevaluates to at least 16 points, and is enough to make a game try, the best being 3♣ or 3♦. East properly refuses the offer. Against 3♠, North will often lead partner's suit, which makes things

12. North opens 1♠ and south should be licking their lips with a great suit, 18 HCPs and a fit for partner's suit. 3♣ as a strong jump shift is not very popular, although this hand would fit the bill. It is best to start slow with 2♣, game forcing, so that there is as much room to investigate slam as possible. North does best to bid 2NT considering all of their values are in the red suits. This bid does not promise any extra values. Some North's might bid 3♣ to show their support. This is ok, but often will offer more encouragement to partner that you

13. After North opens 1♥ East should enter the auction. 2♦ is ok, and is better than 2♣. Why? By bidding the higher-ranking suit first you may get a chance to introduce your clubs at the 3 level. If so, partner can show a preference for clubs by passing or diamonds by taking a preference to 3♦. Had East bid 2♣, then 3♦, now West would be forced to the 4 level if they liked clubs better. However, 2NT is the better bid. It shows at least 5-5 in the minors, any strength. This puts West on the spot with modest minor suit support, but a great suit of

|           |         |           |             |
|-----------|---------|-----------|-------------|
| <b>14</b> | ♠ J64   | Dir: E    |             |
|           | ♥ A1043 | Vul: None |             |
|           | ♦ 876   |           |             |
|           | ♣ K74   |           |             |
|           | ♠ Q8753 |           |             |
|           | ♥ Q2    | ♠ K1092   |             |
|           | ♦ KJ102 | ♥ J95     |             |
|           | ♣ A5    | ♦ A954    |             |
|           |         | ♣ Q8      |             |
|           | 8       | ♠ A       | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT  |
|           | 12 10   | ♥ K876    | N 3 - 3 - - |
|           | 10      | ♦ Q3      | S 3 - 3 - - |
|           |         | ♣ J109632 | E - 3 - 3 - |
|           |         |           | W - 3 - 3 - |

is a welcome sight! Now all West has to do is guess who has the ♦Q for 10 tricks and a fantastic score! This should be accomplished when South had opened the bidding. Once declarer discovers that North has the ♥A, to go with the ♣K, South needs the ♦Q to justify their opening bid. A trump lead works out much better. It avoids a guess in that suit, but allows South to play clubs through the ace. A small heart to the king is best, but strictly double dummy, as underleading aces is too dangerous. It might work on this hand, but is generally inadvisable.

|           |          |          |             |
|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| <b>15</b> | ♠ 1085   | Dir: S   |             |
|           | ♥ AKQJ53 | Vul: N-S |             |
|           | ♦ 10543  |          |             |
|           | ♣ KJ32   | ♠ 74     |             |
|           | ♥ AKJ106 | ♥ 32     |             |
|           | ♦ 742    | ♦ 1086   |             |
|           | ♣ A      | ♣ KQJ872 |             |
|           | 10       | ♠ AQ96   | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT  |
|           | 16 6     | ♥ Q98754 | N - 2 1 1 1 |
|           | 8        | ♦ 9      | S - 3 1 2 2 |
|           |          | ♣ 96     | E 1 - - - - |
|           |          |          | W 1 - - - - |

15. Wow! Lots of distribution in this misfitting marvel! South should pass. A side 4 card major and a modest suit is reason to pass and listen, especially vulnerable! They will be very happy they did when they hear West's opening bid of 1♥! On a side note, minimum opening hands with 4 spades and 5 hearts are very difficult to describe, so there is a convention to do it for you – Flannery. As you continue your bridge progression, you may want to consider adopting this Convention in the future.

North will overcall 2♦ and East should pass. Despite having a great suit, bidding a new suit at three level promises at least 11 HCPs. South passes and West has a problem. They should not sell out, and have enough values to 'reverse' into 2♣. With modest support for the majors NOW East can bid 3♣. This says I have at least six clubs with little support for the majors, and I am suggesting we play here.' If partner had a really good heart suit they could bid it, pass 3♣, or with a big fit invite game. Here West should pass. In the context of the auction, a singleton ace is great support. Had West's minors be reversed I would not blame a raise to 4♣.

This hand does not play well, regardless of what suit E-W chooses for trump. I anticipate that +100 for N-S will be close to average. If E-W bid to 3♥ should South double? Yes! Partner has shown close to an opening bid for their overcall, you have 6 good trumps, AQ in a side suit, and a stiff diamond. It is the nature of the game: aggressive bidding will sometimes lead to misfitting hands, and an opportunity for the other side to maximize their score by doubling!

|           |         |          |             |
|-----------|---------|----------|-------------|
| <b>16</b> | ♠ A87   | Dir: W   |             |
|           | ♥ A62   | Vul: E-W |             |
|           | ♦ K32   |          |             |
|           | ♣ 10932 | ♠ 10963  |             |
|           | ♠ KQ5   | ♥ 83     |             |
|           | ♥ KJ5   | ♦ A87    |             |
|           | ♦ Q1064 | ♣ KQJ6   |             |
|           | ♣ 874   | ♠ J42    | ♠ ♣ ♥ ♦ NT  |
|           | 11      | ♥ Q10974 | N - - 1 - - |
|           | 11 10   | ♦ J95    | S - - 1 - - |
|           | 8       | ♣ A5     | E 2 2 - 2 - |
|           |         |          | W 2 2 - 2 2 |

16. Well... this is no fun! A likely pass out hand! E-W have the majority of high cards, but not quite enough to bid, especially vulnerable. When it goes p-p to East they should consider opening 1♣ by applying the rule of 15: add up your spades to your high cards. If it is 15 or higher open. If not, don't.

|           |           |           |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| <b>17</b> | ♠ 82      | Dir: N    |
|           | ♥ AK842   | Vul: None |
|           | ♦ Q       |           |
|           | ♣ AQ1062  |           |
|           |           |           |
| ♠ 10973   | ♠ AK5     |           |
| ♥ Q976    | ♥ 10      |           |
| ♦ 106     | ♦ KJ87532 |           |
| ♣ J73     | ♣ 85      |           |
|           |           |           |
|           | ♠ QJ64    |           |
| 15        | ♥ J53     |           |
| 3 11      | ♦ A94     |           |
|           | ♣ K94     |           |
| 11        |           |           |

|   |   |   |   |    |
|---|---|---|---|----|
| ♠ | ♥ | ♦ | ♣ | NT |
| N | 5 | - | 4 | 2  |
| S | 5 | - | 4 | 2  |
| E | - | 2 | - | -  |
| W | - | 2 | - | -  |

17. North is not passing here! 1♥-2♦ should be the standard start here. East should not overcall 3♦ with their 7 card suit, as that promises less high cards than they actually have. South is right on the fence between a competitive raise to 2♥, and an invitational raise. If they chose the latter, 3♦ is the way to show an invitational raise (or better). Why can't South bid 3♥? They could, but a better partnership agreement is to use a jump in partner's suit as a preemptive raise, showing at least 4 card support, and less than

7 HCPs. This is a good question to discuss with your favourite partners. Playing matchpoints, I would definitely go conservative with 4-3-3-3 distribution and a QJ in spades which may have minimal value. N-S might get to game anyways, as North may invite game with 3♣ over 2♥. Looking at recap sheet it indicates that game should be reached.

Not so fast.... Declarer has 2 spade losers, and needs to pick up trumps for one loser. Is this possible? Should they find the play? The answers are yes and maybe. East will cash a high spade and likely switch to a club. Declarer will cash the ♥A and see the 10 from East. If this is from Q-10 doubleton it is easy to pull trump and claim 11 tricks. But if you do this and the 10 was a singleton then you make only 9 tricks. There is an option, but it is more advanced. After winning the ♥A, lead a small one to the jack. West can win the queen, but now declarer has K 8 4 of hearts opposite the 5. West has 9 7. Declarer can lead the ♥5 from dummy and finesse the 8. Again, very advanced and works on this hand, but may backfire if East started with 1 club and 2 hearts. Hands like this makes a lot of players starting off hooked on Bridge, and the many subtleties to learn about this great game!

|                                     |    |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-------------------------------------|----|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>18</b>                           |    | ♠ QJ9763<br>♥ 8<br>♦ AQ7<br>♣ 1093 | Dir: E<br>Vul: N-S                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |    |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ♠ A85<br>♥ A10<br>♦ J109643<br>♣ 62 |    | ♠ 10<br>♥ QJ9764<br>♦ K8<br>♣ AJ84 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                     | 9  | ♠ K42<br>♥ K532<br>♦ 52<br>♣ KQ75  | <table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♥</td><td>♦</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr></table> | ♠  | ♥ | ♦ | ♣ | NT | N | 1 | - | 3 | - | S | 1 | - | 3 | - | E | - | 2 | 3 | - | W | - | 2 | 3 | - |
| ♠                                   | ♥  | ♦                                  | ♣                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | NT |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| N                                   | 1  | -                                  | 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | -  |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S                                   | 1  | -                                  | 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | -  |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E                                   | -  | 2                                  | 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | -  |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W                                   | -  | 2                                  | 3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | -  |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                     | 9  |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                     | 11 |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|                                     | 11 |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |    |   |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

18. East opens 1♥ and West does best by bidding 1NT – not strong enough for 2♦, and this will silence North, as they are not strong enough for 2♠ and preempting 3♠ is just too dangerous at this vulnerability. What should East rebid? Most would choose 2♥. You wouldn't be happy bidding 2♣, and that ending the auction. Not only is there is a huge discrepancy in your suits, a major suit scores better! This will get passed around to North. I would now bid 2♠. It is risky, but so is crossing the street! This bid is a headache transfer!

South should pass, inferring that North is not robust as they passed on the 1st round of bidding. West has a good hand, and should compete to 3♥. This will get passed back to South who is in a quandary. They have lots of points for this auction great defence, but also support for partner. Tough choice! I would opt for passing, thanking partner for forcing the opponents up one level, and hope we can beat this contract.

South will likely lead a spade against 3♥, and declarer's best option is to try and ruff at least one club. Best is to win the spade and lead a club, but not playing the ace. Why this is important becomes clear when South switches to a trump. Declarer should spurn the finesse and win the ♥A. Now they can play the ♣A and ruff a club. Had they not ducked the club, they would only be in the wrong hand to ruff a club. Here they could ruff a spade and ruff a club and lead a diamond. This gives declarer 6 trump tricks, 1 spade, 1, diamond and 1 club = nine tricks. A trump lead would have probably caused declarer to go down.



|                                   |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>19</b>                         | ♠ K875<br>♥ 10752<br>♦ 82<br>♣ A103 | Dir: S<br>Vul: E-W                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ♠ AJ4<br>♥ 93<br>♦ AK97<br>♣ Q765 | ♠ 1096<br>♥ J64<br>♦ Q1053<br>♣ K84 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 7<br>14 6<br>13                   | ♠ Q32<br>♥ AKQ8<br>♦ J64<br>♣ J92   | <table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table> | ♠ | ♦  | ♥ | ♣ | NT | N | - | - | 2 | 1 | S | - | - | 2 | 1 | E | 1 | 2 | - | - | W | 1 | 2 | - | - |
| ♠                                 | ♦                                   | ♥                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | ♣ | NT |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| N                                 | -                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 | 1  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S                                 | -                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 | 1  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E                                 | 1                                   | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | - | -  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W                                 | 1                                   | 2                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | - | -  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

19. The bidding should start 1♣, p by West. West does not have the right shape to double, no suit to overcall and not strong enough to overcall 1NT. North will bid hearts and south will raise. Now West should compete with a double. It is not a balancing double (as they are not in 4<sup>th</sup> seat), but shows this type of hand: short hearts and an opening bid, with support for the other three suits. East will bid 3♦, which might just end the auction. The decision by West to enter the auction will usually workout well for E-W. -100 is better than -110.

Some might actually make 3♦ if North prematurely plays the ace of clubs. If N-S bids 3♥ then E-W go +100. The only way it loses if N-S find a double of 3♦. +200 will be a top for N-S and guess what for E-W?

|                                   |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>20</b>                         | ♠ J1076<br>♥ AJ4<br>♦ J6<br>♣ K974  | Dir: W<br>Vul: Both                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ♠ K9<br>♥ K65<br>♦ AK42<br>♣ AJ52 | ♠ Q5432<br>♥ 10732<br>♦ 1085<br>♣ 3 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 10<br>18 2<br>10                  | ♠ A8<br>♥ Q98<br>♦ Q973<br>♣ Q1086  | <table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr></table> | ♠ | ♦  | ♥ | ♣ | NT | N | 2 | - | - | 2 | S | 2 | - | - | 3 | E | - | - | 1 | - | W | - | - | 1 | - |
| ♠                                 | ♦                                   | ♥                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | ♣ | NT |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| N                                 | 2                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | - | 2  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S                                 | 2                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | - | 3  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E                                 | -                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | -  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W                                 | -                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 1 | -  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

20. West will open a minor being too strong for 1NT. Which one? The prevailing wisdom is to open diamonds with 4-4 in the minors. This will get passed around to South who should...very close, but I am a passer. You want to compete playing matchpoints, but you need to be aware of reasons why it is sometimes ill-advised. The main one here is partner is very likely short in diamonds but didn't overcall or double. You know E-W are unlikely in their best fit. If it is a bad misfit you might even get +200. Despite buying a decent

dummy, most roads do lead to down 2 for -200, with declarer scoring 4 diamonds (A K and 2 club ruffs), 1 spade, and 1 club. By the way, most partnerships play that a balancing bid (the bidding starts 1 of any suit, pass, pass) of 1NT shows 10-14 HCPs, with a stopper in the bid suit being optional.

|                                    |                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>21</b>                          | ♠ Q<br>♥ K62<br>♦ AQ974<br>♣ Q872  | Dir: N<br>Vul: N-S                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ♠ AJ83<br>♥ 9543<br>♦ J108<br>♣ K9 | ♠ 976542<br>♥ AJ107<br>♦<br>♣ J103 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 13<br>9 6<br>12                    | ♠ K10<br>♥ Q8<br>♦ K6532<br>♣ A654 | <table><tr><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>2</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>4</td></tr></table> | ♠ | ♦  | ♥ | ♣ | NT | N | 3 | 4 | - | 1 | S | 2 | 4 | - | 1 | E | - | - | 2 | 4 | W | - | - | 2 | 4 |
| ♠                                  | ♦                                  | ♥                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | ♣ | NT |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| N                                  | 3                                  | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | - | 1  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S                                  | 2                                  | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | - | 1  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E                                  | -                                  | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 | 4  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W                                  | -                                  | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | 2 | 4  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

21. North opens 1♦ and East should overcall 1♠. Not the greatest suit, but you have 6 spades with great shape. South should cue bid 2♠ to show invitational plus values with diamond support. West can now raise to 3♠ which will get passed back to South, who reasonably thinks there might still be a game. South may try 3NT.

West will pass and North may not be happy with 3NT, but will pass. East may bid 4♠ for fear that 3NT will make and find out with their perfect fit they are a club guess away from making 10 tricks. 3NT will go down, but it will be better than 4♠ making. These are the hands that will age South very quickly. Any E-W who sell out to 3♦ are being too timid! N-S are likely in for a great score if they compete to 4♦.

|                                    |                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|----|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>22</b>                          | ♠ A1052<br>♥ 53<br>♦ AJ109<br>♣ AQ5 | Dir: E<br>Vul: E-W                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |   |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| ♠ Q863<br>♥ 10987<br>♦ 76<br>♣ K83 | ♠ J9<br>♥ A64<br>♦ Q8432<br>♣ J102  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |   |   |    |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| 15<br>5 8<br>12                    | ♠ K74<br>♥ KQJ2<br>♦ K5<br>♣ 9764   | <table><tr><td></td><td>♠</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♣</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table> |   | ♠ | ♦  | ♥ | ♣ | NT | N | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | S | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | E | - | - | - | - | - | W | - | - | - | - | - |
|                                    | ♠                                   | ♦                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | ♥ | ♣ | NT |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| N                                  | 5                                   | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 4 | 4 | 5  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S                                  | 5                                   | 4                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 4 | 4 | 4  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| E                                  | -                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | - | - | -  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| W                                  | -                                   | -                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | - | - | -  |   |   |    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

22. All roads should lead to 3NT, with E-W silent throughout. They play is also predictable, with N-S scoring 10 tricks at most tables after a heart lead. However, if North is declarer, a diamond lead will be made and North can build an 11 trick in either black suit for a top score.

|           |            |             |           |
|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 23        | ♠ 8        | Dir: S      | Vul: Both |
|           | ♥ QJ6      |             |           |
|           | ♦ AKQ9865  |             |           |
|           | ♣ Q4       |             |           |
|           | ♠ AQJ10642 |             |           |
| ♠ K5      | ♥ 1097     |             |           |
| ♥ AK85432 | ♦ 42       |             |           |
| ♦ J7      | ♣ 10975    |             |           |
| ♣ 82      |            |             |           |
| 14        | ♠ 973      |             |           |
| 11        | ♥ 1097     |             |           |
| 7         | ♦ 103      |             |           |
| 8         | ♣ AKJ63    |             |           |
|           |            | ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ NT  |           |
|           |            | N 2 3 - -   |           |
|           |            | S 2 3 - -   |           |
|           |            | E - - 1 3 - |           |
|           |            | W - - 1 3 - |           |

23. After a dull deal, we return to the types of hands they get our motors running! The usual start will be p-1♥-2♦. What should East bid? A negative double is misguided, but may work. Despite the absence of high cards I like 2♠, followed by 3♠. I wish my void wasn't in partner's suit. South does well to bid 3♣. This is a good choice, as it tells partner about your good club cards, and should imply a diamond fit, being a passed hand against two opponents with lots of values. Despite a dead minimum in terms of high cards, West should venture 3♥ with his 7-card. North will likely pass and East...guess what, bids their spades again. This gets passed around to North who might risk 4♦. If N-S buy the hand in diamonds they will make a slam! The only lead to defeat 4♦ is any spade lead besides the ace – not very likely!! Wow! All because South ventured 3♣. Any E-W who buys the hand in spades will likely go down 1, but still get an above average score, unless they are doubled. Lots of fascinating decisions on this one!

|         |           |             |                     |
|---------|-----------|-------------|---------------------|
| 24      | ♠ A1053   |             | Dir: W<br>Vul: None |
|         | ♥ 4       |             |                     |
|         | ♦ K7      |             |                     |
|         | ♣ J109862 |             |                     |
|         | ♠ Q982    |             |                     |
| ♠ 64    | ♥ K96     | ♦ AQJ52     |                     |
| ♦ 10853 | ♣ K543    | ♠ Q9        |                     |
|         |           | ♣ Q7        |                     |
| 8       | ♠ KJ7     |             |                     |
| 6 13    | ♥ 10873   |             |                     |
| 13      | ♦ AJ642   |             |                     |
|         | ♣ A       |             |                     |
|         |           | ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ NT  |                     |
|         |           | N 4 2 1 3 1 |                     |
|         |           | S 4 2 1 3 1 |                     |
|         |           | E - - - -   |                     |
|         |           | W - - - -   |                     |

24. East starts with 1♥ (another Flannery hand) and South should pass. They have enough high card points to enter the auction but a weak five card suit argues for being conservative. West has a normal raise to 2♥, and now N-S need to enter the auction. 3♣ by North is reasonable but risky, especially as East has not limited their strength. If North wisely passes South should bid 3♦. Why now? The reason is that South knows from the bidding that North has at most 1 heart, therefore is very likely to have a diamond fit. It is now safe to compete with 3♦. This bid will likely buy the contract. Dummy is a disappointment. On a heart lead the defence does best to shift to trumps, trying to cut down on heart ruffs. South can make the contract but must avoid the temptation of purring in the jack on the diamond return, as this will cost a trick and the contract. Instead they should win the king, club to the ace, ruff a heart, spade to the jack (through the opening bidder), then ace of diamonds felling the queen, jack of diamonds, and play spades. Declarer will score 3 spades, 1 club, 1 heart ruff, and 4 diamonds, = 9 tricks.

|           |          |             |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
| <b>25</b> | ♠ K109   | Dir: N      |
|           | ♥ A54    | Vul: E-W    |
|           | ♦ K86    |             |
|           | ♣ 8763   |             |
|           | ♠ AQ54   |             |
| ♠ 876     | ♥ QJ10   |             |
| ♥ 8763    | ♦ 5      |             |
| ♦ J972    | ♣ AQ1094 |             |
| ♣ J2      |          |             |
| 10        | ♠ J32    |             |
| 2 15      | ♥ K92    |             |
| 13        | ♦ AQ1043 |             |
|           | ♣ K5     |             |
|           |          | ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ NT  |
|           |          | N - 2 - 1 1 |
|           |          | S - 2 - 1 1 |
|           |          | E 1 - - -   |
|           |          | W 1 - - -   |

25. After p-1♣-1♦-p start North has to decide whether to raise to 2♦, or show a limit raise. Matchpoints is about getting plusses, so I would opt for 2♦. East should double – a double by opening bid when the opponents bid and raise a suit says, 'I have support for all unbid suits and a non-minimum hand, usually 16+ HCPs. This prime 15 is good enough. N-S will likely compete with 3♦ to end the auction. The unfortunate trump split, although not unexpected on the bidding, causes this contract to fail by one trick. This will be an average minus for N-S as I expect some tables may let 3♦ sneak in.

|            |          |             |  |
|------------|----------|-------------|--|
| 26         | ♠ J7543  | Dir: E      |  |
|            | ♥ 643    | Vul: Both   |  |
|            | ♦ AQ7    |             |  |
|            | ♣ Q6     |             |  |
|            | ♠ 9      |             |  |
| ♠ AKQ10862 | ♥ A109   |             |  |
| ♥ J5       | ♦ J1043  |             |  |
| ♦ 865      | ♣ AJ1097 |             |  |
| ♣ 8        |          |             |  |
| 9          | ♠ KQ872  | ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣ NT  |  |
| 10 10      | ♥ K92    | N 2 - 2 - - |  |
| 11         | ♦ K5432  | S 1 - 2 - - |  |
|            |          | E - 1 - 2 - |  |
|            |          | W - - 2 - - |  |

26. East is too weak to open, but South isn't. There are different strategies for West's hand over 1♥. 1♠, 2♠s, 3♠, and 4♠ will all attract some fans. Opposite a passed hand I like 3♠, but 1♠ and 4♠ are both ok. What West does obviously affects North's decision. Over 3♠, 4♥ seems best with a fit for partner and almost all their high cards outside of spades. The bad club break will lead to 4♥ failing by at least two tricks, the dreaded -200. The winning call is to double 3♠ (4♠ would definitely get doubled), +200 N-S, a great score! The only fly in the ointment is that a double of 3♠ is played by many players as negative. In order



to penalize 3♠ in those partnerships is for North to pass and South to reopen with a double. Possible, but no guarantees! The 1♠ bidders do worse and N-S will stop in 3♥, and a slow auction may encourage them to double West if they do venture 3♠.

|                                   |                                     |                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>27</b>                         | ♠ 53<br>♥ K9<br>♦ Q107<br>♣ AJ7632  | Dir: S<br>Vul: None                                                |
| ♠ AQ942<br>♥ J3<br>♦ A83<br>♣ 854 | ♠ J76<br>♥ 1065<br>♦ K962<br>♣ Q109 |                                                                    |
| 10<br>11 6<br>13                  | ♠ K108<br>♥ AQ8742<br>♦ J54<br>♣ K  | ♠♦♥♣NT<br>N 2 - 3 - -<br>S 2 - 3 - 2<br>E - - - 1 -<br>W - - - 1 - |

27. The bidding should start 1♥-1♠-2♣. North only has 10 HCPs but after an overcall it is ok to make a 2/1 with 10+ HCPs. East should pass, which will lead to an easy auction for N-S: 2♥ by south and 3♥ invite by north, +140 and an average plus. However, East may offer an aggressive raise to 2♠. If they do, N-S will likely overbid to an unmakeable game. Another lesson hand that aggressively competing during the bidding makes it difficult on the opponents to determine how high to bid.

|                                    |                                    |                                                                    |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>28</b>                          | ♠ A1097<br>♥ A62<br>♦ Q983<br>♣ 87 | Dir: W<br>Vul: N-S                                                 |
| ♠ QJ6<br>♥ 10743<br>♦ J76<br>♣ J62 | ♠ 543<br>♥ QJ<br>♦ A1042<br>♣ AQ93 |                                                                    |
| 10<br>5 13<br>12                   | ♠ K82<br>♥ K985<br>♦ K5<br>♣ K1054 | ♠♦♥♣NT<br>N 1 2 2 3 1<br>S 1 2 2 3 2<br>E - - - - -<br>W - - - - - |

28. Another 4-4 minor suit hand for East, which dictates a 1♦ opening. South has just enough to make a takeout double. North should bid 2♠, 8-10 points and at least 4 spades, which should end the auction. 1NT is an ok 2<sup>nd</sup> choice, which is best played as constructive, showing 8-10 HCPs. The cards like friendly and most spade contracts will result in 9 tricks and a good score. Most Easts will lead a major, with a trump lead being my choice. Any N-S pairs arriving in notrump will get +90 or +120, not good enough.

I encourage all participants to use this analysis as a starting off point in post-game discussion with other players, thus aiding each other's learning from the evening's interesting deals, and hopefully applying these lessons during future games!

Neil Kimelman