

# ACBL-wide Charity Game #1

February 21, 2018 – Set 218027

Analysis by Barry Rigal



American Contract  
Bridge League

Bd: 1 ♠ K 10 9 8 5  
Dlr: North ♥ K 4  
Vul: None ♦ 4  
♣ A K 7 5 2  
♠ Q 6 4 3 ♠ A  
♥ 10 9 2 ♥ A J 7 5  
♦ K 2 ♦ J 10 9 8 7 3  
♣ Q J 9 6 ♣ 8 3  
♠ J 7 2  
♥ Q 8 6 3  
♦ A Q 6 5  
♣ 10 4

When North opens 1♠, most Easts will simply bid 2♦ not 3♦ (with weak diamonds and a decent side-suit, the preempt seems wrong on many counts). South should raise spades and a few Wests may stretch to compete in diamonds; most will simply pass. You can imagine the auction dying in 2♠, but if North makes a squeak toward game, South is surely going to put him in 4♠. After East leads the ♦J, declarer is likely to rise with the ♦A and play to ruff clubs in dummy. Eventually he can establish a heart trick, to emerge with 10 tricks against any defense.

Bd: 2 ♠ Q 8 7 3  
Dlr: East ♥ K J 6  
Vul: N-S ♦ 10 8 6  
♣ 9 5 3  
♠ 6 ♠ K 10 9 2  
♥ 10 7 4 ♥ Q 9 3 2  
♦ J 7 5 4 ♦ K 9 3  
♣ A Q 8 7 4 ♣ 10 2  
♠ A J 5 4  
♥ A 8 5  
♦ A Q 2  
♣ K J 6

On this testing deal, any N/S pair who manages to stop low and go plus will get most of the matchpoints. Whether South makes a strong opening, or starts low and hears his partner bid spades, it will be very hard for him to stop short of the spade game. But whether his side declares spades or notrump, they do not rate to enjoy the play. If North gets to notrump, he may scramble eight tricks after a favorable heart lead. Escaping for one down may actually score N/S pretty well, since -200 or -300 will probably be the order of the day.

Bd: 3 ♠ K J 4 3  
Dlr: South ♥ A 8 3  
Vul: E-W ♦ Q  
♣ A 7 6 5 4  
♠ A 9 8 7 6 5 ♠ Q 10 2  
♥ J 7 2 ♥ 9 4  
♦ J 6 ♦ K 10 7 4  
♣ 10 2 ♣ K Q J 9  
♠ —  
♥ K Q 10 6 5  
♦ A 9 8 5 3 2  
♣ 8 3

Some Souths will exploit the vulnerability and rule of 20 by opening 1♥. Whether or not South acts, most Wests will keep silent, won't they? If E/W do stay out of it, N/S are likely to finish up in 4♥. A trump lead looks best against South's game. Declarer should probably win ♥A and play for diamond ruffs, but the bad break there jeopardizes the game. The winning (and theoretically correct) move looks to be to try to pass the ♦Q. Regardless of whether East covers, the spot cards allow diamonds to be established for the loss of one trick.

Bd: 4 ♠ K 7 4  
Dlr: West ♥ A Q 10  
Vul: Both ♦ K J 10 6  
♣ 10 7 2  
♠ Q J 9 8 6 ♠ A 10 5 3  
♥ 9 6 4 ♥ K 7 2  
♦ 3 ♦ 9 7 2  
♣ Q 8 6 3 ♣ K 9 4  
♠ 2  
♥ J 8 5 3  
♦ A Q 8 5 4  
♣ A J 5

N/S have the values for game but no easy way to make it, whether they settle in hearts, diamonds or notrump. When North opens 1♦, South will bid hearts at most tables, then find a way to force in diamonds, perhaps showing a singleton spade in the process. That gives North a dilemma: should he opt for notrump to utilize his ♠K or play in a red suit? There is no winning answer today, since with the heart finesse losing, all games appear hopeless. Accordingly, any making contract for N/S ought to be worth its weight in gold.

Bd: 5 ♠ 6  
Dlr: North ♥ A Q 7 2  
Vul: N-S ♦ 7 4 2  
♣ K 10 6 4 3  
♠ J 9 8 3 ♠ A K 5 4 2  
♥ J 6 ♥ 8 5  
♦ A J 10 3 ♦ Q 8 6 5  
♣ J 9 8 ♣ A 2  
♠ Q 10 7  
♥ K 10 9 4 3  
♦ K 9  
♣ Q 7 5

East has a normal 1♠ opener, over which South does not have nearly enough to overcall. Assuming South passes, E/W rate to stop in a spade partscore, either stopping at the two level or competing to 3♠ over 3♥. If N/S somehow find their heart fit early and reach 4♥, you could imagine some Wests sacrificing, but that would convert their plus score into a minus, and give them a very poor result. Play in both spades and hearts looks to be straightforward enough, with nine tricks easily available in either strain, but no realistic chance of a 10th.

Bd: 6     ♠ K J 7  
 Dlr: East   ♥ K Q 10 8 7  
 Vul: E-W   ♦ Q J 8 2  
            ♣ 8

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

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

West has no reason to upgrade or downgrade his hand into a notrump call. He should open 1♣, and that lets East raise clubs after North overcalls 1♥. Some play a jump as preemptive, some mixed, but those cards look more like a simple 2♣ call than anything else, don't they? Optimistic Wests will surely try 3NT and struggle there. Unless the defenders slip badly by letting West score a cheap heart trick, West has just eight tricks in notrump, or nine tricks in clubs. I don't know if N/S can find spades, but I suspect some will if East doesn't raise clubs at once.

Bd: 7     ♠ A K  
 Dlr: South   ♥ 10  
 Vul: Both   ♦ A J 10 9 7 3 2  
            ♣ K 5 2

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

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

This deal presents vastly different challenges for the two sides. E/W have a huge heart fit, but the absence of aces is just one of their problems. If the defenders lead clubs against a heart contract, N/S can set up four tricks in the side-suits and take three trump tricks via overruffs. They can achieve the same result on a spade lead - here, scoring all four of their trumps but no club winner. By contrast, with the sight of all four hands, N/S can make game in either minor, though in 5♦ the winning play in the trump suit is very unlikely to be found at the table.

Bd: 8     ♠ Q 10 8 7 3  
 Dlr: West   ♥ Q 7 5 2  
 Vul: None   ♦ 7 6  
            ♣ Q 10

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

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

When West opens a minor, East is likely to bounce to 3NT, thus reaching game and becoming declarer in one go. He has only seven top winners, but South has no attractive lead; he rates to attack in hearts rather than spades, and cost his side a trick. Equally, if North is on lead, he might kick off with a spade, with identical consequences. To bring home 3NT, declarer will need to receive a gift at trick one, and may also have to block the defenders' clubs en route to endplaying North. Anyone who makes game here will deserve their fine result.

Bd: 9     ♠ Q J 9 3  
 Dlr: North   ♥ K 7 5 4 3  
 Vul: E-W   ♦ K 10 4  
            ♣ 6

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

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

West will generally be permitted to open 1♣ in fourth seat, after which you might expect North to double and East to bid diamonds rather than hearts. With a combined 22 HCP, E/W appear to belong in a partscore somewhere, but the N/S diamonds lie in extremely friendly fashion, as does the ♠A. In consequence, E/W can rack up 3NT; but getting to game seems to require some significant overbidding on the part of either East or West. A club partscore for +130 or so seems a more plausible, if less rewarding, outcome.

Bd: 10     ♠ 10 6 5 2  
 Dlr: East   ♥ 10 9 5  
 Vul: Both   ♦ K Q 8 3  
            ♣ J 6

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

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

There won't be many buccaneers in the East seat prepared to risk a vulnerable 3♣ preempt. Most will pass, letting South open a minor and finding an aggressive West overcall or double. N/S have the balance of high cards, but not really enough values to attempt 3NT. After a heart lead against that contract, it looks challenging to find a way even to an eighth trick. In practice, declarer can arrange nine tricks in a diamond partscore by playing ace and another club, to facilitate the ruffs in dummy. Any plus score will give N/S an excellent result.

Bd: 11 ♠ A Q J 7 5  
 Dlr: South ♥ 5 2  
 Vul: None ♦ A 7 4 2  
 ♣ 9 4

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

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

East has an awkward call after hearing partner bid 1♣ and the next hand intervene with 1♠. For those whose notrump opener includes 14-counts, one could produce a strong case for East's going low with a response of 1NT. Nothing else is especially appealing, certainly. Many Souths are going to raise to 3♠, notwithstanding the danger signal of that 1NT bid, after which probably the best E/W can do is double and collect 100. Since 4♣ makes, how will that score? Not too badly, I suspect, as E/W could easily go overboard in either clubs or notrump.

Bd: 12 ♠ A K J 7 6 4  
 Dlr: West ♥ K 8 5 3  
 Vul: N-S ♦ —  
 ♣ 10 7 5

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

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

South has a tough hand to value when West opens 1♦, North bids 1♠, and East doubles. With North odds on to have heart length, the minor-suit kings won't pull their weight, which argues for a raise to 2♠ rather than a cuebid raise. When you look at N/S's combined assets it seems unlikely that there is a way to generate 11 tricks in spades after a trump lead. But declarer can ruff out the diamonds to set up one winner in that suit, while ruffing two hearts in dummy. Then he can draw trumps and guess clubs. This is by no means an obvious line, but it works very well. In fact, making even +620 rates to score nicely.

Bd: 13 ♠ Q 10 5 3  
 Dlr: North ♥ 7 3  
 Vul: Both ♦ 10 9 8 7 6  
 ♣ J 3

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

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

Left to their own devices, I hope a majority of E/W pairs would be able to find their way to slam, after East finds a splinter-jump in spades of West's hearts. However, there is no such thing as a free run, or lunch, anymore. You'd expect most Souths to bid spades and for North to produce a preemptive raise of that suit, after which E/W may not have room to show their extra values for hearts. The play in hearts is likely to be simplified when North leads a spade to the first trick. Now declarer can pitch dummy's potentially losing diamond on ♠K after drawing trumps.

Bd: 14 ♠ A K Q 8  
 Dlr: East ♥ 4  
 Vul: None ♦ A J 7 2  
 ♣ Q J 8 3

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

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

Expect a tangled auction here, when North doubles 1♥ at his first turn to speak, to show the unbid suits. East will raise hearts, of course, but will South dare to poke his nose in and introduce his spades? He may be shocked to learn that his side can actually make 4♠, thanks to a remarkably favorable lie of the minors. Meanwhile, E/W have a far less painful route to 10 winners in hearts via spade ruffs in East. Having said that, the unexpected club break means declarer would have to guess the play extremely well after a low club shift by North at trick two.

Bd: 15 ♠ 7 2  
 Dlr: South ♥ A 8 7 5 2  
 Vul: N-S ♦ J 9 3 2  
 ♣ Q 8

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

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

For the third or fourth time already this set, one pair has close to the values for 3NT but need to stop in a partscore in notrump or their minor-suit fit. Today, it will be hard for N/S to get to diamonds if South opens 1♣, but far simpler to do so if South opens 1♦. In the latter case South will bid diamonds and spades, then offer notrump when his partner raises diamonds. It should be easy for North to stay out of 3NT, but it looks natural to suggest diamonds as trump, where South will struggle to take nine tricks after repeated trump leads.

Bd: 16 ♠ A J 10 4  
 Dlr: West ♥ A J 5  
 Vul: E-W ♦ 8 7  
 ♣ K Q 10 5  
 ♠ 9 7 6 ♠ K Q 8 5 2  
 ♥ 8 2 ♥ K 6  
 ♦ K 10 6 3 2 ♦ Q 5 4  
 ♣ A J 8 ♣ 9 6 3  
 ♠ 3  
 ♥ Q 10 9 7 4 3  
 ♦ A J 9  
 ♣ 7 4 2

Whether you use Jacoby or Texas Transfers, most Norths will open 1NT and end up in 4♥. South's side-suit shape and trump spots mean he has too much simply to invite game. That said, when North declares 4♥ on a top spade lead, he might play safe by ducking a diamond early, to facilitate taking the ruff in hand, and will now come to 10 tricks without risk. If North ruffs out the spade before drawing trumps, the defenders must be careful to shift to diamonds. Otherwise, declarer can establish both black suits to pitch dummy's diamond losers, and collect +450.

Bd: 17 ♠ K 9 8 4  
 Dlr: North ♥ 10 3 2  
 Vul: None ♦ Q  
 ♣ A J 9 7 5  
 ♠ 6 5 ♠ 7 3 2  
 ♥ K Q 9 8 7 5 ♥ A J 6  
 ♦ A J 3 ♦ K 7 6 5  
 ♣ K Q ♣ 10 4 3  
 ♠ A Q J 10  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ 10 9 8 4 2  
 ♣ 8 6 2

Very few Souths will 'experiment' with a 1♠ call, so West will get to open 1♥. Now it may be hard for N/S to locate their spade fit and save over 4♥. The heart game is only a fraction better than the diamond finesse, but with the cards lying the way they do, it is hard to imagine West not emerging with 10 tricks on accurate play. By contrast, N/S have a very cheap save in spades. With the club honors so favorably placed, N/S can set up that suit and take nine tricks in spades against any defense. -100 from 4♠x beats all the pairs who defend to a heart partscore.

Bd: 18 ♠ J 6 5  
 Dlr: East ♥ 5  
 Vul: N-S ♦ 8 6 4 3 2  
 ♣ 10 9 7 5  
 ♠ 9 8 ♠ Q 7 4 3  
 ♥ K 9 7 4 ♥ A 8  
 ♦ A Q J 7 5 ♦ 10 9  
 ♣ J 6 ♣ K Q 4 3 2  
 ♠ A K 10 2  
 ♥ Q J 10 6 3 2  
 ♦ K  
 ♣ A 8

Many Easts will open here; the combination of the 5-4 pattern and values in the long suits, combined with the easy rebid, represent a reason to act, especially given the vulnerability. If East opens, West is a favorite to finish up in notrump, probably in partscore rather than game. After a heart lead, declarer should knock out ♣A, then play on diamonds, to come to eight tricks. If East passes in first chair, South will bid 1♥ and many Wests will overcall 2♦. Now it might be East declaring notrump, where eight tricks is the likely outcome, but nine tricks are possible at double-dummy.

Bd: 19 ♠ K Q  
 Dlr: South ♥ A J 10 9 8 3  
 Vul: E-W ♦ 10 6 2  
 ♣ Q 4  
 ♠ A J 9 7 6 5 2 ♠ 8 4 3  
 ♥ 6 ♥ 4  
 ♦ J ♦ A K Q 9 8 5 4  
 ♣ J 5 3 2 ♣ 9 6  
 ♠ 10  
 ♥ K Q 7 5 2  
 ♦ 7 3  
 ♣ A K 10 8 7

When South opens 1♥, should West overcall 3♠? In my book that promises a far better hand than this one at unfavorable vulnerability, but I'm getting old, I know. If West does preempt to 3♠, North can hardly do more than bid 4♥, after which East will try 4♠, and both North and South may certainly be tempted to do more. It is facile to say that over-competing turns a plus score into a minus score, but mightn't some Norths be just a little tempted to lead a top spade against 4♠x? If they do, the heart loser vanishes, and West has +790 for all the marbles.

Bd: 20 ♠ 10 4 2  
 Dlr: West ♥ J 10 5 4 3  
 Vul: Both ♦ 8 3  
 ♣ Q 10 9  
 ♠ Q 7 3 ♠ A K 9  
 ♥ A 7 ♥ K 9 6  
 ♦ 5 4 ♦ A K Q J 10 7 2  
 ♣ A J 8 6 5 3 ♣ —  
 ♠ J 8 6 5  
 ♥ Q 8 2  
 ♦ 9 6  
 ♣ K 7 4 2

On any deal where E/W have 13 top tricks without a finesse you'd hope a sizeable percentage of the field would reach the grand slam. However, I'm going to predict this will be an awfully tough deal to bid confidently to 7NT. West will open and rebid clubs, but East may find it very hard, unless playing old-fashioned strong jump responses (which I do advocate, by the way), to set diamonds and use keycard for that suit. A lot of auctions will end with East closing his eyes and jumping to 6NT or 7NT, and claiming 13 winners at the get-go.

Bd: 21 ♠ 8 6 2  
 Dlr: North ♥ J 10 9 5  
 Vul: N-S ♦ 8 5 2  
 ♣ K J 2

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

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

These days it is increasingly fashionable to blast 3NT with 4-3-3-3 hands facing a strong notrump opener. Whether this is wise or not, West's cards would strongly support not using Stayman, since all his honors are in his short suits. South has a blind guess on lead, and one could make a case for anything — except perhaps a diamond. Today, it hardly seems to matter, because with the spades so helpfully located, there are 10 top tricks for East. I'd be tempted to say "No more, no less" but someone will surprise me, I know. I'm not sure I want to find out how.

Bd: 22 ♠ Q 6 3  
 Dlr: East ♥ J 9 8 4  
 Vul: E-W ♦ 8 6 4 3  
 ♣ Q 2

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

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

If ever there was such a thing as a classic 3♣ preempt for East, this is it. While South doesn't have enough to double comfortably, he should probably make that call and live with the gastric ulcers it might bring. Indeed, although partner has a near Yarborough and no long suit, N/S can scramble their way out for -500 in diamonds, while West has 10 tricks in 3NT. +630 may well represent a fine matchpoint result for E/W, for one reason or another, even though the play there is unchallenging.

Bd: 23 ♠ 7 4 2  
 Dlr: South ♥ 3  
 Vul: Both ♦ Q 6 5 4 3  
 ♣ Q 8 6 2

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

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

South's 1♥ opening bid may surprise West, but he would do well to pass as smoothly as he can. North has no reason to scrape up a response here, but will East dare to balance? I must admit I would pass, even after seeing all four hands. It turns out that West's values fit East's perfectly, and as a result E/W can take no fewer than 10 tricks in spades. Having said that, it doesn't seem automatic to re-open with a six-count, so anyone finding their way into the auction will be appropriately rewarded.

Bd: 24 ♠ J 10 3 2  
 Dlr: West ♥ A J 6  
 Vul: None ♦ A 6  
 ♣ A 9 6 4

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

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

East has a real problem after hearing 1♣ to his right: should he overcall in his weaker suit, or pass and hope to get a second chance to show both minors? If he acts, he is favorite to end up declaring a diamond partscore at whatever level West lets him out. If he passes and backs in to show the minors, there is a fair chance one side or the other might go overboard. That may come from N/S over-reaching in hearts, or E/W doing too much in diamonds. Bottom line: expect to see quite a few penalties of 300 or so here.

Bd: 25 ♠ J 4  
 Dlr: North ♥ 10 4 3 2  
 Vul: E-W ♦ J 3  
 ♣ A Q J 10 8

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

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

At many tables East's 2♣ opener will silence South, and he will defend to 3NT. But if South interferes in spades, now North may join in the fun. As a passed hand he might even respond 3♣, suggesting spade tolerance but asking for a club lead. E/W still rate to end up in 3NT, though a few pairs might double a spade contract and hold it to five tricks. In 3NT after a club lead, ducked, East must find the ♦J to make his game. After a spade lead, declarer has slightly more flexibility in the play. More will make their contract than go down, I believe.

Bd: 26 ♠ A Q 10  
 Dlr: East ♥ Q J 10 3  
 Vul: Both ♦ J 9  
 ♣ Q 10 8 4

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

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

Will any East open a weak two here? I hope not. Some may pass, then back into their opponents' auction, but whether East acts or not, you'd imagine the issue is whether North will play 4♥ or if South will declare 3NT. It is not coincidental that if East bids, it could tip his opponents to heading for notrump — an excellent choice today. The defenders can take four side-suit winners and two ruffs against 4♥; but 3NT can be made on careful play, since declarer can establish clubs for three tricks by leading toward the king. Going after diamonds is likely to prove less rewarding.

Bd: 27 ♠ A 8 4 3  
 Dlr: South ♥ J 9 5 3  
 Vul: None ♦ A 7 6 3  
 ♣ 10

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

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

When East opens 1♥ and hears West responds 1♠ some players will bid clubs — more at the two than three level — others will improvise a rebid of 2NT. E/W seem likely to end up in 3NT, a contract that may well be in jeopardy, unless East plays clubs to best advantage. However, you'd expect him to win an early diamond in hand and lead a club to the king. Now the defenders can establish diamonds and set 3NT by a trick. This is yet another example in this set of a good moment to settle for the minor-suit partscore rather than jeopardizing a safe plus by trying for 3NT.

Bd: 28 ♠ J 10  
 Dlr: West ♥ A J 6 3 2  
 Vul: N-S ♦ A 7  
 ♣ K 9 7 5

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

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

South has a choice of approaches when East overcalls 2♦ over 1♥. He can slightly overbid with 2♠, to describe his suit length accurately, or he can make a negative double and get his values, if not his shape, across. Doubling rates to get his side to 3♣, where the cards lie poorly, but +110 is still straightforward enough. Bidding 2♠ figures to get North to 2NT, a contract in which North will struggle to take even seven tricks. If E/W compete to 3♦, they may push their opponents to 4♣, or get doubled there and come home with a rather fortunate +470.

Bd: 29 ♠ J 10 6  
 Dlr: North ♥ 10 9 5  
 Vul: Both ♦ K 10 5  
 ♣ K Q 8 7

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

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

This should be a rare unopposed sequence on a partscore deal. When East rebids 1NT over his partner's 1♠ response, West will introduce his hearts and get to play 2♠. In that contract, it may look easy for declarer to establish hearts and hold his losers to one trick in each suit. However, +140 ought to be a very respectable result, since one can imagine a few E/W pairs either missing spades or climbing too high. Additionally, an initial trump lead by North might see West misreading the position and holding himself to eight winners.

Bd: 30 ♠ 8 5 4  
 Dlr: East ♥ Q 9 7  
 Vul: None ♦ A 10 6 5  
 ♣ J 4 2

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

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

As West, do you feel strongly if it is right to respond 3NT to 1♦ as opposed to introducing clubs? I'd feel unhappy about wrong-siding the spades in notrump; and that would certainly be a danger today, because North might well lead a top spade against 3NT and defeat the game. Conversely, 3NT by East is proof against the spade lead. Does one deal prove anything? Of course not, but when partner opens a minor and the next hand passes, you can generally assume second hand will not have a great holding in either major — or he might have intervened.

Bd: 31    ♠ K 10 8  
 Dlr: South ♥ 7  
 Vul: N-S    ♦ 10 9  
             ♣ A K J 10 7 4 2  
 ♠ A 2                    ♠ Q J 6 4 3  
 ♥ K Q 10 6 4 3    ♥ 8 2  
 ♦ A J 8 2              ♦ K Q 5 3  
 ♣ 6                      ♣ Q 5  
                             ♠ 9 7 5  
                             ♥ A J 9 5  
                             ♦ 7 6 4  
                             ♣ 9 8 3

E/W have two eight-card fits but must try to locate the major rather than the minor here, since they can take 10 tricks in either strain. In turn, this means that 4♥ is their only makeable game. While it may be simple enough for West to get the relative length of his suits across if North finds a simple overcall of 2♣, it will be far harder if North jumps to 3♣ over 1♥. Now when East produces a negative double, West might introduce his diamonds and play in a partscore there.

Bd: 32    ♠ J 6 5  
 Dlr: West ♥ A 10 6  
 Vul: E-W    ♦ 10 8 5  
             ♣ A 10 9 8  
 ♠ 10 7 3                ♠ Q 9 4 2  
 ♥ K 5                    ♥ Q J 9 8 7 4 3  
 ♦ A 3 2                ♦ Q  
 ♣ K 6 5 3 2            ♣ 7  
                             ♠ A K 8  
                             ♥ 2  
                             ♦ K J 9 7 6 4  
                             ♣ Q J 4

In third seat will East risk investing in a 3♥ preempt at unfavorable vulnerability? The dangers are obvious: he might get doubled and set 500, to lose more than the value of the opponents' game. In fact, as the cards lie, North may well gamble on passing a double of 3♥, and be very disappointed in the result. After a top spade lead, East ought to come home in 3♥ — not a great return for North against his side's 3NT or a makeable slam in diamonds! If East goes low initially, you'd expect North to play 3NT and come home with 10 or 11 tricks.

### 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."