

Olympiad Fund Game

Analysis by Brian Gunnell

www.wednesdaygame.com

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Set 82306

1

♠ Q T 9
♥ A K 7 3 2
♦ 5
♣ A J 9 5

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

♠ 8 3
♥ J 8 6 5 4
♦ A T 9 8
♣ K Q

West North East South

Pass 1♥ Pass 3♥

Pass 4♥ All Pass

Some Easts will throw in a Diamond overcall or (shudder!) a preempt, but that won't change things a bit, East will still find himself on opening lead against 4♥. It seems normal enough to start out with the ♦K, but now there are 13 easy tricks. Declarer draws trumps, unblocks ♠KQ, ruffs a Diamond, cashes ♣AJ (pitching Spades), and merrily cross-ruffs. Of course, an opening Spade lead would somewhat improbable.

2

♠ A K J 3
♥ Q 8 7 4 3 2
♦
♣ T 8 5

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

♠ Q 9 4
♥ A T
♦ K 5 3
♣ J 9 7 4 3

West North East South

1♠ 2♥ Pass 2NT

3♦ All Pass

Although North doesn't have much of a suit for her vulnerable 2♥ overcall, that lovely 6-4 shape and the void must count for something. But the big E-W Diamond fit buys the contract, against which South may well lead the ♥A, giving Declarer easy 11 tricks (not that we expect many pairs to reach game). But even after a passive Club lead, 11 tricks are possible. The Club lead is won by Dummy's Ace, then two more Clubs (pitching a Heart), and a finesse of the Diamond Seven. Now the ♥J is led from Dummy, North smoothly playing low. What Heart should Declarer play? North would not duck with ♥QT and probably not with the Ace, so Declarer plays low, forcing the Ace and setting up the King. Only one Heart ruff is required, and it's 11 tricks again.

3

♠ A 6 3
♥ A K
♦ K 9 2
♣ A T 8 5 3

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

♠ K
♥ 9 7 3
♦ 7 6 4
♣ K Q J 9 7 2

If South starts with a 3♣ preempt (at this vulnerability, wouldn't you?), then should North be interested in a Club slam? We are unconvinced. Even if South has a 7-card preempt, North can see only 10 sure tricks. True, if South has a third Heart then a ruff in the "short" hand gets the total to 11, and maybe a Diamond trick could make it 12. That's quite a few "ifs", and 3NT is the practical bid, wouldn't you say? But it's not the winner here as 6♣ (luckily) hits the jackpot.

The Play in 3NT: East leads a Heart or a Spade, and Declarer counts 10 top tricks. A Diamond to the King would be the 11th, but that would have to be done while Declarer still has major suit stoppers. So Declarer rattles off the Clubs, hoping to see enough Diamond pitches to make a Diamond play safe. But she may go for it regardless. +660 for the fearless.

4

♠ A Q 5
♥ A T 8 5 3
♦ Q 6
♣ A K 3

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

♠ J 9 7
♥ Q 9 7
♦ K 7 2
♣ T 6 4 2

West North East South

Pass 1♥ Pass 1NT

Pass 3NT? All Pass

West leads the Diamond Ten, won in Dummy. Then ♥A and lose to West's ♥K. Persisting with Diamonds hands Declarer her 9th trick, so West shifts to Spades. If Declarer finesses she is down two, but she will have been counting West's HCP. The ♥KJ and ♦A is eight, does he also have the ♠K, having passed throughout? Maybe, but probably not, so Declarer calls for Dummy's ♠A, knowing that West can

be caught in a Strip Squeeze if he surprisingly does have the ♠K. And down only one when West doesn't have the ♠K. Perhaps North is supposed to rebid 2NT, a cautious call that allows N-S to go plus.

5

♠ J T 2
♥ 9 2
♦ T 8 7
♣ K J 9 5 2

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

♠ 8 7 4
♥ Q T 7 4 3
♦ 9 6 4 2
♣ 6

West's 3NT showed 13-15 HCP and East's 4NT was natural, inviting slam. With that 14-count should West accept? We don't think so! This is a truly miserable 14 (square with no Tens). Definitely a Pass!

The Play in NT: There are 9 top tricks, with extras possible from 3-3 Spades, a Heart finesse, and the Club suit. If North (optimistically) leads a Club (perhaps some Easts open 1♦) then Declarer will indeed make 12 tricks when the Clubs bring in three tricks and Spades are 3-3. The more prudent ♠J opening lead holds Declarer to 11 tricks.

6

♠ A K 9 6
♥ J T 6 2
♦ A Q T
♣ 8 5

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

♠ J 8 7
♥ 9 3
♦ 7 6 5 2
♣ A K T 7

North might be tempted to upgrade his 14 HCP to a 1NT overcall, but that won't work well when South invites game (2NT is down one provided that West ducks the opening Heart lead). North's winning bid is a 1♠ overcall. Yes, the 4-card overcall can be a good play when one has (a) a decent suit, (b) values, and (c) length in RHO's suit. Sure, it may get N-S to a 4-3 fit but, with the enemy suit being ruffed in the short hand, it's a 4-3 fit that rates to play well. And so it does here. South raises to 2♠, and Declarer has 8 tricks (maybe 9).

7

♠ A K Q 7 5
♥ 6
♦ J 8 5 4 2
♣ Q 3

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

♠ T 8 3
♥ J 9
♦ A T 9 7 3
♣ A 8 4

East bids 4♥ just in case it happens to make (and it does when the Club finesse works), and South bids 4♣ because she's heard that it's often a good idea to bid 4♣ over 4♥. It's certainly the winner here, down only one (and making if East finds the horrific opening lead of a Club). Yes, if East was a real tiger he would double 4♣, but that runs the serious risk (on different layouts) of telling Declarer how to play the trumps.

8

♠ Q J T 8 3
♥ T 3
♦ 8
♣ Q 9 8 7 4

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

♠ A 5 4
♥ K 9 8 4 2
♦ T 9 7 2
♣ 3

What do you think of West's 2♠ rebid? A bit of a fudge, but the hand is too good for a 1NT rebid, uncomfortably strong for a 2♠ rebid, a Diamond light for 3♦, and by most people's standards not up to snuff for a 2♥ reverse. So, 2♠ it is! East's 2♥ was Fourth Suit Forcing (let's say to game), leaving West with another awkward choice for his third bid.

Assuming that, in the E-W methods, a bid of 3NT now shows decent Hearts and some extras, would you now bid 3NT? This lets East know about the extras, but it could wrong-side the contract (Spades are the likely weak spot) and it might miss a 4-4 (or even 4-5) Heart fit. If you guessed to bid 3♥ then you guessed right, getting East to declare 3NT. South leads a Heart won in Dummy, a winning Club finesse (into the safe hand), and then Diamonds are rattled off. 10 tricks. Or 11 if Declarer is in top form and organizes a Strip Squeeze against South! And if West declares 3NT? Repeated Spade leads by the defense will give Declarer his 9th trick and a successful Club finesse will get the total to 10.

9 ♠ Q 6 5
♥ K J 6 5
♦ K Q J 5
♣ 9 3

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

Dlr North ♠ A J 7 4
E-W Vul ♥ Q 9 7
♦ 8 4 3
♣ K J 8

West *North* *East* *South*
1♦ Pass ??

The first question for South is "Do you bid the Spades?" The hand has no ruffing values, but that does not preclude North from having them. But holding three small in Partner's suit suggests NT so say that South gives up on Spades. The second question is "1NT or 2NT?" 1NT is generally played as 6-10 and 2NT as 11-12, and South has 11. But what a rotten 11! As we saw on Board 5, it pays to downgrade such hands. Perhaps we

say this because we've seen all four hands, but at least consider 1NT here. Especially as only seven tricks are available on the actual deal!

10 ♠ Q J 9 6 4 3 2
♥ T 2
♦
♣ A Q 7 2

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

Dlr East ♠ T 5
Both Vul ♥ A J 9 4 3
♦ Q 9
♣ 8 6 4 3

West *North* *East* *South*
2♦ Pass 1♥ Pass
3♠ Pass 3♦ Pass
6♣ All Pass 4♣ Pass

East and West have 5-loser hands and there's an 11-card fit, surely they will get to slam one way or another.

The Play in 6♣: Declarer has 11 tricks (7 trumps, 2 Spades, 2 Club ruffs), where's the 12th? North leads the ♠Q, won by Declarer's Ace. A 1-1 trump break would get the job done (via a third Club ruff), but with the 2-0

break it's risky to go for three Club ruffs. So, the ♦K is cashed, then the ♦A and ♠K, and the ♠J is finessed, losing to the Queen. North exits with a Spade (ruffed in hand) and Declarer must decide whether to take a ruffing finesse in Clubs or in Hearts. As South played low on the first Club we'd say that North is more likely to have the ♠A. But before committing to that, Declarer leads the ♠K, ruffing regardless, then the ♥K, ruffing regardless, before finally taking the ruffing Club finesse. 12 tricks. This line wins with 1-1 trumps, or onside ♣Q, or a defensive error, or doubleton ♠A, or, when all else fails, the onside ♠A. Pretty good odds!

11 ♠ J 7 3
♥ 9 7 6 5
♦ Q J 8
♣ J T 7

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

Dlr South ♠ K 9 6 4
None Vul ♥ A T
♦ K 5 4
♣ A K 8 6

West *North* *East* *South*
Dbl Pass 2♦ 1NT
2♥ All Pass Pass

North leads the ♠J which holds the trick. Fearing a Spade ruff in Dummy, North may shift to a trump, and South must play the Ten. Now there is no good reason for Declarer to make an inspired guess in trumps, so he'll wind up with seven tricks (two Spades, four trumps, one Diamond). And if West does (amazingly) guess the trump situation then the defensive trick

comes back via a trump promotion. Still seven tricks.

12 ♠ A Q 7 3
♥ A T
♦ Q T 6 5
♣ T 9 7

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

Dlr West ♠ K T 8 2
N-S Vul ♥ J 4
♦ A J 8 7
♣ A Q 5

West *North* *East* *South*
1♥ Dbl Pass 2♥
Pass 2♠ Pass 4♠
All Pass

Declarer wins the opening Heart and places the ♠K and ♦K with West. If trumps are 4-1 she must build minor suit tricks before drawing trumps. *If she runs the ♠T at Trick 2* then West beats the contract by repeated Heart leads. *If she loses a Diamond at Trick 2* then West beats the contract by returning a Diamond (now there's a Diamond ruff when West gets in

with the ♠K). The route to 10 tricks is for Declarer to cash the ♠A then exit with a Heart. Now West is obliged to go for the forcing defense: Declarer ruffs the third Heart, loses a Diamond, ruffs Heart return *high*, finesses ♠T. Whether or not that Spade finesse wins, Declarer has 10 tricks (three trumps, two Heart ruffs, three Diamonds, ♥A and ♠A). It took us an hour or so, but we have now managed to convince ourselves that this exotic line actually makes sense. You had 7½ minutes, did you find it?

13 ♠ 9 4
♥ A 8 3 2
♦ A Q J 7 6
♣ Q 2

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

Dlr North ♠ K T 8 3
Both Vul ♥ 6 4
♦ K 9 4
♣ A K T 8

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass 1NT Pass 3NT
All Pass

If East's opening lead against 3NT is a Club then Declarer coasts to 10 tricks. But suppose that East finds the hyper-aggressive lead of the ♥K! West signals with the ♥Q, and Declarer ducks the first trick and wins the continuation. The Diamonds are run and Declarer will note that East started with four red cards, compared to West's eight. That makes East the

clear favorite to hold the ♠J. Will Declarer play it safe for 9 tricks? Or will she intrepidly finesse in Clubs, trying for the overtrick but risking the contract? We say "Go with the odds and try for the overtrick!" You know that you can rely upon Partner's legendary sense of humor if this happens to turn out badly. 10 tricks, no sense of humor needed this time.

14 ♠ A T 3
♥ 9 6 2
♦ Q J 5 2
♣ T 6 4

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

Dlr East ♠ 5 4 2
None Vul ♥ T 5 3
♦ 9 7 6
♣ A Q 9 8

West *North* *East* *South*
2♥ Pass 1♠ Pass
3♦ Pass 3NT All Pass

In the E-W style, East did not have the extras needed to rebid 3♠ and his 2♠ rebid did not imply a 6th Spade. But all roads lead to 3NT, probably from the East side.

The Play in 3NT: Splendid defense holds Declarer to nine tricks. South leads a Club, let's say the Eight, and North must withhold her Ten. Now when she gets in with the ♠A she can

fire back the ♠T and the defense has three Club tricks. But North may squander the Ten at Trick 1 and that will be ten tricks for Declarer. Another possibility is that South will go passive and find the opening lead of a Diamond. Now there is no chance of holding Declarer to nine tricks and, when in with the ♠A, North must shift to a Club pronto just to hold Declarer to ten tricks.

15 ♠ A J
♥ A 8 7 5 3
♦ K Q T 5
♣ K Q

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

Dlr South ♠ K Q T 9 8 6 4 3
N-S Vul ♥ 6
♦ 9 7 3
♣ 4

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass 4♠ All Pass 3♠

With one eye on the unfavorable vulnerability, South bids only 3♠ and, although North has a pretty impressive hand, she has no reason to bid more than 4♠. If West's opening lead is a Diamond then the ensuing ruff holds Declarer to 10 tricks. But some Wests will instead lead the ♥K. That's not so good for the defense, of course, as Declarer can now draw trumps, scoring 11 tricks when her second Diamond loser goes away on a Club.

16 ♠ T 8 6
♥ J 9 7 4 2
♦ 9 8
♣ 7 4 2

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

Dlr West ♠ J 2
E-W Vul ♥ K 8 6
♦ K 4
♣ A J T 8 6 3

Do you open the West hand 1♠ or 1NT? No doubt there will be a split vote, and we leave the auction to you and look at the play.

If West opens 1♠ then he will eventually play in 4♠, making 11 tricks on any opening lead.

If West opens 1NT then East raises to 3NT and North, with a blind lead, will probably try a Heart. "Yippee!" says Declarer, scooping up 11 tricks and lots of matchpoints. Of course, if North miraculously finds a Club lead then Declarer is struggling to make 9

tricks. Say it goes: Club to the King and Ace, Club to Declarer's Queen, followed by five Spades. South is under pressure now, and she'll either pitch enough Clubs to make the Diamond finesse safe, or else Hearts which allows the ♥AQ to cash without the risk of a finesse. But sooner or later Declarer will take that Diamond finesse, he needs it to work in order to beat those Wests playing in 4♠. But when the ♦K is offside, he gets a bad board. A tad unluckily, we'd say.

17

♠ T 8 7 4
♥ K T 5
♦ K 9 8 7
♣ 7 5

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

♠ A K J 6
♥ Q J 8
♦ 6
♣ A K T 8 2

Dlr North
None Vul

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♣
1♥	Dbl	Pass	4♠

All Pass

If West chooses to bid 2NT over 1♣, he'll probably survive (though 3♦ doubled is a too-expensive down three), and most roads lead to 4♠ played by South. What's your lead with the West hand? A singleton into Declarer's first-bid suit is a long shot, and West is more likely to try the ♥A, reasoning that, as East did not raise Hearts, there may be a ruff in the

works. So, after the ♥A and a second Heart, should Declarer risk the trump finesse? If she does it's down one, so let's say that she guesses right and plays ♠A and ♠K, dropping West's Queen. Now 10 tricks are made, and even 11 are possible if Declarer takes an early (anti-percentage) finesse of the ♠T. Of course, it's not so anti-percentage if West has perpetrated an Unusual No Trump.

18

♠ A 9 3
♥ 5 2
♦ K 8 7 3
♣ K T 8 6

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

♠ Q J 8 6 5
♥ A Q J 9 8
♦ 5
♣ 9 7

Dlr East
N-S Vul

West	North	East	South
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

South's Michaels bid gets her side into a precarious 2♠ doubled, but this makes, so East did well to bail out. How does 3♣ fare? With both minor suit Kings outside, there may appear to be hope for Declarer, but there is the small matter of Dummy entries, added to which the bidding warns Declarer that at least one minor will

misbehave. In fact, getting out for down only one will be a small victory: ♠Q covered by King and Ace and ruffed, Diamond to the Jack and King, Heart to the Jack, ♠J is ruffed with the Queen, Diamond to Dummy, cash ♠T, ♠Q covered by the King and Ace, cash ♠J, etc. That's 8 tricks.

19

♠ 5 2
♥ A K 9 3
♦ A 7 6 5
♣ J 9 3

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

♠ A Q J 9 8
♥ Q 4
♦ K T 2
♣ Q 8 7

Dlr South
E-W Vul

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

This Forcing NT auction gets to 3NT by North, but other N-S methods might well result in 3NT by South. Whoever plays it, the bad news is that the Spades misbehave, and are worth only three tricks. The good news is that the defender with the long Heart, long Diamond and long Club has neither of the top Clubs. It will be a perilous journey, but Declarer scores

three Spades, three Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club. 9 tricks.

20

♠ 4 3 2
♥ Q 7 2
♦ T 6 5
♣ Q 9 5 2

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

♠ K T 7 5
♥ 9
♦ Q 8 3 2
♣ 8 7 6 3

Dlr West
Both Vul

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass
4♥	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣	Pass	6♥	All Pass

The 1430 Roman Key Card auction gets to the fine slam. A Spade lead makes life easy for Declarer, so we'll let South lead a top-of-nothing Club, won by Declarer (low from Dummy and North). Now Declarer needs kind Hearts or the Spade finesse but gets neither. An unlucky down one. But there is a double dummy route to 12

tricks: Club to Declarer's King, cash ♠K, then ♠J covered by Queen and King, Diamond ruff (setting up Dummy's Nine). Now a Heart to Dummy's Ace, the ♠A is cashed (pitching a Spade), ♠J covered by the Queen and ruffed, back to Dummy's ♥K. The Diamond Nine is led and, whatever North does, the last Spade loser goes away. Hands up all the Easts who found *that* line of play! But, if East is allowed to be double dummy perfect then South must be allowed to find the killing opening lead of a trump, taking away a Dummy entry before Declarer can use it profitably.

21

♠ T 3 2
♥ A T 8 4
♦ T
♣ K J T 7 5

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

♠ 6
♥ Q J 9 7 2
♦ A K 5 3
♣ Q 6 3

Dlr North
N-S Vul

West	North	East	South
1♣	2♠	3♣	All Pass

Even though North was opposite a third-seat opening, she might have wondered wistfully about a 4♥ contract, and perhaps she could have given it a go.

The Play in Spades: The defense scores ♠AK, a Diamond ruff, ♥A, and eventually a Club. That leaves just 8 tricks for Declarer.

The Play in Hearts: Suppose that Spades are led and that Declarer ruffs

the second round. The Heart finesse loses and East shifts to a Club. That's exactly how East would defend if he had a singleton Club (by delaying the Club shift West realizes that he does not have the time to play East for a doubleton, and must hope that the Club is singleton). So, we'll rewind. Does that previous thought indicate that, if East overtakes the Spade at Trick 1 and shifts to a Club, West should figure out that East has a Heart entry and a doubleton Club? That's awfully deep! Anyway, unless the defense somehow gets the Club ruff, Declarer has 10 tricks.

22

♠ A 8 4
♥ J 7 6 5
♦ K 4
♣ Q J 5 2

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

♠ Q 9 5 2
♥ 8 4
♦ Q
♣ A K 9 8 7 3

Dlr East
E-W Vul

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♣
Dbl	Rdbl	2♦	3♣
3♦	4♣	All Pass	

Notwithstanding North's strength-showing Redouble, it turns out that the hand actually belongs to E-W. Thanks to the outside ♠A and 2-1 trumps, they have 10 tricks in Diamonds, whereas N-S have only 9 tricks in Clubs. But E-W are likely to be intimidated by the adverse vulnerability and by North's Redouble, and at most tables they will probably

decide that they have done plenty by pushing N-S up to the 4-level.

23

♠ 3
♥ K 8 4
♦ K J 9 8 6 4 2
♣ K 8

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

♠ K T 9 5 2
♥ 6 5 3
♦ A 5
♣ Q 9 2

Dlr South
Both Vul

West	North	East	South
1♥	2♦	??	Pass

What's your choice here? 3♣ would be too much, virtually committing E-W to game (or at least to 4♣), and Pass seems rather feeble. So, perhaps a Negative Double, planning to bid 3♣ if West rebids 2♥? That sequence shows long Clubs and a hand not good enough to bid 3♣ immediately. However, West actually rebids 2♠, and now East must decide between playing in the 4-3 Spade fit or bidding

a non-forcing 3♠. It turns out that 2♠ and 3♠ both make on the nose, although the 5-1 Spade break makes 2♠ a more exciting ride.

24

♠ Q 6 4
♥ T 4 3
♦ Q J T 4
♣ K T 6

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

♠ A T 3
♥ J 8 6 5
♦ K 8 5
♣ J 5 3

Dlr West
None Vul

West	North	East	South
1♥	All Pass		

West reasonably determined that he was not good enough for a 2♣ opening and, after his 1♥ opening, East had nothing to say and South had no reason to balance. 1♥ is a perilous contract and the play is not without points of interest. North's opening lead is the ♦Q, which Declarer ducks. North sees the danger of a Diamond ruff on the board so shifts to a trump. But which one? If a low Heart is led the defense

will have blown its natural trump trick, so North cleverly shifts to the Heart Ten. Nice play! Declarer wins that, cashes the ♠A and ♦A, and loses a Spade to North's Queen. Now Declarer's 7th trick will be a Spade, unless the defense plays Diamonds, thereby organizing a Spade ruff. But if that happens then Declarer's trumps are good. +80 is not the best score that E-W can achieve on these cards, they can do better in NT or any of the other suits (even Diamonds!). But they probably cannot get to one of those spots without also getting too high.

25 ♠ K 9 8 4
♥ 8 6
♦ 9 5 4
♣ K J 9 4

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

♠ 5 2
Dlr North ♥ A T 9
E-W Vul ♦ K T 8 7
 ♣ A 8 6 2

that this works out badly for them (but see also Board 28), not because it gets N-S into a bad spot but because it gets E-W into a better spot. 2♣ will be passed around to East who will double (the "under-double" is usually played as a take-out) getting E-W into their Heart fit (worth 9 tricks). If North pushes on to 3♣ then E-W can do well by doubling (down one or two) or by bidding 3♥.

West North East South
 Pass 1NT All Pass

The opening lead that looks most likely to blow a trick is a Diamond, that KT is a dangerous holding. Sure enough, a Diamond lead does work out badly, letting Declarer score eight tricks, whereas a safer-looking Club holds Declarer to seven.

Back to the Bidding: Some intrepid South players, emboldened by the vulnerability and by their favorite convention, might throw in a 2♣ DONT bid. We are happy to report

26 ♠ A K Q J 8 5
♥ 8 5
♦ 7 5
♣ T 4 3

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

♠ 3 2
Dlr East ♥ A K T 9 6 3
Both Vul ♦ 8 6 4
 ♣ 9 7

care not to let Dummy score a Club ruff).

West North East South
 Pass Pass 2♥

West's 2NT was reasonable enough but it was not a success! North does well not to double, that just lets E-W escape to 3♣ or 3♦ (both good for 9 tricks). If North is in a playful (or irritating) mood she will lead her 4th best Spade, and the defense takes the first 8 tricks. That's a dismal -300 for E-W. As for N-S they can make 8 tricks in Hearts, and likewise in Spades (but the defense must take

27 ♠ A T 9
♥ A T 7 6 5
♦ A K 7 4
♣ 9

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

♠ Q 7 6 4
Dlr South ♥
None Vul ♦ Q J T 8 2
 ♣ J 5 4 2

The danger is that North will make a penalty pass, confidently expecting South to have at least some defense. On the actual deal North has just enough defense in her own hand and 2♥ doubled is down one trick for the rather modest score of +100.

West North East South
 Pass Pass 1♠ Pass
 2♥ Pass Pass ??

Here are South's options:
- **Pass?** A tad submissive, don't you think? It's true that South doesn't have much, but that simply means that North has some values. Also, E-W are not vulnerable and even if North is loaded with Hearts the undertricks will only be 50 apiece.
- **Double?** If Pass is not enough then perhaps Double is too much.

- **2NT?** That's the way to compete without risking -470. 2NT can hardly be natural, and here it shows the minors. 2NT fetches 3♦ and N-S rack up 11 lucky tricks when the Spades are astonishingly accommodating.

28 ♠ A 9 7 6
♥ Q 8 3
♦ K 3 2
♣ A K 4

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

♠ T
Dlr West ♥ A 7 6
N-S Vul ♦ T 9 8 7 6
 ♣ J 7 5 3

Back to the Bidding: Some Easts, perhaps inflamed by the vulnerability and the chance to use their favorite convention, might trot out a DONT bid of 2♥, showing the majors. West corrects to 2♣, North's opening lead is a high Club, after which she has no appetizing continuation. The bottom line is 8 tricks for West and encouragement to East for further future folly.

West North East South
 Pass 1NT All Pass

Deep Finesse tells us that North cannot make 1NT, and on a Spade lead, followed by a Heart shift from West, 1NT is down two. But East does not always make double dummy leads and will prove that by starting out with a Heart. Declarer wins, then plays ♣A, ♠K and another Club. East wins that and now ... if East persists with Hearts then Declarer has seven tricks ... if East shifts to a Spade then Declarer is down one.

29 ♠ 9 8 5 2
♥ T 9 4 3 2
♦ T 9 4 2
♣

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

♠ 6 4 3
Dlr North ♥ A 7
Both Vul ♦ 7
 ♣ A K Q 9 8 4 2

to compete at least to 2♣ or else to double the opponents. If they bid above 2♣ then the force is off and the opponents may play undoubled". (c) As for (b) but only up to two of Opener's suit. By any of those measures, West can pass 2♣, safe in the knowledge that East must do something. East now bids 2♦ and we predict a sticky end for E-W. With 27 HCP they can hardly stop short of game, they cannot play 3NT, and will probably end up in 5♦ down a couple. An ugly deal!

West North East South
 Pass 1♥ Pass 2♣

Rdbl ??
South's hand was perhaps too good for an overcall, so she doubled and then bid her suit to show strength. Over to West. His Redouble showed 10+, and the question is "How forcing is this?" The options include:
(a) West's Redouble says "Either we play this hand or else the opponents will play in their contract doubled".
(b) The Redouble says "We're forced

30 ♠ K Q J 6 5 4 2
♥ A J 7 3
♦
♣ 8 2

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

♠ 9 7
Dlr East ♥ 8 2
None Vul ♦ K Q J T 9 7
 ♣ A K 7

to +450 is to duck the opening Heart, after which West plays ♠A and out a Spade, to stop the ruff on the board. But now Declarer gets her 10th trick with a Heart finesse, and the 11th by squeezing East in the minors.

West North East South
 Pass 4♣ All Pass

Some Easts won't preempt with an outside Ace, but either way North will declare 4♣. East leads a Club, won in Dummy, and Declarer counts 9 tricks, plus some number of Diamonds. After winning the Club, Declarer loses the ruffing finesse in Diamonds, and winds up with 11 tricks when that suit breaks 4-3. How about an opening Heart lead? Declarer can still make 11 tricks, but she may not. The route

31 ♠ 7 6
♥ K J 6 2
♦ 8 2
♣ Q T 4 3 2

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

♠ J 3 2
Dlr South ♥ A 8 4
N-S Vul ♦ A K J 3
 ♣ A K 6

West will lead a Diamond after which Declarer has 10 tricks. There will even be 11 tricks if Declarer cashes 8 minor tricks, East keeps ♠AK, ♥QT3, and Declarer goes exotic by cashing the ♥A and exiting a Spade!
The Play in 4♥: Yes, it's the only game contract that can withstand a Spade lead. Say that South guesses to bid it, that West leads the ♠Q and Dummy ruffs the third round. Now Declarer must not finesse the ♥J, that runs into an uppercut on the 4th round of Spades. Instead, Declarer plays a low trump from both hands and prevails when trumps are 3-3.

West North East South
 Pass 3♣ ?? 2NT

Do you or don't you? No doubt the hand belongs to N-S but many Easts will (reasonably) risk a 3♣ bid to get West off to the right opening lead.
If East bids 3♣ and gets doubled then he goes for -500, less than the value of a vulnerable N-S game. But what game? 4♥ is the only one that makes, and good luck getting to that contract.
If East passes then he won't get the Spade lead he craves against 3NT.

32 ♠ Q 4
♥ Q J 9 8 4
♦ K T 6 4 3
♣ Q

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

♠ T 9 6 5 3 2
Dlr West ♥ T
E-W Vul ♦ Q 9 8 2
 ♣ A 8

and go down two. Things are no better if E-W are allowed to play in 3NT.

West North East South
 1♣ 2NT ??

North's 2NT was "Unusual", showing the red suits. Now, East could double to show a good hand, but does better to show the Club fit. There are various flavors of "Unusual vs Unusual" whereby red suit cue-bids show a good hand, so let's say East chooses whichever one shows Clubs in the E-W methods. South might bid 4♦ now and the best that E-W can do is double that. But they'll probably push on to 5♠, misguess the Clubs, and go down two.