

# Canada Olympiad Fund Game #1

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Analysis by Barry Rigal



American Contract  
Bridge League



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."

Bd: 1  
 Dir: North  
 Vul: None

♠ —	♠ A 8 7 5
♥ A J 9 7 4	♥ 10 6 3
♦ 10 8 6 5 3	♦ K Q 2
♣ 9 8 5	♣ A J 3
	♠ 10 6 4
	♥ 8 2
	♦ A 7 4
	♣ KQ1064
	♠ K Q J 9 3 2
	♥ K Q 5
	♦ J 9
	♣ 7 2

Whether North's hand fits his idea of a notrump opener, be it weak, strong or in the middle, you'd expect the vast majority of the field to reach game. Very few pairs will find any reason to get

beyond the four level here. In theory, the defenders threaten to take four tricks (two hearts, and one trick in each minor). But South can build a discard for the slow heart or club loser from diamonds, so it would be a very careless declarer who fails to bring home his game. If North plays 4♠ and ducks the lead of ♣K, a heart shift, ducked by West, defeats the game.

Bd: 2  
 Vul: N-S  
 Dir: East

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

Another deal where N/S have a simple route to a major-suit game, but there are several issues at play here. The first is that when South opens 1NT, West may intervene to show diamonds and

a major, and now East could contemplate saving in 4♠. If he does, the defenders can extract 800 (three trump tricks, two red aces, and two club tricks sooner or later - declarer cannot discard enough clubs on the diamonds). Secondly, the defenders must lead a top diamond against a heart contract to prevent N/S establishing the clubs for 680.

Bd: 3  
 Dir: South  
 Vul: E-W

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

Many Souths may yield to the temptation to open 1♦, both for the lead and as an obstructive move. Now North will have to restrain himself from advancing beyond 4♥; even that contract is

in jeopardy on a spade lead. Declarer should take West's ♠Q with the ace, then cross to dummy in diamonds to play a heart to the 10. If he misguesses hearts, he could go down in game! After any other defence, declarer might draw two rounds of trumps. Now if E/W are left with the master trump, declarer switches to diamonds to pitch a spade on the 13th diamond.

Bd: 4  
 Vul: Both  
 Dir: West

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

When West opens 1♠, relatively few Norths will overcall, I hope. The hand and suit are too weak for a two-level overcall. Regardless, you'd expect West to declare 4♠ after East has shown a simple raise - a

few may prefer to show a mixed or weak raise, but the contract ought to be the same. In 4♠ West looks likely to win the top heart lead with his ♥K and bash out the two top trumps, then play a diamond to the queen and king. Declarer can eventually force an entry to dummy to lead a diamond to the 10, to bring home his contract.

Bd: 5  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: N-S

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

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

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

In second seat a few Easts will pass, a few more may open 2♥, but most will bid 3♥. Now South should simply bid 3NT, since doubling might give up on that contract for good. That call rates to end the

auction, and West has no reason to lead anything but a heart. South will win, and drive out ♦A, giving East a problem. If he clears hearts, declarer runs diamonds, then spades, and sets up a double squeeze for 12 tricks. If East shifts to a club, he disrupts South's communications (though switching to the ♣Q would expose West to a simple squeeze).

Bd: 6  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: E-W

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

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

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

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

Another classic preempt for East; this time a 2♥ call will be passed round to North, who ought to reopen with a takeout double. This gives South a difficult decision: he can pass for penalty, but I do

not see any sign of a sixth winner for the defence. Or he could bid (a natural 2NT call would be nice, but most play this as lebensohl) with 2♠ being the least offensive alternative, perhaps. Against 2♠ the defenders have an obvious heart lead, which should suffice to set up a sixth winner for E/W. I'd guess N/S will find it very hard to go plus here.

Bd: 7  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: Both

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

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

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

Yet another preempt, but this time for South, who has a reasonable 3♣ opening (though you'd prefer not to have such good hearts). This is likely to be passed round to East, who could simply

bid 3NT, or double, planning to convert a 3♥ response to 3NT. With N/S able to make 4♣, E/W have to find a way to reach diamonds — where the damage will be more of a flesh-wound than life-threatening. Since it is hard to construct a sensible sequence which will do that (bar the huge underbid of East balancing with 3♦) I applaud anyone who manages to achieve the target.

Bd: 8  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: None

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

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

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

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

1NT by West, raised to 3NT by East, looks simple enough; but 3NT is easier to bid than to make, with clubs not behaving. One possibility is that North will set up declarer's fourth heart as a second

winner, to represent his ninth trick. By contrast, on a spade lead, the road to +400 is far from clear. One route to success is for declarer to win and pass the ♣7. Then he can take the next spade to advance the ♣Q, pinning the jack, and setting up the fourth round of clubs for the ninth winner. This is an unusual example of an intra-finesse.

Bd: 9  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: E-W

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

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

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

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

You'd expect N/S to bid unopposed to game. If North opens 1♠ he rates to declare 4♠, whereas if South gets to open a strong notrump he may play 3NT. 4♠ looks less challenging, particularly

because East might attack hearts, the unbid suit, after which 11 tricks become little more than a formality. If South declares 3NT on a heart lead he will have to win and set up a black suit, clubs offering better odds than spades. That gets him to eight winners, but the defenders should be able to prevent South finding the game-going trick. 5♣ may come home today, but not 6♣.

Bd: 10  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: Both

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

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

♠ J 8 3 2  
 ♥ J 4 3  
 ♦ 7 3 2  
 ♣ J 8 3

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

South's hand does not feel right for an upgrade to a strong notrump, given his heart flaw. A peaceful auction to 3NT by South looks the norm. On a diamond lead declarer should unblock clubs,

then perhaps duck a heart. With both clubs and hearts breaking, the defenders will have to be on their toes not to let the ♠A get away, which may be easier said than done. There will be a few pairs bidding to 6NT, where the play is quite complex. Declarer ought to go after spades rather than hearts for his 12th trick and will need to guess ♠J.

Bd: 11  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: None

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

In third seat North has a sensible choice of opening hearts at the one, two or three level. Put me down as a 2♥ preempter, over which East will bid 2NT and play there. After a heart lead, declarer should

take the second and advance the ♣K; the defenders can win and shift to diamonds, after which East can be held to five tricks. Since N/S have a simple +140 in hearts, the difference between two and three down will be more significant than usual. E/W have a safe haven in 3♣, probably down just one trick but it may not be easy to reach.

Bd: 12  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: N-S

♠ A 10 7 5 3 2	♥ A 10	♦ 4 2	♣ 9 7 6
♠ K J 4	♥ Q J 4 2	♦ Q 6	♣ Q J 8 3
♠ Q	♥ K 9 8 5 3	♦ AKJ987	♣ 10
♠ 9 8 6	♥ 7 6	♦ 10 5 3	♣ A K 5 4 2

West's hand looks less like an opening bid than almost any 12-count you've ever seen, but many will open 1♣, I'm sure. When North overcalls, probably with 1♠ rather than 2♠, East can arrange

to get both his suits into play, the big danger being that E/W may get too high after finding hearts. It is easy to see quite a percentage of the field going minus if West opens the bidding. Even if he passes, E/W may still get carried away after a Leaping Michaels auction. (Note: this is a rare deal where a key-card response might not identify a disparity of three-keycards!)

Bd: 13  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: Both

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

Facing East's strong notrump, might West use Stayman then blast 6NT over an unsatisfactory response? (If you located a spade fit, you'd agree spades by whatever method your

partnership uses — a call of 3♥ or 4♦ or the like, then use keycard). That gets East to the normal contract, typically on a heart lead. Declarer can attempt to steal the overtrick by leading spades towards dummy twice. If South ducks twice, there are 13 winners to cash. Few will fall for this, but it is up to declarer to try.

Bd: 14  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: None

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

Over East's 1NT opener, aggressive Souths will intervene to show clubs and a major, or both majors. It may not matter which he does today, since West's values do not look suitable for defending. So

he is likely to blast 3NT at once, and prevent North getting in a lead-directing call. East has only eight top tricks in 3NT, but can generate an extra winner with good guesswork in diamonds (and if South shows both majors and turns up with four clubs, East might well get diamonds right). South can later be employed in clubs to concede an extra heart trick.

Bd: 15  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: N-S

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

When North opens a strong notrump, the wilder Easts among us will overcall in diamonds. But whether East bids or not, N/S rate to find a way to play 4♥. They should try to declare

that contract by North, forcing East to lead a club on the go if he doesn't want to give up a trick at once. Declarer does best to win and continue the attack on clubs, after which East will have to defend accurately by discarding diamonds on the third and fourth clubs then ruffing the fifth, to hold North to 10 tricks. 3NT by North is a far less salubrious contract.

Bd: 16  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: E-W

♠ 4	♥ K Q J 9 5	♦ Q J 7 6	♣ K Q 7
♠ 7 3	♥ A 8 7 2	♦ 9 4	♣ 9 8 5 4 3
♠ AQJ1065	♥ 4	♦ K 8 5	♣ J 10 2
♠ K 9 8 2	♥ 10 6 3	♦ A 10 3 2	♣ A 6

East may choose a 2♠ jump over North's 1♥ opener, if he plays that as close to intermediate values at this vulnerability. Others will simply bid 1♠, but in either case South will

have to choose whether to play or defend. Equally, if he bids, he may lock into hearts or try for notrump, and will have to pick between driving to game or merely inviting it. N/S should select hearts rather than notrump, with 4♥ losing just the two major-suit aces. But note that if East leads or shifts to a diamond against 4♥, declarer might misjudge by rising with the ♦A.

Bd: 17  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: None

♠ Q J 9 6	♠ 10 7 4	South is on the cusp of settling for partscore as opposed to inviting game after the sequence 1♦ - 1♥ - 1NT, knowing his partner is limited to 14 HCP. The fitting diamond honors are useful,
♥ Q J	♥ A 7 4	
♦ 10 8 6	♦ A Q 9 7 4	
♣ K 5 4 3	♣ Q 8	
	♠ K 3 2	
	♥ 10 9 6 2	
	♦ 5 3	
	♣ A J 10 6	
	♠ A 8 5	
	♥ K 8 5 3	
	♦ K J 2	
	♣ 9 7 2	

but the lack of intermediates and quick tricks suggest passing and trying to ensure the plus score. This precaution may not be necessary today, since even if South tries for game, North will reject the invitation, and come to eight tricks easily enough. It is hard to see many other plausible results here other than +120 for N/S.

Bd: 18  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: N-S

♠ A 7 4 2	♠ 10 8 3	If West upgrades his motley assets into a strong 1NT, East may bid 3NT, hoping the minors will run or can be set up. If West prefers to open 1♣, then N/S may find a way to their heart fit, and E/W must
♥ K 10 7	♥ A Q J 9	
♦ K 10 2	♦ A 9	
♣ A 7 4	♣ K 9 8 5	
	♠ Q J	
	♥ 6 2	
	♦ Q J 8 6 3	
	♣ Q J 10 3	
	♠ K 9 6 5	
	♥ 8 5 4 3	
	♦ 7 5 4	
	♣ 6 2	

find diamonds, rather than clubs. Par here is a partscore for E/W in notrump, rather than a minor, though only a club lead lets through the ninth trick at notrump. Admittedly, that is because of the fact that, fortuitously, North cannot duck his ♦A twice. N/S can take seven tricks at hearts and may be allowed to come to an eighth.

Bd: 19  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: E-W

♠ K 7 5	♠ 4 3	At the vulnerability South's intermediates allow him to pre-empt to 3♥ here; a few may even open 4♥. Some Norths will raise 3♥ to 4♥, others will pass. But whatever North
♥ K Q 4	♥ J 2	
♦ 10 5 4	♦ A K J 8	
♣ J 7 6 2	♣ A 10 9 8 3	
	♠ A Q J 10 9 8 6	
	♥ 3	
	♦ Q 9 7 6	
	♣ Q	
	♠ 2	
	♥ A 10 9 8 7 6 5	
	♦ 3 2	
	♣ K 5 4	

bids, East is likely to intervene in spades, and will occasionally play 3♠, though more pairs are going to reach 4♠. Some Norths may double that, and collect 500, while others will lose the diamond ruff and let East come to nine tricks. In fact 4♥ can be made, despite the two trump losers. The diamond finesse (the best chance in abstract) fails, but the clubs lie in extremely friendly fashion.

Bd: 20  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: Both

♠ A K 5	♠ 7 2	Some Wests will open 2NT, others will sensibly prefer a reversing sequence to show what they actually have. In this case avoiding 3NT has a lot to recommend it, since that contract looks doomed
♥ K	♥ J 5 3 2	
♦ A Q 10 4	♦ K 6 2	
♣ K J 8 7 2	♣ 9 6 5 4	
	♠ 9 8 4	
	♥ 10 9 6	
	♦ 9 7 5 3	
	♣ A Q 10	
	♠ Q J 10 6 3	
	♥ A Q 8 7 4	
	♦ J 8	
	♣ 3	

on a heart lead ... or is it? Might South put in the ♥Q at trick one to retain communications? Regardless, a 1♣ opener by West should get his side to 5♦, where trumps can be drawn for one loser, even if the defenders play a forcing game in hearts, while the clubs offer a source of discards, though there is the threat of a club ruff. By contrast, 5♣ has an inevitable spade loser.

Bd: 21  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: N-S

♠ K 10 3	♠ A 6 5 2	The North cards here offer the same problem as West's on board 20. Again, a 1♣ opener looks sounder than a 2NT call. Whichever action is chosen, South has enough to be interested in slam,
♥ Q 9 7 6	♥ A K 4	
♦ 9 6 3	♦ K	
♣ 10 9 2	♣ A Q 7 5 4	
	♠ Q J 9 7	
	♥ 10 3 2	
	♦ J 8 5 2	
	♣ 8 6	
	♠ 8 4	
	♥ J 8 5	
	♦ A Q 10 7 4	
	♣ K J 3	

but reaching 6♣ looks easier after North's 1♣ opener, followed by a jump to 2♠ than over a 2NT opener. 6♣ is a virtual claim, with declarer ruffing a spade in dummy. Meanwhile, 6NT can be made on any lead but a spade (when it would require the ♦J to fall in three rounds). In fact 7♣ is not much worse than 6NT, though both ought to be defeated today.

Bd: 22  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: E-W

♠ K Q J 5 3 2	♠ 8 7 6 4	Most Souths will open 1♦ rather than distort their hands into a strong notrump. West will bid spades at whatever level his system demands, and E/W can then choose between the majors, with
♥ A 7 6 3	♥ 9 5 4	
♦ 10	♦ 7 3	
♣ 9 2	♣ A Q 10 8	
	♠ A	
	♥ Q J 8 2	
	♦ K 9 6 4	
	♣ 7 5 4 3	
	♠ 10 9	
	♥ K 10	
	♦ A Q J 8 5 2	
	♣ K J 6	

nine tricks available in both — though the play is certainly simpler in spades than hearts. In spades, one simply gives up four losers, while if West declares hearts after a diamond lead and club shift he must ruff, unblock spades then advance ♥Q, covered by South. Now to come to nine tricks declarer must draw a second trump, ruff another club, and run the spades.

Bd: 23  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: Both

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

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

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

Few Souths will open, I hope, and when West bids 1♦ North will double, letting East redouble. Assuming South can jump to 2♥ preemptively, it will then be up to E/W to find their way to the best

or safest game. That looks to be 5♦, where declarer needs to guess either spades or clubs and should manage the task. Conversely, in 3NT the play is far less comfortable after a heart lead. You could easily imagine declarer failing to realize hearts were 6-3. Now based on the auction he might lose the club finesse to South.

Bd: 24  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: None

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

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

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

After Stayman, should South drive to game or invite it? Put me in the latter camp: partner knows if he has a maximum better than you! When East leads a heart against 2NT, declarer must win in dummy

(for fear of a switch) and try a club to the nine, 10 and jack. Assuming the defenders continue the attack on hearts, declarer will cross to the ♦K to advance a second club (should unblock the ♣8). Now West can win and clear diamonds, declarer ducking the second and winning the third. Declarer may still come to +120 for a fine result if he can work out to squeeze West in spades and diamonds or endplay East in hearts to lead clubs.

Bd: 25  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: E-W

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

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

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

North should open 2♣ and rebid 2NT to show 22-24. South may contemplate slam if he can find a fit; when Stayman comes up empty he might simply sign off in 3NT rather than invite slam with a call

of 4NT. Whichever contract North ends up in, life becomes easier on a spade lead into the tenace. Now 12 tricks appear simple, but North may well need to find the ♣9. After a passive opening salvo, such as a club, declarer will take his four club winners, and can then strip off the red suits and arrange an endplay in spades on East for the 12th trick.

Bd: 26  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: Both

♠ 10 5 2	♠ AKJ874
♥ 5 2	♥ A K 8
♦ 6 4	♦ 8 5
♣ A Q J 10 8 5	♣ K 9

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

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

West will generally respond 1NT when East opens 1♠. Getting to 4♥ is going to be very hard now, and a 3♣ call from North won't simplify the task. I suspect most will play 4♠ by East or 3NT from

the West seat. 4♠ has a painless +650, but after a club lead West has just nine top tricks in 3NT. He will have to develop spades or diamonds to generate overtricks. At double dummy one can take 12 tricks in both hearts and notrump. The play in hearts is simple enough, but at notrump West has to take very deep finesses in diamonds, then set up a squeeze/endplay on South.

Bd: 27  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: None

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

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

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

Whether South opens a strong(ish) notrump or 1♣, E/W should find their heart fit, but will they reach game or play partscore? After West overcalls in hearts over 1♣, East will cuebid

to show a raise and West can introduce his diamonds, allowing East to get to 4♥. Best defence against 4♥ by West is to lead clubs. South cashes two rounds of clubs and exits in hearts. However, declarer can draw trump then take the diamond finesse, later endplaying South in diamonds to give a ruff and discard or play a spade into the split tenace.

Bd: 28  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: N-S

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

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

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

You'd imagine North will pass when West opens 1♠. When East raises to 2♠, then whether E/W play this as constructive or not, West will drive to 4♠. North is likely to lead and continue

diamonds; West will win the third and try ♠K now. The 4-0 split makes his task far harder, but if the ♠K holds, declarer can ruff out hearts. When they break 3-3, he can run winning hearts through North and neutralize his trumps. The winning defence is for North to take the ♠A at his first opportunity and shift to clubs, to establish another trump trick for himself.

Bd: 29  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: Both

♠ A 9 8 4	♠ Q 3	North's hand is unsuitable for a preempt, so he should pass. When East opens 1♦, many Souths may overcall 1♠; but even if he does not, it is hard for West to work out to stay out of game, given
♥ K 6	♥ J 7 5 4 3 2	
♦ Q 5	♦ 10 7	
♣ K 9 8 7 2	♣ A Q 6	
	♠ 10 2	
	♥ A Q	
	♦ A J 8 4 2	
	♣ J 5 4 3	
	♠ K J 7 6 5	
	♥ 10 9 8	
	♦ K 9 6 3	
	♣ 10	

that he does have a full opening bid. Both 5♣ and 3NT have theoretical play, but the consequence of the poorly placed minor-suit honours is that no game comes home today. Any E/W who manages to escape for -100 will score well enough.

Bd: 30  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: None

♠ 8 7 5	♠ Q J 10 6	At some tables E/W will settle in 1♣, or perhaps in 1♥ after East selects that rebid over 1♦. East might come to seven tricks in each contract after some good views. I suppose North may find
♥ 8 3 2	♥ J 10 9 4	
♦ A 8 6 4 2	♦ 7 3	
♣ 10 4	♣ A 9 2	
	♠ K 2	
	♥ A Q 6 5	
	♦ K Q	
	♣ K J 8 7 6	
	♠ A 9 4 3	
	♥ K 7	
	♦ J 10 9 5	
	♣ Q 5 3	

a way to compete, in which case N/S can take eight tricks in spades. I'd expect to see a few Easts open and close the auction with a call of 1NT (his hand equates to a 15-17 notrump in playing strength, given those strong doubletons). After a diamond lead from South, declarer will probably let North on lead with a club, after which a shift to the ♠Q defeats that contract.

Bd: 31  
 Dlr: South  
 Vul: N-S

♠ 2	♠ 9	Would you believe that this South hand could find an ace and a king opposite, but be struggling to take nine tricks in his side's best strain? After South opens 1♠ and hears the next hand double, North will show
♥ Q J 10 4	♥ A K 8 7 5 3	
♦ K 10 7 3	♦ J 5	
♣ A K 10 3	♣ 9 8 5 4	
	♠ J 10 8 7 3	
	♥ 9 6 2	
	♦ Q	
	♣ Q J 6 2	
	♠ A K Q 6 5 4	
	♥ —	
	♦ A 9 8 6 4 2	
	♣ 7	

his hearts, and it looks very tempting to jump to 4♦ and get partner to pick the right game. Alas, the bad breaks mean that N/S are already out of their depth; even if North breaks discipline and passes 4♦, South is still booked for -100. I'd wager that penalties of 500 and 800 will be extremely common here.

Bd: 32  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: E-W

♠ A Q J 10 9	♠ K 2	One way or another (whether North overcalls 2♦ over 1♠ or not) you'd imagine East will raise spades to suggest a mixed, preemptive or constructive raise. South will doubtless bid
♥ 4	♥ 6 5	
♦ 9 8 6 5	♦ K Q J 10 7	
♣ A K Q	♣ J 7 4 3	
	♠ 8 6 5 4	
	♥ Q 10 2	
	♦ A	
	♣ 9 8 6 5 2	
	♠ 7 3	
	♥ A K J 9 8 7 3	
	♦ 4 3 2	
	♣ 10	

hearts, but West should buy the contract in 4♠. After a top diamond lead from North, West is likely to take a spade finesse at trick two. When North wins he must return a diamond; declarer ruffs, draws a second trump, unblocks clubs, and has 10 winners. On any other defence, West can take 11 tricks. Sacrifices in hearts may escape for less than the E/W game.

Bd: 33  
 Dlr: North  
 Vul: None

♠ A 7	♠ K 10 5 4	In fourth seat, West figures to be allowed to open 1NT at most tables. East can use Crawling Stayman to find his way to a partscore in hearts, against which N/S will do best to go after
♥ A Q 2	♥ 10 6	
♦ A J 10 8	♦ Q 2	
♣ Q 8 5 3	♣ A 9 7 6 2	
	♠ J 8 6 3	
	♥ K J 9 8 4	
	♦ 9 3	
	♣ 10 4	
	♠ Q 9 2	
	♥ 7 5 3	
	♦ K 7 6 5 4	
	♣ K J	

trump. That stops declarer taking more than one spade ruff in the West hand. After that start, East is favourite to be held to eight tricks. Elsewhere, you could imagine East transferring to hearts, and now North might lead spades against a final contract of 2♥. In that case, declarer should come to at least nine tricks, with +140 likely to produce a decent result for E/W.

Bd: 34  
 Dlr: East  
 Vul: N-S

♠ Q 10 7 6 5 3	♠ A K J	East's beautiful hand turns to dust and ashes after a sequence such as: 1♦-1♠-2♣-2♠. East might reasonably stretch to invite game with a call of 3♠, but perhaps he should just give up on
♥ K 8 4 3 2	♥ Q 10 9 5	
♦ —	♦ K 10 3	
♣ Q 5	♣ 9 4 2	
	♠ 9	
	♥ A 7	
	♦ A J 9 5 4	
	♣ A K 10 6 3	
	♠ 8 4 2	
	♥ J 6	
	♦ Q 8 7 6 2	
	♣ J 8 7	

game and pass out 2♠. You'd expect North to start with a top spade to take a look at dummy. After that start, a heart shift will set up a heart winner and hold West to nine tricks before he can draw trumps and run the clubs. On any other lead, West can arrange eventually to ruff a heart in dummy.

Bd: 35	♠ Q 2	E/W have the high
Dlr: South	♥ 5 2	cards and controls
Vul: E-W	♦ A 6 2	to look for slam if
	♣ Q 10 9 7 3 2	they can find a fit.
♠ K J 5 4	♠ A	Here the hearts
♥ A J 10	♥ K Q 8 7 3	offer a tempting
♦ K J 9 4	♦ 10 7	possibility for
♣ 8 6	♣ A K J 5 4	slam, but 6♥
	♠ 10 9 8 7 6 3	looks little better
	♥ 9 6 4	than a finesse
	♦ Q 8 5 3	unless played from
	♣ —	the West seat (in

the absence of those pesky club ruffs). And even if East declares 6♥, that contract can be defeated by South leading a diamond to the ace for a club ruff. By contrast, 6NT is a very unappealing spot; but with both minor-suit queens onside, the defenders cannot prevent 12 tricks. Anyone collecting 490 or 480 will probably register a fine score.

Bd: 36	♠ K Q 10 8 5 4	Do the West cards
Dlr: West	♥ 10 7 6 3	look like a one-
Vul: Both	♦ 8	level or two-level
	♣ K 2	opener? You pay
♠ 9	♠ A J 7 6	your money, you
♥ K 8 5 2	♥ A 9	take your choice!
♦ A Q J 10 4 2	♦ K 9 7 6	A 1♦ opener will
♣ 7 5	♣ A 9 8	allow East — even
	♠ 3 2	in the face of spade
	♥ Q J 4	preemption from
	♦ 5 3	North — to look for
	♣ Q J 10 6 4 3	the diamond slam.

Mind you, it is West's significant extra shape that makes the slam virtually laydown. However, if West opens 2♦, East will envisage the shape but not the high-card extras, and probably will not look beyond 3NT as the final contract. Anyone who achieves more than 630 with the E/W cards should therefore do very nicely here.