



**ERIN BERRY ROOKIE/MASTER GAME**  
**TUESDAY OCTOBER 17, 2023**  
**ANALYSIS BY BILL TREBLE**

Bill Treble is an award-winning author of multiple, highly regarded bridge books. He has won the Canadian Seniors Teams Championship and the Canadian Open Pairs Championship on multiple occasions. Bill is the co-owner of the Ambassador Bridge Club in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where he plays and promotes bridge by offering multiple club games at different times to allow and encourage players of all ages and walks of life to participate in competitive bridge, teaches bridge classes and seminars to assist players in improving their skills, and volunteers his time at supervised play sessions for the betterment of beginner and novice players.

Erin Berry was developing into one of Canada's best Junior players when she tragically died in an automobile accident in January 1998. The Fall Rookie-Master game is named in her honour.

We hope you enjoyed the game and that you will mark Tuesday, April 2, 2024 on your calendar – that is the date of the next Helen Shields Rookie-Master game.

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### Board 1

Board: 1	♠QJ94																													
Dealer: N	♥9																													
Vul.: None	♦AKJ1095																													
♠6	♣A9																													
♥107	♠AK10																													
♦Q7432	♥AKQJ864																													
♣K8732	♦8																													
<table><tr><td>N</td><td>♠</td><td>♥</td><td>♦</td><td>♣</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>6</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>6</td><td>1</td><td>5</td></tr></table>	N	♠	♥	♦	♣	N	1				S	1				E	2	6	5		W	4	6	1	5	<table><tr><td>W</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>N</td></tr></table>	W	E	S	N
N	♠	♥	♦	♣																										
N	1																													
S	1																													
E	2	6	5																											
W	4	6	1	5																										
W	E																													
S	N																													
	♣Q106																													
	♠87532																													
	♥532																													
	♦86																													
	♣J54																													
	5																													
	15																													
	HCP 19																													
	1																													

1. North is looking at a nice hand with 4-6 in the pointed suits and opens 1♦. East has an even better hand that can likely make game if partner has any black-suit honor. He could jump to 4♥, but a more accurate description is to double first and **then** jump to game in his long suit, as that shows both distribution and a lot of points. It's also not out of the question that his side can make a slam.

South will dutifully lead partner's suit with the 8 of diamonds and

now it's basically a question of how many overtricks declarer can make, as ten tricks will be a certainty. The best line after trumping at trick one is to play a top spade and then ruff his 10. Now that he's on board, East can lead a club and put up the queen if RHO ducks. Then he pulls trump and plays another round of clubs, ducking in both hands as North is known to have the ace. On this line of play, all the defenders can take is one club as East will have the rest of the tricks.

## Board 2

Board: 2	♠983
Dealer: E	♥AJ10
Vul.: NS	♦AKQ10
♠A1052	♣J42
♥8765	♦K74
♦94	♥932
♣Q53	♦82
	♣AK1097
N 4 3 3	N
S 3 3 3	W E
E 1 1 1	S
W 1 1 1	
	♠QJ6
	♥KQ4
	♦J7653
	♣86
	15
	6 HCP 10
	9

2. The auction here will be straightforward as North opens 1NT after three passes. A few South players might aggressively raise to 3NT with 9 HCP and a five-card suit, but since the hand is aceless and the diamonds aren't great, a boost to 2NT is probably enough, and opener will pass.

If East had worse spots in clubs, he might lead a small one. Here, though, since he has the ten and nine of his long suit and a possible entry with the spade king, he starts off with a top club.

West encourages as best he can with the five-spot and a low club

is played to the queen at trick two with the defense running the suit. At this point, West encourages with the 10 of spades when he makes his first discard, enabling partner to shift to a low spade and defeat the contract by two tricks. Without the accurate signaling, East might be loathe to play a spade away from his king and North would then take eight tricks in the red suits.

N-S can make nine tricks in diamonds, but 3♦ is not a reachable contract for strong notrump partnerships.

## Board 3

Board: 3	♠Q
Dealer: S	♥10954
Vul.: EW	♦J9
♠J94	♣AK10873 K8763
♥K73	♥J8
♦K1072	♦AQ53
♣964	♣Q5
N 2 4 4	N
S 2 4 4	W E
E 2 1	S
W 2 1	
	♠A1052
	♥AQ62
	♦864
	♣J2
	10
	7 HCP 12
	11

3. North will open in third chair, the only question being whether he opens 1♣ or tries to make life difficult for the opponents with a slightly undisciplined 3♣ pre-empt. East would compete in spades at the one-level but it is riskier to do so if RHO has bid three of his long suit.

Meanwhile, N-S have an eight-card heart fit that they might find after a 1♣ opening but will probably miss out on if North elects to go with the pre-emptive action. This might prove costly as ten tricks can be made in either rounded suit.

## Board 4

Board: 4	♠KQ42
Dealer: W	♥A109
Vul.: All	♦AQ92
♠J73	♣J10
♥KQ743	♠A96
♦K6	♥J2
♣K95	♦10875
N 1 2 1 2 2	N
S 1 2 1 2 2	W E
E	S
W	
	♠1085
	♥865
	♦J43
	♣AQ72
	16
	12 HCP 5
	7

4. In the modern-day bridge environment, virtually all twelve-point hands will open the bidding, which is of great benefit to E-W on this hand. North will bid 1NT at his turn no matter what his RHO does. If partner has opened the suit, East will lead the jack of hearts. North ducks the first and possibly the second round before winning his ace. He'll likely attack clubs, running the jack. If West takes the king and runs his hearts, declarer can make by baring down to the KQ of spades and playing a diamond to the queen after reaching board in the club suit. He can win two clubs, three diamonds and one trick in each of the major suits. West, however, can try and mislead declarer by ducking his king of clubs smoothly. North might then repeat the finesse, playing East for that card. This loses and dummy's high clubs are stranded as the contract will now probably go down.

three diamonds and one trick in each of the major suits. West, however, can try and mislead declarer by ducking his king of clubs smoothly. North might then repeat the finesse, playing East for that card. This loses and dummy's high clubs are stranded as the contract will now probably go down.

## Board 5

Board: 5	♠KQ2
Dealer: N	♥AQ
Vul.: NS	♦QJ42
	♣A1092
♠J98764	♠A53
♥KJ52	♥4
♦A3	♦K10765
♣Q	♣KJ43
N	10
♠	1098763
♥	98
♦	8765
♣	
N	18
S	
E 2 3 2	11
W 2 3 2	HCP 11
	0

5. On this hand, North will be disappointed when partner can't find a response to his 1♦ opening and may be tempted to persist with 1NT after his RHO balances with 1♠. If he does so, East has the choice of supporting partner's major or doubling for penalties. South will look for greener pastures with 2♥. This contract won't fare that well, but even if West doubles, it's not a certainty that partner will leave it in and he may go back to 2♠.

E-W can make nine tricks in a spade contract as declarer will force ruff a heart and pitch two more on dummy's king and jack.

## Board 6

Board: 6	♠K
Dealer: E	♥A652
Vul.: EW	♦KJ1093
♠109754	♣A83
♥K3	♠Q632
♦82	♥Q10
♣J952	♦Q4
	♣KQ764
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
N 3 1 6 6 1	♠AJ8
S 3 1 6 6 1	♥J9874
E	♦A765
W	♣10
	4 HCP 11

6. East will likely pass his unremarkable 11 HCP and so do South and West, after which North opens 1♦ and raises when partner bids 1♥. Responder has 'only' 10 HCP, but should try for game as there is a double fit in the red suits and his side has a nine-card major suit fit. He can do so with either by re-raising to 3♥ or making a help-suit game try with 2♣. It doesn't matter how he invites, North will jump to 4♥ in either of the two sequences.

Twelve tricks can be made, but slam is not very good as it requires

good fortune in both diamonds and hearts.

## Board 7

Board: 7	♠A42									
Dealer: S	♥8									
Vul.: All	♦K7532									
♠106	♣A982									
♥KQJ1065	♠QJ95									
♦Q10	♥A42									
♣J103	♦AJ8									
	♣K65									
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	N									
W		E								
	S									
N ♠ ♦ ♣	♠K873									
N      1	♥973									
S      1	♦964									
E 4 1 4      1	♣Q74									
W 4 1 4      1										
	11									
	9 HCP 15									
	5									

7. West opens 2♥ in second chair, and North's hand is just too skinny to compete. If his hand contained four spades rather than three, he might then venture an aggressive takeout double. East now has a decision to make. In spite of his 15 HCP, there is no guarantee of being able to make ten tricks in a heart contract. Interestingly enough, if he does try for game, the form of 2NT ask will determine the outcome. If E-W play it as a feature ask, the 2♥ opener will bid 3♥ to deny any site ace or king and East will then

subside in 3. If the partnership uses a form of Oust, however, West can answer by showing a good hand and a good suit, and that will be enough for the East hand to bid game.

## Board 8

Board: 8	♠A653
Dealer: W	♥986
Vul.: None	♦A93
♠1094	♣K63
♥A1043	N
♦2	W   E
♣AQ872	S
N    ♠    ♥    ♦	♠K77
N	♥K5
S	♦QJ1064
E 1        1 3	♣J54
W 1        1 3	11
	10 HCP 11
	8

8. This hand could easily wind up being a pass-out. East has 11 HCP but no aces and a balanced hand. West has the shape to open but has only 10 HCP. Still, he might venture 1♣ as he has enough length in the major suits to play a heart or spade contract if partner responds in either suit. East will eventually bid 2NT to invite game, either right away or after 1♣-1♦-1♥. A notrump contract will go down, although nine tricks can be made in clubs provided declarer ruffs hearts in dummy before drawing trump.

### Board 9

Board: 9	♠75
Dealer: N	♥7
Vul.: EW	♦AK10975
♠K109832	♣K973
♥QJ985	♦AJ64
♦J	♥AK2
♣10	♣QJ8642
N 5	N
S 5	W E
E 6 6 3	S
W 6 6 3	
	♣Q
	♦10643
	7 10
	♦Q86432
	7 HCP 15
	♣A5
	8

9. North will open 1♦, after which East might either double immediately or more likely overcall 2♣ for now, hoping to show his major suit length subsequently if he gets the chance to do so. South does best to bid an immediate 5♦, taking advantage of the favorable vulnerability. It's a tough assignment for West to bid one of his major suits now. E-W can still buy the contract, however, if the overcaller doubles at his next turn. This just shows extra values and is by no means strictly for penalty. West can now bid the spades and 5♣ will likely become the final contract. Unless, of course, South carries the sacrificing philosophy a bit too far with a 6♦ bid, giving the opponents another chance to bid the slam they have just missed.

### Board 10

Board: 10	♠QJ84
Dealer: E	♥J
Vul.: All	♦8653
♠109752	♣Q842
♥Q85	♦K
♦Q9	♥A1097643
♣A107	♦1042
N 3 2 3 3	♣K9
S 3 2 3 3	
E 3	♣A63
W 3	♦K2
	8 6
	♦AKJ7
	8 HCP 10
	♣J653
	16

10. Regardless of what East's choice is in first seat, his side will eventually play a heart contract. Over 1♥, South overcalls 1NT and West raises to 2♥. If East has passed initially, he will balance with 2♥ after a 1NT opening and two passes. N-S can make nine tricks in either minor but since neither player has a five-card suit, that landing spot could be tough to find. In any event, the opponents can make nine tricks in hearts and are likely to bid to the three-level on their ten-card fit.

### Board 11

Board: 11	♠2
Dealer: S	♥1097652
Vul.: None	♦Q
♠Q875	♣AJ754
♥K	♦AK63
♦A10963	♥AQ43
♣K32	♦J8
N 4 4 2 4 2	♣Q96
S	
E 4 4 2 4 2	♣J1094
W 4 4 2 4 2	♥J8
	7
	♦K7542
	12 HCP 16
	♣108
	5

11. This hand is interesting from a bidding and play aspect. After 1♦ by West, some North players will not get involved according to the "bid with values, pass with nothing" credo. However, others might succumb to the lure of bidding with their 6-5 distribution, either with a 1♥ overcall or with the more pre-emptive action of 2NT, showing the lowest unbid suits, clubs and hearts. If E-W have a free run or responder has space to make his first bid at the one-level, they should have no difficulty arriving at game in their 4-4 spade fit. If North decides to show both of his suits with 2NT, the end result won't be pretty as East will double first to announce

that his side has the balance of power. South will pass with equal length in the rounded suits and North will remove to 3♥, which is doubled again. With careful defense, E-W will be able to hold this contract to six tricks, and +500 will be a top board for them.

Otherwise, the contract will be 4♣, most likely by West, which gets the 10 of hearts lead from North. Upon winning the lead in hand with the king of hearts, declarer should prevail and make ten or more tricks by playing on diamonds, either by laying down the ace immediately at trick two or by going to dummy with a high spade and then running the jack, intending to finesse twice. If he draws two rounds of trumps and discovers the bad news, he can turn his attention to the diamond suit at this point and this will enable him to come home with ten tricks.

## Board 12

Board: 12	♠Q10
Dealer: W	♥A10972
Vul.: NS	♦A432
♠KJ83	♣102
♥5	N
♦10865	W
♣AQ87	E
N 1 1 1	S
S 1 1 1	J
E 2 3 3	A654
W 2 3 3	♥QJ63
	♦QJ97
	♣K96543
	9
	10
	10 [HCP] 11

12. East will typically open 1♦ in third seat and pass West's 1♣ response. According to general principles, South shouldn't let the opponents have the contract at the one-level. However, the colors are unfavorable and three of his nine high-card points are a singleton king. It matters not, however, if he ventures a 2♣ bid, as E-W will bid up to even the three-level in their eight-card fit and should be able to take nine tricks, as the chances are good that the opening lead will be the ten of clubs from North. Some declarers might finesse on the second round of trump, others may

just plunk down the ace and king and then play on diamonds, and a few might elect to drive out the top diamonds first even if it means conceding a diamond ruff to the opponents.

## Board 13

Board: 13	♠KQ4
Dealer: N	♥J963
Vul.: All	♦854
♠1073	♣876
♥A102	N
♦109	W
♣Q9543	E
N 1 1 1 1 2	S
S 1 1 1 1 2	AJ5
E 1 1 1 1 2	♥K854
W 1 1 1 1 2	♦AJ62
	♣102
	A9862
	♥Q7
	♦KQ73
	♣AKJ
	15
	6
	6 [HCP] 13

13. This hand will be declared in notrump, by South if he overcalls 1NT on his uninspiring 15-count when East opens 1♦, or by West if South passes and he responds 1NT.

E-W can win seven tricks in notrump or eight in clubs, for +90 their way. If South bids 1NT, he plays it there and his only hope of making is if West leads a club from his five-card suit rather than the 10 of diamonds, the suit partner has opened. Since his side is vulnerable, -100 or -200 will not be a good outcome as the best

E-W can manage is +90 if they declare the contract.

## Board 14

Board: 14	♠54
Dealer: E	♥AJ3
Vul.: None	♦KQ82
♠AKJ	♣A1053
♥9875	N
♦64	W
♣QJ72	E
N 1 1 1	S
S 1 1 1	Q10832
E 1 2	♥K6
W 1 2	♦A1097
	♣94
	A976
	♥Q1042
	♦J53
	♣K86
	14
	11 [HCP] 9
	6

14. With 11 HCP and decent holdings in the major suits, West might decide to open 1♣ in third seat. If he passes, North will begin proceedings with 1♦ and East has enough to muster up a 1♣ overcall since his seat is not vulnerable. South's paltry six-count and 4333 distribution isn't enough for him to make a negative double that forces his side to the two-level. West can then show a maximum passed hand with three-card or better support with a 2♦ cuebid. Overcaller will then retreat to 2♣, which becomes the final contract. South might lead a diamond, the suit partner

opened, or a heart from his Q10xx. His choice won't matter, though, as East can make his contract if he doesn't pull trumps right away, since he can ruff at least one diamond on board and then lead up to his king of hearts. The most common result will be +110 for E-W, with the occasional +140 if declarer can manage a second diamond ruff.

### Board 15

Board: 15	♠AK7
Dealer: S	♥9532
Vul.: NS	♦104
♠QJ10983	♣Q1092
♥Q104	♠62
♦95	♥KJ76
♣J8	♦K8
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♣AK643
N 4      4 1	♠54
S 4      4 1	9
E 1	♥A8
W 1	♦AQJ7632
	6 HCP 14
	♣75
	11

15. N-S can make game in notrump, but are unlikely to get there. If they have the auction to themselves, it will go 1♦-1♥-2♦-P, as responder doesn't really have the values to invite with 2NT. Some bold West players might intervene with a weak jump overcall of 2♣, and in that case, North will probably go with a negative double rather than 2NT. South will rebid the diamonds and now it's a question of whether responder bids game, knowing that partner will usually have six or more of his long suit.

This deal illustrates that pre-emptive bids are a two-edged sword, as doing so actually improves the N-S pair's chance of reaching game, whereas they will probably end up in a diamond part-score if West remains silent.

### Board 16

Board: 16	♠
Dealer: W	♥Q10963
Vul.: EW	♦976432
♠K63	♣Q9
♥J874	♠QJ942
♦AJ5	♥A52
♣1053	♦Q8
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♣742
N 1 1 2 3 1	♠A10875
S 1 1 2 3 1	9
E	4
W	♥K
	♦K10
	9 HCP 9
	♣AKJ86
	18

16. Although N-S can make more tricks in a red suit than spades, North doesn't have the values to respond to a 1♣ opening with just two queens in his hand. A two-level bid shows 11 or more points. As for 1NT, it shows 6-10 and is not at all appealing with the spade void. As you can see, South will jump to the skies on his second bid if he gets the chance.

With clubs breaking 3-3, South will be able to scramble home for seven or eight tricks in his 1♣ contract. He will be allowed to play

it there, as neither opponent has the points or distribution to compete.

### Board 17

Board: 17	♠Q6
Dealer: N	♥QJ4
Vul.: None	♦Q9732
♠K97	♣1093
♥9653	♠J10832
♦AK6	♥A107
♣542	♦
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♣QJ876
N      3	♠A54
S      3	9
E      1      1	7
W      1      1	♦K82
	♦J10854
	10 HCP 8
	♣AK
	15

17. After two passes, South will open 1NT which is passed around to East, who has enough shape to compete but no particularly good suit. If E-W play natural overcalls, he might bid 2♣, the stronger of his five-card suits. Some of you might be familiar with Cappelletti, where 2♣ shows spades and a minor suit.

There are two possible outcomes on this hand. South may be allowed to play 1NT on the probable lead of a heart from West. He can win and play on diamonds, after which he'll tally up three

diamonds, two hearts, a spade and two clubs to make with an overtrick (+120). Alternatively, if the E-W pair competes, North then has the opportunity to bid his five-card minor and his side will make nine tricks in a diamond contract (+110).

## Board 18

Board: 18	♠K6
Dealer: E	♥K853
Vul.: NS	♦K32
♠932	♣AK32
♥A62	N
♦10764	W   E
♣1098	S
	♦Q7
	♥Q1097
	♦AQJ95
	♣74
	16
	4 [HCP] 9
	11

It's essential for N-S to bid game in a red suit here, as 4♥ and 5♦ both make, whereas 3NT has only eight tricks on a spade lead.

## Board 19

Board: 19	♠
Dealer: S	♥QJ10632
Vul.: EW	♦874
♠KJ10953	♣K862
♥A97	♠A872
♦2	♥84
♣Q75	♦A63
	♣AJ109
	♠Q64
	♥K5
	♦KQJ1095
	♣43
	6
	10 [HCP] 13
	11

and experts agree that when our side is vulnerable, a one-level overcall should be fairly robust.

In fact, with the king of clubs sitting in the North hand, twelve tricks can be made in a spade contract. There is no legitimate way for E-W to get there, however. They will likely get an above-average result just by bidding their game.

## Board 20

Board: 20	♠Q3
Dealer: W	♥QJ43
Vul.: All	♦43
♠A5	♣AK765
♥A87	♠KJ42
♦875	♥K10
♣Q10942	♦KJ1092
	♣83
	♠109876
	♥9652
	♦AQ6
	♣J
	12
	10 [HCP] 11
	7

18. East will open 2♣, and that gets passed around to North, who has two viable options. One is to bid 2NT, and the other is to make a takeout double. Over the latter action, South with near opening points should be willing to play game, and can jump to 4♥ as the double generally promises four cards in any unbid major. If North has bid 2NT instead, a good agreement to have is that systems would be on, in which case 3♣ would ask for a four-card major and the heart fit is thereby discovered.

19. The auction will start with a 1♦ opening by South and a 1♣ overcall by West at most tables. North doesn't have the values to bid 2♥ directly, but he **can** show his long suit by making a negative double and then bidding hearts, which is natural but denies a wealth of high cards.

With 13 HCP that include three aces along with four-card support, the East hand should be willing to play game and vault into 4♣. While the overcall range nowadays is 8-17 points, most teaches

and experts agree that when our side is vulnerable, a one-level overcall should be fairly robust.

In fact, with the king of clubs sitting in the North hand, twelve tricks can be made in a spade contract. There is no legitimate way for E-W to get there, however. They will likely get an above-average result just by bidding their game.

20. The auction will get underway with 1♣ by North and a 1♦ overcall by East. The question for South is whether to bid 1♣ or keep both majors in the picture with a negative double. Since responder's hand is only worth one bid, the negative double is best even though a 5-3 spade fit could be missed. This time, N-S will find their eight-card fit in hearts. All for naught, though, as the West hand is strong enough to compete to the three-level in diamonds. South will likely choose to defend, as he expects to get two diamond tricks plus a club ruff.

However, 3♦ will make if declarer makes sure to ruff the third round of clubs with the nine of diamonds. He has sufficiently good diamond spots to ruff a spade loser on board and then pull trumps.

## Board 21

Board: 21	♠K1086
Dealer: N	♥843
Vul.: NS	♦A42
	♣Q74
♠AJ9754	♠32
♥A10	♥QJ72
♦Q8	♦K93
♣A109	♣J862
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	N
	W
	E
N 1	S
S 1 1	
E 2 2	
W 2 2	
	♦Q
	♥K965
	♦J10765
	♣K53
	9
	15 HCP 7
	9

21. There won't be much action on this board, as N-S have nothing to say and the bidding will go 1♦-1NT-2♠-P. Not being clairvoyant, North will lead a heart or club, both of which are advantageous for declarer. With the trumps breaking poorly, he'll have three spades to lose, but every time LHO gains the lead, he'll have to something that helps out West in his quest for tricks.

## Board 22

Board: 22	♠9
Dealer: E	♥K1042
Vul.: EW	♦86543
	♣1064
♠Q10875	♠AJ4
♥Q5	♥A73
♦AJ92	♦KQ107
♣AQ	♣972
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	N
	W
	E
N 1	S
S 1	
E 3 4 4	
W 5 3 4	
	♠K632
	♥J986
	♦
	♣KJ853
	3
	15 HCP 14
	8

22. After 1♦-1♠-1NT, West has enough to bid game but doesn't know whether or not there is an eight-card spade fit. He can bid game, but 3NT could miss out on an eight-card spade fit and 4♠ won't be the best place if opener has just two of them. Both 2♠ and 3♠ are non-forcing. This is an excellent hand for the New Minor Forcing convention. If responder bids 2♣, the other minor, that is forcing for one round and asks East about his major-suit holdings. Here, opener will answer with 2♠, showing three of them and West can now bid 4♠ knowing there is an adequate fit in that suit.

Both 3NT and 4♠ make, but a heart lead will keep declarer to nine tricks in notrump, while 4♠ will make ten tricks on any lead.

## Board 23

Board: 23	♠J87
Dealer: S	♥AK
Vul.: All	♦Q873
	♣AQ109
♠KQ42	♠1095
♥963	♥1042
♦62	♦10954
♣6543	♣KJ8
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	N
N 5 3 5 5 3	W
S 5 3 5 5 3	E
E	S
W	
	♠A63
	♥QJ875
	♦AKJ
	♣72
	16
	5 HCP 4
	15

23. You might wonder why a majority of pairs open 1NT with a five-card major nowadays. One of the reasons is because on a hand like this, if the bidding commences with 1♥-2♣, South can only show his extra values with a jump to 3NT, as a 2NT rebid shows 12-14 points. In the process, a lot of bidding space has been eaten up.

After a 1NT opening bid, which shows the strength and distribution of the hand in one bid, North with his 16 HCP might

be tempted to bid slam, but he should be content to raise to 4NT, which is quantitative and asks opener if he is on the low or high end of his bid. It is **not** ace-asking, as we have a 4♣ Gerber enquiry available for that purpose. South has 15 HCP and a five-card suit, but it is still not a maximum hand so he passes.

If West chooses a low spade as his lead, declarer can put up the jack and make twelve tricks. This is the right play because dummy's honor will not take a trick unless the lead was from the KQ. On any other lead but a low spade South can only manage eleven tricks; five in hearts, four in diamonds and one each in spades and clubs.

## Board 24

Board: 24	♠87
Dealer: W	♥K54
Vul.: None	♦A10432
♠AQ1065	♣742
♥A10	♠KJ93
♦K85	♥QJ97
♣A105	♦J76
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♣J6
N	N
S	W E
E 3 4 3 1 1	S
W 4 4 4 1 1	A42
	♥8632
	♦Q9
	♣KQ983
	7
	17 HCP 9
	7

24. If West opens 1NT, responder will Stayman with 2♣ and invite with 3♠ when partner shows that major. Opener then carries on to game with his maximum hand.

As an aside, there are those who would consider 17 HCP with a five-card major and good spot cards too strong for a 1NT opening. They would begin with 1♣, intending to jump in notrump. In this case, East raises to 2♣ and opener then jumps to game.

Either a heart or diamond on the go might prove to be costly, so

West could settle upon a club or a trump as his opening lead. A club is beneficial to declarer as he now gets a second trick in that suit. A spade is best, but declarer can win on table and finesse in hearts. It loses, but he can then throw away two diamonds on the top hearts after the rest of the trumps are drawn.

## Board 25

Board: 25	♠954
Dealer: N	♥AQJ10962
Vul.: EW	♦10
♠KQ6	♣K3
♥	♠AJ87
♦AKQJ9	♥K83
♣AQJ98	♦862
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♣1074
N	N
S	W E
E 5 6 6 6	S
W 5 6 1 6 6	A1032
	♥754
	♦7543
	♣652
	10
	22 HCP 8
	0

25. The question for the North hand is whether to open 1♥ or 3♥. Once upon a time some might have considered an initial pass and bidding hearts many times later as an option, but nowadays pretty much everyone would take initial action with these cards.

If 1♥ is the choice, that is followed by two passes and now West has a decision to make. He wants to drive the auction to game, but an overcall in either minor suit can be passed. Instead, he can bid 2NT to show the minor suits and jump to game in whichever

on partner bids. That will likely result in a 5♣ contract by East, as passing 2NT just because he has a high card in hearts would not be appreciated. There will be an eight-card fit in both minors, so he should be picking the one that he has a better holding in.

More likely, West will double to start and North won't be able to resist the temptation of bidding his seven-card suit again. East has barely enough to contest the auction with 2♠, at which point West bids his highest-ranking minor. East will now bid 3NT, keeping in mind that partner's double followed by a new suit shows a very good hand of 18 or more total points. Over that, West jumps to 6♣, now willing to play in slam since partner can be expected to have around 8-10 points. Both 6♣ and 6♦ are making contracts, losing just the one trick to the king of clubs. As it happens, 6♦ also makes, but it is a 4-3 fit and West is going to be focused on the minor suits.

If North has opened 3♥, the road is much tougher for E-W. West again has the choice of doubling or jumping in notrump to show the minor suits (with 4NT this time). Since they don't have as much bidding space, E-W will likely stop in game with 3NT, 4♠ and five of either minor being possibilities.

## Board 26

Board: 26	♠K1074
Dealer: E	♥743
Vul.: All	♦974
♠963	♣AQ10
♥Q65	♦QJ2
♦653	♥AK102
♣8743	♦A102
	♣J52
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
N 2 2 1 2 2	W E
S 2 2 1 2 2	S
E	
W	
♠A85	9
♥J98	
♦KQJ8	2 HCP 15
♣K96	14

26. East will open 1NT, and plays it there as South doesn't have quite enough points to double for penalties and North lacks the points or distribution to take action in balancing seat.

The opening lead will be the king of diamonds and while the hearts break, that only gets declarer up to five tricks. Down two vulnerable is usually a bad score, but the auction will go the same at most tables so -200 could be slightly below average, but E-W will have a fair amount of company with that result.

## Board 27

Board: 27	♠A9
Dealer: S	♥AKQJ97
Vul.: None	♦85
♠5	♣K83
♥1032	♦J108764
♦AQ94	♥4
♣QJ765	♦K106
	♣A104
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
N 3	W E
S 3	S
E 2 2 4	
W 2 2 4	
♠KQ32	17
♥865	
♦J732	9 HCP 8
♣92	6

27. After two passes, North will open 1♥ and East could overcall 1♦, although not all the players in that seat will. South will bid 2♥, and now the spotlight falls on West, who has nearly his share of the points and knows that his partner has two or fewer hearts since RHO has raised opener's major suit. He might try 3♣, but North goes on to 3♥ and that will be the end of it since East has three-card club support but has pretty much shot his bolt with his initial overcall.

As the hand record shows, N-S can make nine tricks in hearts while E-W can make ten in clubs. However, since they have considerably fewer points, they are unlikely to take the plunge to the four-level.

## Board 28

Board: 28	♠A4
Dealer: W	♥AJ95
Vul.: NS	♦9632
♠973	♣J105
♥K8732	♦102
♦Q107	♥10
♣AK	♦KJ854
	♣Q9732
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	
N 4 5 4	W E
S 4 5 4	S
E 2 1	
W 3 1	
♠KQJ865	10
♥Q64	
♦A	12 HCP 6
♣864	12

28. On this hand, the bidding will commence with 1♥ by West and a 1NT response by East. In Standard American, this would be passable while in 2/1 it is a one-round force. It's not a comfortable action to take but 6 points is considered enough to respond to an opening bid and a new suit at the two-level shows 11 or more points.

In any case, South with 12 HCP and an excellent suit will overcall 2♦. West is out of the picture now as he has a minimum balanced

hand and partner hasn't raised his major. North should try for game with his 10-count, the reason being that partner has gotten into a 'live' auction (both opponents bidding) at unfavorable vulnerability and should have a good hand. One alternative for North would be 2NT, since he has opener's suit well stopped. A raise with the doubleton honor would also be acceptable, as partner will usually have a six-card or longer suit for his vulnerable overcall.

South will be tempted to bid game but still has quite a few losers and might retreat to 3♣, and North will pass, having done his part. The hands mesh well and because of the opening 1♥ bid, it's a simple matter to bring that suit home without losing a trick, running the queen from hand. Even if West covers, you can get back to the South hand and take the marked finesse of the 9 on the second round of the suit. Most N-S pairs will declare a spade contract and make ten tricks. Those who settle in 3♣ will end up with a slightly below average result, as a few brave souls might elect to bid game.

## Board 29

Board: 29	♠83
Dealer: N	♥852
Vul.: All	♦A832
♠AQJ974	♣AJ109
♥7	♠62
♦J64	♥A10643
♣765	♦Q95
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♣Q83
N 3 2 2	N
S 1 3 2 3	W E
E	S
W	
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♠K105
N 3 2 2	♥KQJ9
S 1 3 2 3	♦K107
E	♣K42
W	
	9
	8 HCP 8
	15

29. After two passes, South opens 1NT and West is faced with the decision of passing or bidding 2♠. Even though his side is vulnerable, it could easily be right to overcall since the contract will have a decent chance to make if partner has a couple of useful cards. Unfortunately, LHO has nine HCP and if he either passes or makes a card-showing double, he'll only score five spades and the ace of hearts, going down two.

Pass is the winning action his time, as North will invite game and even 2NT by N-S will fail on the queen of spades lead. If declarer wins the king on the first trick, he doesn't have enough winners off the top to achieve his objective and once East takes the ace of hearts, he'll come back a spade and the defenders will have five more tricks to set the contract.

Interestingly enough, South has a better chance to make his contract if he lets the queen of spades hold. This severs the communication between the opponents' hands if West continues spades. West has to find a way to partner's hand for another round of spades through declarer. He might find the heart shift even though it's his singleton as that is dummy's weakest suit, but it's by no means obvious and if he plays a minor suit instead, that brings South closer to his goal.

## Board 30

Board: 30	♠A7
Dealer: E	♥A763
Vul.: None	♦Q764
♠8653	♣965
♥10842	♠Q102
♦10983	♥K9
♣A	♦A2
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♣Q108742
N 4 3 2 3 1	N
S 4 3 2 2 1	W E
E	S
W	
N ♠ ♥ ♦ ♣	♠KJ94
N 4 3 2 3 1	♥QJ5
S 4 3 2 2 1	♦KJ5
E	♣KJ3
W	
	10
	4 HCP 11
	15

30. With 11 HCP and a reasonable six-card suit, most East players will likely open 1♣ and South will probably take some kind of action with his 15 HCP. Takeout doubles on 4333 shape usually don't work out, so even though his hand is ace-less, he'll likely overcall 1NT since his KJx of clubs may prove to be a double stopper in the enemy suit. Unlike the previous hand, his side is not vulnerable so there isn't as much downside to competing.

North has a respectable ten-count so he looks for an eight-card heart fit with a Stayman enquiry and then bids 3NT after partner answers with 2♠. The usual agreement for a partnership is to use the same responses over both an opening bid and overcall of 1NT. Therefore, 2♣ would be Stayman and transfers would also be in effect.

Knowing that each of his opponents has a major, West leads the ten of diamonds from his three-card sequence. If East takes his ace, that will be three tricks for declarer in that suit, but if he ducks, South can go to dummy with one of his aces and lead a second diamond. RHO will have to go up with the ace perforce, and declarer will again have the maximum number of winners in that suit. With most of the outstanding high cards being where you'd expect them in opener's hand, just playing up to the high cards in the South hand will yield nine tricks.

### Board 31

Board: 31	♠A84
Dealer: S	♥AQ
Vul.: NS	♦K1053
♠QJ1065	♣KQ65
♥J9	♠K2
♦AJ9	♥10863
♣J43	♦Q82
	♣A1072
	N    E
	W    S
	A973
	♥K7542
	♦764
	♣98
	18
	10 [HCP] 9
	3
N    A    ♥    ♦    ♣	
N    1	
S    1	
E   1    1    1	
W   2    1    2	

31. North opens 1♦ in third seat and that comes around to West. Having passed originally, he can balance with 1♣ without fearing that partner will expect significantly more than what he has. Opener now rebids 1NT which shows 18-19 HCP and a balanced hand, the reason being that it would be foolish to take such action when partner hasn't been able to respond. South will in all likelihood scurry out to his five-card suit, as the hand will probably fare better in a heart contract than in notrump. East's hand isn't particularly offensive in nature, so he will elect to defend.

The opening lead will be the queen of spades, and East should overtake with the king because if he has to win the second round of the suit, he has no appealing switch. South has no immediate way back to his hand and can only manage one trick out of the club suit as East is sitting over dummy's KQ with the ace. He will lose two spades, two diamonds, a heart and a club for down one. Still, it's a better result than playing in 1NT, as East will lead the king of spades to establish four tricks in that suit. With an entry-less dummy and no way to untangle the heart winners, declarer will be held to five tricks for the dreaded -200, which is bound to be a poor result for N-S.

### Board 32

Board: 32	♠AKQ9
Dealer: W	♥A652
Vul.: EW	♦J10
♠104	♣AK7
♥QJ9843	♠J8765
♦	♥
♣J9853	♦Q8752
	♣Q104
	N    E
	W    S
	A32
	♥K107
	♦AK9643
	♣62
	21
	4 [HCP] 5
N    A    ♥    ♦    ♣	
N    6    3    3    6    2	
S    6    2    3    6    1	
E	
W	

32. Although it might appear strange, I've seen players try to disrupt the opponents with this weak 6-5 hand and trot out a weak 2♥ bid. The most practical action with the North cards is to bid 3NT, hoping partner will have enough in the way of values for that contract to make. As it turns out, South has 10 HCP with a nice six-card suit, and may well bid a slam in diamonds or notrump, both of which make in spite of East having all the missing diamonds.

If West passes, the most likely auction by N-S is 2NT-6NT. With a long suit of good quality, it makes sense for responder to go for the highest-paying contract at matchpoints.