

Thursday, Feb 28, 2019 - Barometer Game

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ 7 5 2			
♥ J 10 6 4 3			
♦ A 10 7 3 2			
♣ —			
♠ A Q 10 9 3	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 8 6	
♥ 9 2		♥ A K 5	
♦ K 4		♦ 9 8 6	
♣ 9 6 3 2		♣ A K Q 7 4	
		♠ K J 4	
		♥ Q 8 7	
		♦ Q J 5	
		♣ J 10 8 5	

W 4N; EW 4♠; W 5♣; E 4♣; E 2N; NS 1♥; Par -430

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	1 ♣ ¹	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	3 ♣	Pass
3 ♦ ²	Pass	3 ♥ ³	Pass
3 NT ⁴	Pass	Pass	Pass


1. I don't recommend opening 1 NT with two suits wide open (and therefore, all the values concentrated in the other two suits). Here is yet another example where East jumps in the same suit, clubs, with only five cards.
2. 3 ♦ is similar to New Minor Forcing, looking for 3-card support for spades.
3. East does not have support for spades so bids where she lives, hearts. It was a bad idea to open 1 NT, and it still is a bad idea to bid 3 NT over 3 ♦.
4. Not a very good game but at least 3 NT has been right-sided! Since West is playing it, the opening lead will never come through ♦ K4.

North is on lead but can do no harm. Fourth best diamond lead goes to West's ♦ K. East tries to cash five club tricks but no, South has a stopper. Too bad, nine tricks were there if clubs had behaved; now it is time to switch gears.

Declarer cannot afford to lose a trick; otherwise, the defense will cash at least four more diamonds for down one. Declarer needs play spades for three tricks without losing the lead, which means she has to take the double spade finesse. ♠ 8 is led and run, unless it is covered.

Since both ♠ K and ♠ J happen to be in the South hand, the ♠ 8 wins. The finesse is repeated. That's nine tricks regardless of how many spades South started with but when spades break 3-3, 3 NT rolls home with two overtricks!

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

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

NS 3♥; NS 2N; NS 2♠; EW 2♦; Par +140

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦ ¹	Dbl ²	1♥	Dbl ³
1♠	Pass	2♦ ⁴	Pass
Pass	2♥ ⁵	Pass	Pass ⁶
Pass			

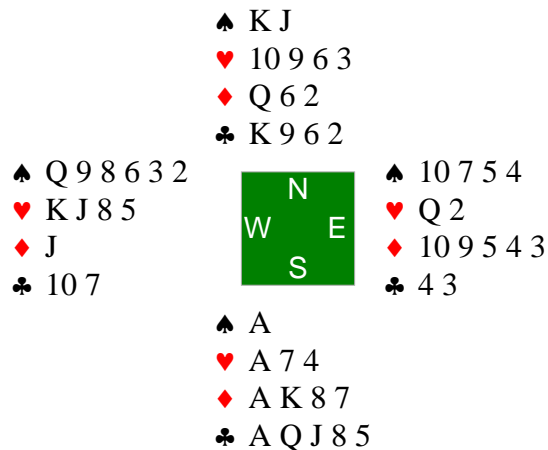
1. Always open 1♦ with 4-4 in the minors unless strong enough to reverse later.
2. North has a marginal double but quite reasonable.
3. East makes a nuisance of herself by bidding 1♥ on a bad suit, a bid that South wanted to make. So, South should double to show 8-11 points and four spades. Double may also imply hearts.
4. East shows diamond support (denies spade support).
5. When 2♦ comes around to North at match points, she would take some action unless she has a trump stack. Based on partner's double of 1♥, North competes in hearts by bidding 2♥.
6. South would correct 2♥ to 2♠ if she did not have four hearts.

Good bidding by NS lands them in a playable contract although EW missed the mark here. Since they are not vulnerable, East could have competed to 3♦. Even doubled down one is only -100.

Against 2♥, East will lead partner's suit and continue with North ruffing the third round. South needs to lead towards the ♣ K sooner or later so she draws two rounds of trump ending in dummy. South finds out that trumps do not break (as expected) but ♣ A should be onside since West opened the bidding.

First, South should play ♠ K, ♠ A and give up a spade before attempting to draw the remaining trumps. Luckily, ♠ Q drops under the ace but it does no good since South cannot draw trumps, cash ♠ J but then come back to her hand to cash ♠ 10. Therefore, defense will get one more trick and the declarer's tally will be back down to nine tricks.

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul



NS 6N; NS 6♣; NS 4♥; NS 4♦; EW 1♠; Par +990

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			2 ♣ ¹
Pass	2 ♦ ²	Pass	3 ♣
Pass	4 NT ³	Pass	5 ♣ ⁴
Pass	6 ♣ ⁵	Pass	Pass
Pass			

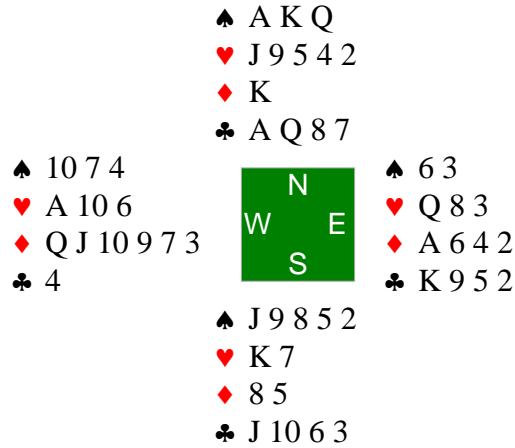
1. Although off shape, South does have excellent quality 22 points.
2. Positive and waiting. If NS play "Controls", North will bid 2 ♥.
3. When South shows 5 or 6 clubs, North can go straight to 4 NT with the known 9-card or 10-card fit and a total of no less than 31 points.
4. 5 ♣ promises four aces. This is true even if 4 NT was straight Blackwood.
5. North may consider 6 NT but it requires South to have the right king, ♦ K (not ♥ K). There is no safe method to specifically ask about ♦ K below 6 ♣.

As the cards lie, 6 NT can be made but it requires hair-raising plays in the diamond suit to win that precious 12th trick. The first diamond must be won with the ♦ Q and when West plays the ♦ J, South finesses East twice against the ♦ 10 and the ♦ 9. The play carries some risk however, since West could easily drop the jack from doubleton ♦ J10.

6 ♣ should be the normal and the safest contract. There is no defense as the cards lie. A heart loser can be discarded on the ♠ K and the fourth diamond ruffed in dummy after drawing trumps because trumps are not 4-0.

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul



N 3♠; EW 2N; S 2♠; EW 3♦; NS 3♣; NS 1♥; Par +140

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	Pass ¹
2 ♦ ²	Dbl ³	3 ♦	Pass ⁴
Pass	Pass		

1. North will open 1 ♥ but South really should pass. Those who respond 1 ♠ will find themselves in an unmakeable game somewhere.
2. West should think along these lines - opponents don't seem to have a fit in spades and 1 ♥ may be a borderline contract but I have six good diamonds and a singleton. I must bid 2 ♦. Besides, our side should have half the deck, maybe a little less. Therefore, partner should have at least 10 points.
3. North has enough extra values and shortness in diamonds to re-open with a take-out double.
4. When East raises the ante, South still does not have values to bid at the 3-level, vulnerable. If NS compete to 3 ♠, East should double and score +200. Declarer is forced to ruff the second diamond with ♠ Q and without a quick entry to the South hand, she cannot draw the last trump. If she tries ♣ A and another, West can ruff the third club and score her ♠ 10 as the 5th defensive trick. Down one in 3 ♠.

West as the declarer should not have any difficulty making 3 ♦ provided she leads towards the ♣ K sooner or later.

If North leads a heart, she gives up a defensive heart trick (declarer cannot lose more than one heart); if not, a heart can be later discarded on the ♣ K. West should lose ♣ A, two spades and one heart for 3 ♦ making three.

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

♠ A Q 9 8 5
♥ A 5
♦ 8 5
♣ 9 7 5 3

W N E
S

EW 4N; EW 5♦; EW 4♣; EW 2♠; NS 1♥; Par -430

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass ¹	Pass	1 ♠ ²
1 NT	Pass	Pass ³	Pass

1. North just does not have the trick taking potential for a vulnerable 3♥ preempt.
2. In the 3rd seat, South can open a little light.
3. When West overcalls 15-17 NT over South's 1♠ bid, everyone should pass although East is close to inviting 3NT. If the♥ Q were the♣ Q, I might not have passed 1NT.

No fewer than ten tricks roll home regardless of the lead.

If ♠ J is led and South ducks it letting West win ♠ K, both opponents become "dangerous" opponents. The lead puts the contract in jeopardy with only eight tricks in sight. After finding out about five diamond tricks, West should cash out ♣ AK, in any order, intending to concede down one (five diamonds, ♠ K and ♣ AK). An attempt to finesse South for ♠ Q runs the risk of going down two if the finesse loses. But lo and behold, ♣ Q drops doubleton, and instead of down one, West emerges with an overtrick!

If ♥ J is led, South wins ♥ A and returns the ♥ 5, but declarer is in a much better position as the cards lie. She should follow the age-old principle of keeping the dangerous opponent out (North in this example with her long hearts) and finesse towards South for the ♣ Q. The correct play however, is to cash ♣ K and lead the ♣ 6 towards ♣ A104 (not the ♣ J, a mistake many players make) intending to finesse. When ♣ Q pops up on the second round, again, declarer has ten tricks, four club tricks, five diamonds and a heart that she won at trick 2. Having cashed ten tricks already, the declarer can try for the 11th by leading the ♠ 4 towards the ♠ K6. South is almost guaranteed to have the ace.

Board 6
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

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

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

NS 3♥; NS 1N; EW 2♣; EW 1♠; NS 1♦; Par +140

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1 ♣	Pass
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣ ¹	Pass	Pass	2 ♥ ²
Pass	Pass	3 ♣ ³	Pass
3 ♥ ⁴	Pass	Pass	Pass

1. Bidding starts off in the normal fashion but instead of bidding 1 NT, West tries to sign off in 2 ♣ (that is a very good decision with only ♥ K3 as a stopper).
2. When 2 ♣ comes around to South she can tell EW have found a fit, so NS should have one also. South expects partner to be short in clubs and therefore some number of hearts. I tend not to double in such situations and simply bid what I think we can make, not worrying too much about possible 4-3 fit.
3. When 2 ♥ comes around to East, she applies the Law of Total Tricks but not just assume that the number of available tricks = number of trumps but the fact that # of cards in two suits, which is 9 = 9 tricks, usually equals number of tricks.
4. North is not done either. She can safely compete in 3 ♥. It should shut out EW who are vulnerable.

A take-out double in the balancing seat by South would also have suggested a heart contract but why pass the buck if you strongly suspect that hearts is the only suit where there is a fit?

Nine tricks should be the limit in 3 ♥ by South unless West leads ♣ J, partner's suit. That lead presents the declarer an opportunity to immediately discard ♠ 8 and then get rid of the second spade loser (♠ 9) on the established ♣ KQ. If that happens, the defense will be limited to two trump tricks and the ♣ A for a bottom board. Moral of the story, it is not always best to lead partner's suit although it keeps peace in the family!

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

♠ 9 8 6 ♥ A 9 6 5 4 ♦ K 6 ♣ A Q 2	♠ K 10 5 ♥ K 8 2 ♦ Q J 10 9 5 ♣ J 3	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; background-color: #008000; color: white; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 4 2 ♥ Q J 10 3 ♦ 7 3 ♣ K 10 8 7 6
♠ A Q J 7 3 ♥ 7 ♦ A 8 4 2 ♣ 9 5 4			

NS 3♠; EW 3♥; NS 3♦; EW 3♣; Par +140

West	North	East	South
			1 ♠ ¹
Pass ²	1 NT ³	Pass	2 ♦
2 ♥ ⁴	3 ♠ ⁵	Pass ⁶	Pass
Pass			

1. South exceeds the Hi-Le-QT Rule of 22 for opening the bidding: "Add High Card Points, length of two longest suits and the number of Quick Tricks in your hand. If the total is at least 22, open the bidding".
2. Despite 13 high card points, West must pass; overcalling 2 ♥ on a bad suit without texture is fraught with danger
3. North has a 8-loser hand (a Limit Raise) with good 10 points and 3-card support. 1 NT forcing followed by a jump to 3 ♠ is the correct sequence in 2-over-1 (or if South bids 2 ♠, raise to 3 ♠ without jumping).
4. Once South shows ♠ and ♦, West can now bid 2 ♥.
5. North follows through with her plan.
6. Being vulnerable, East should exercise caution. Partner did not overcall 2 ♥ so pass is the best option. On a part score deal, doubled down one or two would be bad.

Against 3 ♠, West should lead a trump trying to cut down any possible ruffs in dummy. That is the standard lead if the opponents show two suits and end up in a trump contract unless your trump holding suggests otherwise. It also helps if either you or your partner have control over their second suit. In this example, it is true that a trump lead stops a club ruff but since North has five diamonds, the club loser can be discarded instead.

On the surface, declarer can win ten tricks, five trumps, four diamonds and a heart but only after losing four (♥ A, two club tricks and the ♦ K)! That brings the number of winners down to nine.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

♠ K Q 6 4	♠ A J 2	♠ 10 8 3
♥ 6 2	♥ K 8 7 5 4	♥ J 10 9 3
♦ 8 6	♦ A 7 2	♦ J 4
♣ Q 10 8 6 3	♣ 7 2	♣ K 9 5 4
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ 9 7 5	
	♥ A Q	
	♦ K Q 10 9 5 3	
	♣ A J	

NS 6♦; NS 5N; NS 5♥; NS 3♠; NS 1♣; Par +920

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♥	Pass	2 ♦ ¹
Pass	2 ♥ ²	Pass	2 NT ³
Pass	3 ♦ ⁴	Pass	3 ♥ ⁵
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♥ ⁶	Pass	6 ♦

All pass

1. South starts with a 2-over-1 response. The decision on what to do with her great looking 16-point hand can wait.
2. I belong to the school where re-bidding hearts denies extras and 2 NT promises them. Not only that, I just can't stomach bidding 2 NT with two small clubs. With this approach, you are safe to open 1 ♥ or 1 ♠ with 15-17 points and the rest of the bidding is much easier as you will see soon.
3. South now has room to find more information about partner's hand. 2 NT is forcing, asks partner to further describe their hand and it shows extra values.
4. Delayed raise to 3 ♦ shows exactly 3-card support. Immediate raise over 2 ♥ would show four diamonds and extra values.
5. Having denied three hearts earlier (the 2 NT bid), 3 ♥ now promises a doubleton but not two small. Holding only a 5-card suit, North rejects a heart contract and signs off in 3 NT.
6. 4 NT is RKCB for the known fit in diamonds; 5 ♥ is two key cards without ♦ Q allowing South to bid 6 ♦. If North were to show 0 or 1 key card, South will sign off in 5 ♦.

Declarer plans to establish the 5th heart via one ruff. That should be twelve tricks, four hearts, six diamonds and two black aces. Declarer delays drawing trumps to take the ruff as soon as possible. West cannot overruff; ♦ A provides the entry to pitch two spades on ♥ K8.

Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

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

♠ 10 5 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ 10 5 2
N					
W E					
S					
♥ A 8 2		♥ A 8 2			
♦ A Q 8		♦ A Q 8			
♣ J 9 4 2		♣ J 9 4 2			

NS 4♦; NS 4♣; NS 2N; EW 2♠; NS 1♥; Par +130

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♦	Pass	2NT
Pass ¹	3♣ ²	Pass	Pass
Pass			

1. West can venture into a take-out double of 2 NT for the majors but they are vulnerable. It forces partner to bid at the 3-level on a 3-card suit, which may be a disaster.
2. South has shown a balanced hand with about 11 points but North with stiff spade and ♥ KJ4 should have nothing to do with notrump.

NS have 25 high card points but still 3 NT is hopeless here. The decision is North's to bid 3 NT, and she was wise to opt for a minor suit part score. Bidding and making 5♣ or 5♦ was also not a great option requiring 11 tricks.

Making an overtrick or two will make a lot of difference in a pairs event.

North has a simple path to ten tricks. Even if the diamond finesse loses, only other losers would be a spade and a trump. Please note that 3♣ making four (+130) also scores better than 2 NT making two (+120).

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

♠ 9 4 3	♠ K Q 10	♠ 6 2
♥ J 2	♥ A K 7 6 5 3	♥ 9 4
♦ K J 8 4	♦ 5	♦ Q 10 9 7 3
♣ Q 7 5 4	♣ J 6 3	♣ A 10 9 8
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ A J 8 7 5	
	♥ Q 10 8	
	♦ A 6 2	
	♣ K 2	

NS 6N; NS 6♠; NS 6♥; NS 1♣; Par +1440

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♥ ¹	Pass	2 ♠ ²
Pass	4 ♦ ³	Pass	4 NT
Pass	5 ♠ ⁴	Pass	6 ♠
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. North is strong enough to start with 2-over-1 and then show 3-card spade support.
2. On this particular holding, I don't mind a 2 NT response but the hand is not quite strong enough in my opinion.
3. North has the perfect bid to show 3-card support and shortness, a delayed Splinter bid of 4 ♦.
4. South can practically count 12 tricks but asks for key cards just to make sure partner has ♠ KQ both. North does.

Nothing to the play. If the opponents don't cash their ace of club, they will lose it. Declarer has five trump tricks, six hearts and ♦ A so one ruff will make it all thirteen.

Not sure West will lead a club but she should. With two suits of about equal strength, leading away from the queen is much safer than leading away from a king. Besides, North announced diamond shortness, a good reason not to lead a diamond.

Since South has ♣ K2, there is something to be said for bidding 6 NT instead of 6 ♠ and play it from her side of the table. In 6 NT, there are only 12 tricks but in 6 ♠, there is a chance of making all thirteen. Some West players may not lead a club.

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

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

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

S 3♠; NS 4♦; EW 4♣; NS 2N; N 2♠; NS 2♥; Par +100; EW 5♣×-1

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1♦
2N ¹	3♣ ²	Dbl ³	3♦ ⁴
Pass	Pass ⁵	Pass	


1. Unusual 2 NT by West shows 5-5 in hearts and clubs, the two lower suits.
2. Cue-bidding their lower suit promises limit raise or better in our lower suit, diamonds. Cue-bidding hearts, the higher cue-bid, would show game going hand with long spades, our higher suit.
3. Double here is weaker than bidding 4♣ or 5♣ but does promise great support for clubs and deny heart support.
4. Pass is an option for South but she has the right shape and major suit aces to bid diamonds again even on a 5-card suit.
5. North has done her part, bidding game is partner's responsibility. North needs proportionately stronger and stronger hands to invite game (4♦) or bid game (5♦) or cue-bid 3♥ (or 4♣).

EW may push NS into 4♦ (and, NS should take the push when necessary). Both North and South have the desired shape to not let EW play 4♣. Even double is not an option.

Although 3♠ happens to make and scores better than 4♦, it requires spades to be 3-3, not a great chance based on the bidding. In 3♦ or 4♦, as the cards lie, declarer must lose two hearts and a spade so ten tricks is the limit. It doesn't matter whether West leads ♠K or ♥K, both are bad leads, ♣J lead is better.

If West correctly leads the ♣J, South can win, draw trumps and lead towards ♥J94. West should have KQ in both majors since she only has one point in clubs. After winning ♥Q, West is end-played. All returns are bad. Switching to ♠K, or a heart, gives South her 10th trick. And, a club offers a ruff and discard, again ten tricks in 3♦.

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

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

NS 5N; NS 3♥; NS 4♦; NS 2♠; NS 2♣; Par +660

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1 ♦ ¹	Pass	1 ♠
Pass	2 ♣ ²	Pass	2 ♥ ³
Pass	3 ♥ ⁴	Pass	3 N ⁵
Pass	Pass	Pass	

1. After opening 1 ♦, North does have a problem with her second bid that shows the strength of the hand whether partner responds 1 ♥ or 1 ♠. Actually, 1 ♥ response is more problematic.
2. But no, South has longer spades than hearts. North can simply show her second suit, clubs.
3. South deploys Fourth Suit Game Forcing 2 ♥ bid. It will discover if North has 3-card spade support or 5-5 in the minors or even a delayed Splinter for spades.
4. Nope, when North raises 2 ♥ to 3 ♥, it is a pattern bid promising a singleton or void in spades.
5. So be it; 3 NT it is. All slam chances have vanished into thin air!

Even on a club lead, which is South's weakness, 5 NT can be made by leading twice towards ♦ QJ643 losing only to the ♦ AK.

As the cards lie, club suit is protected and EW cannot generate a defensive trick in clubs. South emerges with two clubs, three spades, three hearts and three diamond tricks.