

Barometer game - Saturday, March 9, 2019

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

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

NS 2♠; NS 2♥; NS 1N; NS 1♦; NS 1♣; Par +110

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

1. If I was sitting West with only five points, the presence of four tens will prompt me to do something other than pass, 1 ♦ being the obvious response.
2. North is a passed hand and she has both majors but still not quite strong enough to double for the majors.
3. East has an obvious 1 NT re-bid; there is no other logical option.
4. In the passout seat however, North has enough values to make a takeout double to find 4-4 fit in a major. One bidding principle to keep in mind is, "We must have half the deck (20 points) if the opponents want to sign off in a partial at 1 or 2-level". North expects about 11 high card points from partner.
5. South has the same information but lacking four cards in either major, South should pass and try to defeat 1 NT. To bid 2 NT instead would require stronger clubs and diamonds.

A major suit lead is called for; a heart is safer than a spade from South's perspective. She should never lead a club or a diamond, those are the suits bid by the opponents.

East has a lot of work to do just to make seven tricks. She has slow tricks; ♦ A has to be lost then she can try to generate an extra trick or two from both clubs and hearts. She can win six tricks, but not seven before the defense prevails. Whether the lead is ♥ A or low heart, a continuation allows NS to establish a second heart trick plus ♦ A and four spade tricks by leading a small spade from the North hand (lacking entries) towards ♠ KJ9 and finessing East for the ♠ Q.

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

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

EW 2N; EW 2♠; EW 2♥; EW 2♦; EW 1♣; Par -120

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1 ♠	Pass	1 N	Pass
Pass ¹	Pass		

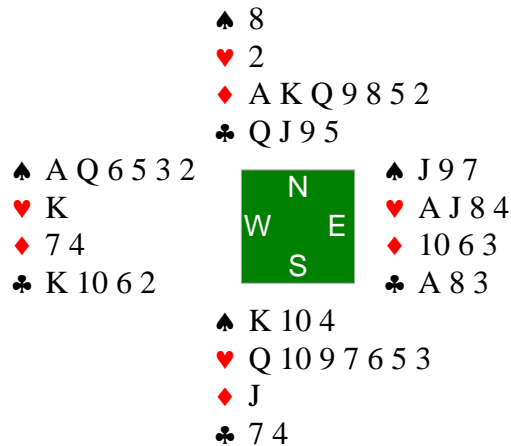
1. An easy auction for a change. West does not have to bid again opposite a passed hand since game is unlikely. There are however some situations where bidding 2♣ would be correct; at IMP scoring, for example, or when a trump contract looks safer than 1NT. The problem is one cannot judge that outcome with any kind of certainty.

South should lead a minor with ♦ 4 being somewhat better than ♣ 3 because of better spot cards in diamonds. The lead puts East on the spot; those who guess to go up with the ♦ K will make 2NT; those who will play low only make 1NT. Regardless of what happens at trick one, the subsequent play may go in different directions but the declarer should make at least seven tricks.

If East wins the ♦ K at trick one, she may lead a low spade towards the ♠ J, which North must duck; winning the trick will make life easy for the declarer. East doesn't have another spade so ♥ AK follow and she is relieved to see the ♥ Q drop. Dummy is entered via ♥ J to play ♠ A and ♠ Q. North wins that trick and cashes the 13th heart and ♦ Q. The defense has won three tricks so far with ♦ A and ♣ A yet to some but 1NT will make with an overtrick.

Based on the lead, NS should know that East has five diamonds and therefore, South should not cash both ♦ A and the ♦ Q until the last minute. If she does, it gives up extra diamond tricks to the declarer.

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul



EW 3♠; NS 2♦; EW 2♣; Par -140

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

1. At favorable vulnerability, South should preempt 3♥ despite having good spade support for partner.
2. West does not have the strength to bid 3♠ over 3♥. You may appreciate this if you look at it from East's point of view. She would have been well within her rights to raise 3♠ to 4♠, a contract that will go down one because West does not have the values promised.
3. North may not like the 3♥ preempt but she cannot "improve" the contract to 4♦. It would be forcing and require a much stronger North hand.

Good defense requires EW to play a trump sooner or later to cut down on the ruffs. If that happens, declarer will be down two for -100.

Although 3♠ by EW makes three, there is no easy way to land in that part score contract.

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

S 5♦; NS 3♠; N 4♦; E 2♥; W 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +600

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♠	Dbl	Pass
2♥ ¹	3♦ ²	Pass	4♦ ³
Pass	5♦ ⁴	All pass	

1. Bidding is straightforward up to West's 2♥ response to her partner's Negative Double.
2. North should not sell out and should not bid spades again. It is better to bid 3♦ to promise at least nine cards in two suits. The fact that North has 11 cards is even more the reason.
3. South has enough values in support of diamonds for a simple raise. A jump to 5♦ shows a stronger hand, and a cue bid of 3♥ is even stronger.
4. If South can raise diamonds, North has the shape and values to bid 5♦. It may not be a 100% contract but it is close.

Unfortunately, 5♦ can only be made if played by South but there is no way for North to convince South to bid diamonds first.

Played by North, a trump lead defeats 5♦ by one trick. That lead is definitely called for. East should have placed a trump on the table even before the final pass.

If allowed to do so, defense should play a second trump. The final result should be down one for a score of -100, declarer losing a trick in each minor and a slow spade trick.

Some East players may think leading ♥A is safe but it is not. Declarer ruffs and can then make 5♦ by ruffing two spades in dummy. She needs to take care of ruffing the second spade with the ♦A so that a low trump can be led towards ♦QJ962. Declarer eventually loses a club and ♦K.

Those who manage to make 5♦ will score very well on the board.

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

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

NS 4N; NS 2♦; NS 2♣; NS 1♥; Par +630

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

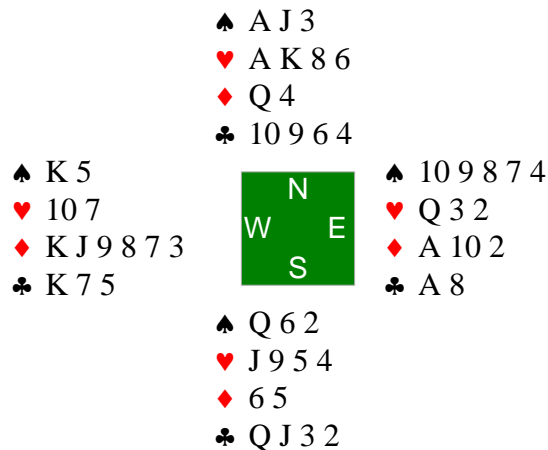
1. East will open 1 ♣ but South is a little weak for 1 NT overcall. And, without 4-4 in the majors, she cannot make a take-out double either so pass is the right call.
2. North however has a clear cut 1 NT bid in the passout seat.
3. Opposite a passed partner, bidding the same values again just to show a 6-card suit is not recommended but some East players may venture into a 2 ♣ re-bid.
4. South can easily double 2 ♣ for penalty but will it score better than +600 for 3 NT making? Not likely. She should just blast into 3 NT, which should be an excellent contract. Declarer play should not be too difficult; North knows where most of the missing points are.

East will lead the ♣ 10 won by ♣ Q. East is marked with all three aces and the first ace to be knocked off is the ♦ A. Since East has ♦ A10 doubleton, the declarer gets three diamond tricks. After winning the ♦ A, there is nothing better than continuing the club attack, albeit in vain. North wins the ♣ K and leads a low spade towards ♠ KQ6. She still has ♥ K and a diamond entry to knock off ♠ A and ♣ A.

East's side suit entries have been knocked off early in the play neutralizing the threat of any slow defensive tricks in the club suit.

Most declarers will win three tricks each in the minors and two each in the majors for a total of ten tricks for a score of +630.

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul



W 4♦; EW 2N; EW 2♠; NS 2♥; E 3♦; NS 1♣; Par -130

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

1. West has more than enough to open the bidding in 3rd seat (The Hi-Le-QT Rule of 22 can be shaded by a couple of points).
2. Despite only 3-4 in the majors, North must take some action. She has 4-card support for two suits.
3. With 10+ points (two tens add value), East must redouble first, then bid her suits or NT. I have seen too many Charlotte players bid 1 ♠ with the East hand then wonder how to show 10+ points and a 5-card suit.
4. South has six points and 4-card major so she can bid 1 ♥ over the Redouble. Anything less, PASS would be correct.
5. Although vulnerable, East has doubleton club and diamond support opposite what looks like a 6-card diamond suit (although West may have bid 2 ♦ on extra values), PASS is not an option.

North can win two hearts tricks but since South does not have an entry, the defense only has one spade trick no matter how North defends. The ♥ Q provides a spade discard. Even if North does not play ♥ AK, West can play a heart towards the ♥ Q.

West should make 10 tricks for a score of +130.

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

NS 5N; NS 4♥; NS 4♦; NS 2♣; NS 1♠; Par +660

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

1. West does not have the suit quality or shape to come in vulnerable so all the tables should see a straightforward auction to 3 NT.

The lead should be the 4th best spade with no other suit offering a better lead.

Declarer has three top spades and three top clubs plus three hearts (after ♥ A is lost), so she should turn her attention to the 9-card diamond fit. Since diamonds are 2-2, declarer cannot go wrong losing only to the ♦ A. 3 NT making five should be the normal result.

Board 8
 West Deals
 None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

EW 5♠; EW 5♣; EW 1N; NS 1♥; EW 1♦; Par -450

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

1. It is better to open 1♦ when you have 4-4 in the minors as there may be a re-bid problem if you open 1♣.
2. With three small hearts, it does not seem right to bid 1NT over partner's 1♠ response.
3. Applying losing trick count method, East has barely enough strength to raise 2♣ to 3♣. West should pass because 11 tricks look out of reach.

There is one more reason for East to bid 3♣. If East passes, South is bound to re-open with a takeout double, then over 2♥ by North, East would have to bid 3♣ anyway.

Although 5♠ and 5♣ both happen to make, it is impossible to logically get there. Neither game is high percentage because in a club contract, trumps have to come in for no losers and the declarer has to guess diamonds for one loser. In 5♠, spades have to split 3-3 on top of that.

Most of the EW players should be in a club partial making 10 or 11 tricks depending on the diamond guess. When the declarer plays a small diamond from the doubleton ♦43 that is visible in dummy, South should always play low in case declarer has ♦KJxx offering a losing option of finessing the ♦J.

Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

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

EW 3♠; EW 4♣; EW 2N; EW 1♦; Par -140

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

1. Playing 2-over-1, West has to bid 1 NT Forcing and then invite game somehow.
2. With most of the points in the unbid suits, West should opt for 2 NT instead of raising 2 ♣ to 3 ♣ on that anemic club support.

North will lead ♥ 5 establishing three defensive heart tricks for her side. But from declarer's perspective, going after 5-2 spades for extra tricks is much more attractive than the 4-4 club fit because of the spade spots. Declarer should only lose three hearts and ♠ AK, 2 NT making two.

Although 2 ♠ and 3 ♣ happen to score better than 2 NT (+140 and +130), there is no way to know that during the bidding; therefore, most EW pairs will end up in 2 NT.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

	♠ Q J 5											
	♥ 10 8											
	♦ 10											
	♣ K J 10 7 5 4 2											
♠ 10	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 7 6 3 2	
	N											
W		E										
	S											
♥ K 9 7 5 3		♥ Q 4										
♦ K 9 8 4 3		♦ J 2										
♣ 9 3		♣ A Q 8										
	♠ 9 8 4											
	♥ A J 6 2											
	♦ A Q 7 6 5											
	♣ 6											

EW 3N; EW 2♠; EW 2♥; EW 3♦; Par -600

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

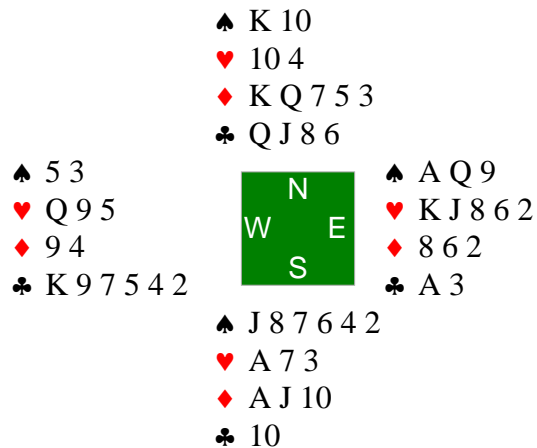
1. East will open 1 ♠. South does not have the strength or suit quality to overcall 2 ♦. Against good defense, 2 ♦ doubled will go for -1400!
2. The same logic applies to North players if they are contemplating a 3 ♣ preempt here. It won't be as bad as 2 ♦ doubled but still why go for -500 when the opponents may not have game.
3. After partner bids 1 NT Forcing, East should discount ♥ Q and ♦ J and make the slight underbid of 2 ♠ and end up playing there.

In 2 ♠, most declarers will make 3 ♠ since the defense to hold the contract to eight tricks is difficult to find. It takes ♦ A lead, ♦ Q ruffed by North, a heart return to ♥ A and another diamond ruffed by North with the ♠ J. East is then forced to overruff with the ♠ K, which promotes two spade tricks for South (both ♠ 98 become winners).

Hand record says 3 NT makes three but that contract requires four different things to be favorable to the declarer, and they are! Spades break 3-3, both red aces are onside and club finesse is working.

If the declarer is left alone to do all the work, only nine tricks are available in 3 NT: five spades, two red kings and two clubs. If the defense gets too "busy", they may let the declarer make an overtrick for a very bad match point score.

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul



EW 3♥; NS 2♠; EW 1N; NS 2♦; EW 2♣; Par -100; NS 3♠×-1

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

1. Normal third seat light opening.
2. Three small in opponent's suit is not good but East does have extra high card strength to overcall 1♥.
3. Playing Support Doubles, North can pass 2♥ to deny even three spades.
4. East can expect three hearts in partner's hand. It is not a good idea to let the opponents play in a safe 2♠ contract after partner has freely supported hearts.
5. Since North opened the bidding in the 3rd seat and South has six spades and 10 points, she should not sell out in 3♥ either. East makes a "Match Point" penalty double. It would be necessary if 3♥ is making. And, if 3♠ is making, the penalty double should not be too costly. If 3♠ goes down, however, her double will outscore all others who let NS play 3♠ un-doubled.

It may seem like a good idea for West to lead trumps at every opportunity in order to cut down potential heart ruff(s) but since diamonds are running, that line of defense plays right into declarer's plans. Four spade tricks, ♥ A and five diamonds add up to ten tricks.

Alternatively, if the defense forces declarer to ruff a heart with one of the trump honors in dummy, East ends up with three trumps tricks to go along with a heart and ♣ A for five tricks. That's a difference of two defensive tricks! As is often the case, defense is the most difficult part of the game.

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

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

E 6N; EW 6♦; W 5N; EW 5♠; EW 5♥; EW 1♣; Par -990

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

1. Not quite strong enough for a 2-over-1 response so East bids 1 NT Forcing.
2. South is vulnerable and not strong enough to venture into a 3♣ preempt. If EW do not have slam, even down two for -500 would be a bottom board.
3. Full reverse
4. Especially if you play Lebensohl over the 2♠ reverse, 3♦ shows 9-11 points and 5+ diamonds.
5. RKCB for diamonds when West raises diamonds to show a 4-5-3-1 or 4-5-4-0 or 4-6-3-0 hand.
6. 5♦ is the 1430 response promising three key cards for diamonds.

Played from East, 6♦ is an excellent contract, mainly because ♠AQ and ♣K are protected from the opening lead and the spade finesse is working.

♣A is the normal lead against the slam, which gives declarer 12 tricks off the top by taking the proven diamond finesse. Five hearts, one club, five diamonds and ♠A add up to 12 tricks.

Even if South leads something else, Spades come in for no losers so the defense can have the ♣A any time they want. The best way to play spades is to run the ♠J. If covered, you have a decision to make. Cashing the ♠Q works on this hand because it smothers the ♠10.

During the bidding, East may suspect 6NT is a possible make but 6♦ surely has a much higher probability of success.