

Barometer Game - Sat June 22, 2019

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

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

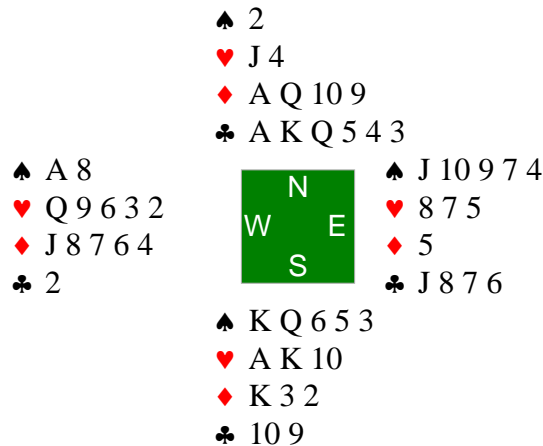
NS 3♥; NS 2N; EW 2♠; NS 3♣; NS 2♦; Par +100: EW 3♠×-1

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

1. Although the suit is not very good and the 9-points are mostly in quacks, West does have six spades. A 1-level overcall is permissible.
2. East knows she may have to compete to 3♠ later but that may not happen. If you can play 2♠, why jump to 3♠ with 10 high card points?
3. North's 3♥ bid is an example of when to ignore the Law of Total Tricks and bid to the 3-level despite possibly holding only 8 trumps. She has singleton in opponent's suit, spades. She does not expect partner to have too many wasted points in that suit.
4. South sees the possibility of 2-3 defensive tricks in her hand (two kings and a second diamond trick) opposite a 1st seat opening bid by partner, which should produce 3 more defensive tricks. She cannot let the opponents play a 3-level contract undoubled. Even if 3♠ makes, a bad score is still a bad score whether she doubles or not.

NS can make 3♥ so EW were correct in bidding 3♠, and NS were correct in doubling 3♠. If the opponents make 3♠, NS are headed for a bad score anyway. Doubling should not make it much worse in terms of number of match points.

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul



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

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

1. This is an example of when to open 1 ♠ instead of 15-17 point 1 NT. Outside of the spade suit, the hand contains prime cards, aces, kings, AK's and KQ's.
2. If NS do not play 2 ♣ as game forcing, South must jump to 3 NT. Otherwise, 2 NT by South is correct.
3. North does not sign off in 3 NT or some other game but introduces a new suit, 3 ♦. This is called a high reverse. It shows slam interest and 9+ cards in the minors.
4. South also has extras but with no clear fit and some wasted values in the spade suit, she cannot go slamming. Since partner does not like spades, ♠ KQxxx is not a very good suit on its own. If those five points were ♠ A and ♣ Jxx, those would have been excellent values for slam purposes opposite 4-5 or 4-6 in ♦ and ♣. Granted, on a good day, club suit will break 3-2 and 6 ♣ may come home but one cannot always depend on such good luck.

Since there are two unavoidable black suit losers, ♠ A and ♣ J, 3 NT only makes five. That should be the normal results at most tables. Anybody that ventures into 6 ♣ will be down one but they can chalk it up to bad luck.

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

♠ K 4 3 ♥ J 9 6 3 ♦ J 5 2 ♣ A K 7	♠ A 6 5 ♥ K 7 ♦ A Q 4 3 ♣ J 5 4 2	<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;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W E</div> <div style="margin-top: 5px;">S</div> </div>	♠ J 8 ♥ A 10 8 5 2 ♦ 8 7 6 ♣ Q 10 8
	♠ Q 10 9 7 2 ♥ Q 4 ♦ K 10 9 ♣ 9 6 3		

NS 2♠; EW 2♥; NS 2♦; NS 1♣; Par +110

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

1. When West opens 1 ♣, North is essentially shut out, at least on this round of bidding. Never double just because you have an opening hand.
2. In the passout seat, 2 ♠ is perfectly fine balancing bid especially since South has five spades. The logic is that our side must have half the deck, about 20 points, and partner should have 3-4 spades based on the bidding. Since North passed over 1 ♣ by West, she will never have 5+ diamonds.
3. Do not punish partner for balancing by raising to 3 ♠. She already knows you have points.
4. NS have pushed EW one level higher; North may think that there is no need to double. However, if 2 ♠ is making, down one undoubled would not be the best result. This is a good reason to double 3 ♥. Also, 3 ♠ is probably going down.
5. South is happy to pass the double holding some defensive values.

If East applied the Law of Total Tricks to compete to 3 ♥, she will regret it. The score is likely to be -200 if not -500 when the opponents can only muster up +110.

South should lead a diamond. NS will cash three diamonds and switch safely to a club. If East plays two rounds of hearts, North will win ♥ K and play another club. East still has to lose two spade tricks. To hold the losses to down one, East has to play three rounds of clubs *before playing on trumps. That is by no means clear and carries considerable risk of a club ruff.*

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

NS 4N; NS 4♥; NS 3♠; NS 4♦; NS 3♣; Par +630

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

1. North hand is an example of 15-17 1 NT opening despite holding a 5-card major. The three queens tilt the balance in favor of opening 1 NT versus 1 ♥.
2. Since South does not have majors, a jump to 3 NT is correct with most of the 10-point hands.

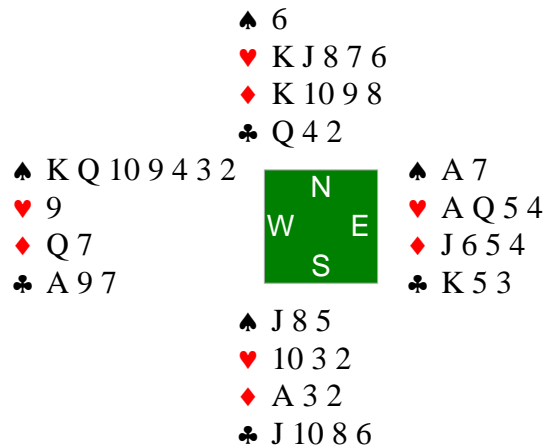
With the ♠ Q protected from the opening lead attack and hearts are 3-3 with ♥ Q onside, North can make ten tricks in 3 NT.

The normal lead will be the 4th best ♠ 4, which ensures two stoppers for the declarer and offers timing to then cash ♦ A, overtake the ♦ Q in order to run the ♥ J for a finesse against the queen.

Since West has the ♥ Q, the declarer should be able to take four hearts, three diamonds, two spades and a club.

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul



EW 5N; EW 5♠; EW 2♦; EW 2♣; N 1♥; Par -460

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

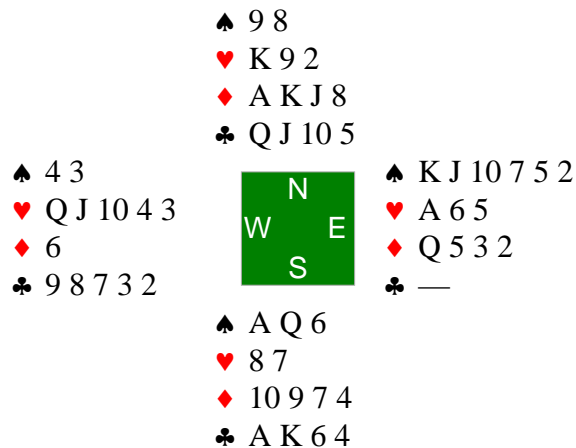
1. North has the wrong shape (too many diamonds) to take any action in a live auction.
2. Using New Minor Forcing, West is able to describe her hand perfectly. The bidding sequence promises a stronger hand than a direct jump to 3♠ over East's 1NT. That would have been non-forcing, invitational.
3. East is obligated to show four hearts in response to New Minor Forcing whether she has 3-card support for spades or not.
4. West jumps to 3♠ as planned, which keeps 3NT in the picture. East is happy to oblige. Those West players who jump to 4♠ over 2♥ will miss out on their best match point contract of 3NT.

The New Minor Forcing Sequence shown here may be totally new to you because it is an example of how to use NMF with a game forcing hand.

When you jump to 3♠ *after going through NMF*, it is 100% forcing to game but a simple jump to 3♠ over partner's 1NT will be non-forcing, invitational.

Against 3NT by East, South will lead ♣ J. Since ♥ K is onside, East has seven spades, two clubs and two hearts, 3NT making with two overtricks.

Board 6
 East Deals
 E-W Vul



NS 3N; N 4♦; S 3♦; NS 3♣; EW 1♠; NS 1♥; Par +400

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

1. No crime in having the maximum Weak-2 ♠. Anything more and East would have opened 1 ♠.
2. South does not have the values for a 2 NT overall.
3. Another balancing action. Although flawed with only three hearts, the double seems to be the only logical bid. Holding 14 high card points, pass is not an option. You might have noticed that balancing bids come up quite often. It pays to be on solid ground on how to balance, and partner to know what to do.
4. South bids what she hopes to make. There is no point in trying for the 5 ♣ or 5 ♦ instead of 3 NT.

Even if West leads ♥ Q ignoring partner's suit, South can duck twice and let East win the 3rd round of hearts. East does not have another heart and West does not have any other entry. As a result, South should take care not to lose a diamond trick to West meaning, run the ♦ 10.

Although East wins that trick also, South make 3 NT via four clubs, three diamonds and two spades. 3 NT making should be the normal result for NS.

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

♠ 6 5 4 3
♥ 10 7 6 4
♦ 10 5
♣ 10 9 2

EW 6N; EW 6♠; EW 6♦; EW 6♣; EW 2♥; Par -1440

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

1. Experts are well aware that it is extremely difficult to bid a strong 4x1 hand. I have shown a Strong 2 ♣ sequence because I recommend control showing responses: 2 ♦ = 0/1 control, 2 ♥ = 2, 2 ♠ = 3 = 2 NT = 3 Kings and 3 ♣ = 4 or more controls.
2. Shows two controls. Since West has three kings, she knows that East has the ♥ A.
3. When West shows a balanced 22-24 point hand, East shows slam interest and both minors by bidding 3 ♠. This is also a good convention to have in your arsenal. If East was weaker, she would sign off in 3 NT instead.
4. Since ♦ K is missing, there is no point in trying for the grand slam. It would require a successful finesse against the ♦ K.

Without the control showing 2 ♥ bid and both minors bid of 3 ♠, many EW players may find it hard to reach 6 NT. There is nothing to the play; no lead poses any difficulties for West. Twelve top tricks are available with the diamond finesse as a bonus in order to make 13. Not today, the ♦ K is offside and 6 NT makes only six.

Board 8
 West Deals
 None Vul

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

EW 5♣; EW 2N; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; Par -300; NS 5♦ ×-2

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

1. A minor suit preempt like this in the 2nd seat may quite possibly miss out on a makeable game in spades. I suppose it's OK because nobody is vulnerable.
2. Always a good idea to further the preempt with 3-card support and 10 points. Even 2-card support with extra trick will do.
3. This is similar to balancing bids we have often discussed. Since the opponents appear to have landed in a part score, West must do something holding a singleton diamond and a shapely hand.
4. It is East's turn to think about partner's distribution. West is known to have one or no diamond and East is looking at singleton heart. The deck has changed to 28 points and EW appear to have about 21-22 points out of 28. Hence the jump to 5♣.
5. South cannot risk 5♣ making for a score of minus 400.
6. East must double. It is a two-way shot. There is no way NS can make 11 tricks, and if 5♣ is making for our side, East has to double 5♦ just to save a few match points. Without the double, their score may be a measly +100.

Many tables will see a highly competitive auction with EW trying to play a club contract and NS trying to outbid them. Even after EW bid up to 5♣, South may find a sacrifice in diamonds hoping to go down two, not three. So it is, EW cannot defeat 5♦ doubled by more than two tricks for a score of +300 instead of +400 for 5♣ making. If East's diamonds were slightly weaker, ♦ AJ8 instead of ♦ AJ9, 5♦ will only be down one.

Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

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

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

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

A simple auction for a change!

When North opens 15-17 NT, EW are essentially shut out of the auction. Although 2♦ by East makes two, there is no logical way to get to that contract. East can also make 2♠ on a 4-3 fit but again, no way to bid it.

Against 1 NT by North, East will lead the ♦ 5. Declarer should go after her long suit, clubs, by leading ♣ 2 at trick two. If East hops up with her king, that will be very bad for the defense. She can play another diamond but North can duck it and destroy some of the defensive chances.

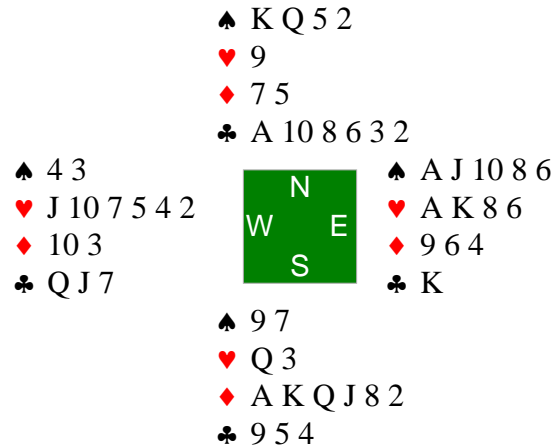
If that happens, EW may win two clubs, one diamond and maybe two tricks in the majors in the end but 1 NT will make with an overtrick or two.

To hold it to seven tricks, East must play low on the 1st round of clubs letting partner win that trick then clear diamonds.

Or, she makes the highly unusual play of the ♦ Q after winning the ♣ K. It happens to smother the ♦ 9 and ♦ 10 allowing her to knock off the ♦ A and emerge with three diamonds, ♣ AK and ♠ A for six tricks.

When West plays ♦ J on the second round, East has to overtake it with her ♦ Q and continue the suit if declarer ducks the ♦ J.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul



EW 3♥; NS 3♣; NS 2♦; EW 1♠; Par -140

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

1. North is not a passed hand. Bidding 3 ♣ here would show a stronger hand than 9 points and much better suit quality. Besides, the spade values seem to be wasted.
2. Although partner passed 1 ♠, East is strong enough to bid a 4-card lower suit freely.
3. North can now show long clubs. It also denies support for diamonds and presumably spades since she did not take any action earlier. For example, a responsive double on the previous round would have shown the two unbid suits, hearts and clubs.
4. Having passed earlier, West is well within her rights to compete to the 3-level with 6-card support for partner's second suit, hearts!

Against 3 ♥ by East, South will lead out her top diamonds. On the 3rd round, East should discard the losing spade instead of ruffing with the ♥ 10, not taking any chances that North might have the ♥ Q. This is called a loser-on-loser play, which is always better. There is no downside since you are exchanging one loser for another. At worst, it will be a wash.

Defense can only score one more trick, the ♣ A. 3 ♥ making three should be a normal result.

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

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

NS 7♦; NS 5N; NS 4♥; NS 5♣; NS 1♠; Par +1440

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♥	2♦ ¹	Pass	2♥ ²
Pass	2♠ ³	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥ ⁴
Pass	4NT ⁵	Pass	5♥ ⁶
Pass	6♦ ⁷	All pass	

1. North is not quite strong enough to "Double and bid diamonds". There will be opportunities to show extra values later in the bidding.
2. South has 11 points in support for diamonds and a cue-bid shows that.
3. North makes the cheapest bid that shows extras. A simple 3♦ would have denied more than a minimum overcall.
4. If partner has extras, South decides it is fine to cue-bid an ace. It is the cheapest bid. 4♣ would have denied ♥A.
5. RKCB for diamonds, the presumed fit.
6. Two key cards without the ♦Q.
7. With only one spade stopper, 6NT is out. The safest slam is 6♦ since one key card is missing, probably the ♦K.

There is nothing to the play since ♦KJ both are onside and fall in two rounds. The declarer should make all 13 tricks on any lead. The ♣K is cashed before going to dummy with the ♥A and the losing heart is discarded on the ♣A *before taking the diamond finesse*.

Please note that two diamond finesses should not be required since only four trumps are missing. As long as West has the ♦K (since she opened the bidding), the declarer cannot lose more than one diamond trick.

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

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

EW 4N; EW 4♥; W 2♠; EW 3♣; E 1♠; NS 1♦; Par -430

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

1. Having found a fit in hearts, East decides to show extra values by bidding out her distribution. She intends to get to game no matter what.
2. West cooperates with whatever the reason for partner's 2 ♠ bid.
3. Bidding out hand pattern, promising singleton or void in diamonds, the unbid suit.
4. West offers 3 NT as a alternative game contract.

West is correct, especially at match points, 3 NT scores better than 4 ♥ as long as there are the same number of tricks or the same number of losers. And so it proves. Despite holding a 9-card fit in a major, declarer must lose ♦ A and ♠ AK whether the final contract is 4 ♥ or 3 NT.

Ten tricks are available on any lead unless the defense is careless and lets another trick slip through their fingers.