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Declare the Love All Part-scores

by Andrew Robson

ON one deal in four – that's six deals in a 24-board duplicate – neither side is vulnerable. Both sides only lose 50 points per trick if they go down. So take a part-score scenario. If you are making your contract (of 2♥ or higher), you will have to get the opponents three down (two down doubled) to beat the value of your making contract. And it's the same in reverse: if your opponents are making their part-score (of 2♥ and above), you can afford to go two down and still show a profit. So declare.

I remember playing a pairs event against Mark Itabashi of Hawaii, a match-point specialist. I opened 1NT at Love All and the bidding went Pass – Pass to Mark. I knew he'd bid (yes, 1NT making one scores just 90, meaning he has to go just one down to be better, but 1NT plus one and he can afford to go two down). He bid 2♠ – we smiled at each other as if to say, 'We both know you could have anything.' He did – he was 4-3-3-3 with ♠Q-7-5-4. He duly escaped for one down vs a room's worth of +90s in 1NT our way.

In the expert pairs game, these Love All part-

scores are a battle to the end. Take this one:

Love All. Dealer West.

	♠ K 5										
	♥ K Q 9 4 3										
	♦ K 8 7										
	♣ 9 8 4										
♠ A Q 8 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <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		♠ 10 7 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ A 7		♥ 10 8 5 2									
♦ A J 9 4 3		♦ Q 6 2									
♣ Q 6		♣ K 7 3									
	♠ J 9 6 3										
	♥ J 6										
	♦ 10 5										
	♣ A J 10 5 2										

West	North	East	South
1♦	1♥	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	2♦	2♥
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

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What an auction – more than five rounds of bidding! No one wanted to let the opponents declare the Love All part-score. Now whether 2♣ (and for that matter 2♥) would have made is moot. But it's easier to declare than defend, and they certainly might either or both have made on imperfect defence. So it was good tactics to bid on. The music eventually stopped at 3♣.

West had an awkward lead. Ace and another diamond would have been best but, not unreasonably, he tried ace and another heart. Winning with the jack of hearts, at trick three declarer led the five of diamonds, West grabbing his diamond ace (or the diamond king would have won and the ten of diamonds be thrown on the king of hearts). West exited with a second diamond.

Winning with the king of diamonds, declarer led the four of clubs (not the nine or the eight) to the

club jack, West winning with the queen of clubs and leading a third diamond. Ruffing with the two of clubs, declarer led up a spade, West ducking and dummy's king of spades winning. Declarer now led the nine of clubs and passed it when East played low (note that if he'd earlier squandered the nine of clubs and now led the eight, East could cover with the king of clubs and declarer could not get back to dummy).

Leaving East's club king out temporarily, declarer could now lead dummy's king-queen of hearts, East helplessly following, while he shed two spades from hand. East ruffed the fifth heart (with the king), but declarer could overruff with the ace, cash the ten and merely give up the last trick, a spade. Nine tricks made.

★★★★★

Just reflect on the likely look of such a traveller (from, say, North-South's perspective). In the first quartile (ranking the scores from best to worst), you'll have scores resulting from North-South's making contracts. In the second quartile, you have scores resulting from defeating East-West's contracts (they'll not be as great as the scores from the making contracts). In the third quartile, you'll have scores resulting from you failing to make your contracts; in the bottom quartile, you'll have scores resulting from the opponents making their contracts.

My point is this: if you declare, then you'll have a score in the first quartile (if you make) or third quartile (if you go down). First or third. Conversely, if you defend you'll have a score in the second quartile (if you defeat their contract); or the fourth quartile (if they make). Second or fourth.

So declare!



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