

Unit 191 Tier II Mentor-Mentee Game October 14, 2025

6 Tables

Boards 1-3 Debbie Hoveland and Bill Young

Board 1 North deals, neither vulnerable,

Bidding: North deals should open 3S, East has a nice hand with Ds but not big enough to bid 4D. At first, South thinks about passing, since he only has 9 HCPs but on second thought, he should realize that partner's 3S bid should show about 6 tricks in S since South has 3 S. South only needs 4 more tricks to make game. He has AQ of H for 1½ tricks, 2 C ruffs and ½ tick for the QJxx of D, enough to go to make game. Another reason to bid 4 S is to block West from bidding. West is less likely to come in the 5 level than the 4 level and it may be their hand.

Play of the hand in 4S: East should open with the Ace of D. East does not want to continue with the King since it will set up 2D tricks for North. He has to "guess" which suit to lead next. East should realize his partner has to have the 2 of the top 3 honors in C. If he doesn't North would have opened 1S instead of 3S. East should play the J of C, West will win the Q of C and play back a D.

North will trump and play an intermediate S guarding against West having 3 trumps. East will win with his K of S and as long as East doesn't lead a D (or play this K of H

when North plays up to the AQ) will set the contract with their side winning a card in each suit.

Lesson from this Hand: Every Norths should open 3 S and every South should bid 4 S (3 of the 6 did not!). The reason South should bid 4 S is game could make and it keep E/W out of the auction.

Board 2, East deals, NS vulnerable

Bidding: East deals and bids 1H. He has 12 HCPs and 1 length point, enough to open. South should pass and West should bid 2H showing 6-10 points and at least 3 Hs. An aggressive West will bid 3H showing a limit raise with 4 H. (11-12 points). In either case North passes East should also pass with a minimum hand.

Play of the hand in 2H or 3H: South doesn't have a great lead. He should not play a D or a H. If he leads a small S, East will get 2S tricks, 2S ruffs and 5H tricks for 9 tricks. N/S still will get the AK of D and AK of C (unless North set up dummy's Cs for D pitches).

If South leads a C, which one should he lead? This is partnership agreement. We play and teach BOSTON: Bottom Of Something or Top Of Nothing). If I lead a C it would be the 10 showing nothing higher. My partner would play the K of C (showing the A of C) and switch to a small D showing something in Ds. We would get our AK of C and AK of D before declarer gets in,

Lesson from this Hand: Every East was in Hs. 4 were in

2 or 3 and 2 in game? Only 3 of the 6 N/S held them to 3 while the other 3 helped East set up dummy's clubs for a D pitches. Key to the defense is to have a partnership agreement about your leads. If my partner leads small, I know they have something in the suit. If they lead big, I know they have nothing higher.

Board 3, South deals, E-W vulnerable

Bidding: Both South and West should pass. North should open 1 S. He has a great hand but to open 2 C he would need $8\frac{1}{2}$ trick and I only count 7. East may bid 2NT show 5/5 in the minors. South will then bid 3 S (unless they have an agreement) and North will bid 4 S (unless they have an agreement). All 6 tables played in 4S.

Play of the hand in 4S: East does not have a good opening lead. When I played the hand, East opened a H and I won in my hand, drew trump. I then play my second good H in my hand and then finessed the Q of D which won. I then pitch a C from my hand on my K of H and ruffing H. I got back to the board with the K of D to pitch my last C on the 5th H.

With any other lead North still make 6 losing only to the A of C.

Lesson from this Hand: Double Dummy say you should make 6 S and Par is 980. But how do you get there? The answer is you don't unless you have special agreements. Bill and I have special agreements for responses over an

unusual 2 NT bid by the opponents and what a new bid means after a suit is agreed upon. (Both of which are alterable). We may have gotten to slam but I would not have gotten there with a causal partner. In fact, for this hand only 2% got to slam.

Boards 4-6 Michael Lavine

Board 4 West deals, both vulnerable

N opens 1n. S will check for a 4-4 spade fit, then place the contract in 3n. If the partnership plays puppet Stayman then S can also check for a 5-3 heart fit. East has no attractive lead. It looks like NS will come to only 8 tricks: 2 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond, and 4 clubs, if they remember to cash the AK on the first two club tricks in case that reveals a third round finesse, as it does here. One of our NS pairs rested in 1n. I don't see a plausible bidding sequence that ends in 1n.

Board 5 North deals N/S Vulnerable




N opens 1n and S will place the contract in hearts. How high should S bid? When my partner opens 1n and I'm not sure how high to bid, I like to picture possible hands for partner. It's easy for S to start by imagining N holding four aces. In that scenario, S can expect to score 6 hearts and three outside tricks. And that's a scenario where all of North's points are useful. It's quite possible that N will hold points in clubs that are not useful, so, as South, I would be inclined to place the

contract in 2h. On the actual hand NS should lose a trick in every suit, to make 3h. Two of our NS made 10 or 11 tricks, but I don't know how.

Board 6 East deals E/W Vulnerable

Boards 7-9 Joyce Jenzano

Board 7 South deals Both Vulnerable

South opens 1 NT with 15 HCP and a balanced hand. North does not have quite enough HCP to force to game in NT, but can explore the potential for a fit in hearts. North bids 2  transferring to  s. South bids 2 hearts accepting the transfer. North then bids 2NT giving South the choice between hearts and NT. South corrects to 3  s. Now, North can re-evaluate his hand. With a fit in hearts and a singleton spade, he has enough to bid game.

Declarer should count potential losers in the Dummy since this is where most of trump are. There is a definite spade loser, potential heart and diamond losers, and two potential club losers. There are several finesses to take to try to reduce the losers. Neither the heart nor diamond finesse is successful. The 10 of Clubs can be led from Dummy taking the A or K if East covers. Then repeating the finesse. If East does not cover, he will eventually take a club trick for down one. Most players were in 4 hearts going down 1 on this hand. Getting a diamond lead would have helped. The key takeaway is that, with no trumping capability in the Declarer's hand, you must work on setting

up additional club tricks.

Board 8 West deals, Neither Vulnerable

Half of the players ended up in 3 NT on this hand which is not unreasonable. It is preferable to play in NT rather than a minor suit when possible. You get more points and can lose more than 2 tricks. With West's 7-4-1-1 distribution, though, NT may not be feasible, especially since the club suit is not solid and there is only one outside entry. After West opens 1 club, East, with 13 HCP, wants to reach game. East first responds in spades. South interjects a bid of 2 hearts. West most likely will rebid clubs to show length in that suit. Now East has a dilemma. He may bid 3 NT with a stopper in hearts and game going count or may bid his diamond suit - forcing Opener to further describe his hand. In the latter case, West can show support for diamonds and East can bid game in diamonds.

The play of the hand in 5 diamonds requires Declarer to trump a club in order to establish the club suit. With a favorable split in trumps, 5 diamonds makes.

In NT, Declarer can stop hearts only once and South still has entries in spades or clubs to make at least 2 setting tricks.

Board 9 North deals, EW vulnerable

North has 16 HCP and a balanced hand. He can open 1 NT. However, with such a solid spade suit, he does not want to risk missing a spade game. In spades, his hand is

worth 17+ points and is maybe too strong to open 1 NT. South responds to 1 spade with a limit raise in spades since he has 9 HCP, 4 spades and two doubletons (plus a very attractive diamond suit). In this case, even if North had opened 1 NT, the spade game would have been reached.

In choosing a lead from the East hand, the best choices would be 8 of diamonds, hoping for a ruff later, or a trump. Although in hindsight, a heart would have been a better lead, you should not under-lead an A in a suit contract and leading A from AJ is likely to set up tricks for Declarer. This should be avoided if other leads are available.

Boards 10-12 Michael Lavine

Board 10 East deals, Both vulnerable

I expect all Easts to open 2s. Then South has a problem. <https://kwbridge.com/preempts.htm> has suggestions for how to bid over the opponents' preempt. The one most relevant for us is the Rule of Seven: "... imagine an 'ordinary' (not perfect) 7 points in partner's hand. If you could make your bid opposite that hand, you should overcall." There are lots of 7 point hands North could have that would allow South to make 4h. North could have as little as the queens of hearts and clubs and 4h could make with an overtrick. So South might simply call 4h.

Two other suggestions from that page are (i) a direct

cue-bid (2s-3s) to ask for a stopper for notrump and (ii) a jump to 4c as Leaping Michaels. Those bids are for advanced partnerships with detailed understandings.

Board 11 South deals, Neither vulnerable

I think almost every West will open 1h and feel they are strong enough to reverse if East bids 1n. East will respond 2h. I think it's reasonable for West to either bid 4h directly or to invite East to bid it. How to issue the invitation depends on partnership agreement. Some pairs play that 1h-2h; 3h is an invitation. Others will bid 1h-2h; 2s as the invitation. If West invites, I don't think East should accept because East has only 8 hcp, a flat hand, and no 10's. So EW will end in either 3h or 4h depending on whether West invites or bids game directly.

The hand will be tough for West to play because there is only one entry to dummy. West should use that entry to lead up to the KJ of spades.

Board 12 West deals, NS vulnerable

The EW bidding might well go 2h-4h. Neither North nor South has enough to bid, so EW buy the contract. They have to lose a spade, two diamonds, and a club.

Boards 13-15 Ray McEntee

Board 13 North deals, Both vulnerable

East has a 20 high card point balanced hand and should

open two No Trump. West has a five card heart suit with 11 high card points and should bid 3 diamonds asking East to bid three hearts. West should bid three No Trump in case East has only two hearts. East, in fact, having three hearts will usually prefer the 5-3 heart fit and bid four hearts rather than pass three No Trump.

The play:

South can be expected to lead either the nine of spades or the nine of clubs. East, upon seeing dummy, will know he is missing two aces and judges he will probably make an over trick. In the extremely unlikely event that the outstanding hearts are divided 5-0, with North holding all five, East will lose two heart tricks, but still make his contract.

Ironically, three No Trump also makes 11 tricks and scores 660 versus 650, not insignificant in a match-points game.

Board 14 East deals, Neither vulnerable

The bidding should be straightforward. After East passes, South, with a 17 high card point balanced hand, will open one No Trump. West should pass and North should bid two diamonds asking South to bid two hearts which should be passed out.

The play:

West should probably lead the five of spades, top of nothing, in a major that has not been bid. South now pauses to evaluate. Since North has the longer trumps

we count losers from North's point of view, even though North is the dummy. Looking at North's hand we see one spade loser, one or two heart losers, two diamond losers, and one club loser. One possible plan is to take an early diamond finesse and, whether it wins or loses, ruff the third diamond in South. Another is to establish South's club suit for discarding North's diamond losers. On this layout, both plans work.

Board 15 South deals, NS vulnerable

Some NS pairs will bid one spade, two spades, four spades. Other pairs may have to deal with a three diamond weak jump overcall by West. Nonetheless, they will still likely reach four spades.

The play:

We see no spade losers, and possibly one loser in each of the other three suits. Trump should be drawn. I would lead the Singleton club hoping the ace is with West - in fact the ace is with West so my club king provides a discard in the heart suit. Now cash ace and king of hearts, then run 4 spades discarding your diamonds, conceding a diamond - losing only 2 tricks.

Boards 16-18 Morris Weinberger

Board 16 West deals, EW vulnerable

West has a relatively balanced hand with 15 HCPs. Despite the 5-card club suit, this hand should not be

opened 1C because, over a 1NT response by partner, West is not strong enough to bid 2D (a reverse). So, the options are 1D or 1NT. The latter is better because it will make it harder for North to bid. North will pass. Although East has a 4-card spade suit, with 4-3-3-3 distribution, it is best to bid 3NT, ending the auction.

The play:

North will likely lead the Jack of spades, giving declarer two spade tricks when playing the Queen from dummy. With 3 sure tricks in clubs and diamonds, this brings the total to 8. One could play the clubs from the top and if they break 3-2, 10 tricks are there for the taking. However, if North has 4 clubs to the Jack, he will switch to a heart, and the contract may go down depending on where the heart honors are. Since South is the danger hand, it would be nice to duck a club to allow South to win a trick (guaranteeing 4 club tricks and the contract. However, your club spots may not allow that. So, the best option is to play the clubs from the top and hope that, if they break 4-1 that South has the 4-card club suit.

Board 17, North deals, Neither vulnerable

North will open 1C or 1D. Different pairs have different agreements about that, but I think opening 1D is more common. With 6 clubs and a somewhat distributional hand, East could either pass or, if N opened 1D, make a weak jump overcall of 3C. If East passes, South will bid hearts, North will bid notrump, and they will likely buy the

contract in 1nt. If East overcalls, South, with both majors and 9 hcp, will make a negative double. North will see that NS have the majority of hcp, excellent defense against clubs, and no surety of game. North would do well to pass, and EW will be in trouble playing 3C doubled.

The play in notrump:

East will lead the 4th best club. North can use the rule of 11 to see that West can't beat dummy's 8. So South may as well win with the 8. The most important use of dummy's entries is taking heart finesses. So declarer's next lead will be a heart. It should be the 9 on which N can play the 8 to remain in dummy to take another finesse. Should West cover the 9 and, if so, with which honor? Our lessons on second hand play say to cover with the ace. That gives NS the most trouble as they still don't know where the queen is and must use another dummy entry to take another heart finesse. After that start, it will be a scramble to see how many tricks each side can take.

Board 18, East deals, NS vulnerable

East will open 1D, and with 12 high card points South should double as the 5-card club suit is weak. West will pass. With 14 high-card points, North has enough to force to game. Although it is possible that South had only 3 spades for the negative double (note that South only has 3 hearts), I would simply bid 4 spades, which will end the

auction as South does not have enough points to explore slam, especially given that East had an opening hand. There are two other options for North. One is to pass and defend 1D doubled. NS are quite likely to defeat 1D, but not necessarily enough to compensate for their vulnerable game. The other option is to cue-bid 2D. When responding to a takeout double, a cue-bid is forcing to game and is useful when North doesn't know the correct strain in which to play. South's job, as doubler, is to reply with a four card major. On this hand that puts NS in 4S.

The play:

NS should have an easy time, as long as they lead spades from North to finesse against East's possible Jack. On this deal East does have the Jack, so the only losers are the AK of trump.