

## Unit 191 Tier II Mentor-Mentee Game February 10, 2026

### 5 Tables

### Boards 1-6 Debbie Hoveland and Bill Young

### Board 1 North deals, neither vulnerable

Bidding: North will pass, East will bid 1♣ and South will overcall 1♠. West could respond 1NT with 2♠ stoppers and 2 Ks or wait until East makes a reopening double and then bid 1NT. East should bid 2NT showing 18-19 HCPs and West with 2♠ and 2 Ks could bid 3NT.

Play of the hand in 3NT: South should lead his 4<sup>th</sup> best ♠ and declarer will win it with the 10♠. Declarer count her sure winners (7) and realizes she needs to set up 2 additional tricks to make the contract. She needs to first set up a ♦ by playing up to the K♦ and when that wins come back to her hand and play up to K♠. I am guessing both sets of defenders miss defended as both declares made 10 tricks

Lesson from this Hand: Technically a response of 1NT after an overcall shows more points than a response of 1NT without interference. If East had a bare opening hand she could have easily gone down in 1NT with only 18

or 19 HCPs total between both hands.

## **Board 2, East deals, NS vulnerable**

Bidding: East and West pass through. South opens 1 ♠ and West replies 3 ♠ showing a limit raise. South will bid game.

Play of the hand in 4 ♠ with 9 ♦ lead: Declarer will win in hand and should realize that West led a singleton, and ♦s can be set up if the Q ♠ is doubleton but that line of play only has a 33% chance. A better line of play is to hope West has 3 ♠s. So, declarer should next play a small ♥ and let West trump your good ♦ when East wins and plays a ♦. Win the next trick and draw trump ending in dummy. Throw all your losers on the good ♦s.

Lesson from this Hand: Some hands are not easy.

## **Board 3, South deals, E-W vulnerable**

Bidding: South should pass and West should open 1 ♥, North will double, East will pass and South should bid 2 ♦.

West can now bid 2♥ but he should be careful since he is vulnerable. North can now bid 3♦. All will pass

Play of the hand in 3♦: West will lead the A♥, K♥ and then the 10♥. Dummy will get over ruffed by East when a small trump is played. West will play a ♠ and East will win the A♠. Game over. South can win any lead in hand and go to the A♦ and finesse East out of her Q♦. Declarer has to remember to dump a ♣ from the South hand on the good ♠ in dummy the last time he can get to dummy. Should make 3♦s

Lesson from this Hand: Have to remember to have entry to take your winners.

### **Board 4 West deals, both vulnerable**

Bidding: West will open 1♥ and North should bid 3♦. East could support West and bid 3♥. South will now bid 4♦ and most Wests are going to bid 4♥. All should pass.

Play of the hand in 4♥: North will lead the A♦ and then the K♦ which West will trump. West should hope trump are 3/2 and play the K♥ and then the Q♥ if South does not take her A♥, saving the J♥ as an entry to dummy. West can now win any return, draw the last trump with the J♥ and finesse South for the Q♠. West will still win a ♣ and go down 1.

Lesson from this Hand: In competitive bidding you sometime bid more than you can make but it still may be a good board since your opponents may be able have entry to take your winners. Notice North/South can make 4♦.

### **Board 5 North deals N/S Vulnerable**

Bidding: In the modern world North is going to open 1♦ and East is going to double. South will pass and West will convert the takeout double to penalty. If North or South tries to run, East /West will end up in 5♣.

Play of the hand in 1♦ doubled: East will lead K♣ and North/South will make only 3 tricks for down 4 for -1100.

Play of the hand in 5♣: South should lead a ♦ and East will ruff out the A♦. East will drive out the A♣ and

make 6.

Lesson from this Hand: The rule of 9 really does work (Look up Mel's Rule of 9)

### **Board 6 East deals E/W Vulnerable**

Bidding: East should pass and North/South will pass throughout. West is going to bid 1 ♠ and East is going to make a bid that shows a limit raise in ♠. East will bid Key Card Blackwood and end up in 6 ♠.

Play of the hand in 6 ♠: If a ♦ or ♣ are is lead, West gets a free finesse, but to make the contract West still has to finesse to play South for the K ♣ and/or North for the Q ♦. As the cards lie, West will go down,

Lesson from this Hand: People should be in 6 even if it only makes on a finesse. Sometime you will go down.

### **Boards 7-12 Joyce Jenzano**

#### **Board 7 South deals Both Vulnerable**

South deals and with 10 HCP and two distributional points opens the bidding with 1 spade.

West passes throughout. North has 15 HCP and 4 spades and should bid Jacoby 2NT to show 4+ spades and at

least an opening hand.

East has opening count, but has no suit to bid. It is also clear that his partner has almost nothing. East passes. South has options. South has a second 5 card heart suit and also a singleton diamond. He has a minimum hand for his opening bid. The first priority is to show the 5 card suit if it has good values, preferably 2 of 3 top honors. With A and Q of hearts, South bids 4 hearts. This bid also promises an outside void or singleton as well.

North, with good values in the side suits, may choose to investigate for slam by bidding 4NT.

South responds with 5 hearts showing 2 key cards without the spade Q.

North, accordingly bids 5 spades.

The play is straightforward, giving up the two missing Aces and successfully finessing against the heart K.

## **Board 8 West deals, Neither Vulnerable**

No one has a good opening bid on this deal. In first and second seat, West and North both pass with fewer than 12 points and no distributional values.

In third seat, East has a 5 card spade suit but only 8 HCP. Generally, opening the bidding with these meager scattered values would show a better suit and would also suggest the lead of that suit on defense. East should pass. South has 11HCP and no distributional values. The general rule (the Casino Rule) is to add the HCP to the number of spades in the hand. If this equals 15 or more, then open the bidding. Otherwise, without a valid opening

hand and with three prior passes, this position should also pass.

### **Board 9 North deals, EW vulnerable**

North deals and opens 1 heart.

East has a 5 card suit, but scattered values with an unprotected Q and J. Bidding at the 2 level in this position generally shows a solid opening hand. East should pass.

S has a nice club suit but only 7 HCP. South should respond with a 1 NT forcing bid.

West passes.

North has a difficult rebid. He has a nice spade suit, but he knows that South would have bid spades with 4. He doesn't have quite enough total points to reverse in spades and doesn't have enough to invite to game in NT.

He also doesn't have even 3 cards in a minor suit to bid.

North's best choice is probably to rebid hearts even though he only has 5, but bidding spades or NT are valid options given the concentration of values in the majors, although these bids over value this hand.

If North, bids 2 NT, South can raise to 3 given the six card club suit headed by AK since North is promising 18 points with the 2NT bid. If North rebids hearts, South may pass with a singleton assuming North has 6 hearts. If North bids spades showing a reverse, South may now show his club suit, but denying stoppers in diamonds.

North, with no diamond stopper, may pass.

Although some pairs played this hand successfully in NT,

this is not a viable contract on this deal.

### **Board 10 East deals, Both vulnerable**

East and South pass.

West opens 2NT with 20 HCP and a balanced hand.

North has an opening hand with a six card heart suit and may choose to interfere by bidding 3 hearts.

If North passes, East should use Stayman or Puppet Stayman to inquire about a spade fit. West denies a 4 card major and the final contract is 3 NT which makes since there is no opportunity for South to lead through Declarer's heart holding.

If North bids 3 hearts, East's bid depends on partnership agreement. A bid of Double may show a 4 card spade suit, may reflect a Stolen Bid showing a five card spade suit, or may just show game going points. In the absence of a specific agreement, East should just double and see what Opener rebids. In this deal, it will be 3 NT.

### **Board 11 South deals, Neither vulnerable**

South deals and opens 1 diamond with 10 HCP and 2 distributional points.

West may overcall 1 spade or bid 2 spades as a preemptive bid.

North may bid 3 spades, a cue bid showing at least 4 diamonds and 10+ points. However, he should not cue bid

with only 10 points as this pushes the bidding to the 4 level. In this case, with an opening hand, it is reasonable. Otherwise North could just raise diamonds.

East has a very good hand with 7 hearts, two singletons and 11 HCP and should definitely compete for the bid.

East should bid 3 hearts, but could also consider bidding 4 hearts to interfere with the opponents bidding.

South's opening bid was minimal and he should not bid at the 4 level.

West passes. North may raise diamonds to the 4 level and, if so East will then bid 4 hearts.

## **Board 12 West deals, NS vulnerable**

West and North pass.

East opens 1 club.

South has good values but has no good bid to make.

South passes.

West has 7 HCP and a void in partner's bid suit. West bids 1 heart.

Now North can come in with a 1 spade overcall.

East rebids clubs.

South doesn't have a good bid but does have 11 HCP.

South can double here showing points and values in diamonds. South also has tolerance for spades should partner rebid them. Alternatively, a 2NT bid would show values and stopper in clubs, but may be too ambitious since partner was originally a passed hand.

West passes and North rebids spades in responding to a double by South or passes a 2 NT bid.

Unfortunately, the spade contract was not successful. While the hand would make 2 NT, this would not have been the best contract to reach.

## **Boards 13-17 Michael Lavine**

### **Board 13 North deals, Both vulnerable**

Bidding: East has a clear opening bid of 1 club and the first interesting decision is South's. South has the strength and distribution to overcall 1nt, but has only a partial club stopper. Personally, I would pass, but I can see the appeal of a 1nt overcall. Assuming South passes, West might bid either 1d or 1nt. I would choose 1nt because the hand is balanced with strength in all three unbid suits, the diamond suit is short and weak, and 1nt tells partner immediately that you have no more than 10 points. See <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5127d3d2e4b0b304f0b6db24/t/60c038ec85f9f025b5b6d68f/1623210221597/2+Responding+-+Responding+to+1m+Notes.pdf> for a summary of responding to partner's 1c or 1d opening. Finally, should East rebid clubs after West's 1nt? In most cases it is wrong to rebid a 5-card suit. However, in this particular bidding sequence, East can tell that West has at least 3 clubs (West has at most 4 diamonds, 3 hearts, and 3 spades, hence at least 3 clubs.) and, because the enemy might be able to establish tricks in any of the other three suits, it might be wise to play in the

known 8-card fit.

Play: Playing in 1nt, North will probably lead a spade. West will play low from dummy, capture South's SJ with the ace, and still have another spade stopper with the combined queen and ten. Then West will try to develop clubs. This gives us a particular instance of how best to play a suit when missing different combinations of honors. That topic is called *card combinations* or *suit combinations*. <http://www.rpbridge.net/4a00.htm> gives a good summary. For this particular combination, missing the KJ, it says, "*If the ace and queen are in the same hand: Finesse for the king and jack with 8 cards or fewer. Finesse only for the king with 9 or 10 cards.*" On this hand, declarer might realize there aren't enough entries to the West hand, so might finesse only for the club king, probably making 1nt.

Playing in clubs, South will probably lead a high diamond and the defense will start with two high diamonds and a diamond ruff. Again, there is only one sure entry to the West hand and declarer must decide whether to use it to lead up to the spade queen or to take a club finesse.

### **Board 14 East deals, Neither vulnerable**

Bidding: South will open 1d and rebid 2n. Then NS will reach 4s.

Play: A lot will depend on the opening lead. If East makes the aggressive lead of a low club (not a diamond

— that's South's suit) then North can let it run to the queen and not lose any club tricks. If East leads more passively with either a heart or a spade, that's more difficult for North.

### **Board 15 South deals, NS vulnerable**

Bidding: Should East open 1s or 1nt? That's a tough question, as explained by <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/1nt-with-5-card-major>. Some pairs who open 1nt with a five-card major have adopted a convention called "puppet Stayman" that lets responder ask whether opener has a five-card major. See

<https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/puppet-stayman> and other websites for an explanation. EW will reach either 3nt or 4s depending on how they open and whether they play puppet Stayman.

Play: Playing in spades, if South makes the reasonable lead of a heart, then EW will get two heart tricks. If S leads a non-heart, then East can try to develop an extra trick by scoring a ruff in dummy. That entails discarding a heart on the diamond AKQ, then ruffing the third heart in dummy. Of course that must be done before pulling trumps.

### **Board 16 West deals, EW vulnerable**

Should West open with a preempt? The hand has two flaws: a void and a good four-card major. No answer is

right all the time. This hand illustrates what can go wrong: if you open 3d you will probably miss the good game in 4h. Here are some discussions: [https://web2.acbl.org/CommunityLessons/9\\_21\\_23.pdf](https://web2.acbl.org/CommunityLessons/9_21_23.pdf), <https://www.hamiltonbridge.com/Articles/PreemptiveOpenings.html>, <https://kwbridge.com/pre-open.htm>, and <http://www.rpbridge.net/3j00.htm>.

### **Board 17, North deals, Neither vulnerable**

Bidding: North opens 1d and East has just barely enough to overcall 2c. Should South act? The basics of bidding after an opponent overcalls are at [https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/after-the-opponents-overcall and](https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/after-the-opponents-overcall-and) [https://www.larryco.com/uploaded/pdf/pdfup\\_923.pdf](https://www.larryco.com/uploaded/pdf/pdfup_923.pdf). I don't think South is strong enough to act. Should West make an advance after East's overcall? See <https://www.larryco.com/bridge-articles/simple-overcalls> and <https://www.advinbridge.com/this-week-in-bridge/527> for discussion. In my opinion, 2c is quite likely to be passed out, though that's not what happened in our game.

Play: Playing in clubs, South will probably lead a diamond, partner's suit, and East will soon be in with DK. How should the clubs be played? See the comments about board 13 about card combinations. On this hand, East can first finesse against the CJ by leading up to dummy's C9. The finesse works and drives out CK. Then East will win 5 clubs, 1 diamond, the spade king, and 2 or three hearts depending on who leads them and how the suit is

played.

## **Boards 18-22 Ray McEntee**

### **Board 18, East deals, NS vulnerable**

The bidding should go: 1D-1H-3H-4H, straightforward

The Play: East, in my opinion, should lead an unbid major, the spade 10, "top of nothing". North can immediately see 1 Spade trick, 3 Hearts, 4 Diamonds if the K is onside, and 3 Clubs. So, he takes his ace, drives out the trump ace, loses the spade return, trumps a third spade, then takes the diamond finesse which wins, and claims 11 tricks.

In the event South opens 1 NT with his 18 count North should bid 3 NT ending the auction and putting West on lead. It's too dangerous to lead away from King -Jack even with a 5-card suit, so West will probably lead the Club deuce. Again, North sees 1 Spade, 3 Hearts, 4 Diamonds if the K is onside, and 3 Clubs. He can attack Hearts or Diamonds first, it doesn't matter. Fortunately, the Diamond king is onside. When East takes his Heart ace and returns a spade, South will win the ace and claim 11 tricks.

Note that if the Diamond finesse loses, the 4 Heart contract makes 4 losing a Spade, a Diamond and a Heart. The 3 NT contract also makes 4. So, it seems opening 1 NT pays off- at least this time.

## **Board 19, South deals, EW vulnerable**

South opens 3 Spades, favorable vulnerability. North guesses, do we have a slam? If he guesses correctly he bids 4 Spades.

The Play: South wins the lead on the board, leads a spade and realizes he has to lose 3 spade tricks. That's all he loses!

## **Board 20, West deals, both vulnerable**

Should go P-1C-P-1S  
P-1N-P-P

North playing 1 NT with East on lead. Diamond queen or Heart ace is probably best. The defense will make 3 Heart tricks plus 3 Diamond tricks, plus a Spade. Seems like there's no way to make 1 NT.

## **Board 21, North deals, NS vulnerable**

Should go: P-2N-P-3D  
P-3H-P-P

The Play: South leads a small Spade to the ace, a spade back to the king. South probably continues Spades allowing East to pitch a Club while winning the Spade queen in hand. East then leads a Diamond to the queen, then a small Heart dropping the king. East realizes he

must lose a Heart. So, on trick 6 East leads a small Heart to South's queen. South has no effective play at this point; maybe the Diamond jack voiding his hand of Diamonds in hopes of a ruff. East wins, plays a winning Heart followed by ace and king of Clubs then a Club ruff. At trick 12 declarer leads dummy's last Heart dropping South's last Heart and then the last diamond to his ace. Losing 2 Spades and 1 Heart, making 4.

## **Board 22, East deals, EW vulnerable**

One possible auction:

Another, and probably,  
more likely

P-P-P-1C  
P-1D-P-2N  
P-3N-P-P  
P

auction:  
P-2D-P-3N

In either case North plays 3N

The Play: East leads Heart 3, 4<sup>th</sup> best. Looks easy. If the Diamond queen and the Club king are both onside there are 10 tricks in the minors plus 3 top Hearts. What can go wrong? What if both are not onside? If the defense forces Hearts twice East will have 2 good Heart tricks and West has the Spade ace. That's down 1. But East can never get in, so, in fact North will cash 8 tricks in the minors plus 3 top hearts, making 5. ....continued....

You should think about North taking 2 finesses, back to back, Diamonds then Clubs, versus laying down the Club

ace, then leading a low Club to South's queen hoping East has king doubleton. Which is the better play?

Suggestion: purchase from Baron Barclay a box of flash cards called "BRIDGE, The Standard Plays of Card Combinations on Flash Cards", by Alan Truscott. Cost about \$18. and provides over 100 card combinations, not to be memorized, but to help you learn the proper way to play common combinations.

## **Boards 23-27 Morris Weinberger**

### **Board 23, South deals, both vulnerable**

Bidding: Despite having a 4-card heart suit, South would choose to open 2D. With 17 points and a balanced hand, West doubles. North passes, and East bids 3C, their only 4-card suit. South passes and West passes because they are not strong enough to suggest 5C as a final contract and because East would strive to bid notrump rather than clubs if East had a diamond stopper, making 3C the final contract.

Play of the hand in 3C: South leads the AK of diamonds, North discarding a heart on the second round. North then leads a third round of diamonds, North ruffing with the 4. North leads a heart which East wins with the Queen. Declarer then leads the 10 of clubs, ducking from hand and won by North with the Jack. North leads their last heart. West winning with the King. With no entry to the

hand, declarer leads the A of clubs, learning about the 5-1 split in clubs, and continues with the Queen of clubs. North wins with the King and leads a low spade, South playing the Queen and won by West with the Ace. West plays the A of hearts, North ruffing with their last club (the 7) and East overruffing with the 8. Declarer now leads the Jack of spades, which North wins the King. With only the 10 and 4 of spades left, whichever North leads, West will win the last two tricks. East-West is down 2 for -200.

### **Board 24, West deals, neither vulnerable**

Bidding: With 17 HCPs and 4-4-4-1 distribution, West opens 1D. North passes, and East bids 1H. After South passes, West bids 1S, North passes, and East bids 1NT. West bids 2NT; with 9 points, East raises to 3NT.

Play of the hand in 3NT: South must choose whether to lead from their 5-card heart suit or 5-card spade suit. If South decides to lead their 4<sup>th</sup> best heart (the 5), it will be covered by the King and won by North with the Ace. North returns the 6 of hearts, covered by the 7, and South winning with the 8. Given that the only entry to their hand is if North leads a heart and not wanting to give declarer a trick by leading the Queen and another heart, South shifts to their 4<sup>th</sup> best spade, which North wins with the Ace. North continues with a heart. South wins as cheaply as

possible and cashes two more heart tricks and exits with a spade. Declarer plays a diamond to the Ace and a diamond back to the Queen, discovering the 4-1 diamond split. Another diamond is played, with declarer taking two more diamond tricks. Declarer's only play on the clubs is to hope the Queen falls, which it does. Declarer is down one for – 50. If South decides to lead their 4<sup>th</sup> best spade (the 3), declarer knows that North has only three cards higher than a 3 (Rule of 11) and so plays low from dummy. North plays the A to protect against a singleton Jack or 10 from winning the trick. The safest lead is another spade, which West wins with the King. Declarer plays a low diamond to the Ace and then a low diamond to the Queen, revealing the 4-1 diamond break. Declarer continues diamonds and wins the next two diamond tricks. With 6 certain tricks (4 diamonds and 2 spades), declarer only needs 3 club tricks to make the contract. Declarer plays a low club to the King and cashes the A, expecting to lose a trick to Queen of clubs. When the club Queen falls, declarer cashes the high spade, plays low to the jack of club, and cashes the last club for 10 tricks. As the cards lie, the defense will take the last two tricks. Declarer makes one overtrick for +430.

**Board 25, North deals, EW vulnerable**

Bidding: North opens 1S, East passes, and South bids 2C. North's hand is very valuable. Since N-S is in a game forcing auction, North bids 3C to set the trump suit. South, with no extra values, bids 3NT. North could pass to end the auction or, more likely, bid 4C to explore a club slam. South will bid 4H as a control bid. North now bids 4NT, and South bids 5C to show one key card. Since South has already shown a heart control, North can safely bid 6C.

Play of the hand: If the final contract is 3NT by South, West leads their 4<sup>th</sup> best heart (the 4), giving declarer a free heart finesse. After drawing trump, South has 12 top tricks (5 spades, 5 clubs, and 2 hearts for +490). If the final contract is 6C by South, West will lead the A of diamonds and then lead to 10 of spades hoping that partner has the K. Declarer will win the Ace and then draw trumps in 3 rounds, ending in South. Declarer then ruffs a diamond, plays a spade to the King, and ruffs a diamond. Declarer then runs the spades, pitching the last diamond and the Queen and 5 of hearts to make the slam for +920.

## **Board 26, East deals, both vulnerable**

Bidding: East passes, and South opens 1S. West overcalls 2C, and North raises to 2S. East passes, as

does South. West considers bidding 3C, but with E-W vulnerable, chooses to pass, ending the auction,

Play of the hand in 2S: West leads the diamond A and then switches to the deuce of hearts. Declarer wins the Ace in dummy, pitching a low club. Declarer now leads a low spade to the Jack, covered by the Queen and won by West with the King. West leads a low heart, covered by the 10, K and ruffed in the South hand. Declarer plays the A of spades and then continues with another spade, won by East. East leads a club covered by the Queen, King, and won in North with the Ace. Declarer will lose two diamond tricks, making the contract +110.

### **Board 27, South deals, neither vulnerable**

Bidding: South opens 2D, and West overcalls 2S. North passes, and East jumps to 3NT, ending the auction.

Play of the hand in 3NT: South leads the Queen of diamonds, which East ducks. When South continues with the jack, East winning with the Ace. East plays the Queen of clubs and then a small club to the Ace, showing the 4-1 split. Declarer now needs to set up spades while they have an entry to the board in clubs. So, declarer plays a low spade to the jack and continues with the 8 of spades, which South wins with the Ace. South leads another

diamond, which East wins. East now plays a club to the King and runs the spades. Declarer plays a low heart to the Ace and another low heart towards the Queen. However, South wins the King and cashes the remaining diamonds. E-W make 10 tricks (4 spades, 3 clubs, 2 diamonds and 1 heart) for +430.