

Bidding Decisions 9/18/19

Board 2	♠ K 6 2	
East Deals	♥ K J 7 6 2	
N-S Vul	♦ A 7 2	
	♣ 10 6	
♠ Q 10 8 3		♠ A 9 7 4
♥ A Q		♥ 8 5 4
♦ 4 3		♦ J 9 8 6
♣ K 9 8 7 3		♣ J 5
	♠ J 5	
	♥ 10 9 3	
	♦ K Q 10 5	
	♣ A Q 4 2	

You are South in 2nd seat on this hand. East passed and you passed. Although you correctly recognized that your hand was no great shakes (fewer than 13 HCP), most of the bridge community these days considers it a minimum opening hand. Its assets: 12 HCP, 2 and ½ quick tricks, nice intermediate texture in the heart suit, satisfies the “rule of 20” (8 cards on your longest suits plus 12 HCP equals 20). We easily find our game in hearts if you open the hand. I recommend South open the hand one diamond, leaving himself with an easy rebid of 2 clubs.

Board 8	♠ 8	
West Deals	♥ J 10 8 4 3 2	
None Vul	♦ 7 6 4	
	♣ A Q 4	
♠ K Q J 9		♠ A 10 3
♥ 9		♥ K Q 6
♦ A Q 10 8		♦ J 5 2
♣ 10 9 8 5		♣ K J 7 2
	♠ 7 6 5 4 2	
	♥ A 7 5	
	♦ K 9 3	
	♣ 6 3	

You are West as dealer and decide to pass with fewer than 13 HCP. As in the previous board, I suggest that West's hand is worth a minimum opening bid. West has 12 HCP, nice sequence of intermediates in the club suit, beautiful sequence of honors in the spade suit, 2 and ½ quick tricks, satisfies the rule of 20 (8 cards on your longest suits plus 12 HCP equals 20). This hand illustrates why it's better on balance to draw first blood in the bidding. North (who preempted with a weak two hearts opening bid in 2nd seat) would have been unable to keep us from reaching 3NT. My recommendation: open the hand one diamond, leaving yourself with an easy rebid of 2 clubs.

Board 10	♠ Q	
East Deals	♥ 8 6 5 4	
Both Vul	♦ 8 7 6	
	♣ A Q 9 8 6	
♠ 8 7 6		♠ J 10 9 4 2
♥ K J 7		♥ A Q 9 2
♦ A K Q 10 3		♦ J 4
♣ K J		♣ 4 2
		♠ A K 5 3
		♥ 10 3
		♦ 9 5 2
		♣ 10 7 5 3

After two passes on this hand West made the nice opening bid of 1NT (15-17 HCP). I responded 2 clubs (Stayman) asking if West has a 4-card major. West's rebid of 2 diamonds correctly said "no, I don't have a 4-card major". I then bid 2 spades to play.

The main point here is that responder to the 1NT opening bid becomes "captain of the hand," since he knows within one high card point the assets of the partnership (in this case I add your estimated 16 to my 8 equals 24 HCP). It does not look (from responder's perspective) like we have a game unless there is a major suit fit.

Another inference West can draw as the opening NT bidder is that your partner must be 5-4 in the majors with less than a game forcing hand in the context of the

bidding so far. Otherwise he would invite with 2NT or a jump to three of his five-card major.

It's interesting that EW would likely make 3NT on the hand as the cards lie. West can count 5 diamond tricks and 4 heart tricks for a total of nine tricks. It's unlikely that North would put South on lead with a spade for a damaging club shift.

Board 11

South Deals

None Vul

♠ 9

♥ K Q J 10 9 7 5

♦ A J 10 8

♣ J

♠ Q J 10 4

♥ 3

♦ 5 2

♣ A K 9 7 5 2



♠ 8 6 2

♥ —

♦ K 9 7 6 4

♣ Q 10 8 6 4

♠ A K 7 5 3

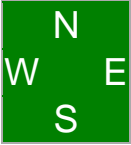
♥ A 8 6 4 2

♦ Q 3

♣ 3

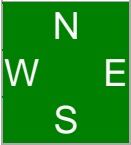
This is a very interesting hand in which West's right-hand opponent opened one spade. West has a great hand even though it's contains only 12 HCP. How many tricks do you have with that fantastic heart suit? I count seven tricks (losing the ace of hearts and running the remaining six hearts plus the ace of diamonds). The heart suit itself contains only six HCP but it's worth six tricks for your side in a heart contract. I recommend West overcall two hearts with that trick taking potential. Can you believe that we will easily make four hearts opposite partner's void and a bad heart split? On a combined 17 HCP no less! Points schmoints. We lose one spade, one heart, and one club. Ten tricks come home for EW in a heart contract!

Board 12 ♠ K Q 10 4
 West Deals ♥ 6 5
 N-S Vul ♦ 7 3
 ♣ K Q 9 5 4

♠ A J 8 6 2 ♥ A Q 9 ♦ J 4 ♣ A 10 8		♠ — ♥ J 8 7 3 2 ♦ Q 10 9 8 5 ♣ J 3 2	♠ 9 7 5 3 ♥ K 10 4 ♦ A K 6 2 ♣ 7 6
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This hand demonstrates the benefit of transfers when partner opens 1NT. West opened 1NT with 16 HCP. I responded two diamonds (at this point West should announce to the opponents “transfer to hearts”). West correctly bid two hearts and made nine tricks opposite my crummy 4-point hand. Well done and a good result for us.

Board 22 ♠ A Q 8 4
 East Deals ♥ K J
 E-W Vul ♦ K 4 2
 ♣ A 10 9 2

♠ J ♥ A Q 9 8 ♦ Q 9 3 ♣ K J 7 4 3		♠ 9 6 3 ♥ 10 7 5 2 ♦ A 10 8 7 6 ♣ 8	♠ K 10 7 5 2 ♥ 6 4 3 ♦ J 5 ♣ Q 6 5
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On this board there were three passes, and I opened the bidding 1NT (15-17 HCP) in 4th seat. South passed with his crummy hand, correctly recognizing that we did not have enough strength to consider game. Even with a bad hand, though, South

can ask himself if he might be able to improve the part score contract without fear of the auction getting too high. Is there a better potential contract than leaving partner in 1NT? It looks like 2 spades would likely be a better contract for us from South's perspective. By bidding two hearts South can transfer partner to two spades. Once North bids two spades South will pass, knowing that there is no game in the hand and this is likely the best part score contract. As the cards lie NS can make ten tricks in two spades. But NS can only make seven tricks in one no-trump. Study the hand to make sure you see the benefits of using transfers even with a bad hand. Being captain of the hand is an awesome responsibility! 😊

Board 24	♠ A 9	
West Deals	♥ A 8 5	
None Vul	♦ J 8 7 3 2	
	♣ Q 10 2	
♠ K 6 5 2	<div style="display: inline-block; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; border: 1px solid black;"> N W E S </div>	♠ J 4
♥ Q		♥ 10 7 6 4
♦ 10 9 6 5 4		♦ A K Q
♣ K J 5		♣ A 9 8 4
	♠ Q 10 8 7 3	
	♥ K J 9 3 2	
	♦ —	
	♣ 7 6 3	

You are South and your RHO opens the bidding one club. This is a perfect hand for you to make the [Michaels cue bid](#) overcall of two clubs (showing a 5-5 holding in the majors). You have only 6 HCP but lots of trick taking potential in the majors, assuming you and partner have a fit. And you are not vulnerable. Also, notice the preemptive value of bidding their suit – it robs them of valuable bidding space! It's great fun when you can do it.

Weak Two Bids:

I have been asked me a couple of times how to decide when to make a preemptive bid. Here is the hand I held as dealer (vulnerable) on board 9:

♠ K J 7 5 4 3

♥ J

♦ 9 2

♣ J 5 3 2

I have six spades and six points, so it's in the range of our agreement on the strength needed for a two level preempt (5-10 HCP). But it does not have enough playing tricks! Optimistically it looks like I can count on only 3 tricks in the spade suit. That is 5 tricks short of being able to take 8 tricks in a contract of two spades. I prefer to be within 3 tricks of my bid when vulnerable and within 4 tricks when not vulnerable. I would pass.

Change the hand to:

♠ K Q J 7 5 4

♥ 3

♦ 9 2

♣ 8 5 3 2

This is a much better six points. Now it looks like I can count on 4 or 5 tricks in the spade suit, and I would open it two spades.