

## Proposed Bidding - Sept 15, 2023

1.	N	E	S	W
	P	P	1D	2C
	2S	All Pass		

### Notes:

- On likely Club lead, West needs to worry about being end played into leading a Heart
- Best approach: cash AK of clubs, then A and 7 of spades
- Not likely to cost a trump trick: if South has the Q of Spades, only entitled to A. Unlikely East has QX in Spades, since South likely would have gone to 3S with 4 card support

Likely Result: Making 2 – defense get 2 Clubs, 2 Spades and K of Hearts

2.	N	E	S	W
		1S	P	3S
	4D	P	4S	All Pass

### Notes:

- 4D shows: A. slam interest in Spades, B. first or second round control in Diamonds and C. NO first or second round control in Clubs
- South has no extras and, potentially, exposed K of Clubs. So, simply signs off in 4S

Likely Result: Making 5 – defense get A of Clubs and K of Hearts

3.	N	E	S	W
			1S	P
	2C	3H	3S	4H
	4S	All Pass		

### Notes:

- North is too strong to bid 3S (non-forcing) and 1 trump short of bidding Jacoby 2 NT. So, temporizes with 2C
- East's 3H is preemptive and lead directing

Likely Result: Making 5 – defense get two Aces

4.	N	E	S	W
				P
	P	1D	P	1H
	P	2H	All Pass	

Notes:

- South has no reason to enter the auction once East opens 1D
- East's only shot is to establish Clubs. Means that he needs to keep board's K of Spades as an entry

Likely Result: Making ? – At least AK of Clubs and A of Diamonds. Probably will get K of Hearts on a finesse. May get a Spade and/or a second Heart trick

5.	N	E	S	W
	2NT	P	3NT	All Pass

Notes:

- If playing Puppet Stayman, South should bid 3C. Will let them find superior 4H contract
- If not, South's flat hand and scattered values calls for giving away less information. Thus, direct 3NT bid
- East needs to be careful on the run of the Hearts: he needs to keep 3 Clubs and 3 Diamonds. Means he needs to hope partner can protect Spades.

Likely Result: Making 4 – Declarer should get 5 Hearts, 2 Spades, 2 Clubs and a Diamond

6.	N	E	S	W
		1NT	P	2C
	P	2S	P	3NT
	All Pass			

Notes:

- If playing a system over opponent's NT, South should bid to show Spades and Diamonds. Say, 2D with DON'T. May very well buy the contract
- On the likely Diamond lead, East knows he's going down: opponents should get at least 4 Diamond tricks and the A of Clubs. So, there is no point in trying to establish anything but Clubs.

Likely Result: Down 1 – Declarer should get 3 Spades, 3 Clubs, A of Hearts and a Diamond

7.	N	E	S	W
			1NT	P
	2D	P	2H	P
	3NT	P	4H	All Pass

Notes:

- Declarer should finesse twice in Hearts given the strong spots. Start with the Q of Hearts to force out the K. Holds losses to 1 trump as long as West has either honor. Any other play requires a guess of the second round of trumps
- Declarer should NOT go after Diamonds: that will lead to 2 losers in that suit. Instead, the goal should be to finesse Q of Spades and then pitch a Diamond on the 9 of Spades if they split 3-3. Not a great chance, but the only realistic option.
- If West leads a Diamond, then Declarer needs to play low in Dummy. This protects against 2 Diamond losers even if East inserts the J on the first trick (best defense)

Likely Result: Making 4 – Defense gets 1 trick in Diamonds, Hearts and Clubs each

8.	N	E	S	W
				1D
	2NT*	P	3H	X
	P	4S	All Pass	

2NT = Unusual No-Trump = Two lowest, unbid suits (i.e. Hearts and Clubs)

Notes:

- In the context of this auction, East has a MONSTER hand: 5 Spades including the A, no wastage in Hearts. So, he should bid 4S, not just 3S, after West's takeout double

Likely Result: Making ? – It can make 4, but it's not easy even knowing that North is at least 5-5 in the red suits. Take the play on a club lead:

1. Rise with the Ace
2. Cross to hand with a low Spade to the Ace
3. Finesse with the Jack of Diamonds to establish 3 Diamonds (Note: North is out of trump due to the play at trick 2)
4. Pitch 2 clubs on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Diamonds
5. South will ruff the 4<sup>th</sup> Diamond but can't return trump since that will allow declarer to draw trump and pitch two losing Hearts. Similar story with a Club lead: Declarer ruffs in hand, leads a Spade to the board and proceeds as before. So, the only hope is to lead 2 Hearts.
6. From there, play alternates for the next 3 tricks between Dummy leading a Diamond, which South ruffs, and then Dummy ruffing the Heart return.
7. After trick 10, Declarer is left with 3 winning trumps. Defense only gets 3 ruffs, so contract makes

9.	N	E	S	W
	1NT	P	2H	X
	3S	P	P	4D
	P	4H	All Pass	

X = Suit showing. In general, doubles of artificial bids show that suit. (Note: 2S in this auction would be takeout.)

3S = Super accept the transfer: 4 card support and 17 points

Notes:

- Despite being 3-3 in the partner's suits, East has a clear preference for Hearts since 4H is game
- Given West's huge two suiter, South's best chance to set the contract is to get a ruff. (Note: Having three low trump suggests that West will be able to pull trump even if forced to trump a Spade or two.) When North gets in with the Ace of trump at Trick 2, he should return the Queen of Diamonds. In this case, returning a high card for partner to trump requests a lead of the higher remaining suit (i.e. Spades, not Clubs). If South returns a Spade, then she gets a second

ruff to set the contract. If she returns a Club instead, then East can pull the remaining trump, run West's remaining Diamonds pitching Spades from his hand. That will be just enough discards to allow him to ruff West's singleton K of Spades to make 5.

- Declarer can make North's life harder by pitching the 5 of Diamonds on the first trick. That may make them think that partner's leading top of a doubleton 7 2. (Note: There is NO way on this bidding that South should be leading one of dummy's long suits with a doubleton instead of their side's 9 card Spade suit. But it happens...)

Likely Result: Making 4 – It takes a very bold North to set up dummy's long suit with the Diamond return.

10.	N	E	S	W
		1C	X	2S
	P	3C	All Pass	

Notes:

- Without the Double, West might have gone as high as 4S. But with it, and the likely bad split, there's no need to go higher than 2 here
- Since West might have 6 lousy Spades, East has an easy pull to his solid 6-card Club suit
- Don't envy South on lead. Spade: yuck! Club: yuck! Diamond: double yuck! Heart: only lead that gives East a legit shot to make!

Likely Result: Down 1 – Defense should get Ace of Diamonds, long Club and 3 Hearts.

11.	N	E	S	W
			1C	2D
	X	P	2S	P
	3H	All Pass		

Notes:

- This sequence by North shows a hand that was too weak to bid 2H immediately (i.e. less than 10 points). This makes South's subsequent Pass easy
- If North upgrades his hand to a 2H overcall, then his side will likely end up in 4H going down
- That would be the right bid with a working singleton, say in Diamonds, not one in partner's first suit

Likely Result: Making 3 – 6 Hearts, 2 Aces and a Diamond.

12.	N	E	S	W
				P
	P	P	1S	P
	1NT	P	2D	P
	2S	All Pass		

Notes:

- All 5-card Spade holdings can't be great
- Not everyone is going to open this hand, so you need to play to make. So, finesse the Club!

Likely Result: Making 2 – 2 Spades, 1 Heart, 3 Diamonds, 2 Clubs!

13.	N	E	S	W
	1C	X	1NT	2H
	3C	P	P	3H
	All Pass			

Notes:

- None

Likely Result: Down 1 – Defense will likely take 3 minor tricks (1 gets pitched on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Spade. Will likely lose 2 trumps: need to play a low trump from both hands on the first trick.

14.	N	E	S	W
		1H	P	1S
	P	2NT	All Pass	

Notes:

- None

Likely Result: Making 2 – 5 Hearts and 3 Aces.

15.	N	E	S	W
			3C	4C
	P	4S	All Pass	

3C = Can't bid 2C, so gotta push it up a level

4C = Michaels

Notes:

- None

Likely Result: Making 5 – Ruff out 2 of Dummy's Hearts. Leaves only 2 trump losers

16.	N	E	S	W
				1C
	1S	2D	2H	3D
	All Pass			

Notes:

- 3D may not end the auction, but it probably should!
- Given the bidding, East attack Hearts by leading low towards Dummy's Queen
- East will need to do a good job of counting to get the play in Clubs right

Likely Result: Making 3 – Defense takes 1 in each suit

17.	N	E	S	W
	3C!	All Pass		

3C = Can't bid 2C, so gotta push it up a level

Notes:

- The next time tells you here “preempts don’t work”, show them this hand!
- North just needs to use both of Dummy’s entries: A of Spades, K of Clubs to finesse in Diamonds

Likely Result: Making 3 – Defense takes 2 trumps plus 1 in each red suit

18.	N	E	S	W
		2H	P	P
	2S	P	P	3H
	All Pass			

Notes:

- No need for West to push to 3H unless North bids 2S
- East should draw only 2 trump and then pitch a Spade on the King of Diamonds

Likely Result: Making 4 – Defense takes 2 Spades and 1 trump

19.	N	E	S	W
			1NT	All Pass

Notes:

- If playing a system over opponent’s NT, East should bid to show Spades and Diamonds. Say, 2C with DON’T. Should get the pair to a very playable 2H
- This is going to be an important hand for South’s composure. When Dummy comes down, she’ll realize she has very little chance of making! And, if the opponents see her deflation, they are more likely to find the right defense. So, it will pay for her to not give anything away
- To that end, South should avoid breaking new suit whenever possible

Likely Result: Down 1 – The Defense can set the contract 2 if they 1. Establish Hearts immediately and 2. Use East’s Aces to both cash the length Heart and finesse South’s King of Spades twice. In practice, West is likely to give up at trick with the initial lead: a Spade lets South score her King, a Diamond or Club kills the timing for East being able to cash his long Heart. It’s even possible that West will get endplayed in Spades, which would let South make!



20.	N	E	S	W
				P
	P	1S	2C	2S
	P	4S	All Pass	

Notes:

- East's hand is too strong to open 1NT. Yes, it only has 17 points. But they're almost all working: Aces and Kings. Plus, the two doubletons.

Likely Result: Making 5 – there aren't many choices here. Only one way to play the Clubs: lead from hand towards the King. The Diamonds offer a choice, but the most likely approach (i.e. finesse the Queen) works here, too.

21.	N	E	S	W
	2C	P	2D	P
	2NT	All Pass		

Notes:

- East is well positioned: sitting behind the strong hand, not Vulnerable. But he should have 1 more Spade to inject a 2S bid here.
- On the lead, East should make his standard lead of the J of Spades. Yes, this might give away a trick in the likely situation that North has the Ace and the Queen. But, even then, leading it immediately is likely to set up his 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> spade while he still has an entry to cash them (i.e. the Ace of Clubs). In this hand, that lead is golden since West has the Ace!

Likely Result: Down 2 – on the run of the Spades, North is going to have to make 3 discards. That is either going to expose his Club holding or force him to pitch length Hearts. As long as East pays attention, North will be held to 6 tricks.

22.	N	E	S	W
		1H	P	1S
	P	2H	P	3C
	P	3NT	All Pass	

Notes:

- Yes, West could bid 2C at her first opportunity. But that will eliminate any possibility of finding a 4-4 Spade fit. Both 1S and 3C are 100% forcing on this auction, so there is no problem with missing game from this approach.
- On the likely Spade lead, North can make the contract kinda of dicey if he ducks the first Club and then returns the Queen of Hearts.

Likely Result: Making 4 – after North’s play, East is cut off from Dummy’s winners. So, he needs to get creative: cash both high Hearts pitching a Spade from Dummy, then lead a low Diamond from hand. Whatever South does, East has forced his way into Dummy. (Note: Even if North had the King of Diamonds, East still might be able to make by setting up Hearts.)

23.	N	E	S	W
			P	P
	1C	1S	2C	X
	2D	All Pass		

Notes:

- Aggression all around on this one! North’s 1C bid isn’t everyone’s cup of tea, but in third seat he has to act with this hand. Same with West’s Double: not a lot of points but can live with whatever East does over it.
- East is in a tough spot on his second bid. Everything is a lie: not enough trump to pass, needs 1 more Spade to rebid his suit, short in both red suits. In this situation, it is best to keep this low and flexible. Thu, the 2D call. (Remember: This does NOT end the auction. If Spades or Hearts are a better spot, the West will likely correct.)
- East needs to be a little careful when setting up Spades. Specifically, he needs to make sure that he retains an entry back to his hand: either one of the top Hearts or the 3<sup>rd</sup> trump depending on the defense

Likely Result: Making 2 – as long as East is careful, he should only lose 2 in each Minor suit and a Spade

24.	N	E	S	W
				1C
	P	1D	P	2NT
	P	3NT	All Pass	

Notes:

- Yes, we sometimes bypass a 1D response with 4 of a major. But there's no need to do that here: East's hand is strong enough for multiple bids.

Likely Result: Making 4 – if you were in 6NT, you might be backed into making it. But, at only 3NT, the aggressive line: win the likely Heart lead in Dummy with the King, establish a minor suit, finesse the King of Spades when you get around to it risks going down if you pick the wrong minor (i.e. Clubs). Instead, your best approach is to make the contract. So, this should be your approach:

- Win the first trick in hand with the Ace of Hearts
- Finesse Spades immediately

This guarantees 9 tricks: 3 Spades and 2 in each of the other suits. When the King is onside, it will often give you a chance to revert to the other approach after clearing Spades. But, in this case, South can foil that plan by simply holding up the King until the 4<sup>th</sup> Spade trick. That will eliminate any entry back to East's hand after Diamonds have been established.

25.	N	E	S	W
	1S	2H	3H	P
	3S	All Pass		

Notes:

- South's 3H cue bid is a limit raise in Spades: 3+ Spades, 10+ points. With the singleton (in opponent's suit no less!), this hand qualifies.
- The worthless QJ in opponent's suit downgrades this hand, so North shouldn't go to game.
- Even with the well positioned K of Spades, East doesn't have enough to try 4H, especially Vulnerable.

Likely Result: Making 5 – the Defense is entitled to 4 tricks: K of Spades, A of Hearts and 2 Clubs, but only if they lead a Club at Trick 1! On any other lead, North has time to either set up Dummy's Diamonds while the Ace of Clubs is still an entry or establish a crossruff. For example, assume the most likely start: Ace of Hearts followed by a Diamond switch. From there, the play should go like this:

1. On that trick, Dummy's Jack gets covered by the West's Queen and Declarer's Ace. (Note: No point forgoing a free finesse!)
2. Declarer leads a second Diamond with all following. (Note: North doesn't care here if East ruffs since he will just play a low Diamond from Dummy instead.)
3. Dummy leads another Diamond, which West covers, and ruffs with the 10 of Spade. East's best play here is to overruff with the King and lead a Club.

4. Rise with Dummy's Ace and draw 2 trumps. It was important for Declarer to ruff with the 10 earlier because, this second trick can end in Dummy: Declarer takes the first one high in hand and then leads the carefully preserved 6.
5. Start cashing Dummy's Diamonds. Declarer is going to start tossing losing Clubs, so West does best to ruff the first one (i.e. Dummy's fourth). But North overruffs.
6. Now, since East is marked with the King of Hearts based on the lead, Declarer can do a ruffing finesse: lead the Queen of Hearts. If East ducks, discard a Club from Dummy and then ruff Declarer's Jack of Hearts. If East covers, ruff in Dummy.
7. Back in Dummy, cash the last 2 Diamonds since the Defense is out of trump pitching Declarer's remaining Clubs.
8. And, voila: Declarer's hand is good! Making 5!

26.        N        E        S        W  
                          P        P        1C  
              1NT    All Pass

Notes:

- Even I'm not willing to open West's hand 1NT, not to mention it's against ACBL's current rules! But I am willing to bid it with North's hands. It would be a different story if West bid a Major, or even Diamonds. But, she might have only 3, so North can be a little more aggressive on the definition of a "stopper"

Likely Result: Making 3 – Without anything better to do, East is likely going to lead a low Club. Since this typically indicates an honor in the suit, as opposed to a "top of nothing" lead, North can now expect to collect 2 tricks in the suit by simply covering with the 9. West can win the King, but can't profitably attack Spades due to Dummy's Jack. (Note: The way to hold Declarer to 8 tricks is for East to lead a Spade which lets West smother Dummy's Jack.) As a result, Declarer is able to come to 9 tricks: 5 Hearts, 2 Clubs and 1 each in Spades and Diamonds.

27.        N        E        S        W  
    2S        P  
              3S        All Pass

Notes:

- North's 3S bid is purely an attempt to increase the pressure on the opponents, NOT an invitation for South to go to 4.
- East is going to be tempted to do something given his 6-5 shape. But his lack of points and pure suit quality (I'm looking at you 6 Clubs to the 10!) will likely keep him out of the auction.

Likely Result: Making 3 – If East was on lead, the set would be easy: lead his singleton Diamond to partner’s Ace and get a ruff back. But, that’s not the case here: West is on lead. Holding A Q X in Spades behind Declarer’s length, she will want to be aggressive. Without information about East’s hand, West will likely lead to a low Diamond. That won’t cost a Diamond trick, but it does mean East will be out of trump when West gets back in with one of her top trump. So, the Defense will only get 4 tricks: 2 Spades and two Aces.

28.	N	E	S	W
				1C
	P	1D	P	1S
	P	1NT	All Pass	

Notes:

- Since East’s hand is good enough for two bids, he shouldn’t bypass 1D.
- West is going to be tempted to pull partner’s bid to 2C but should avoid that temptation due to the lack of length (should have 6) and strength in her suit.

Likely Result: Making 3 – If East was on lead, the set would be easy: lead his singleton Diamond to partner’s Ace and get a ruff back. But that’s not the case here: West is on lead. Holding A Q X in Spades behind Declarer’s length, she will want to be aggressive. Without information about East’s hand, West will likely lead to a low Diamond. That won’t cost a Diamond trick, but it does mean East will be out of trump when West gets back in with one of her top trump.

29.	N	E	S	W
	1H	X	4H	P
	P	X	P	4S
	All Pass			

Notes:

- North’s 1H opening is not everyone’s cup of tea. But, with 5 Hearts, 2 doubletons and 11 working points, it rates to turn out better more often than not.
- South’s 4H bid is preemptive: it shows 5 Hearts and 6 of fewer points. Yes, it will end in a bottom board if the opponents double it. But, in today’s world of wide-ranging doubles: Takeout, Support, Do Something Intelligent (DSI), etc., it can be very hard for opponents to extract that penalty as this auction shows.

- East's hand is WAY too good to let North-South buy this hand. Yes, this is a dangerous bid Vulnerable, but that's the beauty of preempts: it makes the opponents make tough decisions at high levels!
- East's two doubles guarantees 4 Spades, so she should bid the "known" 8 card major suit. Yes, East should also have 3+ Clubs, but 5 Clubs is likely to underperform 4 Spades despite that.
- North should lead the Jack of Hearts at Trick 1, which South will take with her Ace. Since the lead of the Jack denies the Queen, South should return another Heart to Declarer's Queen and North's Ace. Yes, Dummy can ruff this, but that was going to happen anyways. Any other return risks giving Declarer a free finesse.

Likely Result: Making 5 – Based on the bidding and the play to Trick 1, we know that East has most of the remaining face card including both the Ace of trump and the King of Clubs. So, Declarer should cross to her hand with the King of Diamonds and lead a Spade towards Dummy. When North ducks, East wins the trick with the Queen. Now what? First, if you look at the spots, we know that North doesn't have all of the remaining trump: with A J 9 7, he would play the 7, not the 9, on the spade lead. If North only had 2 Spades, then the best play is to return a low Spade from Dummy. If North has 3 Spades, then Declarer could ruff a Diamond to lead towards the board. But North can foil that plan by rising with the Ace and leading another Heart. Whichever hand ruffs this trick, there will be difficulty in both establishing Clubs and drawing trump. So, the safest play is the former: lead a low trump from Dummy, which works out very well here.

30.	N	E	S	W
		P	1C	1H
	X	P	2C	3H
	P	4H	All Pass	

Notes:

- North's Double is a little off shape, but still makes given South's opening bid.
- West doesn't need a ton of help to make 4H: say, Ace of Spades and 2-3 Hearts. Bidding 3 Hearts conveys this message.
- East has two reasons to like his hand: the Ace and King of Diamonds. So, he should gladly raise to 4H.

Likely Result: Making 4 – After ruffing the Ace of Clubs lead and drawing trump, Declarer may be tempted to finesse the Jack of Diamonds. She needs to avoid that temptation at all cost! If it loses, she's going to have a hard time attacking Spades. If it wins, the "reward" is being able to discard a potentially winning trick (i.e. the 13<sup>th</sup> Spade). Instead, she should use Dummy's Diamonds to finesse in Spades twice: first lead to the Queen, then lead to the King. Even when both of these lose, the 3-3 split allows Declarer to bring home her contract: 7 Hearts, 2 Diamonds and the 13<sup>th</sup> Spade.