Game bonus commentary

Hand 1
North opens 1♦, South responds 1♠, and North rebids 2♣.
South must do more than 2♠. 4♠ would not be unreasonable, but for now I shall stick with 3♠.
North, with little to spare and a poor fit will pass.
West's best lead is a small club – second suit bid on table.
Declarer has tricks to spare, but a heart return by East whenever he gets in will hold him to 9 tricks.
(Score – 90 + 50 = 140)

Hand 2
East opens 1♥, West responds 1♠ and East rebids 2♣.
West must now force to game. An immediate 3NT is possible, although 3♦ opens up the possibility of a 5-3 spade fit.
3NT should be the contract, for the sake of argument played by East.
South has a difficult choice of lead but will choose either ♦9 or ♠A.
Declarer will attack his long suit, diamonds, and should come to 10 tricks as the ♣Q falls and the long diamonds establish.
(Score 40 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 300 = 430 - 5♦ also makes but scores only 400.)

Hand 3
South opens 1♦, North responds 1♥ and South rebids 2♣.
North must show preference with 2♦.
With 18 points South will make a further bid in case partner has 7 to 9 – in this case 3♦, and with 8 points facing 17 or 18 North will bid 3NT.
Declarer can count 9 tricks in the minor suits and can always establish a tenth in one of the majors.
(Score 40 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 300 = 430)

Hand 4
West opens 1♣, East responds 1♦ and West rebids 1♥.
Simplest is for East to rebid 3NT. (An alternative would be 2♠ (4th suit) in search of a 5-3 heart fit.)
South will lead either ♠4 or ♦K.
In either case declarer can count ten tricks off the top, although he must be certain to be in the right place at the right time.
More worrying at first sight is a heart lead, bit if Declarer covers the Q with the K then the T will stop the suit, and might even create an 11th trick.
Score for 10 tricks in NT – 40 + 30 + 30 + 30 + 500 = 630.

Hand 5
North opens 1♦, South responds 1♥ and North rebids 2♣.
With no fit for either of partner's suits and a 6-card suit of his own which can be shown at the 2-level South rebids 2♥, and with no extras in either hand the auction stops there.
West will lead either ♣T (top of an interior sequence) or a spade (the unbid suit).
Declarer should lead towards ♥T when the opportunity arises, and play on diamonds.
He can be held to 8 tricks but may well make 9.
Score for 2♥ making 8 tricks is 30 + 30 + 50 = 110

Hand 6
East opens 1♦, West responds 1♥ (or 2♣) and East rebids 1♠.
West will show preference to 2♦ (known 5-3 fit - 2♣ (4th suit) is saved for a stronger hand).

South's choice of lead is difficult – either ♣A or ♥Q seems likely.
Declarer should play for spade ruffs on table before attacking trumps.
He can make 4♦ (10 tricks) for a score of 80 + 50 = 130.
4♥ also makes for a score of 120 + 500 = 620.

Hand 7

South opens 1♣, North responds 1♦ and South rebids 1♠.
With 13 points in a balanced hand and a heart stop North rebids 3NT.
East leads ♠5 – 4th in long suit.
Declarer should play to establish his black suit tricks, and finesse in diamonds.
He should come to 10 tricks for a score of 130 + 500 = 630.
4♠ also makes 10 tricks for a score of 420 – but it is not a comfortable contract, and is usually inferior on just a 4-3 fit.

Hand 8

West opens 1♦, East responds 1♠ and West rebids 2♣.
East can be forgiven for passing or raising to 3♣ at this point, but there is something to be said for jumping 5♣ for the game bonus. With 3 aces in his hand and extra values West may well raise to 6♣.
South will lead a top heart but declarer will have little trouble coming to 12 tricks for the loss of just the ♣K, and a score of 120 + 300 + 500 = 920.
The vigorous bidding has kept NS out of their heart contract. They can make 8 tricks in the suit. It actually pays them to compete with 6♥ over 6♣ going down 4 for a loss of 800 when doubled.

Hand 9

North opens 1♣, South responds 1♦, and North rebids 1♠.
South must choose between pass, 1NT and 2♣. My choice is 1NT, keeping the bidding open on 9 points and rather too shapeless for 2♣, and North must then choose between pass and 2♣.
Play the contract in 1NT by South.
My choice of lead on the West hand is ♥J (the unbid suit) but many might prefer ♠4.
Declarer should come to 7 tricks for a score of 40 + 50 = 90.
The NS bidding has kept EW out of the auction. They can in fact make 9 tricks if they can locate their heart fit, for a score of 140.

Hand 10

East opens 1♦, West responds 1♠, and East rebids 2♦ (or 3♦).
Over 2♦ West passes – over 3♦ West might try 3NT or 5♦, but they are both something of a gamble.
Against a diamond contract South leads ♥3.
Declarer will clear trumps, leading towards East's clubs at every opportunity.
He should come to 11 tricks for a score of 100 + 500 = 600, with the help of a heart discard on the 3rd club and a heart ruff, but the contract depends totally on the lie of the club honours and the trump split – not a great contract.
3NT makes 9 tricks, also for 600.

Hand 11

South opens 1♣, North responds 1♥, and I rebid 1♠ although 2♣ would be understandable.
North should now bid 3♥ but South with a poor fit and nothing to spare will pass.
Declarer will take 2 rounds of trumps, discovering the bad split. He then has an easy 7 tricks, and an 8th can be developed as the defence finds itself endplayed but 9 is a trick too far.
The contract will go 1 light for a score of -50.

Hand 12
East opens 1♦ and East responds 2♣.
Lacking anything like a splinter bid or 4♣ as a forcing slam-try, West could rebid 5♣, but with 3 Aces in hand I might try 4NT.
In response to 4NT East will bid 5♥ (2 key-cards) after which West will probably sign off I 6♣.
South will lead a small card from a major suit.
Declarer will clear trumps in 2 rounds and then cross-ruff, eventually setting up a small diamond for the 13th trick.
6♣ + 1 scores 140 + 300 + 500 = 940

Hand 13
North opens 1♦, South responds 1♥ and North rebids 2♦.
South will rebid 2NT in a basic method (10 to 12 points) or 1NT in an intermediate method (8 to 10 points).
On straight point-count north will then pass, but he might upgrade for that long solid diamond suit and raise to 3NT.
East must choose between ♥7 (long suit but one of the opponents') or ♣8 or ♣5 (a nothing suit).
The club lead causes the greatest problem.
If he tries the Queen he is in trouble as the defence establish their clubs to go with 2 red aces.
Alternatively take the first club with the ace, then when West gets in with the ♦A the ♣Q will stop the suit.
On this play declarer can make 5 diamonds, 3 spades and a club for 9 tricks, and a score of 600 if bid, 150 otherwise.

Hand 14
East opens 1♥, West responds 1♠ and East rebids 2♦.
West should convert to 2♥. 5-2 might well play better than 4-3, and in any case he should keep the bidding open in case East holds 17 or 18.
East rebids 3♣ to show 5-4-3-1 shape and 17 or 18 points, and West completes the auction with 3NT.
North leads ♦Q or ♦5 – ♦Q works better.
Declarer has a problem with entries to his hand, but with the ♥J lying right and the ♦8 establishing he should make his 9 tricks for a score of 400.

Hand 15
South opens 1♦ (higher of 2 5-card suits), North responds 1♥ and South rebids 2♣.
North should rebid 2♥, promising at least a 6-card suit and keeping the bidding open, but with only 15 points and a poor fit South will pass.
East will lead either ♣J or ♠A.
Declarer cannot avoid 2 trump losers as they lie, but should make 5 trumps, 1 spade, 1 diamond and 2 clubs for a total of 9 tricks and a score of 30 + 30 + 30 + 50 = 140.

Board 16
West opens 1C, East responds 1♦, and West rebids 1♠.
My choice for East is 1NT, but 2♣ is also possible – he should keep the bidding open one way or another with 9 points.
Opposite 2♣ West will pass.
Similarly facing 1NT (6 to 9 points) West will usually pass.
However if the 1NT rebid by responder promises 8 to 10 (say) then West will either bid 3NT, or just 2NT which East will raise to 3NT.
South's most likely lead is the rather desperate ♥5.
Declarer can see 3 tricks in clubs, 1 diamond, 3 hearts and 1 spade for 8 tricks, but the defence will find themselves endplayed and are likely to concede a further 2 tricks for 3NT + 1 and a score of 630.
4S scores better when it brings in 11 tricks, but depending on a 3-3 split is not my first choice

Board 17

North opens 1♦, South responds 2♣, and North rebids 2♦.

Playing a responder's reverse in the traditional manner South will now rebid 2♥ – natural, and forcing for 1 round. In this auction North will bid 2♣ (4th suit), South will bid 2NT and North will raise to 3NT.

Playing the modern version of a responder's reverse as game-forcing South will have to rebid 2NT, which North will raise to 3NT.

Playing 3NT from the North hand East will probably lead ♥2. If West puts on the Jack then declarer can make 3 tricks in the suit – alternatively if West can count the hand and place North with a singleton then he might duck and hold declarer to 2 tricks in the suit.

Either way, 5 tricks in clubs, and the defence can hardly help but set up a trick or two in diamonds or spades.

9 tricks for 400 is the par score, but 10 tricks for 430 will not be uncommon. 5♣ also makes for 400.

Board 18

East opens 1♣, West responds 1H and East rebids 1♠.

At a learner level West will probably jump to 4♠.

One level up and West might bid 4NT (4-card Blackwood). The 5♥ response might well be enough to encourage West to have a try at 6♠.

Better, at a more advanced level, would be to bid 2♦, 4th suit and then to follow East's 3♣ answer with 3♠ (a bid he could have made directly) thus setting the suit and forcing to game with at least some slam interest, and paving the way for a sequence of control-showing cue-bids below the level of 4NT. Again, 6♠ should be the final contract.

Play the hand in 4♠ by East and try to make 12 tricks.

South will probably lead ♦6, after which declarer can clear trumps in 3 rounds, finessing the ♠Q, before taking the remaining tricks in hearts and clubs.

4♠ making 12 tricks score 180 + 300 = 480.

6♠ making 12 tricks scores 180 + 300 + 500 = 980.