Winter 2026
Match 3 (3 August 2026)

P&L

After three weeks of this season's OPL, the current top scorers are Peter Buchen and Lorna Ichilcik. In the most recent match, 11 of the 12 boards were fairly flat, with Peter and Lorna averaging a slight loss against their opponents Dell Macneil and Adrian Beaumont. All of that was dwarfed by a massive profit on this fateful board:

BOARD 6

BD: 6 ♠J **Dlr: E**
♥AQJ85 **Vul: EW**
♦AKJ87
♣62

♠K7543
♥976
♦6
♣KQ93

♠T986
♥T
♦QT5
♣AT854

♠AQ2
♥K432
♦9432
♣J7

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	4	2		16
S	4	4	2	8	6
E	2		3		10
W	2		3		

Div 1 FREQUENCIES FOR BOARD 6

Contract	Result	Score	Frequency
4♥ by NS	+1	450	1
4♥ by NS	+1	450	2
4♥ by NS	=	420	4
3♠X by EW	+1	-930	1

Div 2 FREQUENCIES FOR BOARD 6

Contract	Result	Score	Frequency
4♠X by EW	-2	500	1
4♥ by NS	+1	450	2
4♥ by NS	+1	450	1
4♥ by NS	=	420	3
6♥ by NS	-2	-100	1

A standard auction starts with North opening 1H and South inviting game with 3H. North is not strong enough for slam, unless you have some way to find if partner has an ideal hand, such as one with the HK, DQ and CA. This time you don't want to be higher than 4H.

At some tables, West opened 2S, showing five spades and a minor (some pairs play that the minor must also be five cards long, especially if vulnerable). This is a little scary with this hand – but if at first you don't succeed, it is better to be experimenting with Multi Twos than skydiving.

Over a 2S opening, what action should North take? Most straightforward is a 3H overcall, which South should probably raise to 4H. An alternative possibility for North is a Michaels Cue Bid; the popular expert style over an enemy 2-major opening is to play Leaping Michaels, where a jump to 4-minor (e.g. 4D in this instance) shows a good hand with that suit plus the other major (this leaves a bid of 3-their-major as a stopper ask, seeking 3NT).

At our featured table, North took a different approach, starting with a takeout double. East raised to 3S and South passed (at another table where the auction started the same way, South bid an aggressive but successful 4H). When 3S was passed back to North, he doubled again, and South could bid 4H, but chose to pass.

This could reap a high reward, but not this time, where the big black suit fits allow East-West to take nine tricks in spades, while North-South's red fits make 4H a shoe-in.

North led the DA, then switched to the C6, taken by the CA. A heart was led from dummy, taken by North who led another club, won with the king. Declarer led a heart and ruffed in dummy, then led the S10. South rose SA, but that dropped partner's SJ, allowing Peter to later return to dummy to finesse against South's SQ for an overtrick, +930 points. This meant a massive swing of 1350 or 1380 points compared to the -420 or -450 for East-West at other tables in Division 1, where North-South made 10 or 11 tricks in 4H, and that translated to a match-changing swing of 16 IMPs.

Comments or questions?
You can interact with Derrick about his analysis on the Bridge NSW Facebook page by commenting on the post for that week of OPL.

About Derrick Browne

Derrick Browne is the author of over 40 books and pamphlets on bridge. He is also owner of Trumps Bridge Centre in Mosman, Sydney, which offers training, duplicate games, bridge books and accessories, and holidays including Canberra 20-23 September and Leura 22-25 November.