Message from

José Damiani,

President, World Bridge Federation

Dear Bridge Friends

Once again I am delighted to be able to thank you for coming and playing in the World Wide Bridge Contest, an event which we hope you find challenging and enjoyable. This event represents a slightly lighter side to bridge, where you have been able to play at your own club, amongst friends, while still competing with players all over the world – a world that has become smaller over the years as communication has developed faster than perhaps we ever dreamed possible.

Scoring the event overall used to take weeks, now it takes hours – indeed only minutes. And the speed at which all the information becomes available – the statistics surrounding the event – would have seemed impossible just a decade ago.

The same happens at our World Championships – we can provide enormous amounts of data in seconds, publishing it across internet, with vu graph presentations of the major matches, and all the Bulletins being made available even before they are printed for the players on site. It all enhances these events and makes them even more interesting.

I hope that, in October, you will watch as youngsters from your country compete in the Junior Championships being held for the first time alongside the Open and Women's teams in the First World Mind Sport Games in Beijing. The Senior International Cup will also be played and the World Transnational Mixed Teams will be held during the second week. Full details about the event are on the WBF Website at **www. worldbridge.org**

Once again, thank you for taking part in the Contest, competing across the world and showing once again that we all follow the spirit of the WBF Motto …

Bridge for Peace

José Damiani
President

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

```
                ♠ A 10 6 3
                ♡ A 8 7 4
                ◇ K J
                ♣ A Q 10
♠ K 5 2                        ♠ 7
♡ 10 9 6                       ♡ K J 5 3 2
◇ A 10 8 7 6 2                 ◇ 9 3
♣ K                            ♣ 9 7 6 5 2
                ♠ Q J 9 8 4
                ♡ Q
                ◇ Q 5 4
                ♣ J 8 4 3
```

West	North	East	South
	1♠	1♡	1♠
2♣*	3♠	Pass	4♠///
	1♣	Pass	1♠
2◇	3◇	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♠///		
	1♣	Pass	1♠
2◇	4♠///		

And other auctions in the same family, with North settling for an invitational 3♠, jumping to 4♠, or delaying his game raise by cue-bidding first.

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	2♡*
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠///

(*2♡ = transfer to spades)

West	North	East	South
	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♡	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠///		

Some will consider the North hand is too strong for a 16-18 1NT, others too weak for 1♣ followed by a jump to 2NT over a 1◇ response. The 1NT opening will usually keep E/W out of the auction but won't affect the choice of final contract.

Although slam is easy to make with both black kings onside, it would be a surprise if more than a couple of pairs worldwide attempted 6♠.

It would be equally surprising to learn that notrump attracted anyone's attention, but unless South declares or East leads the ♡K, those greedy N/S pairs will chalk up +490 and beat all the normal +480s.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

```
                ♠ 10 4 3
                ♡ J 7 5 4 2
                ◇ 9 7
                ♣ 6 4 3
♠ A K Q J 9 6 2                ♠ ---
♡ 9                            ♡ Q 10 8 6
◇ Q 8 5 3                      ◇ A K J 6 4 2
♣ 8                            ♣ A J 5
                ♠ 8 7 5
                ♡ A K 3
                ◇ 10
                ♣ K Q 10 9 7 2
```

West	North	East	South
		1◇	2♣
2♠	Pass	3◇	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣*	Pass
5◇	Pass	6◇	Pass
6♠/Pass///			

(*0 or 3 key cards for diamonds)
(5◇ assumes 0 keys; E continues over 5◇ with 3 keys)

West	North	East	South
		1◇	2♣
2♠	Pass	3◇	Pass
4◇*	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠/6◇///			

(*4◇ = forcing, a partnership choice)

West	North	East	South
		1◇	2♣
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4◇	Pass	5♣	Pass
6♠/6◇///			

West has a good hand for a cheaper Key Card Blackwood (for diamonds) surrogate, such as a jump to 4♡ or a raise to 4◇, at least in theory. In practice, however, if East responded 4♠ to a "Kickback" 4♡, showing 0 or 3 keys, West could not afford to pass, so if East really had no keys the partnership would finish in 5◇, not a higher-scoring 4♠. Sure, it's a very small chance that East has something like: x, KQJ, J109xxxx, KQ, but there are very few conventions that do not come with a price.

Perhaps at IMP scoring, West might choose to play in diamonds to avoid paying off to North's ten-fifth of spades, but that's taking safety a step too far at Pairs, the threat of a diamond ruff playing in spades notwithstanding.

Some will miss slam; those that do would be advised not to play in diamonds, at 20 points a trick.

If South trusts his opponents he won't double 6♠ to warn partner off a club lead; besides, double

might reasonably be interpreted as a request for a diamond lead, North believing South is counting on a diamond ruff and the ♡A. But the double might work brilliantly in a different way: if West believes South is ruffing a diamond, he might just run to 6NT, especially where East has bid notrump first. That could lead to 6NT by East doubled, down one, or 6NT by West making on a non-heart lead (among other things).

```
                ♠ A J 10 5 4
                ♡ A 9 6
                ◇ K 5
                ♣ 10 7 4
♠ 6 3                        ♠ 8 7 2
♡ Q 7 3 2                    ♡ K 10 5
◇ J 10 9                     ◇ A 8 6 4 2
♣ A 8 5 3                    ♣ Q 9
                ♠ K Q 9
                ♡ J 8 4
                ◇ Q 7 3
                ♣ K J 6 2
```

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣*
Pass	2◇**	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT///		

(*= Drury-Fit ** = not a shaded opening)

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT///		

West	North	East	South
			1NT
Pass	2♡*	Pass	2♠
Pass	3NT///		

(*2♡ = transfer to spades)

These auctions are not an endorsement for reaching 3NT, which is not a lovely contract; they are examples of comprehensible sequences that could lead N/S to a lucky +400. Say that West leads a diamond honor to the king and ace. South ducks the second diamond, wins the third, crosses in spades and leads a club to the nine and jack; West ducks, but declarer finishes spades and leads the ♣7, permitting himself a smile when the queen comes up. If West were to switch to a heart after the second diamond, declarer ducks, and must play low if East returns the ♡5. "Well done," offer East and West, thinking anything but.

After similar starts, N/S could easily finish in 4♠, which requires the same fortunate club position to bring declarer's trick total to nine. If the defenders don't mess up either red suit to give declarer a third winner in those suits combined, they will set 4♠. There will be many -50s for N/S, but more +420s than there ought to be, keeping in mind that East has an unattractive choice of leads and will do best with a trump.

In some Drury auctions, North may take the position that he would pass a game invitation and so not admit to a full opening bid. South will/should not go past 2♠ in that scenario, and N/S might score well for +140 or a tainted +170 if the E/W pairs defending 4♠ do yeoman work.

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT///

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT (or
the equivalent)///			

…are additional possibilities, though North might continue to 3NT. With East on lead, the normal diamond start allows declarer a second trick in that suit for 10 in all, +180 or a glowing +430.

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠
Pass	4♠///		

… is possible, but a particularly ugly way to bid the South hand. I hate to sound judgmental, but I can't help feeling that anyone reaching 4♠ on this auction deserves to go down in it.

```
                ♠ A K J 7
                ♡ A 6
                ◇ 9 8 7 6 5
                ♣ J 7
♠ 10 9 6 5 3                 ♠ Q 8 4
♡ K J                        ♡ Q 9 8
◇ K 2                        ◇ J 10
♣ 8 4 3 2                    ♣ A K 9 6 5
                ♠ 2
                ♡ 10 7 5 4 3 2
                ◇ A Q 4 3
                ♣ Q 10
```

West	North	East	South
Pass	1◇	Dbl	1♡
2♠	Pass	Pass	3◇///

West	North	East	South
Pass	1◇	Dbl	2♡
2♠	3◇	Pass	Pass
3♠	Pass/Dbl///		

(2♡ = Fit jump, forcing to at least 3◇)

West	North	East	South
Pass	1◇	Pass	1♡
Pass	1♠	Pass	2◇///

West column table (left):

West	North	East	South
Pass	1◇	Pass	1♡
Pass	1♠	Pass	2◇
Pass	Pass	3♣	3◇///
Pass	1NT	Pass	2◇*
Pass	2♡///		

(*transfer to hearts)

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Pass	2◇*
Pass	2♡	Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♡/3◇///

(*transfer to hearts)

Where North describes a balanced hand, South will try to play the hand in hearts at 30 points a trick. If E/W compete to 2♠, however, South might consider introducing diamonds. If E/W cash their clubs, diamonds will produce nine tricks, hearts only eight, so it won't do N/S much good to try for 30 points a trick at the three-level . . . unless West leads a spade, permitting South to dispose of a club loser for +140 in hearts, but only +130 in diamonds. Of such small differences are significant swings in matchpoints made.

If E/W do enter the auction at all they won't be selling out to 2♡, but they may have to avoid doing too much as N/S can double 3♠ for 200 and collect 200 or 500 versus 3♣, depending on whether they double and how they defend; best defense against clubs involves three rounds of spades, (◇A), ♡A, fourth spade to promote a trump trick. As that's not so tough to find, N/S pairs that get all their tricks will score well against 3♣ even if they don't double. Not doubling 3♠, however, will be costly, as +100 will lose to all the +110s, +120s, and +140s their way, and there will be plenty of those.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

```
              ♠ K Q 10
              ♡ J 8 5 4 3 2
              ◇ K 2
              ♣ 10 6
♠ A 8 7 4 3 2              ♠ 9 5
♡ K 7                     ♡ A Q 9
◇ 10 5 3                  ◇ Q 9 6 4
♣ K 4                     ♣ A Q J 8
              ♠ J 6
              ♡ 10 6
              ◇ A J 8 7
              ♣ 9 7 5 3 2
```

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♡/4◇*	Pass	4♠///	

(*4♡/4◇ = transfer to 4♠)

West	North	East	South
		1♣/1◇	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2◇*	Pass	2NT	Pass-3NT///

(*2◇ = game-forcing inquiry)

West	North	East	South
	2♡*	2NT	Pass
3♡*	Pass	3♠	Pass-3NT///

(*3♡ = transfer to spades)

West	North	East	South
	2◇*	Dbl	2♡*
3♠	Pass	3NT///	

(*2◇ = weak 2♡ or weak 2♠; *2♡ = pass or correct to 2♠)

The best contract for E/W is 3NT and it might be reached in a variety of ways when West offers a choice of games facing a known balanced hand of appropriate strength.

Many Wests will simply commit their side to 4♠, however, and on a better day, might survive that decision when the defense does not start on diamonds. On this lie of the cards, declarer will try to discard diamonds on hearts and clubs, but the bad breaks in both those suits (South uppercuts with the ♠J when declarer tries hearts first, West ruffs the third club if declarer plays that suit first, and three rounds of diamonds promotes an extra trump trick) will hold spade contracts to eight tricks after all.

3NT is an interesting contract. Say that South leads a heart, knowing of North's length. Declarer wins in dummy and must not duck a spade, perhaps the reflex play. Instead, he must start diamonds, both to develop a ninth trick there and to cut the defenders' communications. What can North do? If he follows low, declarer plays the nine (or queen) and South wins to play a second heart or a spade. With diamonds blocked, declarer wins a heart continuation and must play a second diamond, ducking to the king and preserving dummy's ten but killing North's entry to his hearts or a second spade winner: declarer wins a heart continuation or ducks a high spade and wins the second, and, with the ten-queen of diamonds equals against the ace, can build his ninth trick in diamonds. Had South switched to spades after winning the first diamond, declarer would win the first or second spade and have

time for a diamond trick (or a spade winner if North took his second winner). In order to defeat 3NT legitimately against perfect declarer play, South must find a most unlikely spade lead, and if declarer ducks, the defense must continue spades with the danger of establishing the suit for declarer looming large; if declarer wins and tries a diamond, North must go in with the king, cash his spade winner, and exit in diamonds so South can take the ace-jack.

As both the winning line of play and the killing defense are hardly straightforward, those 3NT contracts will enjoy a mixed fate, but if anyone prevails in the fashion described above, they will have a good story to tell in the bar.

As it would take an obscure parlay to permit E/W to take as many as nine tricks in spades, and as few pairs playing in spades will stop at three, anyone escaping with -50 in the E/W line should be over average.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

```
              ♠ Q 10
              ♡ A 10 6
              ◇ A K 9 4
              ♣ J 10 9 5
♠ A K J 7 3              ♠ 9 8 6
♡ Q 4                   ♡ K J 9
◇ 10                    ◇ Q 7 3 2
♣ K Q 8 4 2             ♣ 7 6 3
              ♠ 5 4 2
              ♡ 8 7 5 3 2
              ◇ J 8 6 5
              ♣ A
```

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Dbl	2♠	3♡
3♠/4♠///			
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Dbl	2♠	3♡
Dbl*	Pass	3♠///	

(*Dbl = artificial game try; 3♠ would be competitive)

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass
2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♠///	
		Pass	Pass
1♣	Pass	1◇	Pass
1♠///			
		Pass	Pass
1♣	1NT	Pass	2◇*
2♠	Pass	3♣/Pass///	

(*2◇ = transfer to hearts)

Although N/S might get into the auction and compete as high as 3♡, E/W will usually buy the contract in spades or clubs, not often at the four-level. Sure, West might bash 4♠ if East dares to raise him directly, but unless West thinks he can jockey his non-vulnerable opponents into a losing sacrifice, it's too aggressive at Matchpoint scoring to jeopardize a plus or small minus in a partscore in search of the perfect fit.

In practice, West will often make 3♠ unless North leads a club on the go and gains the lead once in each red suit to deliver two club ruffs to his partner. Else, after a high diamond and a low or high heart switch, declarer can use dummy's lone entry to lead a club down. When the ♣A comes up declarer either runs into a club ruff or loses a club in the end after playing off ace-king of trumps to good effect.

The play in clubs will be a bit more anxious, but declarer is likely to drop the ♠Q and survive the four-one trump break as long as he uses dummy's heart entry to lead a club.

Although it might seem that E/W are on thin ice when they declare a black-suit contract, they figure to achieve a plus more often than not, so N/S plus scores should score very well, and should they buy the contract in 3♡ or 3◇, minus 50 will also be pretty good for them.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

```
              ♠ J 6 2
              ♡ K 7
              ◇ Q J 5 2
              ♣ A K 9 4
♠ A 10 7 5 3            ♠ Q 8
♡ 8                    ♡ Q 9 6 5 2
◇ A 10 3               ◇ 8 7 6 4
♣ 10 7 5 2             ♣ 8 3
              ♠ K 9 4
              ♡ A J 10 4 3
              ◇ K 9
              ♣ Q J 6
```

West	North	East	South
			1♡
1♠	Dbl*	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT///		
			1♡
Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT///
			1♡
Pass	2♣	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT///		
			1NT
Pass	3NT///		

There won't be many Souths attempting a contract other than 3NT on this one. Even if the defense stays off spades and avoids giving away a trick (club lead from either side or diamond lead from East), East is going to have two unpleasant discards on the third and fourth rounds of clubs: one will be a heart, but the next will cost him a trick. Say that he releases a spade; declarer leads a diamond to the king, and West does best to duck in tempo, then to cover the ◇9 with the ten. To achieve a maximum result, declarer will soon need to exit with either of dummy's diamonds (ideally after cashing the ♡K). West, down to spades, will have to play one: if a low one to queen and king, a second spade forces West to give dummy a second spade winner, and East, if he remains with the high diamond, will be squeezed in the red suits; If West plays the ♠A, South unblocks the king when the queen appears, and the second round of spades again squeezes East in the red suits. Often, however, West will take the ◇K with the ace, and exit with the ◇10. Declarer will have to play a spade himself, and the second round of spades will finish off East.

The same sort of pressure on East develops after an initial spade lead from West, whether East puts in the eight or the queen when dummy follows low, although the ending will be a bit different if West is able to exit with a heart after winning the ◇A. The lead of the ♠Q from East leads to the same position as a low spade from West to the queen and king.

But would it be so ridiculous for declarer to play the ♠J at Trick One if West has overcalled in the suit? That would be best if West held the ace-queen of spades, East the ten, and West the ◇A, and why should that not be the position? If declarer makes that spade play, he will go down in 3NT when many will be making five. Good partners will mention that they would have made the same play.

As not every declarer will thread his way through the play successfully, +660 will be excellent, but +630 will be a fair result only if there are enough declarers going down in 3NT.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

```
                ♠ Q 7 6 5
                ♡ A 7
                ◇ A K 8 2
                ♣ 7 6 5
  ♠ K J 10 9 8              ♠ A 4 3 2
  ♡ J 10 9 2                ♡ Q 8 3
  ◇ 9 6 5                   ◇ Q 10 7 4
  ♣ 9                       ♣ K Q
                ♠ ---
                ♡ K 6 5 4
                ◇ J 3
                ♣ A J 10 8 4 3 2
```

West	North	East	South
Pass	1◇/1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣/5♣///
Pass	1◇	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♡
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣/5♣///
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3◇	Pass	5♣///
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣*
Pass	3NT///		
(*forcing)			

6♣ is excellent for N/S, but just reaching five might be above average as not everyone will reach game, and others will take a shot at 3NT and go minus.

Even if the defense doesn't lead spades against 3NT, East will have a chance to switch when he gains the lead in clubs. Where declarer is lucky enough to avoid a spade lead (a diamond lead would have plenty of appeal), he will do best to duck the first round of clubs, depriving West of the opportunity to make a discard that would encourage a spade switch. At IMPs, East would surely attack spades at that point as the only chance to set the contract, but at Matchpoints, holding down the overtricks is often more important, so East might not do the right thing … for this layout. North is a big favorite to hold the ♡A to make up his point count, however, and in that case it can't hurt to cash the ♠A and might help, but playing West for the ♠K and underleading the ♠A is a more ambitious play with high risk/high reward. East might do that, though, because his opponents have reached 3NT with at most 23 HCP, perhaps with as few as 21, on a deal where many if not most others will be in 5♣ or

perhaps 3♣; if 3NT is making at least four, E/W will get a very a poor score, so why not try to set the contract and get an excellent score?

At a few tables, West will open a cavalier weak 2♠ or Multi and East might get involved. That will probably jockey N/S into 5♣, and perhaps even a rare 6♣. Furthermore, a few brave souls will overcall 2♠ for the lead in a N/S Stayman auction, and they too might convince their opponents to play in clubs rather than notrump.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

```
              ♠ A 8
              ♡ 9 6
              ◇ K 5 4 3
              ♣ Q 5 4 3 2
♠ K J 9                      ♠ Q 7 4 2
♡ Q 10 4                     ♡ A J 7 5
◇ A 10 8 2                   ◇ Q J 6
♣ A J 9                      ♣ 8 6
              ♠ 10 6 5 3
              ♡ K 8 3 2
              ◇ 9 7
              ♣ K 10 7
```

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass
2◇	Pass	3NT///	
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1◇	Pass	1♡	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT///	
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1◇	Pass	1♡	Pass
1NT	Pass	2◇*	Pass 2NT
Pass		3NT///	

(*2◇ = game-forcing inquiry)

This is another deal where virtually every E/W pair will be in 3NT played by West, and North will have no reason to lead anything but a club.

A case can be made for ducking South's king: play South for the ♠A and the ◇K, North for five clubs; by ducking two clubs, declarer will be able to keep North off play and lose only two clubs, the ♠A, and the ♡K if South has it. That line, which is hardly ridiculous, will lead to two or three down, depending on how many red finesses declarer takes.

In contrast, declarer can take the first club, which might give him a second natural club trick, as here, and go after spades first, playing North for that ace, which protects his fragile

jack-nine of clubs for a moment. Now if spades and hearts behave, it might not matter who has the ◇K. North will take the king or jack of spades to lead a second low club, and might even go in with the ♠A if declarer leads the nine through him. With the defenders' communications intact, they will take three clubs, the ♠A, and whichever red king declarer finesses against. That will be down one as the other red finesse would only be for practice: declarer will take two clubs, two spades, three of one red suit and the ace of the other.

Say that instead declarer wins the first club and takes the heart finesse. South wins and returns the ♣10, covered and ducked. Now declarer might well finish the hearts and take the diamond finesse, as he would make the contract if he could make four diamond tricks. When that loses also, he goes two down: three clubs, two red kings and the ♠A.

As each of these lines will appeal to a cross-section of declarers and none of them leads to success, we can expect to see plenty of -100s and -200s, and the very occasional -300.

If you made 3NT, you've done remarkably well. You won't have much company at the top of the frequency list.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

```
              ♠ 10 4 3
              ♡ K Q 5 4
              ◇ J 4 3
              ♣ A Q 8
♠ J 5                        ♠ A K 9 8
♡ 10 6 2                     ♡ A J 7 3
◇ K Q 8 5 2                  ◇ 10 6
♣ J 4 3                      ♣ 10 7 2
              ♠ Q 7 6 2
              ♡ 9 8
              ◇ A 9 7
              ♣ K 9 6 5
```

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1◇*	Pass	1NT///	

(*where 1◇ denies a 4-card major unless game-force strength)

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1◇	Pass	1♡///	

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1◇	Pass	1♡	Pass
1NT///			

		1♣	Pass
1♢	Pass	1♡	Pass
Pass	1NT///		

		1♡/1♠	Pass
1NT///			

		1♡	Pass
2♡///			

		1♡	Pass
2♡	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	Pass/2NT/2♠/3♣///		

		1NT///	

No one can make much of anything on this "balanced" deal with the strength nearly evenly divided. N/S, with a bit more in high cards, can take seven tricks in notrump, and they might buy the contract at 1NT for +90, assuming declarer makes either a spade trick or a less likely second heart (♢10 to the queen, heart to the queen and ace, heart to the ten and king, spade towards the queen). With both sides vulnerable, +90 will be a decent score only if line-mates are not collecting at least 100 defending against E/W contracts of 1NT or 2♡.

N/S can also take seven tricks in clubs, a strain they won't often reach, and in spades, where they might finish if South reopens 2♡ with a takeout double. Those N/S pairs won't be going plus on offense and so will help the cause of the pairs recording +90.

More often, E/W will finish in 1NT. Where East declares, South will most often lead a spade; if declarer calls for the jack and attacks hearts (low to the jack, low to the ten and queen, later finesse against the king when in dummy with a diamond; the defense does not have time for a spade trick) he will take seven tricks for +90, confirming that 1NT can often be made by both sides without anyone doing anything terrible (unless one considers the "normal" fatal spade lead by South such an action). Where West declares, it's more difficult for N/S to allow 1NT to make. Any lead will set the contract, as long as South ducks the first diamond and stays off spades until it's safe (which might involve leading the queen). Accidents are always possible in one-level contracts, but West will be -100 much more often than +90.

If North sells out to 1♡, he's not a favorite to beat it, so add E/W +80 to the frequency chart.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

```
                ♠ A 9
                ♡ J 9 7 5 4 3
                ♢ 9 8 7
                ♣ 9 7
♠ K 10 7                        ♠ Q 8 4 3
♡ Q 6                           ♡ K 8 2
♢ K Q J 5 3                     ♢ A 10 6 4
♣ Q 5 4                         ♣ K 2
                ♠ J 6 5 2
                ♡ A 10
                ♢ 2
                ♣ A J 10 8 6 3
```

West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♢	1♡	Dbl*	2♣ Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	
3NT///			

(*Dbl = 4♠, competitive values)

West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♢	2♡*	Dbl**	Pass
2♠	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT///			

(*weak)
(**Dbl = 4/5♠, competitive values)

West	North	East	South
			1♣
1♢	1♡	2♡	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT///	
			2♣*
Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass
3NT///			

(*10-15, 6+♣ or 5♣/4M)

West	North	East	South
			2♣*
2♢	Pass	2NT/3NT///	

(*10-15, 6+♣ or 5♣/4M)

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♢	Pass	1♠	2♣
Pass	Pass	3NT///	

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♢	2♡	Dbl	3♣/3♡
Pass	3♡/Pass	3NT/Dbl///	

E/W have the cards for 3NT and are likely to get there from the East side, an essential condition for making it, as North can lead a club with telling effect where West declares.

Where East declares 3NT, only an unlikely spade lead and club switch will hold declarer to nine tricks; a minor club honor is much more attractive, as declarer might have

king-queen-low, dummy honor-doubleton, or both East and West only two clubs. East can win the ♣K and lead a spade to the ten. Although North can win the ace and clear clubs, declarer simply runs diamonds, pitching (a second) heart. South, forced to keep his spades and the ♡A, must discard all his club winners. Declarer cashes the ♠K, and exits with a heart to collect the queen-eight of spades in the end.

As N/S won't defeat 3NT too often, those who go for only 300 in clubs or hearts (500 is more likely) should score quite well.

The E/W pairs that miss game won't fare well unless a surprising number of their line-mates declare 3NT from the West side on a club lead or lose their way in the play from the East side.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

```
              ♠ K J 5
              ♡ 10 4 3
              ◊ Q J 10
              ♣ K 10 7 2
♠ 7 3                      ♠ 10 8 6 4
♡ Q J 6                    ♡ A K 9 5
◊ 7 6 5 2                  ◊ A K 9 8 4
♣ A Q 6 3                  ♣ ---
              ♠ A Q 9 2
              ♡ 8 7 2
              ◊ 3
              ♣ J 9 8 5 4
```

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1◊	Pass
1NT///			
Pass	Pass	1◊	Pass
1NT	Pass	2◊	Pass
3◊///			
Pass	Pass	1◊	Pass
1NT	Pass	2◊	Pass
3◊	Pass	3♡	Pass
4♡///			
Pass	Pass	1◊	Pass
2◊	Pass	2♡	Pass
3♣	Pass	3◊	Pass
3♡	Pass	3♠	Pass
4◊	Pass	Pass/5◊///	
Pass	Pass	1◊	Pass
1♡*	Pass	3♡	Pass
Pass/5◊///			

(*where 1♡ is not conventional, but a gamble by West)

Although E/W have only 23 combined HCP, 3NT, 4♡ and 5◊ are conceivable contracts. There is enough duplication in clubs to make 5◊ an odds-against undertaking, though 3NT and 4♡ (making four or five) would also make most of the time that 5◊ comes home. Everything requires a two-two break in diamonds, a 40.7% chance, and strictly speaking, you would like significantly better odds to attempt an under-strength game at Matchpoints, where the plus is King.

Against 4♡ by West, the defenders must be careful not to cash a second spade (which would allow declarer to ruff a spade in hand) before they threaten a diamond ruff or attack clubs from the South side. Only a club lead from North would permit West to make 4♡ legitimately. The defense should prevail on any lead if East declares 4♡, but a low or high spade lead requires accurate defense at Trick Two (diamond switch from North; diamond or club switch from South, respectively). There will be some +420s, E/W to go with more -50s.

The defense can survive any lead by North against West's 3NT, but North must switch to the king or jack of spades when he wins his diamond trick and the defenders must take their four spade tricks. Though that defense is not so difficult to find, 3NT will be made more than a few times – some +400s to go with more -50s and -100s.

Although the auction will usually tell the defense that spades are a problem for notrump, not every South will lead and continue spades against 5◊. Say that South leads his singleton trump: declarer wins, crosses to a heart, ruffs a club, crosses in hearts, ruffs another club, and plays ace-king of hearts, discarding a spade from West; if North ruffs, the defense gets only a spade trick, so he discards a spade. Now declarer concedes a spade to North, who plays a trump; declarer wins and cannot be prevented from cashing the ♣A and ruffing a third club with his last small trump; North gets only his high trump. So, yes there will be some other +400s to go with not many more -50s.

If all that is true, the +90's, +120's, +130's, +140's, +150's and +170's for E/W should all be above average.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

```
              ♠ K Q 10 8 7 6
              ♡ K
              ◇ A 9 2
              ♣ K 10 2
♠ A 5 3 2                    ♠ 4
♡ A 2                        ♡ Q 10 7 5 4
◇ K 10 6 3                   ◇ 8 5
♣ J 5 4                      ♣ A Q 8 6 3
              ♠ J 9
              ♡ J 9 8 6 3
              ◇ Q J 7 4
              ♣ 9 7
```

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	Pass
1NT	2♠	3♡	Pass/3♠/
Dbl///			

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠///		

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	2NT*	Pass
3♣///			

(*2NT = some two-suited hand)

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♠	2NT*	Pass
3♣	Pass	Pass	3♠
Dbl///			

(*2NT = some two-suited hand)

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♠*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♣///	

(*2♠ = 5+♡/5+m) (*2NT = which minor?)

West	North	East	South
	1♠	2♠*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♣	Pass
4♣/Pass////			

(*2♠ = 5+♡/5+m) (*2NT = which minor?)

While East lacks the values for a vulnerable direct-position two-suited action or a two-level overcall in one of his suits, Hall of Famer Kit Woolsey has never varied from his belief that "vulnerability is for children," and I have no doubt that many participants in today's session will enter the auction on the first round with East's five-five hand. At those tables, West will do well not to read too much into East's effort in order to go plus; even a modest 3♣ requires careful play and a good view or two, and West could be forgiven for committing his side to the four-level, or to 3♡ (trying for 30 points a trick).

There are other possibilities for E/W to enter the auction: some are indicated above. Those strategies will more often keep E/W from getting too high, though some of them will also finish in hearts. With careful play (which includes developing a diamond trick), E/W can come to eight tricks in hearts; in most variations, South will find himself with too many trumps and succumb to an endplay.

Where East declares a club contract, South will be tempted to lead a trump, either of which permits declarer to avoid a loser in the suit, but that won't be crucial to declarer coming to the nine tricks to which he's entitled. To see why this is so, have South lead a spade. Declarer wins the ace, cashes the ♡A, then plays a club to the queen and cashes the ace before offering North the ♡Q. North discards a spade, and can over-ruff or not when declarer plays a third heart. Say that he over-ruffs and exits safely in spades; declarer ruffs and leads a diamond, intending to play the ten if South doesn't split his honors; South plays the quack, king, ace; declarer ruffs the spade continuation and leads a second diamond. South must permit declarer to score dummy's ◇10 or his ♡10.

Meanwhile, N/S must be careful not to get higher than 2♠ in a competitive situation, as West is likely to double to protect his presumed equity of at least +110. Minus 200 will be awful for either side. In fact, E/W can beat 2♠, although they probably will not double it . . . or sell out so cheaply; East must lead a diamond and West must not cover when declarer calls for the quack to hold spade contracts to seven tricks.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

```
              ♠ 5
              ♡ 7 6
              ◇ A J 8 4 3
              ♣ A J 9 4 2
♠ A Q J 4 3 2               ♠ 10 9 8
♡ 9 2                       ♡ Q 8 4 3
◇ Q 9 5                     ◇ K
♣ Q 6                       ♣ K 10 8 7 5
              ♠ K 7 6
              ♡ A K J 10 5
              ◇ 10 7 6 2
              ♣ 3
```

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♡
1♠	Dbl*	2♠	3♢
3♠	5♢///		
		Pass	1♡
2♠	Dbl*	3♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl*	Pass	
Pass/4♢/5♢///			
		Pass	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
Pass	3NT*	Pass	4♢///

Although N/S don't have that much in the way of high cards, they can't be prevented from taking 11 tricks in diamonds with a good view or two in the play: this might involve taking a timely first-round heart finesse or, after cashing the ◇A, ruffing one club low, and one with the ten, squeezing East between clubs and hearts (which would require only one heart finesse in the endgame.

E/W will compete with different degrees of enthusiasm, a weak jump overcall or weak two-bid (where South ultra-conservatively declines to open the bidding) more likely to keep N/S out of game than a simple overcall would do. As E/W can take eight tricks in spades, they can compete without danger to the three-level, and to 4♠ if N/S promise not to double. Minus 50 or 100 will be very good as N/S can chalk up +130 or +150 in diamonds, +140 or (more likely) +170 in hearts, not to mention the +400 or +420 available to those aggressive pairs that reach game. Minus 300, on the other hand, figures to be bad for E/W.

The South hand is difficult to evaluate opposite a negative double showing length in the minors: the ♠K, under the primary spade bidder, is a dubious asset, the hearts may not come into play in time, and there is no diamond honor; as against that, South can protect the ♠K from immediate attack by declaring a diamond contract, and the possibility of ruffing clubs with relatively low cards may be positive for developing the play; furthermore, if South doesn't compete to 3♢ over 2♠, his side may sell out too cheaply. In practice, though the ♠K has no value in the play and N/S have only 17 or 18 working HCP, 5♢ is eminently playable.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

```
              ♠ 8 6
              ♡ A 10 6 4 3
              ◇ K 8
              ♣ A Q 8 2
♠ K Q J 10 5 3          ♠ 9 2
♡ Q                     ♡ J 8 7 2
◇ Q 10 4 2              ◇ 9 6 5 3
♣ 6 4                   ♣ J 5 3
              ♠ A 7 4
              ♡ K 9 5
              ◇ A J 7
              ♣ K 10 9 7
```

West	North	East	South
			1NT
2♠	3♡	Pass	4♡///
(where 3♡ is forcing)			
			1NT
2♠	3♢*	Pass	4♡///
(where 3♢ is at least invitational with 5+♡)			
			1NT
2♠	3♢*	Pass	3♡
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♢*
Pass	4♡	Pass	4♠
Pass	5♣	Pass	6♣ ///
(*where 3♢ is at least invitational with 5+♡)			
			1♣
3♠	Dbl*	Pass	3NT
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♠
Pass	6♣///		

(or North could simply pass 3NT)

If North's ◇K were the ♡Q, 6♣ would be an excellent contract, but on the actual layout, N/S would much prefer to be in a peaceful 4♡, with the main considerations being whether to take the first spade, how to broach the hearts, and whether to play for six by taking the diamond finesse to pitch a spade loser from North, jeopardizing five in the process.

As it happens 6♣ can be made with mildly inspired play: win the first spade (although ducking doesn't hurt), play ♣K, ♣A, ♡A, heart to the nine, ♡K, ♣Q, heart ruff; if declarer took the first spade and East no longer has the ♠9 in his hand, declarer can make seven as the ♠8 and ◇J are both threats and West can't guard both suits. Now wouldn't that be lovely: +1390! N/S are likely to reach 6♣ only when they go past 3NT or 4♡ in a delicate auction, and I don't expect many pairs to finish at 5♣.

The play in hearts could take many turns, including this one: Declarer takes the first spade and plays

ace-king of trumps to find West showing out. Now if he concedes the ♡9 to the jack, two rounds of spades promote the ♡8 behind the ten. Declarer had to duck the first spade or play ♡A, heart to the nine to avoid this ignominy. There will be plenty of N/S +620s and +650s.

To take 11 tricks in notrump, declarer need only duck one spade; then he can clear hearts by conceding a trick to East and take one spade, four hearts, two diamonds and four clubs. Plus 660 figures to be excellent, as hardly anyone will bid and make 6♣. 3NT won't be a popular contract, but if West gets too busy, he might jockey his opponents into that high-scoring game, much to his chagrin.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

	♠ A J 5 2	
	♡ 9 6 3 2	
	◇ 8 5 4	
	♣ 6 2	

♠ 6		♠ 9 7 3
♡ A K Q 10		♡ J 5 4
◇ 3 2		◇ K J 10 6
♣ A 10 9 5 4 3		♣ J 8 7

	♠ K Q 10 8 4	
	♡ 8 7	
	◇ A Q 9 7	
	♣ K Q	

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1◇	1NT
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♠///		

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1◇	1NT
2♣	Pass	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	3♣	Pass
Pass	3♠	Pass	Pass
4♣	Pass	Pass	Pass/Dbl//

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1◇	1♠
2♣	2♠	3♣	3◇
3♡	3♠///		

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1◇	1♠
2♣	2♠	3♣	3◇
3♡	3♠	Pass	Pass
4♣	Pass	Pass	Pass/Dbl///
1♣	Pass	1◇	1♠
2♣/Dbl*	3♠*///		

(where Dbl would show 4♡, and 3♠ is weak)

West	North	East	South
2♣*	Pass	3♣	3♠
Pass/4♣///			

(*2♣ = 10-15, 6+♣ or 5♣/4M, and 3♣ = weak)

West	North	East	South
2♣*	Pass	3♣	3♠///
4♣	4♠///		

(*2♣ = 10-15, 6+♣ or 5♣/4M, and 3♣ = weak)

This deal is all about who blinks first. With N/S on for nine tricks in spades, E/W for nine in clubs, the bidding is likely to reach 3♠ at every table in one way or another. Whether West competes to 4♣ will turn on his judgment about the relative success of that contract and 3♠, and his assessment of the likelihood that he will be doubled by opponents inclined to protect their equity by trying for +200 at the risk of going -610.

N/S pairs that collect only 100 vs 4♣, or go minus in 4♠ (East must remember to play an honor on each of the first three rounds of diamonds) will score poorly as +140 in a spade partial and +200 against 4♣ doubled will much more popular results.

It's not that 4♣ is a poor contract; it's not; it requires the ◇Q in North and nothing awful in trumps. The problem with 4♣ is that it's so likely to be doubled when it fails because E/W are vulnerable and N/S expect to make their 3♠ contract.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

	♠ J 10 9 8 7 5 3	
	♡ A 8 3	
	◇ 7	
	♣ 7 5	

♠ 4		♠ K 2
♡ J 10		♡ 6 5 4 2
◇ A K Q 6 4 2		◇ 10 9
♣ 10 9 6 3		♣ K Q J 4 2

	♠ A Q 6	
	♡ K Q 9 7	
	◇ J 8 5 3	
	♣ A 8	

West	North	East	South
	2♠/3♠	Pass	4♠///

West	North	East	South
	2♠/3♠	Pass	4♠
5◇	Pass	Pass	Dbl///

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
3◇	4♡*	Pass	4♠///

(4♡* = transfer to 4♠)

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1NT
2♣*	2♡*	Dbl*	2♠
3◇	3♠	Pass	4♠///

(2♣* = any suit; 2♡* = ♠; Dbl* = comp values)

There will be some variations (because there always are) but the essence of this deal will

usually be whether E/W compete to 5◇ over 5♠. My inclination is that they will not and that 4♠ making six will be by far the most common result (declarer takes the spade finesse and has four heart trick on this layout, so the club loser disappears). A long string of +480s will grace the score sheets.

If E/W compete to 5◇, N/S might go on to 5♠, but are more likely to double. At first glance it might seem that declarer in 5◇ might escape for -300 by passing a diamond honor from East. That doesn't work, however, if North leads a major and the defenders take every trick offered them to force declarer twice. Thus, when declarer is in dummy with the second round of clubs and tries to slip the ◇9 past his right-hand opponent, South can smile sweetly and cover with the jack, blocking the suit for declarer. Now declarer can return to the ◇10 but must either concede a club ruff or shorten himself with a heart ruff; in either case South makes a trump trick and 5◇ doubled is three down, for -500 and a dreadful score.

Will anyone bid slam with the N/S cards? I can't see how or why, but with so many tables in play, who knows?

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

```
              ♠ K Q J
              ♡ J 9 2
              ◇ J 8 7 4
              ♣ K J 3
  ♠ 8 4                      ♠ 10 5 3
  ♡ K Q 3                    ♡ 7 5 4
  ◇ 9 5 2                    ◇ A K Q 6 3
  ♣ Q 9 8 4 2                ♣ 7 5
              ♠ A 9 7 6 2
              ♡ A 10 8 6
              ◇ 10
              ♣ A 10 6
```

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT*	Pass	2♡
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠///

(1NT* = forcing one round, limited to a poor 12 HCP)

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2◇	Pass	2♡
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠///		

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣*	2◇	2♡
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	4♠///		

(*where a 2◇ response would suggest 5+◇)

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♡
Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠///

West	North	East	South
		2◇	Dbl
3◇	3NT///		

West	North	East	South
		2◇	Dbl
3◇	Pass//		

West	North	East	South
		2◇	Dbl
3◇	Dbl*	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠/3NT/Pass///		

(Dbl* responsive)

Aficionados of the Multi 2◇, Flannery 2◇, Ekren 2◇ (both majors, weak), Precision 2◇ (limited three-suiter with short diamonds), Roman and mini-Roman 2◇ (any three-suiter) will generally tell you that they don't mind not having a natural weak 2◇ because it's not much of a preempt anyway. This deal will do nothing to bolster the accuracy of their dismissive assertion. What should poor North do after 2◇-Dbl-3◇-? His diamond holding is frighteningly thin for 3NT when South will have a singleton or void; passing with 12 HCP is a gamble that bidding will often lead to a minus on offence; doubling for penalty would be very reasonable, but many would treat this double as responsive (cooperative takeout) and how would North continue when South replies with 3♡ or 3♠ (passing, raising, and converting to 3NT are all different gambles with a real chance of working poorly). Although this time it will probably work to double and raise 3♠ to 4♠, and to commit to 3NT directly or indirectly, North won't much enjoy the ride. Perhaps a bit more respect is due the natural, weak 2◇.

Uncontested, N/S will generally reach 4♠, though some will miss game and others might try 3NT. The fate of 3NT will depend on whether declarer is given a diamond trick and whether he takes two heart finesses or tries to find the ♣Q: +600 will be more common than +630 and -100.

In 4♠, the defense will usually start with a diamond to East and a heart switch. If declarer

goes about his business, he will discover that West is 2=3=3=5 or perhaps 2=3=2=6, and so will play him for the ♣Q for +620. If instead East plays a second diamond and declarer places him with the ace-king-queen, he might come to 10 tricks without having to guess clubs: (a) he can lead the ◊J through East to smother the nine and establish the ◊8 for a club discard; or (b) he can reverse the dummy and get West to solve his problems: go to the ♠K, ruff the third diamond with the ♠9; trump to the queen, ruff the ◊J with the ♠A, exit with a low heart; West wins and must break clubs or lead from his remaining heart honor; when in dummy with a club, declarer draws the last trump with the jack; he loses only another heart. 4♠ will rarely go down.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

```
              ♠ 3 2
              ♡ 10 9 6 2
              ◊ J 10 4
              ♣ K 7 6 4
♠ 10 9 7                  ♠ A K Q J 8 5 4
♡ A K 3                   ♡ 8 7 5
◊ A K 6                   ◊ Q 7
♣ Q J 10 9                ♣ 2
              ♠ 6
              ♡ Q J 4
              ◊ 9 8 5 3 2
              ♣ A 8 5 3
```

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1NT	Pass	2♡*	Pass
2♠	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♠*	Pass
6♠///			

(2♡* = spades)
(4♣* = long spades, short clubs, slam interest)
(5♠* = 2 of 5 key cards - 4 aces + ♠K + ♠Q)

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1NT	Pass	4♡/4◊**	Pass
4♠/// (4♡/4◊* = transfer to 4♠)			

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	4♠/3NT///	

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	2◊*	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3♠	Pass
4◊*	Pass	5♠	Pass
6♠///			

(1NT* = 15-17; 2◊* is game-forcing inquiry)
(2NT* = 3=3=3=4 or 3=4=3=3)
(4◊* = ◊ control, no ♣ control, slam suitable)

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♣	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	4♠	Pass
5◊	Pass	6♠///	

(5◊* = ◊ control, no ♣ control, slam suitable)

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	4♣*	Pass4♠*
Pass	6♠///		

(4♣* = Gerber – ace asking: 4♠* = 2 aces)

West has a maximum, of sorts, for a 15-17 notrump, and the 14-16 group will have to open 1♣ (forcing or natural) and rebid 1NT or 2NT, according to system. Apart from his lovely spades, East seems to have little to contribute to a slam investigation, but it turns out that both his ◊Q and singleton club are critical assets. If East issues any type of slam invitation, West will cooperate, but East might just settle for game and miss his laydown 6♠.

Some West players will try to sort out the club-control issue while some East players will concern themselves with red-suit controls, but others will rely on an ace or key-card ask from one side or the other. It's that sort of deal. Methods, judgment, state of the session, and partnership philosophy will influence East's inclination to sign off at 4♠, try for six, or drive to slam. As for those who gamble that 3NT will have as many tricks as 4♠ (or 6NT as many tricks as 6♠), that's an acquired taste!

While E/W have 12 tricks (and only one loser) in spades, they also have 12 tricks (but two losers) in notrump. Unless the auction pinpoints a club lead or North is particularly inspired, the notrumpists will win their gamble on this one, with +690 beating the +680s and +1440 beating the +1430s. Could the defenders contrive to allow a thirteenth trick in spades if the defense doesn't lead clubs? Well, yes, but I'm not going to write about it other than to state that a few declarers will take Trick 13 with the ♡5.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

```
            ♠ K 10 7 6
            ♡ Q J 9
            ♢ A J 10 6
            ♣ 8 6
♠ Q J 9 8 3              ♠ A 5 4 2
♡ 8 3                   ♡ 10 6 4 2
♢ Q 8 5                 ♢ 9 7 2
♣ J 9 7                 ♣ Q 10
            ♠ ---
            ♡ A K 7 5
            ♢ K 4 3
            ♣ A K 5 4 3 2
```

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♢	Pass	1♡
Pass	1♠	Pass	3♢
Pass	3NT///		
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♠	Pass	2♡
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♢	Pass	4♡
Pass	4NT///		
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♡
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4♢	Pass	4♡
Pass	4NT///		
Pass	1♢	Pass	2♣
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♡
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♢
Pass	4NT	Pass	6♣///
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♢
Pass	6♣///		

You don't want to be in slam on this one unless you happen to make it. Where North passes initially, more will stay out of six than reach one the odds-against slams, but where North opens 1♢ or 1NT (or perhaps 1♠) with his chunky 11-count, most South players will drive to six once North admits to a balanced hand, minimum though it figures to be, after several rounds of unenthusiastic bidding.

Where North declares 3NT or 4NT, he can take 11 tricks whether or not East leads a spade: on a neutral heart lead, declarer wins in hand and leads clubs, playing high from dummy unless East contributes the queen, then repeats the process; if East doesn't cash the ♠A, declarer can settle for his top tricks or play someone for the guarded ♢Q, +660, +690, or perhaps just +630 (guessing diamonds wrong). South won't often declare a notrump contract, but if he does, the lead of a spade honor will hold him to 10 tricks as long as the defense makes a neutral switch at Trick Two.

The play in 6♣ will usually turn on the guess for the ♢Q, but where the ♠Q is led, declarer can avoid that guess whether or not he covers with the king. Say that he doesn't, ruffs in hand, cashes ace-king of trumps, and runs hearts. If West ruffs in he must break diamonds or set up a spade trick for declarer, and if he doesn't ruff, he'll be thrown in with his trump winner with the same effect.

Curiously, 13 tricks can be taken in diamonds: declarer picks up the ♢Q and can ruff out clubs with North's last trump. And in hearts, which looks particularly fragile, declarer plays low on the ♠Q, ruffs, and plays three rounds of clubs, ruffing with the nine; if East over-ruffs and plays the ♠A, declarer ruffs, picks up the ♢Q, cashes three of those and the ♠K, and crossruffs with four high trumps. Variations can be interesting too.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

```
            ♠ 10
            ♡ Q 9 8 4 2
            ♢ A 6
            ♣ Q 9 7 5 4
♠ 5                     ♠ A Q 9 4 2
♡ A J 10 7 6            ♡ 3
♢ K J 4 2              ♢ 9 8 7 5 3
♣ K J 2                ♣ A 3
            ♠ K J 8 7 6 3
            ♡ K 5
            ♢ Q 10
            ♣ 10 8 6
```

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	2♠
3♡	Pass	3NT/Pass///	
	Pass	Pass	2♠
Dbl///			
	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
3NT///			

	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
2NT*	Pass	3◇	Pass
4◇	Pass	5♣	Pass
5◇/6◇///			

(*where 2NT is game-forcing)

	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠	Pass
3◇	Pass	4◇	Pass
5◇///			

		2♡*///	

(2♡* = 5+♡/5+other, 8-11)

		2♡*	Pass	2♠*
Pass	3♣///			

(2♡* = 5+♡/5+other, 8-11; 2♠* = pass or correct)

		2♡*	2♠	Pass
3NT///				

(2♡* = 5+♡/5+other, 8-11)

As the auctions above suggest, there will be plenty of variety on this one. N/S will not want to buy the contract in 2♠ doubled (down 800 or so), which could happen if North and West do not open the bidding, but they won't necessarily be thrilled to finish in 2♠ or 2♡ not doubled either (down 300 or so) as E/W might not reach game in a viable strain, might go down in game or even slam, and might find the wrong strain and go minus in a partscore.

3NT and 5◇ are the most likely games for E/W. There is no immediate ninth trick in 3NT, even with an accurate approach to the diamond suit, unless North leads a heart or a club, or South a spade. But even on the best lead of a club by South, declarer can play low from dummy, and eventually lead a heart to the ten and build a second winner there. South can't get the lead in time to lead a second club through the king-jack, and if the bidding has tipped declarer to the distribution, North might even get end-played to concede a tenth trick. The play will usually be easier for declarer from the West side on a heart or club lead, but getting the diamonds right will be important for declarer in all variations.

It might seem that declarer can come to 12 tricks in diamonds with the right view in trumps, but if the defense does not give declarer a trick to which he isn't entitled (essentially a club lead

from North or a spade lead from South), at the end of the day, after a third-round ruffing finesse in hearts and various additional ruffs, declarer's trick total will be only 11; bad news for the 6◇ bidders as N/S are unlikely to blow a trick at that level. There are too many possibilities on this one to make any sensible score predictions.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

```
                    ♠ A J 9 8 6 2
                    ♡ Q 9 8 2
                    ◇ J 5
                    ♣ J
    ♠ K Q                       ♠ 5
    ♡ A 10 5                    ♡ J 6 4 3
    ◇ 10 8 4                    ◇ A K Q 6 3
    ♣ K 7 5 4 3                 ♣ Q 8 2
                    ♠ 10 7 4 3
                    ♡ K 7
                    ◇ 9 7 2
                    ♣ A 10 9 6
```

West	North	East	South
		1◇	Pass
2♣	2♠	3♣	3♠
3NT/Dbl///			
		1◇	Pass
2♣	2♠	3♣	3♠///
		1◇	Pass
2NT///			
		1◇	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT///	

Although East and West both hold minimum opening bids and N/S don't have freak distribution, this deal belongs to N/S, who can take nine tricks in spades without difficulty while E/W can't do better than take nine tricks in diamonds or (much less obviously) hearts, but not clubs, perhaps the most likely strain they will find.

All too often, E/W will defend 3♠ doubled (-530), shoot out 3NT (-200), but if they stop in 2NT or compete to 4♣ (it's not so obvious to finish in a red suit), they'll go set in those contracts too. Indeed, South might double 4♣ and collect 500 if E/W sit for it, as they probably would.

Where E/W bid and raise clubs after East opens 1◇, it's barely possible that they will take a position and sell out to 3♠ without doubling, but that will take a lot of courage with so much strength and five points in the enemy suit. On the few occasions when a table produces N/S

+140, E/W figure to do quite well, given the number of ways they can do so much worse.

<u>Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.</u>

```
                ♠ 9 6 4 3
                ♡ K 9 8
                ◇ K 5
                ♣ A 7 6 5
♠ Q                         ♠ K J 10 7 5 2
♡ Q 10 7 6 4 3 2            ♡ A 5
◇ 9 4 2                     ◇ J
♣ 3 2                       ♣ K 10 9 4
                ♠ A 8
                ♡ J
                ◇ A Q 10 8 7 6 3
                ♣ Q J 8
```

West	North	East	South
			1◇
2♡	Dbl*	3♡	Dbl*
Pass	3NT///		
			1◇
2♡	Dbl*	Pass	3◇///
			1◇
2♡	Dbl*	Pass	4◇
Pass	5◇///		
			1◇
2♡	2NT	Pass	3NT///
			1◇
Pass	1♠	2♠	3◇
Pass	3♡/3♠	Pass	3NT///

N/S can make 3NT, perhaps with an overtrick, but can't make 5◇ on a spade lead. If West intervenes with a weak jump overcall, or East is systemically permitted to make a natural overcall in North's one-level response-suit and willing to do so, N/S may have to use some fancy footwork to reach their optimum contract. It would not be difficult to imagine them stopping in a diamond partial or reaching a losing 5◇ where E/W enter the auction. 5◇ will make if West does not lead the ♠Q, but that would be his choice whether or not East mentioned the suit. On any other lead declarer can play low from dummy and eventually squeeze East in three suits, if necessary. The variations can be interesting and worth your consideration when you have a few idle moments.

In 3NT, declarer can come to a tenth trick on any lead in a variety of ways, essentially by running diamonds and watching East succumb to the pressure; the defense may concede a tenth trick earlier by breaking hearts in one of several unsuccessful ways.

E/W can come to eight tricks in hearts but only seven in spades, but don't figure to reach a level at which it would be attractive for their opponents to double them or sell out without doubling, so there won't be many N/S +200s or 500s. Although this is not such an easy deal for N/S, many of them will achieve +630 and +600, so those that don't will be treated shabbily in the scoring.

<u>Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.</u>

```
                ♠ A K J 9
                ♡ A K 10 8 7
                ◇ Q 6 4
                ♣ 9
♠ 10 7 6 5 3              ♠ Q 8 4 2
♡ 9 6 3 2                 ♡ J 4
◇ A 9 3                   ◇ 10 8 7
♣ J                       ♣ K 8 6 3
                ♠ ---
                ♡ Q 5
                ◇ K J 5 2
                ♣ A Q 10 7 5 4 2
```

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♡	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	4◇
Pass	4NT///		
Pass	1♡	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3◇
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	5NT*	Pass	6♣/6♡
Pass	Pass/6NT///		

(5NT* = pick a slam)

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣*	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♡	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	Pass	4◇
Pass	4NT	Pass	5♡
Pass	6♡/6NT///		

(1♣* = strong, artificial)

While N/S can make a slam in notrump, hearts, or even diamonds, those pairs that get to six are as likely to play in clubs, where they will fail, losing the ◇A and one or two trump tricks. With the ♡J falling, diamonds three-three, and the ♣K onside, there are 12 tricks available in notrump, and the declarers who take them will be over average whether or not they reach slam.

While declarer can time the play in notrump to suit his overall plan (though he must put

in the queen if East leads a club on the go), the entry position is far less fluid if hearts are trumps. For example, if East leads a club, dummy no longer has a late entry to the long diamond: putting in the ♣Q looks important, but in practice, the ace will do. West must duck one diamond or declarer can take one spade ruff in dummy and discard another on dummy's fourth diamond. It would seem that West could also duck the second diamond, or win it and play a third; while it's true that these variations in the defense kill the long diamond, declarer counters by cashing his high spades and taking a second spade ruff in dummy, ruffing himself in with clubs and eventually dropping the ♡J in two rounds. As long as declarer's first "early" diamond play is low towards the queen, the defense will be helpless; West can't afford to discard a diamond on an early club ruff from dummy, as declarer can take one spade ruff, cash the trump queen, and knock out the ◇A. There are some fantastic variations possible, including this one: ♣Q, ♡Q, ◇Q, spade ruff, club ruff, trumps; East must keep guards in both spades and clubs and so must discard his remaining diamonds; declarer plays ace-king-jack of spades; East, in with the ♠Q, must lead a club from the king into dummy's ace-ten. It's likely that the play in hearts at any level will go slowly, but although declarer can't be prevented from taking 12 tricks, declarer won't always find a line to get all of them. As hearts won't be the strain of choice all that often, this discussion may prove to be nothing more than a pleasant afterthought.

Similarly, there won't be many pairs in diamonds, but those that are will be in six, an uncomfortable contract that needs trumps three-three. After a heart lead by West, declarer wins in hand, and must lead a trump honor to preserve North's queen; West ducks, and now declarer can continue trumps any way he chooses. The play will usually transpose into the same matrix as 6NT, with declarer taking the single club finesse.

Alas, 6♣ is doomed, and declarer must play with some inspiration to come to 11 tricks. On a heart lead, declarer wins and can recover even if he cashes the ♣A; the ♡A, ♡K; if East

ruffs declarer over-ruffs and loses the ◇A and only one trump; declarer repeats the process, and if East does not ruff, declarer discards another diamond, then two more on high spades, losing only two trump tricks. If West leads ◇A, diamond, declarer can play: ◇Q, ♠AK (diamonds), spade ruff, ♡A, spade ruff, ♡K, heart . . . ♣Q! Well, he can.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

```
              ♠ 5 3
              ♡ K 7 4 2
              ◇ A K J 10 8
              ♣ 5 3
♠ J 9 8 4                   ♠ A Q 10 7 2
♡ A 9 8 5 3                 ♡ J 10 6
◇ 9 5 2                     ◇ 7
♣ A                         ♣ K Q 7 2
              ♠ K 6
              ♡ Q
              ◇ Q 6 4 3
              ♣ J 10 9 8 6 4
```

West	North	East	South
	1◇	1♠	2◇
3◇	4◇	4♠	5◇
Dbl///			
	1◇	1♠	2◇
3◇	4◇	4♠	5◇
Pass	Pass	Dbl///	
	1◇	1♠	2◇
4♠///			
	1◇	1♠	3◇
4♠	5◇	Dbl///	
	1◇	1♠	3◇
4♠	5◇	Pass	Pass
Dbl///			

E/W can make 4♠ but not five and N/S have a paying sacrifice at 5◇ doubled: − 300 against -620. The rhythm of the auction, South's choice of diamond raise (club systems will not be able to focus on diamonds as readily: for example, some would make a weak jump response in clubs, others a competitive bid (2NT or 3♣) to show a modest hand with length in both minors), and the number of bids it takes E/W to reach 4♠ will affect N/S's decision to save; the vulnerability will be a major selling point too, of course.

Competing to 5◇ is the winning decision, not only because it costs less than E/W's vulnerable

game, but also because E/W might take the push to 5♠ and go set. Indeed, 5♠ needs roughly two of three major suit finesses, and some might gamble on taking 11 tricks on the theory that N/S have judged correctly to sacrifice and that others might not do so, saddling E/W with a poor score for accepting the penalty.

But there's more to this deal than the five-level decisions. Where E/W are permitted to play in 4♠, South might lead the ♡Q, threatening a ruff. The winning line is to take the ♡A and play ace and another trump, but that would lose an unnecessary trick to the ♠K if it is onside with one, two or three low trumps. At Matchpoints, it's generally wrong to take safety plays in normal contracts; trying to take as many tricks as possible is the traditional strategy on such deals. 4♠ appears to be the contract everyone will reach, but is that so?

If a significant number of N/S pairs sacrifice at 5♢ and buy the contract, those E/W pairs will probably collect only 300 or 500 points, and if the price is 800 there's nothing a declarer in 4♠ can do about that. If the ♠K is onside, the E/W pairs who go on to 5♠ will make their contract and the best declarer can do in 4♠ is tie those +650s. Sure, South might lead a singleton heart with two small trumps, but that could cost the defense whatever fast tricks they might have coming in the minors, and holding down the overtricks can be more important than going all out to defeat a normal contract. Thus South is quite likely to think he can gain the lead in trumps, cross to partner, and get a heart ruff. Taking the trump finesse increases declarer's chances of going down in 4♠ (as here, for example: ♠K, ◇K, ♡K, heart ruff), and doing his best to ensure +620 is a valid strategy, given that others with the E/W cards will be +300, +500, and -100 (in 5♠ if the ♠K is wrong, and perhaps in 4♠ also). Declarer must weight these possibilities against the likelihood that there will be a significant number of +650s with the ♠K onside.

If these reflections have reasonably given you a headache, perhaps a little knowledge is not worth its acquisition.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

```
              ♠ 7 6 2
              ♡ A 10 3
              ◇ K J 2
              ♣ A K J 2
♠ K J 10 9 8              ♠ ---
♡ 6 4 2                  ♡ K Q J 9 8
◇ Q 7 3                  ◇ A 10 6 5
♣ Q 8                    ♣ 10 9 6 3
              ♠ A Q 5 4 3
              ♡ 7 5
              ◇ 9 8 4
              ♣ 7 5 4
```

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	2♡	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl///	
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	1♡	1♠ (5+♠)
2♡	2♠	3♡	3♠
Dbl///			
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	1♡	1♠ (5+♠)
2♡	Dbl*	Pass	2♠
Pass	Pass	Dbl///	
		1♡	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣/2◇	Pass
2♡///			
		1♡	Pass
1♠	1NT	Pass	Pass
2♡///			
		1♡	Pass
2♡	Dbl	Pass	2♠///
		2♡	Pass
Pass	2NT///		
		Pass	Pass
2♠	Dbl///		
		Pass	Pass
1♠	Dbl	2♡///	

This deal will test everyone's style and judgment, as no one can make much of anything (the one-level seems to be the maximum in all strains!) and the objective will be to ensure that the opponents buy the contract at the two-level or higher, and in the process to look for opportunities to collect at least 200 if at all possible.

The auctions above, mostly something short of pretty, will surely take place more than once. There will be others, of course, especially featuring different methods for East to compete over a 1NT opening after

passing originally. Notrump ranges will make a difference, too, but only where North sees three passes before it gets to him. Whether the vulnerability will cow East or West at their first turn remains to be seen.

Although only West can make 1NT, North is the only one likely to play in that strain, and he'll be much too high to enjoy it. Where N/S reach the giddy heights of 3♠, E/W won't have to double to score well, but it will be important to double 2♠ as N/S -100 will be a fairly common result. Similarly, if E/W buy the hand at 3♡, N/S will do well even if they don't double, but a close double of 2♡ and careful defense (early trump plays, a passive strategy) will produce a 200-point penalty and an excellent score.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

```
                ♠ K 8 2
                ♡ A K 9
                ◇ J 10 2
                ♣ A 8 7 2
♠ 6 4                        ♠ A 10 7 5
♡ J 7                        ♡ Q 6 5 4 3 2
◇ A Q 4 3                    ◇ 9 5
♣ K J 6 5 4                  ♣ 9
                ♠ Q J 9 3
                ♡ 10 8
                ◇ K 8 7 6
                ♣ Q 10 3
```

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1NT	2♡	Dbl*
Pass	2NT/3♣/2♠///		
			Pass
1♣	1NT	2♡	2NT///
			Pass
1◇	Dbl	1♡	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♡	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	2♠///
			Pass
1◇	Dbl	2♡	2♠///

With neither side vulnerable, both West and East will usually have something to say at a low level, so although N/S would reach 1NT or 2NT uncontested, they may reach less satisfactory contracts of 2♠ or 3♣ in competition.

Notrump plays well for N/S as long as declarer knocks out East's ♠A first after a heart lead to the ten (best, to keep East in the dark about the location of the nine), jack, and king, and does not start clubs by leading the ace. Although on a diamond switch and heart return, declarer won't know to take the king, he can come to eight tricks after ducking the second heart to East; to do so he will need to either lead the first club to the ten or queen and lead the other honor through West when next in dummy, or lead an honor from dummy to start the suit.

South can make 2♠, but North (who will very rarely declare this contract) can't if East leads his singleton club. Say that West leads the ♡J; declarer wins and starts on trumps, East takes an honor on the second round and exits with a third trump; let's have declarer mis-guess, leaving East with the master trump. As long as declarer plays accurately on the minors and takes the second heart, the defense will get only two trumps, two diamonds and a club. Whether +110 scores well will depend on how well the declarers in notrump guess the play, and some will go minus in 2NT while others will do very well to make three.

If N/S stop to double 2♡ or sell out without doubling or competing (too conservative to imagine), they will beat it one as long as South leads a trump or a diamond (to kill a timely entry to cash an impending club winner). On the lead of a spade honor, declarer ducks; South can switch to trumps, and after taking the ace-king, North reverts to spades; declarer ducks again, and can isolate South's spade winner, eventually stripping diamonds, drawing the last trump, and leading a club to the jack. There will be more +470s for E/W than we might expect, and E/W -100 might not be too bad either.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

```
                ♠ 10 6
                ♡ K 9
                ◇ A K Q 5
                ♣ A J 7 6 3
♠ Q 5                        ♠ A K J 8 7 4 2
♡ J 8 6 5 4                  ♡ A 10 7 2
◇ 9 7 6 2                    ◇ J
♣ Q 8                        ♣ K
                ♠ 9 3
                ♡ Q 3
                ◇ 10 8 4 3
                ♣ 10 9 5 4 2
```

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣/1♢/1NT	3♠/4♠///	Pass
1♣/1♢	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl///			

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣/1♢	4♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	5♣/5♢
Pass	Pass	Pass/Dbl///	

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣/1♢	1♠///	

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	2♣*	Pass
2♡	Pass	2♠/3♠	Pass
4♡/4♠///	(2♣* = hearts and spades)		

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	Dbl///	

(but someone would probably remove the double)

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♢	1♠	Pass
Pass	2♣	Dbl	3♣
3♡	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣*	Pass	4♠///	

(4♣* = choice of games)

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♣/1♢	Dbl	2♣/2♢
2♡	Pass	2♠*	Pass
3♣/3♢*	Pass	4♠///	

(*where 2♠ would be forcing after West's "free" 2♡; 3♣/3♢* = choice of strain)

While a few E/W pairs will languish short of game for one good reason or another, most will find a route to 4♠ or 4♡, and a healthy number of them will be doubled, more on general principles than with a firm belief that they are going down. Where North, after opening a minor, reopens 4♠ with a double, he be offering his partner the choice between -500 in five of a minor doubled and -590 defending 4♠ doubled. In addition to the relative size of those minus scores, South will do better to remove the double (generally treated as cooperative takeout) because (a) East might not double; (b) someone might bid 5♠ and go down.

Where North opens his awkward hand with 1NT rather than reverse (after opening 1♣) with a balanced minimum for that action, or distort his minor-suit length by opening 1♢ and planning a 2♣ rebid, East will either pick a number of spades or perhaps start with his system bid to show length in both majors, intending to bid spades next to show extra strength and at least a two-card length disparity in his suits.

A penalty double of a strong 1NT opening will strike some Easts as a good move; that could lead to E/W +500, but it's likely that South, West (though he shouldn't) , or North will remove the double, after which E/W will either proceed to 4♠ or advance cautiously and stop short.

Given the number of possibilities on this deal, E/W +420 might not be good enough to produce an above- average score.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

```
              ♠ Q J 8 7 6 3 2
              ♡ A 3
              ♢ Q 5 4
              ♣ K
 ♠ K 9                      ♠ A 10 4
 ♡ K Q J 9 7 6              ♡ 2
 ♢ A J 6                    ♢ K 10 9 8
 ♣ A 10                     ♣ Q J 9 7 6
              ♠ 5
              ♡ 10 8 5 4
              ♢ 7 3 2
              ♣ 8 5 4 3 2
```

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2♠	3♣	Pass
3♡	Pass	3NT///	

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2♠	3♣	Pass
3NT///			

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2♠	3♣	Pass
3♡	Pass	4♢	Pass
4♡///			

West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	Pass
Dbl	2♠	Dbl/*2NT*	Pass
3♡	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT/4♡///			

(where DBL* and 2NT* would be minor-suit oriented)

There's nearly a 10% difference between the optimum play for five tricks in hearts (honors from the top) and the alternative line (finesse the nine), but this time the inferior play works. That won't help the declarers in hearts who get the lead of a spade honor, as North will (or should) give South a second-round spade ruff. In the process, though, declarer will finesse the ♠10 and can discard the ♣10 on the ♠A

after drawing the remaining trumps; when the ♣K falls under the ace, declarer will not need to look for the ◇Q, and E/W +650 will be a common result.

Where E/W elect to play in notrump, they would rather be there from the West side to completely neutralize the spade suit, but in this case it won't matter as long as declarer plays high cards at every opportunity, dropping the ♣K before thinking of conceding a second heart trick; that would give him 11 top tricks, and if he cashes heart(s) and the ♣10 before crossing to the ◇K to run the clubs, he catches the opponents in a double squeeze: South must keep the ♡10, North the ♠Q and neither can keep three diamonds, so the ◇J will be declarer's twelfth trick for +690 and a superb score. Will everyone drop the ♣K in time, or at all? Probably not, but it will make a good story for those who do and follow the winning line to 12 tricks without having to rely on finding the ◇Q.

E/W can collect 800 against 2♠ doubled if they divine to defend at that level. We'll see a few of those, but not enough to have a serious effect on the other scores.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

```
              ♠ Q 10 7 6 2
              ♡ Q 8 6 4
              ◇ Q 3
              ♣ Q 10
♠ K J 9 8 5 4              ♠ A 3
♡ K 10 9                  ♡ A J 7 2
◇ ---                     ◇ J 10 7 6
♣ A 6 4 3                 ♣ K 8 2
              ♠ ---
              ♡ 5 3
              ◇ A K 9 8 5 4 2
              ♣ J 9 7 5
```

West	North	East	South
		1◇	3◇
3♠	Pass	3NT///	
		1◇	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	2◇/Pass
4♠///			
		1NT	3◇
4♠///			
		1NT	3◇
4♡*	Pass	4♠///	

(*where 4♡ is a transfer to 4♠)

		1♡	3◇
3♠	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♡	Pass	Pass/4♠///	

4♠ will be the people's choice on this one, with West and East each declaring at a significant number of tables.

A quick glance at the complete layout might suggest that 4♠ is in some danger of going set, but in practice, there are 11 tricks available without having to do anything special, as long as declarer plays North for the ♡Q. Say that the defense starts with a diamond; declarer ruffs and leads a trump to the ace, getting the bad news, plays ♡K, ♡10, and finishes the hearts whether or not North covers (the ♣K is an entry to discard a club if he does), ruffs a diamond, cashes the high clubs, and exits in clubs; North, down to four trumps, must ruff and lead from Q107 around to West's KJ9. If declarer mis-guesses the ♡Q, he can still come to 10 tricks on the same general line of play, but it's more convenient to play North for the ♡Q because the finesse can be repeated without tampering with the fluid entry position.

Pre-emption in diamonds might jockey E/W into 3NT or (more rarely) 4♡, neither of which have the potential of a spade contract.

In 3NT, the defense faces a Hobson's choice after a low diamond to the queen and a diamond to the ten and king: if South cashes the ◇A, declarer has his ninth winner, assuming he plays hearts successfully; if South switches (say to a club), declarer can concede two spade tricks to North, who can't reach South's ◇A. There's no legitimate chance for a tenth trick, however, so unless there are enough E/W pairs going set in 4♠ or less likely contracts, or collecting only 100 or 300 against diamond contracts, +400 figures to be below average.

The play in hearts is tricky, though manageable. In one variation, declarer ruffs one diamond with the nine, another with the king, takes a heart finesse through North, cashes one more heart, the ♠A, ♣A and the ♣K, then exits in trumps. North takes two trump winners and is down to four spades, as is West. North gets only one spade trick. Lovely!

```
              ♠ 10 7 2
              ♡ A 10 6
              ◇ 9 3
              ♣ A 9 6 3 2
  ♠ 8 6                      ♠ Q 5 4 3
  ♡ Q 7 4                    ♡ 9 8
  ◇ Q 10 7 6 5 4             ◇ A J 2
  ♣ 10 4                     ♣ Q J 7 5
              ♠ A K J 9
              ♡ K J 5 3 2
              ◇ K 8
              ♣ K 8
```

West	North	East	South
			1♡
Pass	2♡	Pass	4♡///

West	North	East	South
			1♡
Pass	2♡	Pass	2♠/2NT
Pass	4♡///		

West	North	East	South
			1♡
Pass	2♡	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3NT/4♡///

West	North	East	South
			1♡
3◇	3♡	4◇	4♡/Dbl///

West	North	East	South
			1♡
Pass	2♡	Dbl	Rdbl
3◇	Pass	Pass	4♡///

N/S will play 4♡ far more often than 3NT, and unless declarer gets the hearts right, hearts is the place to be. Both contracts offer 12 tricks for those who find the ♡Q and take the spade finesse, but in hearts declarer will never take fewer than 11 tricks, while in notrump, declarer can go down on a diamond lead if he takes the heart finesse through East; else he can cash ace-king of hearts and take the spade finesse for nine tricks.

On a deal where +680 and +650 will be by far the most common results, top scores on offense will go to the notrump artists who achieve +690, but their less successful co-conspirators will score dreadfully for +600 or -200 (more likely than -100).

There's no reason for anyone to attempt a slam, but it's barely conceivable that a few frisky E/W pairs will compete to 4◇ and concede 800 points in the name of enterprise.

```
              ♠ A 10 8 2
              ♡ J 8 4 3
              ◇ J 3
              ♣ J 10 8
  ♠ J 6 5 4                  ♠ K Q 9 7 3
  ♡ A Q 5                    ♡ 9 7 6
  ◇ 9 8 2                    ◇ Q 10 7
  ♣ 7 5 3                    ♣ 6 4
              ♠ ---
              ♡ K 10 2
              ◇ A K 6 5 4
              ♣ A K Q 9 2
```

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1◇
Pass	1♡	1♠	3♣
3♠	Dbl///		

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1◇
Pass	1♡	1♠	Dbl*
2♠	Pass	Pass	3♣
Pass	3◇	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♣///		

(*Dbl = 3-card ♡ support)

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1◇
Pass	1♡	Pass	3♣
Pass	3◇	Pass	3♡
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Pass	5♣///		

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣*
Pass	1◇*	1♠	Dbl*
2♠	3♡	Pass	3♠
Pass	3NT///		

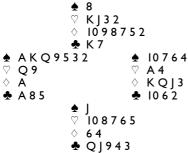(*1♣ strong, artificial; 1◇* = 0-7; Dbl* = takeout)

Although reaching five of a minor when that happens to be par is often tricky business at Matchpoints, where 3NT is King, this deal should not pose a particularly challenging assignment for N/S after a natural 1◇ opening. Strong clubbers, on the other hand, may have some trouble after losing an important round of natural bidding and encountering some mild obstruction by E/W.

On a bright, sunshiny good day, with a good guess in hearts possible, N/S could make 6♣, ruffing out diamonds and discarding a heart on the ♠A. Under a cloudy sky, ambition is best

resigned to a back burner. +400 should be very nice, thank you; 3NT not so much, as eight tricks is the limit.

The big winner, however, is the ugly contract of 4♡. On a spade lead, declarer can take the ♠A, three spade ruffs, four top tricks in the minors, and a diamond ruff; he exits with a club and can guess trumps in the endgame to make a trick out of his jack-eight-four. On a reasonable trump lead (or a less likely club lead), declarer can manage an overtrick. Good bidding will not lead N/S to 4♡, but those who are there and make it will consider their bidding impeccable and their score a matter of justice.

Board 33. Love All. Dealer North.

```
                ♠ 8
                ♡ K J 3 2
                ◇ 10 9 8 7 5 2
                ♣ K 7
♠ A K Q 9 5 3 2        ♠ 10 7 6 4
♡ Q 9                  ♡ A 4
◇ A                    ◇ K Q J 3
♣ A 8 5                ♣ 10 6 2
                ♠ J
                ♡ 10 8 7 6 5
                ◇ 6 4
                ♣ Q J 9 4 3
```

Here's a grand slam in spades or notrump for E/W with only 25 of their combined 29 HCP working (the major suit queens are redundant). Reaching any grand slam will not be a piece of cake, but it's certainly not out of the question, particularly if N/S stay out of the auction.

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
2♣*	Pass	2◇*	Pass
2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♡	Pass
4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
5♣*	Pass	5◇*///	Pass
6♠	Pass	7♠///	

(5♣* = 1 key card or 4; 5◇* = ♠Q ask)

	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT*	Pass	4♣*	Pass
4◇	Pass	4♡	Pass
4NT	Pass	5♣*	Pass
5NT	Pass	7◇	Pass
7NT///			

(3NT* asks singleton; 4♣* = none)
(5♣* - 1 key card or 4)

	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♣*	Pass
2◇*	Pass	3◇	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♡	Pass
4NT, etc///			

(2♣* = (Reverse) Drury-fit
(2◇* = at least a sound opening)

	2◇	Pass	Pass
Dbl/4♠///			

	2◇	Pass	Pass
3◇*	Pass	3NT	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♡	Pass
6♣	Pass	6◇	Pass
7♠///			

(3◇* asks for a diamond stopper)
(4♠ describes a strong two-bid, one-suiter)

	2◇	Pass	Pass
4◇*	Pass	4♡*	Pass
4♠	Pass	5♡	Pass
6◇	Pass	6♠/7♠///	

(4◇* = very strong 4♡ or 4♠ bid; 4♡* = pass or correct)

The North hand is no one's idea of a (natural) weak two-bid, but it's the sort of action that has become increasingly popular in the modern game, for better or for worse. That might work brilliantly, as East will place North with the ◇A and might not like his hand all that much, and if West ever shows first-round diamond control, East is likely to credit him with a void and like his hand even less.

Where West opens a strong, artificial 2♣, a 3-control response (2♠) would be a decent start, but even if East has to stall with 2◇, he will be able to bid strongly later. Ideal would be a fit-showing jump in diamonds to show a concentration of values, followed by a 5♡ control-bid; still, West will need the ◇J or king-queen-fifth and a late spade entry for seven.

There won't be many 7NTs, and perhaps not all that many 7♠ contracts. 6NT might score quite well, and 6♠ might not be that far below average because there will be some pairs in game.

```
                  ♠ 10 7 5 4
                  ♡ 8 3
                  ◇ Q 8 5
                  ♣ K J 5 3
  ♠ J 9 6 3                    ♠ A K Q 2
  ♡ Q J 10                     ♡ A
  ◇ 7 2                        ◇ A J 10 9 6
  ♣ A Q 6 4                    ♣ 10 9 2
                  ♠ 8
                  ♡ K 9 7 6 5 4 2
                  ◇ K 4 3
                  ♣ 8 7
```

West	North	East	South
		1◇	1♡
1NT	Pass	3NT///	
		1◇	1♡
Dbl*	Pass	2♡	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♠	Pass
3NT	Pass	Pass/4♠///	
(where Dbl shows exactly 4♠)			
		1◇	2♡
Dbl*	Pass	3♡	Pass
3NT	Pass	4♠///	

The vulnerability will usually convince South not to get too busy, and E/W will coast into 4♠ or 3NT unless West shows some enthusiasm and convinces East to go past game. The four-one trump break and the location of the club honors should prevent E/W from taking 11 tricks, and careful play is required to ensure 10.

Say that South leads a club against East's 4♠; declarer ducks to the jack, wins the heart return, plays ♠A, spade to the jack, and a diamond to the jack and king; if South plays a second club, declarer wins the ace and can take a second diamond finesse or ruff out the suit, draw trumps, and lose a club in the end. If South plays the ♡K, however, declarer has two effective counters, the easiest being to discard a club to keep control. The other winning line is to ruff, and as North is out of hearts, declarer can cash his high trump, cross to the ♣A, finesse in diamonds, cash the ◇A and lead a good diamond, discarding clubs from West; North gets only his high trump as dummy remains with a trump and a high heart.

With diamonds three-three and the honors split, declarer can take 10 tricks in notrump with less handling to do, and +430 will be excellent for E/W.

South can manage seven tricks in hearts, so will do well not to expose himself to a double at the three-level. This should not be too tall an order, except for the occasional color-blind cowboy.

```
                  ♠ A J 10 7 4 3 2
                  ♡ A 10 6
                  ◇ 4
                  ♣ Q 8
  ♠ K                          ♠ 5
  ♡ 7 5 2                      ♡ K J 9 8 4 3
  ◇ A Q J 9 7                  ◇ 10 8 3
  ♣ K 10 9 4                   ♣ A 3 2
                  ♠ Q 9 8 6
                  ♡ Q
                  ◇ K 6 5 2
                  ♣ J 7 6 5
```

N/S can make 4♠, but their vulnerable opponents can make 5♡ with a double-dummy play in trumps. It's difficult to see why anyone will get that high with the E/W cards, however, so N/S +420 will be by far the most common score.

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1◇	1♠	2♡	3♠
Pass/4♡	4♠	Pass/Dbl///	
			Pass
1◇	1♠	Dbl*	3♠
Pass	4♠///		
			Pass
1◇	3♠	Dbl*	4♠///
			Pass
1NT	2♠	2NT*/3♡	3♠
Pass	4♠///		
(where 2NT is Lebensohl)			

Exceptions may occur when E/W double 4♠ because they believe they "own" the deal and that the non-vulnerable opponents are saving. The number of N/S +590s will depend on the aggression and principles of the E/W pairs, and that, dear friends, is something we'll all learn when the frequencies are posted.

```
                 ♠ A J
                 ♡ A Q 9 7 5 2
                 ◊ K 10 8 5 3
                 ♣ ---
♠ Q 10                        ♠ 9 7 6 5 4 2
♡ K J 10                      ♡ 6 4
◊ A J 4 2                     ◊ Q 6
♣ A K 6 3                     ♣ Q 7 2
                 ♠ K 8 3
                 ♡ 8 3
                 ◊ 9 7
                 ♣ J 10 9 8 5 4
```

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♡	Pass	Pass
1NT	2◊	2♠	Pass
Pass	2NT*	Pass	3♡ ///

(2NT* = longer hearts than diamonds)

1♣	2NT*	Pass	3◊///

1◊	1♡	1♠	Pass
2NT	Pass	3♣*	Pass
3◊*	Pass	3♠*///	

(3♣* = puppet to 3◊)

(3◊* = forced; 3♠* = signoff)

1NT	2♡	2♠	Pass
Pass	3◊	Pass	3♡///

E/W might make 2♠ from the West side, but it will be difficult for them to achieve that, as North will usually compete quite vigorously. This is N/S's hand for 3♡, four if the defense does not lead a trump on the go: declarer can otherwise cross to the ♠K to lead a diamond, and will have time for one diamond ruff - the entry to finesse the ♡Q - and will later concede a second diamond and a trump.

If North treats his suits as equals, his side might finish in an undignified 3◊. Even if they make that (North can, but only on the impossible lead of a low club), +110 won't be worth much unless lots of N/S pairs go down in 4♡ or sell out too soon and collect only 100 from 2♠ by East.

Although there is some potential for heroics on this one, we can't really say that we're making a dramatic exit.

Say good Night, Gracie.

You can find the results from this event on the website at:

www.ecatsbridge.com

Eric Kokish married Beverly Kraft, his childhood sweetheart, in 1986.

Son Matthew, two dogs: Lady (Golden Retriever) and Jackie Robinson (Black Labrador); Kitten - called Kitten!

Eric learned bridge at High School and has been fascinated by the game ever since. He has made his mark on bridge in several areas. He served in administration, as president of Unit 151 (Montreal); as District 1 judiciary chairman in the Seventies and Eighties, as a Canadian Bridge Federation board member and as a member of the ACBL Goodwill Committee.

Eric is a former editor of the Unit 151 newsletter, author of a weekly bridge column in the Montreal Gazette from 1977 to 1997, has been a principal contributor to most world championship books since 1979, directs the Master Solvers Club and Challenge the Champs for the Bridge World magazine, has been editor of the World Bridge News since 1994 and has contributed to bridge magazines and bulletins around the world as well as doing VuGraph commentary at many World and International events.

Kokish is also the author of several conventions, including the Kokish Relay and the Montreal Relay. In 1980, he won a Bols Brilliancy prize and the ROMEX award for the best bid hand of the year.

Although he has not played frequently of late, Kokish is still among the top all-time Canadian players. He has won two North American championships — the Vanderbilt Knockout Teams and the Men's Board-a-Match Teams. He has earned two silver medals in international play — in the World Open Pairs in 1978 and the Bermuda Bowl in 1995 and has finished third three times in the Rosenblum Cup.

As a coach, Kokish has earned a reputation as one of the best. His latest success was as coach of the Nick Nickell squad, which won the 2000 Bermuda Bowl in Bermuda and the 2003 Bermuda Bowl in Monaco. In the past year Eric has coached the Russian and Chinese teams and members of the Egyptian team and this year is coaching teams and pairs using the excellent play records from Bridge Base Online, which provide for a whole new and effective coaching environment.

In 1997, after several working visits to Indonesia, he was invited by the Indonesian government to coach the national teams in Jakarta, following which he and Beverly settled in Toronto.