



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.

Many of you will have been aware of the First World Mind Sport Games held in Beijing last year - these were incredibly successful, and you can still find the data, including the hands, bulletins, results etc on the WBF Website at [www.worldbridge.org](http://www.worldbridge.org) as well as on the ECatsBridge Website at [www.ecatsbridge.com](http://www.ecatsbridge.com).

I hope that, in late August and early September, you will watch and enjoy the excitement of seeing some of the strongest teams in the world compete in the 2009 World Bridge Team Championships in Brazil - watching these teams is always an entertaining experience! Full details about the event are on both the WBF and the ECatsBridge websites, as well as the site set up especially for the event at <http://www.brazilbridge2009.com.br>

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*

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several sweeping lines that form the name 'José Damiani'.

José Damiani  
President

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| ♠ K 7          |             |
| ♥ 9 8 6 2      |             |
| ♦ 10           |             |
| ♣ Q 10 6 5 4 2 |             |
| ♠ A J 9 6      | ♠ 8 5 2     |
| ♥ A 7 5 3      | ♥ Q J       |
| ♦ Q 7 2        | ♦ K J 9 4 3 |
| ♣ A 8          | ♣ K 9 3     |
| ♠ Q 10 4 3     |             |
| ♥ K 10 4       |             |
| ♦ A 8 6 5      |             |
| ♣ J 7          |             |

Hey, it's Board 1. Maybe North can resist opening 3♣ and South can resist opening 1♦ or 1♠ in third seat if North passes; maybe, just maybe West will have a chance to open INT in fourth seat and East will get to raise to 3NT.

Uncontested, weak notrumpers or 16-18 aficionados using five-card majors might bid: Pass-1♦; 2♦ (inverted)-2NT; 3NT /. Where the weak notrump combines with four-card majors, however, East might have to respond 2♦ to 1♥ or 1♠ in order to reach game (Pass-1M; 2♦-2NT; 3NT /) because if East responds INT or raises 1♠ to 2♠, West might well pass.

Once in a while East might declare 3NT (perhaps after opening a 10-12 notrump, or after jumping to 2NT to show the same strength after passing). A spade lead from South would allow a tenth trick at those tables.

North will only very rarely lead something other than a club, and declarer will play normally by winning in West, knocking out the ♦A, winning the club continuation, cashing diamonds, and taking the heart finesse for nine tricks: four diamonds, two clubs, two hearts and the ♠A. South might need to cover the first heart in the endgame after North discards at least two of those on the diamonds while West keeps all four of his; if South saves his ♥K, declarer might by then divine that the clubs are six-two, and clear the hearts while retaining the ♠A, making a third heart for a valuable tenth trick.

The fact that a clairvoyant declarer could make 10 tricks legitimately should be of little solace to N/S if they find a different way to allow an overtrick. For 10 tricks, declarer would have to win the ♣K at trick one and lead a spade to the nine, but duck if South plays the ♠Q. This works because clubs are six-two, South has the

♥K and the spades are as they are so declarer will be able to knock out the ♦A, force an entry to dummy in hearts, and have time for a second spade trick. Sure!

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| ♠ Q J 10 7 5 4 3 |             |
| ♥ Q 4 2          |             |
| ♦ ---            |             |
| ♣ Q 7 3          |             |
| ♠ K 9            | ♠ A 8       |
| ♥ A K 6 5        | ♥ J 10 9    |
| ♦ J 9 6 5 4 2    | ♦ A 8 7     |
| ♣ J              | ♣ K 8 6 5 4 |
| ♠ 6 2            |             |
| ♥ 8 7 3          |             |
| ♦ K Q 10 3       |             |
| ♣ A 10 9 2       |             |

Where South does not overcall East's 1♣ with a busy 1♦, West will generally (but not always: dedicated "Walsh" fans will explain why 1♥ is better) bid those himself. North will bid spades, the number turning on personal preference/experience or perhaps more arcane factors. 1♠ and 4♠ will not be popular and my suspicion is that 3♠ will be a more frequent choice than 2♠. If South does not get his side past 3♠ West will face a tricky reopening problem, though he will most often double as the most flexible (read: perhaps you will know what to do for I don't) action. So many different things can happen that any confident prediction would be presumptuous, but the catalogue of contracts will include E/W defending 2♠ or 3♠ (usually doubled), declaring 2NT, 3NT, 3♥, 4♥, 5♦ or scrambling into the safe haven of 3♦ for a rare plus score.

Where East opens a weak notrump and West starts with Stayman, a jump to 3♠ might have less appeal, but it figures to get him doubled right there at least as often as it drives E/W into 3NT, 4♥, or 5♦.

With the cards as they are, North can come to nine tricks in spades, losing only two trumps and two hearts; with the remarkable club position declarer not only avoids a club loser by leading the queen at the right time, but also enjoys two club entries to lead towards the ♥Q if the defense has not yet broken either suit for him. We can expect significant numbers of N/S +470, +570 and +530.

With a decent diamond position, 3NT would

often come home for E/W, but on this layout, even if South plugs away at spades as declarer establishes four diamond winners there is no ninth trick and North will either gain the lead in hearts to lead the ♣Q (if he no longer has enough spades to beat the contract) or cover the ♣J when declarer leads it from West. 2NT will be made, however, unless South leads specifically a heart, so there will be E/W scores ranging from +120 to -200 in notrump contracts.

A heart contract doesn't look too bad for E/W, but the play is very awkward and in most variations the defense should come to five tricks.

About that bold 1♦ overcall: where it once would have had no supporters I'd guess that today it might be a 2% action.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| ♠ A Q 9 5 3<br>♥ J 6 5<br>♦ 6 5<br>♣ 9 5 2   | ♠ 10 7 4<br>♥ A Q 9 3<br>♦ K Q 8 2<br>♣ K 7 | ♠ J 8 6<br>♥ 10 4<br>♦ A J 9 7<br>♣ A Q 4 3 |
| ♠ K 2<br>♥ K 8 7 2<br>♦ 10 4 3<br>♣ J 10 8 6 |   |   |

Uncontested, E/W will bid INT-3NT /, or 1m-1♥; INT-3NT /. North will lead a spade and declarer will claim the last eight tricks for one down. Normal bad luck for E/W, who have 26 points and two balanced hands with no matching weak doubletons.

How much will change if North overcalls 1♠ and East makes a negative double? Well, there are those who believe that it makes more sense to rebid 2♣ than INT, but far more Wests will consider J86 sufficiently comforting to rebid INT and they will be raised to game. Most Norths will lead a spade in that scenario because anything else is more complicated, but a few will try something else. If a low heart, declarer will probably try the queen and soon find himself two down; if a minor suit, declarer will take his minor-suit winners, forcing two discards from North. As long as declarer keeps in mind that North started with five spades, he will know enough to reject the heart finesse where North keeps all his spades to discard

hearts. Best defense in that scenario is for North to make his last discard a spade, trying to look like a player keeping king-jack of hearts. If declarer finesses the ♥Q now, South will cash his club winner for North to dispose of his last heart, and the defenders will take six tricks after all.

Where West opts for that exotic (my review - my opinion) 2♣ rebid East will force with 2♠, hoping for 2NT before he commits to diamonds. West will have a lovely rebid over 2♣: 2NT, 3♠, 3♣ are all flawed, but perhaps 2NT is acceptable after not bidding notrump earlier, though East will expect something like 3154 or 2254 with a stopper. E/W will reach 3NT or 5♦ in this variation with the latter headed for two down and a poor score. Even if E/W cleverly stop in 4♦ they can't make that either and will achieve the same -100 as most of the notrumpists.

Is there a chance for E/W to go plus? Only if West passes as dealer and later refuses to go past 3♦ in a stopper-investigation sequence after raising a third-seat 1♦ opening by East, e.g. Pass-1♦; 2♦ (strong)-2♥; 3♣-3♦ /.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ♠ A K<br>♥ 6 4<br>♦ A Q 10 6 2<br>♣ A 10 5 4 | ♠ 10 8 4 2<br>♥ A K 9 3<br>♦ 9 8<br>♣ 8 7 3 | ♠ J 7 6<br>♥ Q J 8 5<br>♦ K J 4 3<br>♣ J 2 |
|  | ♠ Q 9 5 3<br>♥ 10 7 2<br>♦ 7 5<br>♣ K Q 9 6 |  |

E/W should have little difficulty in reaching 3NT whether West begins with 1♦, INT or a strong club. Even the hungriest North players should be able to resist overcalling 1♥, an action likely to give E/W the timing for a tenth trick (North must duck the first or second round of hearts to avoid giving declarer two heart tricks, and now there is time to build a second club trick). Some uncontested auctions:

- (a) 1♦-1♥; 2♣-2♦; 2NT-3NT /
- (b) INT-2♣; 2♦-2NT; 3NT / (or East could bid 3NT over 2♦)
- (c) 1♦-1♥; 2NT-3NT /

(d) 1♣\*-INT; 2♦-2♥; 2NT-3♦; 3NT /

(e) 1♣\*-INT; 2♦-3♦; 3NT /

The best lead for the defense is a spade, South putting in the nine if North starts the suit. Now North can rise on the first heart to continue with the ♠10 and the defense can take two hearts and (fortunately from declarer's point of view, only) two spades. As the spade lead is very reasonable from either side the potential for holding declarer to nine tricks is quite good, but there will be plenty of E/W +630s on this one.

If South happens to lead a low club or club honor, declarer can lead a heart early on and force North to duck the second heart, after which a second club trick can be established if the lead hasn't already conceded one.

E/W pairs that reach 5♦ will be disappointed to learn that there are three unavoidable losers.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

|            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| ♠ A 10 3 2 |             |
| ♥ 6 5 2    |             |
| ♦ 9 4 2    |             |
| ♣ 8 6 3    |             |
| ♠ 9 8 7    | ♠ K 4       |
| ♥ A J 8 7  | ♥ K Q 9 4 3 |
| ♦ A Q 10 6 | ♦ J 8       |
| ♣ 10 5     | ♣ K Q J 4   |
| ♠ Q J 6 5  |             |
| ♥ 10       |             |
| ♦ K 7 5 3  |             |
| ♣ A 9 7 2  |             |

This may prove to be the flattest Board of the session, E/W buying contract at 4♥ and losing the two black aces for +450.

Some Souths might double East's second-seat 1♥ opening even though the vulnerability is worst for his side and North has already passed. That won't cause West any difficulty as he can redouble or use his favorite artificial limit or limit-plus raise, and won't convince North to bid too many spades. South will usually lead a spade against a heart contract, but even if he doesn't he can hang on to all his diamonds and declarer won't be able to discard both his spades on diamond winners.

I suppose that East might sneak a spade past the ace, then discard his remaining spade on a diamond to make six, but it's not easy to

construct a scenario where it makes sense for the play to go that way.

Although the West hand has eight LTC losers it is a trifle heavy for a limit raise because of the strong diamonds, combining power in hearts and maximum point count. At IMPs it would be cutting it very fine to give opener a chance to stop short of game, but at Pairs scoring, what matters is being right more often than wrong. On seemingly routine deals you want to do what the field does, but here it's not clear whether everyone will commit to game with the West cards; East has enough to accept a game invitation, of course, so this discussion is of theoretical interest only.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

|               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| ♠ J 9 7 5     |           |
| ♥ J           |           |
| ♦ J 7         |           |
| ♣ K Q J 5 4 3 |           |
| ♠ A 10 8 6    | ♠ 3       |
| ♥ Q 10 6 5 2  | ♥ 9 8 4 3 |
| ♦ 8 6         | ♦ A 9 3 2 |
| ♣ 10 6        | ♣ A 9 8 2 |
| ♠ K Q 4 2     |           |
| ♥ A K 7       |           |
| ♦ K Q 10 5 4  |           |
| ♣ 7           |           |

Perhaps the vulnerability will convince West not to overcall 1♦ with 1♥, but if South starts with a strong club most West players will either overcall in hearts or use an artificial two-suited bid that shows (or might show) both majors.

Let's deal with those strong-club auctions first. Say that North shows a positive response with clubs over West's intervention. East might well jump to 3♥, setting a difficult problem for South, who can choose (perhaps) from among a forcing pass, a penalty double, 3NT and an overly committal 4♦. If South doubles, three rounds of trumps will hold E/W to seven tricks, down 500. If South tries an optimistic 3NT, West will do far better to lead the ♥Q (+100) than a low one (-430), but if he does lead the ♥Q there will be a price on his head. If South passes over 3♥ North will reopen with 3♠ and declare the "normal" 4♠, though it's not clear whether that will transpire at the tables where West has shown both majors. In practice some of those N/S pairs will reach 5♦ or 5♣ and fail by two or three tricks for miserable scores. But

if N/S do manage to reach 4♠ where West has shown hearts and spades the contract might be made even on a challenging heart lead if declarer elects to play East for a singleton six or three of spades, leading the first round of trumps to North's seven. There will be some North players with great stories to tell after getting this one right.

How will N/S bid if West remains silent (as is his right)? North would like to show his clubs and perhaps play in the suit, and if the partnership uses weak jump responses it would not be unreasonable to respond 3♣ to 1♦, concealing his spades. If South sensibly passes 3♣, N/S might achieve a plus score, but even this humble contract can be defeated if the defense arranges to play a third round of diamonds while West still has the ♣10 with which to ruff. And why not?

Where North responds 1♠ (the popular choice) South will either settle for a somewhat heavy 3♣ or commit to game with a 4♣ splinter game raise. If East makes the natural lead of a heart the defense will be able to force the North hand with the third round of hearts and declarer will lose two spades and the two minor-suit aces for one down (though the battle to avoid a second undertrick may lead to some interesting positions). West will not double 4♣ and perhaps sell out the trump position to declarer. Bad luck for the N/S pairs that reach 4♣, a heavy majority of the field. Any N/S plus will be huge.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| ♠ K 6         |                  |
| ♥ A 10 7 2    |                  |
| ♦ J 9 4 2     |                  |
| ♣ 7 5 2       |                  |
| ♠ A Q 9 5 4 3 | ♠ 8              |
| ♥             | ♥ K J 9          |
| ♦ A Q 7 6     | ♦ 8 5            |
| ♣ K 8 3       | ♣ A Q J 10 9 6 4 |
|               | ♠ J 10 7 2       |
|               | ♥ Q 8 6 5 4 3    |
|               | ♦ K 10 3         |
|               | ♣ ---            |

With a good view in spades (and with the aid of the diamond finesse if South leads one against East), E/W can make 7♣, and might reach those exalted heights if West does not place too much emphasis on his fair six-card spade suit.

East will respond 2♣ whether or not his partnership treats that as a game force, but where his 3♣ rebid would be merely invitational some will settle for 3♣ while others will have to rely on a fourth-suit 2♥ over West's rebid of 2♦. West will do best over 2♥ to support clubs rather than rebid spades, and over 3♣ to raise to 4♣ or indicate his heart void with a splinter jump to 4♥. East won't like his heart holding but with such a good seven-card suit might feel a bit sheepish about signing off in 5♣. It's unfortunate for East's purposes that he has no meaningful slam try over 4♥ unless 4NT would not be Blackwood, while over 4♣ the only move would be 4♥, hardly attractive with this heart holding opposite probable shortness. If West is convinced that East has no more than one spade in combination with at least seven clubs he may well take a shot at 7♣, perhaps after checking on East's trump quality with the Grand Slam Force.

Without a diamond lead 7♣ is excellent as declarer can use heart ruff hearts while setting up the spades for three tricks (trump lead, ♠A, spade ruff, heart ruff, spade ruff, heart ruff, spade ruff, draw trumps: three spades, two heart ruffs, seven trumps and the ♦A. On a diamond lead, however, declarer must decide whether spades are coming in with two ruffs and trumps are not three-zero. If both conditions prevail he can reject the diamond finesse and take seven clubs, four spades, one heart ruff and the ♦A. There was a time when only the greatest experts might lead from a king against a grand slam, but ready access to match records and analytical studies of virtually every aspect of the game have debunked the absolute nature of so many traditional maxims to the point that leading trumps against seven-level suit contracts is no longer accepted as the virtually automatic strategy. Still, no one likes to go down on a losing finesse at trick one with other chances for the contract and those who lead a diamond figure to defeat the "unbeatable" 7♣.

As not everyone will bid slam with the E/W cards (indeed, some might reach 3NT: 1♠-2♣; 2♦-2♥; 3♣-3♥; 3♠-3NT/) and 7♣ will fail with some frequency, those who reach 6♣ and make it might be over average (the diamond lead will be much more common against 6♣ than seven). Some chances for both sides on this one.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

|                  |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| ♠ A K J 10 7 3 2 |             |
| ♥ 5 4            |             |
| ♦ J 10 8 6       |             |
| ♣                |             |
| ♠ 9 8            | ♠ Q         |
| ♥ K 10 8 2       | ♥ A J 9 7 3 |
| ♦ A 5 3          | ♦ K 9 7 2   |
| ♣ J 10 7 3       | ♣ K 5 2     |
| ♠ 6 5 4          |             |
| ♥ Q 6            |             |
| ♦ Q 4            |             |
| ♣ A Q 9 8 6 4    |             |

One of the joys of Bridge is its susceptibility to diverse approaches that are not clearly wrong. Here, for example, North will open 4♣ (or an artificial variant), 3♠, 1♠, 2♠, or perhaps even pass.

That cute pass might lead to: Pass-1♥-2♣-2♥, or 1♥-3♣-3♥, or 1♥-2♣-3♥, and North will have no clear evidence pointing to the optimum number of spades for him to bid; if he commits to 4♠ he's more likely to be doubled than if he opened the bidding. If he guesses to bid only 3♠ he will go plus whether left to play there or whether East continues to 4♥. To do better than +140 N/S would have to be doubled in 3♠, be treated to a club lead in any spade contract, or have South lead a low club against 4♥ doubled for +300. But only the eccentric or peculiar purists would pass the North hand.

- (a) Pass-1♠-DBL-RDBL; Pass/2♥-3♠-Pass- (which South might pass or raise)
- (b) Pass-1♠-DBL-ART raise; 2♥ or 3♥; 4♠ /
- (c) Pass-1♠-2♥-2♠; 3♥/4♥-4♠ /
- (d) Pass-2♠-DBL-3♣ (lead/fit); 3♥-3♠-4♥-Pass; Pass-DBL /
- (e) Pass-2♠-DBL-3♠; DBL\*-4♠-DBL /
- (f) Pass-3♠-DBL-4♠; DBL /
- (g) Pass-3♠-DBL-Pass; 4♥ / (or North might double 4♥)
- (g) Pass-4♠ /
- (h) Pass-4♠-DBL /
- (i) Pass-4♠-DBL-Pass; 4NT-Pass-5♦-Pass; 5♥ /

How often will East lead a club against a spade contract? Not very often. A diamond lead should lead to an early cash-out for the defense and the lead of the ♥A should work equally well, but if East leads his trump declarer can cross to

dummy with a third round of the suit to discard a heart and will need to hold his diamond losers to two to get home. As the cards lie he can't manage this legitimately either by leading low to the eight or by trying to drop the nine doubleton or tripleton, and if he ruffs a club to hand to lead the first diamond towards the queen, East will still defeat the contract by ducking.

How often will South lead a low club against a heart contract? Perhaps only when North preempts and then doubles with Lightner implications. To each his own!

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| ♠ Q 9 8      |           |
| ♥ Q 9 5 3    |           |
| ♦ A Q 4      |           |
| ♣ Q 7 2      |           |
| ♠ J 10 4 3 2 | ♠ A 6 5   |
| ♥ 6          | ♥ K 8 4   |
| ♦ 9 7 2      | ♦ K 8 6 3 |
| ♣ J 8 6 5    | ♣ 10 4 3  |
| ♠ K 7        |           |
| ♥ A J 10 7 2 |           |
| ♦ J 10 5     |           |
| ♣ A K 9      |           |

If North passes his disgusting 12-count South will choose between 1♥ and INT. Whether N/S reach 3NT or 4♥ in either case will turn on judgment more than methods, and we'll see Drury variations (2♣ or 2♦), limit raises, natural bids in notrump by both partners, and at many tables N/S will never mention hearts at all (Pass-Pass-INT-Pass; 3NT/).

If North opens a weak notrump South might just raise to 3NT, but it's more likely that he'll look for a heart fit, find it, and commit to 4♥. If North opens 1♣ or 1♦ and raises 1♥ to 2♥, South might offer a choice of games sooner or later and North will be pleased to vote for notrump.

As this is one of those deals that yields 11 tricks in both hearts and notrump with nothing to the play, I'm sad to report that the pairs in hearts will score very badly for playing in their nine-card fit. And that the pairs defending the "normal" 3NT will also have to settle for a poor score.

It's deals like this that give Matchpoints a bad name. Indeed, in some jurisdictions the governing body has declared that 10-point differences when the same number of tricks is taken in a making notrump or major-suit contract are to be disregarded.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| ♠ A            |             |
| ♥ J 10 6 5 3 2 |             |
| ♦ 10 2         |             |
| ♣ K J 10 3     |             |
| ♠ J 5          | ♠ 8 7 6 4 2 |
| ♥ 8 7          | ♥ A Q 4     |
| ♦ A K J 9 6 3  | ♦ Q 8       |
| ♣ 8 5 4        | ♣ A 6 2     |
| ♠ K Q 10 9 3   |             |
| ♥ K 9          |             |
| ♦ 7 5 4        |             |
| ♣ Q 9 7        |             |

There are lots of possibilities on this deal, including four passes. E/W have eight top tricks in diamonds or notrump (though we can imagine someone taking the heart finesse at a point where South's spades are running and holding himself to seven), while N/S can take eight tricks in hearts or clubs. In theory, then, as E/W are entitled to the highest plus, it should be okay for North to throw it in if given the option, despite the fact that he has the most promising shape for offense around the table.

Most Easts, despite their non-suit, will open 1♠ or a weak notrump. West will respond INT to 1♠ and play there if permitted, for +120 more often than +90. Where a INT response is forcing East will rebid 2♣ systemically and West will try to play in 2♦ or 3♦, but will probably reopen with 2♠ after: 1♠-Pass-INT-Pass; 2♣-Pass-2♦-2♥; Pass-Pass. South should like 2♠ too much to double it, and declarer might go down 300 or 400. North might overcall 2♥ directly over West's INT response, and South will do best not to advance and then to defend 3♦ or 2♠ rather than compete to 3♥, going plus – perhaps significantly – rather than minus. Where East starts with a weak notrump, South should resist any temptation to bid, reserving direct suit-oriented action for hands with better offensive potential. If West passes INT, he will reopen North's 2♥ with 2NT or 3♦, the former offering a chance for a big result (+150) when South tees off to the lead of the ♥K – ouch! (cried the unfortunate perpetrator).

If East passes South might open 2♠ or an ugly 1♠ where his system endorses light balanced openings vulnerable. Imagine: 1♠-2♦-DBL\*-RDBL; Pass-Pass-2♥-2NT /, or West retreating to 3♦. Or: 2♠-All Pass, with the contract failing on unexceptional defense (one high diamond,

early trump switch).

If East and South pass West will open a weak 2♦ where that's available, but might try 1♦ or 3♦ otherwise, rather than pass. Whether North risks 2♥ or 3♥ under duress is another intangible, and if he does stretch to intervene, how much leeway will South give him. N/S will probably survive -100 quite nicely, but -200 won't be as palatable.

When both sides can make a low partial or collect some 100-point undertricks, the plus guys usually do well. This deal will be no exception.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| ♠ A K 10 6 5 2 |             |
| ♥ ---          |             |
| ♦ J 8 6 4      |             |
| ♣ 9 6 4        |             |
| ♠ Q 7 4        | ♠ J 8 3     |
| ♥ K J 8 7 4    | ♥ A Q 9 6 5 |
| ♦ A K 9 7      | ♦ 3         |
| ♣ A            | ♣ Q J 8 5   |
| ♠ 9            |             |
| ♥ 10 3 2       |             |
| ♦ Q 10 5 2     |             |
| ♣ K 10 7 3 2   |             |

N/S can take two high spades and a spade ruff against an E/W heart contract and can be held to six tricks in spades on a defensive cross-ruff, so it will not be in their best interest to do too much bidding.

After: Pass-1♥, North will bid 1♠ or 2♠, and East will raise to 4♥, perhaps via a 4♦ splinter or an artificial support bid.

If West drops the ♠Q under North's honor at trick one, standard signalers will have no trouble reading the nine as a singleton or doubleton; and if instead West follows with the seven or four North can read the nine as a true card, low from Q9, or high from nine-low. In all cases he should continue spades lest he lose the opportunity for three defensive tricks in the suit.

Upside down signalers won't have as clear a read on the ♠9. When West plays the ♠Q the nine would be consistent with singleton nine or tripleton nine (highest from three low). Continuing spades will be wrong only if establishing dummy's jack created a useful club discard for declarer's ace-third. If instead West follows with the ♠7 or ♠4, North will know that

South has Q9 doubleton or singleton nine or Q9x, in which case a spade continuation would be safe. Thus, against upside-down signalers, West's only chance is to follow with the ♠Q.

As there won't be any N/S pairs sacrificing this time the only real issue will be the play to the second trick.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West

|  |   |
|--|---|
| ♠ Q 10 3 2<br>♥ Q 8 5 3 2<br>♦ Q J 9<br>♣ 6    | ♠ A J 8 7 5 4<br>♥ A K<br>♦ 2<br>♣ K 8 7 3    |
| ♠ ---<br>♥ 9 7 6 4<br>♦ A K 6 3<br>♣ Q J 9 5 4 | ♠ K 9 6<br>♥ J 10<br>♦ 10 8 7 5 4<br>♣ A 10 2 |

East has some extra values but a broken spade suit, and jumping to 3♠ over a passed-hand INT response would be a mis-description. On the other hand, rebidding 2♠ is an underbid of sorts; both spade bids place too much emphasis on the long suit. Although a 2♣ rebid risks missing a higher-scoring spade partscore, by introducing a new strain, East expands the discussion and might facilitate reaching a spade game when West knows of at least 10 of East's cards rather than just six.

That's not what this deal is about, however. Here E/W's mission is to reach 5♣, 6♣, or 3NT. Where 2♣ might deliver only three clubs, West might settle for 3♣ or a fit-showing (by agreement) 3♦, or rebid 2NT (10-12) despite the unappealing spade and heart holdings. Pairs who employ some artificial method over 2♣ will use a two-step process to reach 3♣, showing a maximum club raise in context, very often with spade shortness. If East tries for slam West will certainly cooperate, but East might aggressively take charge and drive to slam himself.

If the defense does not lead trumps against a club contract declarer can play carefully on cross-ruff lines as South follows helplessly to two hearts, two high diamonds and two diamond ruffs. Down to trumps at the last three tricks South will not be able to ruff high or low with profit. If the defense starts with two rounds of trumps,

declarer has just enough timely entries to set up his spades, returning to hand, first in hearts and finally with a diamond ruff to draw the last trump and claim with a high spade(s). E/W won't have to bid 6♣ to score well, though +920 will be quite a bit better than +400.

Pass-1♠; INT-2♣; 3♣-3♠; 3NT / might be the main E/W route to 3NT and there doesn't appear to be any clear path to an overtrick.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North

|   |   |
|---|---|
| ♠ 9 7 4<br>♥ K 8 7 5 4<br>♦ Q 8<br>♣ K 9 6    | ♠ J 6 5 3<br>♥ Q J 2<br>♦ 7<br>♣ Q 8 5 3 2  |
| ♠ A K Q 10 2<br>♥ 10 6 3<br>♦ A 10 6<br>♣ A 4 | ♠ 8<br>♥ A 9<br>♦ K J 9 5 4 3 2<br>♣ J 10 7 |

Perhaps South will open 3♦, which would carry E/W to 4♠ on momentum when East will raise a 3♠ overall to 4♠ (perhaps over a raise to 4♦ by North) on general principles. Unfortunately for N/S, North is unlikely to lead a heart and West will chalk up 4♠ for a fine score.

Perhaps South will open 1♦, leading to: 1♦-1♠-DBL-3♠; Pass/4♦-4♠ / Here North might find the killing heart lead, but not very often.

Perhaps South will pass, and West will open in fourth position. After which:

- (a) 1♠-Pass-2♠-3♦; 4♠ / or a 3♥ trial bid by West, East accepting with 4♠
- (b) 1♠-Pass-3♠ (weak)-4♦; 4♠ /
- (c) 1♠-Pass-4♠ / ... where the heart lead is quite likely
- (d) 1♣\*-1♥-DBL\*-3♦; 3♠-Pass-4♠ /
- (e) INT-Pass-Pass-3♦; 3♠-Pass-4♠ / ... now there's an odd one!

As N/S can take 9 tricks in diamonds they have a "paying" phantom sacrifice in 5♦, down only 500. So what if E/W can't make 4♠ on best defense: 4♠ will make much more often than it fails so that "misjudged" -500 will score remarkably well.

Isn't Bridge peculiar?



Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| ♠ A 2         |             |
| ♥ K Q 8 5 2   |             |
| ♦ A Q J 7 6   |             |
| ♣ J           |             |
| ♠ K Q J 9 4   | ♠ 7 6 5     |
| ♥ 9 7 6       | ♥ J 10 3    |
| ♦ 10          | ♦ K 5 4 3 2 |
| ♣ Q 8 6 4     | ♣ 10 2      |
| ♠ 10 8 3      |             |
| ♥ A 4         |             |
| ♦ 9 8         |             |
| ♣ A K 9 7 5 3 |             |

As N/S have enough strength for game but no eight-card fit, we might expect 3NT to be a popular destination. However, with North holding his side's spade stopper and also five-five shape with extra values, catching delayed heart support will often convince him to move forward and the partnership will reach 4♥ with significant frequency. Some ambitious (polite for overly aggressive) pairs will climb to 6♥, a contract that can be made but should not be if declarer plays with the odds.

After East passes:

- (a) 1♣-1♠-2♥-2♠; Pass-Pass-3♦-Pass; 3♥-Pass-4♦-Pass; 4♥ /

But North might try 3♠ over 3♥, then 4♦ over 4♣ by South. These actions should not lead to slam because they're all tentative probes below game, but it is human nature to think optimistically with strong hands that do not encounter news that is unambiguously bad.

- (b) 1♣-2♠-3♥-Pass; 3♠ (help!)-4♦-4♥ / ... but North might go on here as there wasn't much room for South to maneuver over 3♥ and South could have a bit more.

- (c) 1♣-1♠-2♥-2♠; 3♣-Pass-3♦-Pass; 3♥-3NT /

We can see that there are 12 tricks available in hearts if declarer draws trumps, but three-three hearts is a 36% proposition. With hearts four-two, declarer might still come to 12 tricks with the ♦K onside by using dummy's aces (spade discard on the ♣K) to finesse twice in diamonds. That will bring in 12 tricks not only with the ♦K onside tripleton, but also with the ♦K onside doubleton or fourth, with the doubleton diamond in the hand with the natural trump trick (four trumps) as declarer tries for a third round diamond ruff. Alas, this superior line will produce at most 10 tricks for declarer when East wins the ♦K, gives West a diamond ruff, and

sees a club come back to promote a trump trick. Admittedly, it would not be particularly unlucky to fail in 6♥ or in 5♥, trying for the maximum, but those in a less optimistic 4♥ who finish with 10 tricks on the recommended line of play might feel somewhat put upon. If there are enough minus scores in heart contracts, N/S pairs that stop in 5♣, an obscure 5♦, or 3NT and make their contracts (hardly automatic to make 3NT as the 50% diamond finesse is more likely than the even heart break, and the diamond finesse offers a chance for 11 tricks if the suit is three-three) might score remarkably well.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| ♠ K Q        |               |
| ♥ A 9 6 2    |               |
| ♦ A J 10 6 3 |               |
| ♣ J 8        |               |
| ♠ A 10 6 4 3 | ♠ J 5         |
| ♥ K 4 3      | ♥ J           |
| ♦ K 9 8      | ♦ Q 7 4 2     |
| ♣ 6 5        | ♣ A Q 9 7 4 3 |
| ♠ 9 8 7 2    |               |
| ♥ Q 10 8 7 5 |               |
| ♦ 5          |               |
| ♣ K 10 2     |               |

Where North starts with 1♦ in third seat, most Easts will risk 2♣ or 3♣ at the prevailing vulnerability. Over 2♣ South might stretch to compete with a negative double despite his featherweight values and misfit for diamonds, though pass is undoubtedly the textbook action. If South does opt for double West might wonder why he has such a good hand with everyone bidding; possible actions include redouble, 2♦, 2NT, 2♠, and a wait-and-see pass. West's action will help North decide whether to make a minimum bid in hearts or jump – perhaps to game. It's not clear where it will end after those first three bids: North might declare 3♥ or 4♥ (doubled) while East might declare a club partscore, perhaps doubled, or 3♠. On this layout E/W will do best to go relatively quietly ... unless N/S guarantee not to double anything beyond 2♥.

To avoid an awkward rebid over a 1♠ response to 1♦, many strong notrumpers will open 1NT, which will catch many Easts with no systemic way to enter the auction (not you, of course). Some of them will risk a jump to 3♣ and might buy the contract for -100 and a fine score when South either has no negative double available or refuses to be bullied into using one with such modest

values. Where East has a conventional double or artificial 2♣ overall of INT at his disposal to show an unspecified one-suiter South will be able to mention hearts (perhaps with a transfer) or check on either major (perhaps with “potentially weak” Stayman) and N/S will compete to 3♥ if pushed. Heart contracts handle very well for N/S and should produce 10 tricks with careful play. Declarer can accomplish this even if he doesn’t finesse against the ♣Q as long as he plays off the ♥A in time to prevent East from scoring the ♥J on a spade over-ruff and plays loser-on-loser (♠Q on ♣10) if West ducks the first spade: this gambit prevents West from playing king and another trump when it would make a difference.

Without commenting on the merits of 4♥, N/S might also reach game via: Pass-Pass-1♦-Pass; 1♥-1♠-3♥-Pass; 4♥ / and the combination of E/W bids and passes might help declarer place the honors and distribution in the play.

A fair number of Wests will open 1♠. North will choose from among pass, double, INT and 2♦ and any positive action will generate some interest in South, but whether that translates into N/S climbing as high as 4♥ is difficult to predict with confidence.

:Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

|               |            |
|---------------|------------|
| ♠ 7           | ♠ A 10 6 3 |
| ♥ 8 7 6 4 3   | ♥ Q J 9 2  |
| ♦ 10 9 3      | ♦ J 7      |
| ♣ K 8 7 5     | ♣ Q J 10   |
| ♠ K J 9 5 4 2 |            |
| ♥ A K 5       |            |
| ♦ Q           |            |
| ♣ 9 6 3       |            |

North will start with 1♦ after a pass by West. At the existing vulnerability East might be reluctant to double for takeout facing a passed partner, but it’s often less dangerous to get in and out of the auction early than it is to wait for an appropriate balancing situation. Especially at Matchpoints there’s a premium for competing effectively for the partscore and I expect double to be roughly a 40% action at the table, where it counts. If East passes, N/S might bid:

- (a) 1♦-1♠; 2♦-2♥; 3♦-3♠; 4♣ (cue for spades); 4♠ /
- (b) 1♦-1♠; 2♦-2♥; 3♣-3♦; 3♠-4♠ /

(c) 1♦-1♠; 2♦-2♥; 2NT-3NT /

(d) 1♦-1♠; 2♦-2♥; 3♦-4♦; 4♠ /

If East doubles 1♦, we might see:

(e) 1♦-DBL-RDBL-1♥; 3♦-Pass-3♠-Pass; 4♦-Pass-4♥-Pass; 4♠ /

(f) 1♦-DBL-1♠-Pass; 2♦-2♥, etc as in the uncontested sequences

Where West is willing to compete as high as 2♥ he might slip in a busy 2♣ to direct the lead. That’s the sort of action we don’t see very often, but the strategy can pay a huge dividend in a scoring format in which every trick is so important.

At first glance it might seem that declarer will lose three tricks in a spade contract unless he plays East for ace-ten-fourth of trumps, but that is not so. Even on the best lead of a club declarer can win, unblock the ♦Q, take a heart ruff and continue with high diamonds through East. If East does not ruff declarer discards his remaining club loser and plays the ♠Q, losing just two trump tricks. If East ruffs in he loses a trump trick but the defense comes to a club trick instead. Again, at first glance it might appear that declarer can take 12 tricks in notrump – seven diamonds, two hearts, two spades and a club – on a heart lead, but that too is not so: the heart lead kills declarer’s communications and East can duck the first spade, then switch to clubs. A club lead holds 3NT to four routinely (declarer must duck two clubs), but the heart lead that kills 12 tricks with accurate defense, does not preclude declarer taking 11: he wins the heart lead, cashes the ♦Q, and leads the ♠J (or king). If East ducks, declarer cashes the ♥K and crosses to the ♠A to cash out; if East wins, declarer has a spade entry to the ♥K later.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| ♠ 7 4 3      | ♠ A K 10 8 |
| ♥ A J 6 3    | ♥ Q 4      |
| ♦ 8          | ♦ 10 9 7 3 |
| ♣ A K 9 6 2  | ♣ Q 5 3    |
| ♠ 5 2        |            |
| ♥ 10 9 8 7 5 | ♥ Q 4      |
| ♦ A J 6 5    | ♦ 10 9 7 3 |
| ♣ 10 8       | ♣ Q 5 3    |
| ♠ Q J 9 6    |            |
| ♥ K 2        |            |
| ♦ K Q 4 2    |            |
| ♣ J 7 4      |            |

It's often tricky to stay out of game with 12 points opposite 12, and here the two most popular contracts will be 3NT and 2NT. Some uncontested N/S auctions:

- (a) 1♣-1♦; 1♥-1♠; 2♣-2NT; Pass or 3NT /
- (b) 1♣-1♦; 1♥-2NT; Pass or 3NT
- (c) 1♣-1♦; 1♥-3NT /
- (d) 1♣-1♠; 2♣ or 2♠-2NT or 3NT /
- (e) 1♣-1♠; 2♣-2NT; 3♣- /
- (f) 1♣-1♠; 2♣-2♦\*; 2♠-3♠; 3♣-3NT /

South will almost always be declarer and West will nearly always lead an appropriate heart honor, ducked to the king. This is a complex deal to play and declarer would like to make a play for all five club tricks while leading spades twice towards the closed hand. In addition he needs to be concerned about his fragile holdings in both red suits. While the best percentage chance for five club tricks is to play the ace-king, declarer might opt for a different line, such as the running the jack and making a later decision about the ten if the jack were covered; or low to the king for a spade play, then playing East for doubleton ten of clubs if a second heart from West messes up communications. As East is sure to gain the lead in clubs or spades in the early going and will surely switch to diamonds, nine tricks won't be possible and it's easy to see that declarer won't make eight unless he drops the ♥Q (though only a diamond lead ensures six tricks for the defense).

N/S plus scores will be very good, with both 3NT and 2NT failing much of the time.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

|             |             |
|-------------|-------------|
| ♠ A 4       | ♠ Q 9 3     |
| ♥ 10 3      | ♥ J 9 8 6 4 |
| ♦ K J 8 5 2 | ♦ A 10 3    |
| ♣ K 10 9 8  | ♣ 7 4       |
| ♠ K J 8 6 2 | ♠ 10 7 5    |
| ♥ K Q 7     | ♥ A 5 2     |
| ♦ 4         | ♦ Q 9 7 6   |
| ♣ Q J 5 2   | ♣ A 6 3     |

With the points split nearly evenly and neither side having a huge fit, this figures to be a partscore battle that N/S are entitled to win: they can make 3♦ or 2NT and can defeat 3♥ or 3♠ by obtaining a third-round ruff in the other major.

Of course, finding that ruff is not so straightforward and E/W often will make 3♣ (and, less often, 3♥) when they compete to that level. On a diamond lead, for example, declarer can prevail in 3♣ with accurate play because North has only two trumps: ♦A, ♠K taken, diamond ruffed, ♥K ducked, ♠J, ♥Q ... South can duck or win but declarer loses only two club tricks in addition and can draw the last trump with dummy's queen to take the two good hearts.

Although N/S have a slight edge in strength, they may not find it so easy to enter the bidding. North doesn't really have a vulnerable 2♦ overcall of 1♣ facing a passed partner, and not every North will reopen after East's raise to 2♣ is passed back to him.

However, it's losing strategy to sell out to an apparently comfortable 2♣ on a five-three or five-four fit and North should protect with 2NT, showing two places to play. South should assume North has both minors, but North would convert clubs to diamonds with both red suits or convert diamonds to hearts with hearts and clubs. Here South can afford to bid diamonds as he has heart support if diamonds is not one of North's suits. If West doesn't compete to 3♣ East might reopen with 3♥, but there's a decent chance that 3♦ will end the auction.

N/S +110 will be excellent as many of their counterparts will be -110, -140 or +50 defending major-suit partials.

Here's something you might wish to address regarding North's protective actions: North shows both red suits either by balancing with double or a two-suited 2NT and converting clubs to diamonds. One of these sequences should deliver a fifth heart. There's no standard agreement here but having one you will both remember is sure to help your partnership in the long run.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| ♠ K 9 7     |              |
| ♥ 10 8 3    |              |
| ♦ K Q J 6   |              |
| ♣ Q J 9     |              |
| ♠ 10 6      | ♠ Q 8 4 2    |
| ♥ A 7 6 2   | ♥ K J 9      |
| ♦ 10 7 4    | ♦ A          |
| ♣ 7 5 4 2   | ♣ A K 10 8 6 |
| ♠ A J 5 3   |              |
| ♥ Q 5 4     |              |
| ♦ 9 8 5 3 2 |              |
| ♣ 3         |              |

North will open 1♦ or a weak notrump in third seat and in either case East will double. In the former scenario South will choose between 1♠ and a direct raise in diamonds (three more often than two). Say that he opts for 1♠; West and North will pass and East will protect with 2♣, grateful to have the opportunity to suggest the general character of his hand though perhaps a tad light for this sequence.

If South bids only 2♦ West will raise to 3♣ or perhaps try 2♥ although East did not double a second time to keep that suit in play. Selling out would not be winning strategy for N/S as 3♣ should produce nine easy tricks with normal play (10 if declarer starts hearts by leading the jack and arranges to pick up the suit without loss) while 3♦ won't go down more than one and should produce a good result even if someone (West, really) finds a double.

And 3♦ might make if East leads a high club (allowing declarer to develop a club trick with a ruffing finesse to discard a heart from South) and releases his ♦A without switching to the ♥J to secure three heart tricks for the defense with a textbook "surrounding" play.

As there will be some +110s for both E/W and N/S, some +130s for E/W and some +470s for N/S to counterbalance the -50s and -100s, there will be plenty of opportunities to win or lose the Board in the bidding and play. Apart from the extreme results, +110 should score well for either side.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| ♠ A J 7 6 4  |                |
| ♥ Q 8 7 3    |                |
| ♦ 5 4 2      |                |
| ♣ Q          |                |
| ♠ K 9 5 2    | ♠ Q 8 3        |
| ♥ K J 2      | ♥ 6            |
| ♦ A Q J 3    | ♦ K 10 9       |
| ♣ 9 2        | ♣ A 10 8 6 5 4 |
| ♠ 10         |                |
| ♥ A 10 9 5 4 |                |
| ♦ 8 7 6      |                |
| ♣ K J 7 3    |                |

E/W have the preponderance of the high cards and have the potential for the highest score on offense -- +120 in notrump -- but N/S have the biggest trump fit – in hearts, a strain that offers only eight tricks if E/W cash their diamonds in time. Whether that nine-card heart fit comes to light at all or gets N/S to the three-level very often when it does is something we'll know only when all the results come in. Add to that the uncertainty about whether E/W will double 3♥ for +200 to protect their perceived equity of 110 or 120 and we've got ourselves a classic case of Matchpoint scoring converting a quiet deal into an exciting one. Some common auctions:

- (a) 1♦-Pass-2♣-Pass; 2NT-Pass-Pass/3♣ /
- (b) 1♦-Pass-INT (ugh!)-Pass; Pass-2♦ (majors)-3♣-3♥/DBL/Pass ...
- (c) 1♦-Pass-2♦-Pass; Pass-2♠-3♣ /
- (d) 1♦-Pass-2♦-Pass; Pass-DBL-3♣-3♥/Pass ...
- (e) 1♦-1♠-2♣-Pass; 2NT-Pass-3♣-DBL /
- (f) 1♦-1♠-INT-DBL (hearts and clubs); Pass-2♥-2♠ (clubs, secondary diamonds)-3♥ /
- (g) 1♠-Pass-2♠ /
- (h) 1♠-Pass-2♣-Pass; 2NT /
- (i) INT-Pass-2NT (transfer)-Pass; 3♣ /
- (j) INT-2♣ (majors)-2NT\*/3♣-3♥; Pass-Pass-DBL /

To defeat 3♣ N/S need to arrange a spade ruff for South but this is much more difficult than it might seem. Say that South leads the ♠10 and declarer, "knowing" North has five, plays low from dummy (planning to discard spades later on the red winners). Following low is the right play for North only if South has a second spade and declarer can benefit from one discard on a second spade winner. North must overcome

the temptation to reason that if declarer thought South might have two spades he could have covered with dummy's king on the actual honor layout to create a second-round finesse against North's jack. If North doesn't play ♠A, spade the defenders will come to at most two clubs and two major-suit tricks, and if declarer gets the hearts right, he will make four. Perhaps, then, South should not lead the ♠10 on the go. If he delays his spade play until he wins one or two trump tricks and/or the ♥A North will see no advantage in ducking and will do the right thing in spades to defeat 3♣ for +100 or a wonderful +200 (after doubling). Should E/W fetch up in diamonds they might piece together nine tricks if North doesn't lead trumps, the three-three trump break and declarer's ability to ruff clubs high in hand to establish the suit seeing them home.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

|              |              |             |
|--------------|--------------|-------------|
|              | ♠ A K        |             |
|              | ♥ J 9        |             |
|              | ♦ K J 4 3    |             |
|              | ♣ Q 9 7 6 3  |             |
| ♠ 9 8 7 5 2  |              | ♠ J         |
| ♥ Q 10 6 5 4 |              | ♥ A 8 7 3 2 |
| ♦ Q 2        |              | ♦ A 10 9 5  |
| ♣ K          |              | ♣ J 8 2     |
|              | ♠ Q 10 6 4 3 |             |
|              | ♥ K          |             |
|              | ♦ 8 7 6      |             |
|              | ♣ A 10 5 4   |             |

Although E/W can make 4♥ easily if declarer makes the percentage play for no trump loser by cashing the ace, they might not find it so easy to enter the auction. Although for many the opening bid choice for North will be between 1♣ and 1♦, there will be many others who open a weak or medium INT or even a 15-17 variant. For some it will be a matter of adding something for the two nines and two potential trick sources while others will prefer not to open in either minor with the possibility of losing the other minor or having to suggest an unbalanced hand by bidding both suits.

A INT opening might well get pat East and South will either sign off in 2♣ or use a transfer or Stayman sequence to invite game or force to game. On a low heart lead against notrump declarer can win and eventually guess diamonds correctly for seven tricks and +90, -100, or -200. 2♣ might be made on two rounds of hearts if declarer gets diamonds right but will be fine for N/S even if declarer fails.

Where East can show hearts and a minor or diamonds and a major over INT, West will like his hand enough to compete to the three level, and might commit to 4♥ if the auction points to East being short in spades. The only downside in reaching 4♥ after INT from North is that declarer, knowing that North has a balanced hand, might lead the ♥Q from dummy to hold himself to nine tricks, -50 or -100 (when South doubles on "power" rather than any particular evidence that 4♥ will fail).

Where North opens 1♣ or 1♦, East will overcall 1♥ and West will bounce to 4♥ over South's 1♠. Whether South lets this go, reopens with a marginal "action" double which North will often pass, or competes to 5♣ where North has opened 1♣, N/S are trolling in dangerous waters; while they might go +50 or +100 on defense, they might also go -420 or -590, and for their -50, -100 or -300 in 5♣ (often doubled) their score will turn on how often E/W are going plus in hearts.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

|                |                |                |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|                | ♠ 9 6          |                |
|                | ♥ 6 5 4        |                |
|                | ♦ A 8          |                |
|                | ♣ K Q J 10 9 8 |                |
| ♠ A 5 4 3      |                | ♠ 8 7          |
| ♥ ---          |                | ♥ Q 10 9 8 7 3 |
| ♦ Q J 10 9 5 2 |                | ♦ 7 6 3        |
| ♣ A 7 3        |                | ♣ 6 5          |
|                | ♠ K Q J 10 2   |                |
|                | ♥ A K J 2      |                |
|                | ♦ K 4          |                |
|                | ♣ 4 2          |                |

When West overcalls 1♠ with 2♦ North will face a classic problem for standard bidders. While it looks so easy to bid 3♣, the practical effect of introducing a new suit at the three level is to create a game force, or at least the perception of a game force. Thus, were South to rebid 3♣ he would expect North to bid again, as North would be obliged to do over 3♥, a new suit. And, while a case could be made for treating a 4♣ rebid by North at his second turn as non-forcing, there will be many more hands with which North would prefer 4♣ to be forcing. So North is gambling when he volunteers 3♣, and this time South has enough to cover him for his aggressive approach. Not that North will love bidding 3NT, 3♠ or 4♣ over South's 3♥, or that South will not fear that 3♥ will endplay North when he has enough for 3NT but no diamond

guard. Best would be for N/S to wriggle into 3NT, which has the merit of being very easy to play. All declarer needs to do to make four with complete confidence is to cash a high heart early enough to see West show out and make the heart finesse a certainty. 5♣ will fail if East leads a heart, something he's more likely to do if West doubles, Lightner-style.

The most interesting game contract is 4♠ (1♠-(2♦)-3♣-(Pass); 3♥-3♠; 4♠ /). To make 4♠ with hearts 6-0, declarer must win the diamond lead in dummy, rather counter-intuitively. West takes dummy's ♠9 (the first round of trumps) and his best continuation is ♣A, club, neither play at all obvious. That leaves East with a trump to ruff a club continuation and effectively kills the clubs. Declarer draws trumps, East keeping his diamonds) and cashes the ♥K to see West show out. To get home from here declarer must cash his last trump, squeezing East in an unusual way: he can't pitch a heart lest declarer play ace and another with the ♥K as the entry to cash the jack, so he must discard his penultimate diamond. Now declarer extracts that diamond like a crazed dentist and exits with a low heart. East, with only hearts, wins and must return a heart to declarer's ace-jack. You can imagine 4♠ failing on many different lines of play, of course.

If not 3♣, though, what's left for North? Perhaps a natural, nonforcing 2NT where that call is available (e.g. not reserved for a limit spade raise); perhaps a dangerous (if it promises hearts) negative double; perhaps a hopeful but equally dangerous (in its own way) pass. If West knew that 2♦ would cause North such hardship he might adopt a strategy of overcalling more often with less promising hands. A natural 2NT should get North to 3NT, a negative double to 4♠ via 4♥, a pass to 3NT, 5♣ or ... 2♦, down 100!

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

|             |                |
|-------------|----------------|
| ♠ A         |                |
| ♥ A 8 3     |                |
| ♦ A 6 5 3 2 |                |
| ♣ K Q 6 3   |                |
| ♠ 9 5 4 2   | ♠ K Q J 10 8 7 |
| ♥ J 9 4 2   | ♥ K 10         |
| ♦ K J 9     | ♦ 8 4          |
| ♣ 10 9      | ♣ 7 5 4        |
| ♠ 6 3       |                |
| ♥ Q 7 6 5   |                |
| ♦ Q 10 7    |                |
| ♣ A J 8 2   |                |

N/S have the strength for game, but 3NT has an obvious flaw in spades, 5♣ or 5♦ can't overcome the diamond position, and the unlikely 4♥ has two trump losers to go along with the diamond problem. These conditions point to N/S doubling 3♠ for at least 200 points if E/W get that high, and that will happen from time to time. For example:

Pass-Pass-1♦-2♠; DBL-3♠-DBL-Pass; Pass-?

North's extended responsive double shows extra values, typically with three hearts, falling under the general heading of cooperative takeout doubles. South has some useful cards but only four hearts and only three diamonds; a "total tricks" based penalty pass is very reasonable and proves to be the winner. Declarer gets out for 200 only if he guesses both red suits correctly: diamonds should not be an issue, but if a low heart shift comes from North after he shows the ♦A, the ♠A and at least one high club (by inference from the opening lead), East might do the wrong thing and suffer a 500-point set.

As N/S will nearly always get to game if E/W don't offer a penalty opportunity at the three level, and as N/S games will always fail, any N/S plus will score fabulously well.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

|               |             |
|---------------|-------------|
| ♠ 8 6 4 2     |             |
| ♥ A 9 8       |             |
| ♦ 9 6         |             |
| ♣ Q 10 7 5    |             |
| ♠ 10          | ♠ A K J 5 3 |
| ♥ J 4 3       | ♥ 7 6 5     |
| ♦ A K Q 7 5 3 | ♦ 10        |
| ♣ K 9 8       | ♣ A 6 3 2   |
| ♠ Q 9 7       |             |
| ♥ K Q 10 2    |             |
| ♦ J 8 4 2     |             |
| ♣ J 4         |             |

On a bright, sunny day for E/W, the N/S hearts block and declarer can concede a diamond when necessary to the hand that can't finish the hearts.

On layouts like this one the defenders have time for their heart tricks when they get in with the fourth round of diamonds if they haven't already taken them and the normal 3NT (1♠-1♠; 2♦-3♣; 3♥-3NT/, or 1D-1♠; 2♦-2NT; 3NT /) will usually fail. When East declares South has an easy heart lead and though South has a somewhat exit after

taking his fourth heart, nothing should matter unless North has thrown a spade and South switches to that suit.

Could anything else happen? Well, once in a while declarer will call for the  $\diamond 10$ , South won't cover, and declarer will pass it rather than rely on the 36% three-three break; this unusual line gains legitimately when North has nine-eight doubleton, tactically when South doesn't cover with jack-fourth, and can't cost when the suit is four-two (nearly 50% of the time).

E/W won't reach  $5\diamond$ , or a partial in diamonds or notrump very often, but -100, +110 and +120 will produce extreme scores.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| ♠ J 9 6          |              |
| ♥ A J 9          |              |
| ♦ Q 10 8 7 5 4 3 |              |
| ♣ ---            |              |
| ♠ K 5 3          | ♠ Q 8 7 4    |
| ♥ Q              | ♥ 10 8 7 5 2 |
| ♦ 6 2            | ♦ 9          |
| ♣ A K Q J 8 7 2  | ♣ 10 9 4     |
|                  | ♠ A 10 2     |
|                  | ♥ K 6 4 3    |
|                  | ♦ A K J      |
|                  | ♣ 6 5 3      |

N/S's perfect fit and the friendly lie in the majors translates into 12 easy tricks in diamonds, but it's difficult to see a realistic route to  $6\diamond$ . Indeed, they might suffer the ignominy of losing the first seven tricks in 3NT (3 $\diamond$ -Pass-3NT /) with a slam available to them in their solid 10-card fit.

As is so often the case, opener at favorable vulnerability is dealt a long suit but a hand flawed one way or another (great dummy for both majors, defense outside the long suit, broken topless suit of modest texture) for a preempt in the partnership style. Should he therefore pass, choose a different opening (1 $\diamond$ , a weak 2 $\diamond$ , or even 4 $\diamond$ ), or ignore the imperfections and open at the three level, after all? This is the sort of battlefield decision we face every day and serious partnerships will develop agreements they find acceptable and live with them.

We could see: Pass-Pass-INT-3 $\clubsuit$ ; 3 $\diamond$  (forcing)-Pass-3 $\heartsuit$ -Pass; 5 $\diamond$  / or something closely related, producing +420 with one of two spade finesses succeeding. Where West doubles INT for penalty North might bid a direct 5 $\diamond$ , or

fool around a bit before driving to the same destination, but there will also be some tables where the bidding goes: Pass-Pass-INT-DBL; all pass, or business redouble, all pass, adding N/S -100 and -200 to the frequency sheets. Where West passes throughout after Pass-Pass-INT – tactically or systemically – North's methods might enable to him to transfer to diamonds and show club shortage; South would simply love that to pieces!

Where North opens an eccentric 1 $\diamond$ , N/S might be in the running to reach 6 $\diamond$ , but even then, it would require North showing club shortness to get them there.

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Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| ♠ 10 5 3 2   |              |
| ♥ 9 4 3      |              |
| ♦ A          |              |
| ♣ J 10 9 8 6 |              |
| ♠ A 9 8 4    | ♠ Q J 7      |
| ♥ A 10 5 2   | ♥ K 8 6      |
| ♦ K Q 3 2    | ♦ J 8 4      |
| ♣ 2          | ♣ 7 5 4 3    |
|              | ♠ K 6        |
|              | ♥ Q J 7      |
|              | ♦ 10 9 7 6 5 |
|              | ♣ A K Q      |

With the points evenly divided and not much shape around the table, this is another partscore deal that offers limited trick-taking potential for either side.

N/S's five-three club combination is the best fit on offer, but to come to even eight tricks in clubs on a trump lead declarer must employ the unusual stratagem of leading the  $\spadesuit 6$  toward the North hand, saving the ten. Where West has entered the bidding and is more likely than East to hold the  $\spadesuit A$ , this odd play might not be so far-fetched. East can play a second trump, but even if the defense stops a spade ruff in the short-trump hand ( $\spadesuit K$  to the ace, heart to the king, third trump), declarer will have the timing to draw trumps and lead a third spade to establish the ten, return to hand to cash it, and come to a heart trick. Plus 90 doesn't seem like much of a target, but that's absolute par for N/S on offense. They might get there via: Pass-1 $\diamond$ -Pass-1 $\spadesuit$ ; Pass-INT-Pass-2 $\clubsuit$  / where N/S do not use 2 $\clubsuit$  as an artificial checkback mechanism of some sort, or when South's methods call for a

1♣ opening with all minimum balanced hands, North giving second-round preference or offering a direct natural raise. West will double a 1♣ opening for takeout, making it easier for N/S to reach 2♣.

A fairly common sequence will be: 1♦-Pass-1♠-Pass; INT/, where West is frozen out of the auction and North can't continue with 2♣ because that would be conventional. INT will fail unless West leads a spade or unless the defense doesn't kill North's diamond entry in time to prevent the run of the clubs. Although E/W might well scramble eight tricks in hearts or spades, it's tricky for West to both enter the auction and get East involved at the two level.

While no purist would be caught doubling a 1♦ opening for takeout, the world is filled with players who will look no further than their four-card support for both majors when considering entering the auction: 1♦-DBL-Pass-INT/ would net E/W +90 on offense, East in such partnerships being much more inclined to bid notrump without a stopper than introduce clubs on four low cards. Some of the Wests who would not double 1♦ will hazard an ugly 1♥ or 1♠ overall rather than pass. They will indeed reach 2♥ or 2♠ and will probably make their contract. Others will double South's INT rebid for penalty and might then double North's escape to 2♣ for takeout, another possible route to two of a major with a possible destination in 2♣ doubled, +180 or -200. Lots of possibilities!

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

|             |            |              |           |              |         |           |                |
|-------------|------------|--------------|-----------|--------------|---------|-----------|----------------|
| ♠ 3 2       | ♥ K Q 4 3  | ♦ Q 10 9 4 2 | ♣ 8 2     | ♠ Q          | ♥ 8 6   | ♦ J 7 6 5 | ♣ Q J 10 7 6 3 |
| ♠ A K 9 7 4 | ♥ J 10 9 5 | ♦ ---        | ♣ A K 9 5 | ♠ J 10 8 6 5 | ♥ A 7 2 | ♦ A K 8 3 | ♣ 4            |

N/S can make 5♣ on their solid 10-card fit and can't make six even if the defense doesn't cash hearts: it does take a trump lead instead to hold declarer to six clubs in North, three ruffs

in South, and two cashing spades; if declarer removes West's remaining trump to cash a third spade, intending to establish South's fifth spade with a ruff, the five-two spade break kills that plan, and if declarer does not draw West's second trump he can't cash the third high spade.

But stretching to 6♣ is an issue that won't often come into play. After: 1♠-Pass-INT-Pass; 2♥-Pass-? North has an awkward choice of continuations, as 3♣ involves trying to take a large number of tricks, while giving preference to 2♠ or passing 2♥ could easily land the partnership in a six-card fit though staying low. Because this problem is not so difficult to foresee, some North players might take a different sort of a gamble and pass 1♠; indeed, where 1♠ is limited to 15 or 16 points, pass will have some legitimate appeal. Those North players who favor weak jump responses will try 3♣ as a least-of-evils choice, which is in essence the same solution as bidding 3♣ in the 1♠-INT; 2♥-? scenario, with less danger that South will play him for a better hand.

When and if North bids 3♣, South will bid either 5♣ or try a 4♦ splinter bid to invite slam. While North has no duplicated values in diamonds he also has very few values to offer, though the ♠Q could be a huge card. Reaching 5♣ will be excellent regardless of whether declarer takes 11 tricks or 12, as there will be pairs languishing in 1♠, 2♠, and 2♥. Spade contracts can be held to six tricks on a red-suit lead, seven otherwise. In hearts a diamond lead will allow South to score all four of his trumps, using the ♠Q, a spade ruff, and a club as entries for the other three diamond ruffs, though declarer will lose one of those six tricks if he carelessly cashes a high spade rather than ruff a spade to access his fourth diamond ruff; the high spade will stand up on the third round if it was right to cash it on the second. A trump lead and continuation will hold declarers in hearts to one trump, two spades, and two clubs.

Curiously, there will be virtually no partials in clubs declared by N/S because if they find clubs they will reach game. Apart from the unpleasant low partials in hearts and spades for N/S, E/W might find a way into the auction and reach 2♦ (which they can make) or 3♦ (which they can't, but if E/W do get together in diamonds, South will get his clubs into the picture if he has not yet done so, and N/S will bid their game belatedly.



Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

|              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| ♠ 9 2        |                |
| ♥ A J 9 8 7  |                |
| ♦ A 4        |                |
| ♣ Q 9 7 6    |                |
| ♠ K 7        | ♠ A Q 10 5 4 3 |
| ♥ Q 10 6 5 3 | ♥              |
| ♦ K J 8 5    | ♦ 10 9         |
| ♣ 4 3        | ♣ J 10 8 5 2   |
| ♠ J 8 6      |                |
| ♥ K 4 2      |                |
| ♦ Q 7 6 3 2  |                |
| ♣ A K        |                |

4♥ is the normal (and fairly respectable) contract for N/S but the five-zero trump break coupled with poor lies in the minors reduces North's potential to eight tricks (on a diamond lead) with well-judged play.

Most North players will open the bidding with 1♥ despite the adverse vulnerability and a weak jump overall of 2♠ will be a popular choice for East. South will offer a cue-bid raise, jump to game in hearts, or stall with a forcing 3♦. If West raises spades (more likely where South has bid 3♦) East will certainly go on to 4♠ if he believes the 3♠ raise involved him further. The good news for E/W is that declarer can come to nine tricks in spades (by leading low clubs twice, the indicated play in the suit, and guessing diamonds correctly) and concede only 100 points; the bad news for E/W is that N/S were going to fail in their destination of 4♥.

A modern treatment that has gained popularity would stand E/W in good stead: a preemptor who has been raised below game can double at the game level to inform his cellmate that he was planning to bid on himself but was doubling in case advancer preferred to defend. The best E/W scores will go to those who defend doubled heart contracts for at least 500-point sets.

Another modern method is a variation of the Polish two-bid where a 2♥ or 2♠ opening shows five of the bid suit and a second suit (a minor in most cases) of at least four cards.

Here a 2♥ opening by West will keep North out of the auction and a 2♠ response might well ensure N/S continued silence; E/W will buy the contract at 2♠ or perhaps 3♠. Also, if both West and North pass initially, a weak 2♠ opening by East, raised to 3♠ by West might conclude the

auction. As there will be some +110s and +140s for E/W to go along with the +100s, +200s and +500s (oh, and a few +800s) for defeated heart contracts, those N/S +50s and +100s against E/W 4♠ sacrifices will score particularly well.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

|            |              |                |
|------------|--------------|----------------|
|            | ♠ J 9 7      |                |
|            | ♥ K 9 7 4    |                |
|            | ♦ 7 4        |                |
|            | ♣ A J 7 6    |                |
| ♠ A 10 2   |              | ♠ 8 4          |
| ♥ 5 3      |              | ♥ Q 2          |
| ♦ K 8 3 2  |              | ♦ A J 10 9 6 5 |
| ♣ K Q 10 4 |              | ♣ 8 3 2        |
|            | ♠ K Q 6 5 3  |                |
|            | ♥ A J 10 8 6 |                |
|            | ♦ Q          |                |
|            | ♣ 9 5        |                |

The honor strength is again nearly evenly split between the two sides, but this time there is a clear advantage to N/S who can take 10 tricks in hearts or spades as long as they do not lose a trick to the HQ. Meanwhile, E/W had better not get too high with their 10-card diamond fit as they have five losers and a 5♦ sacrifice against a N/S game will cost 800 points and net them very few matchpoints. And if N/S were going to stop short of game, competing to 4♦ would offer them 200 or 500 points, which would be poor for E/W if this proved to be a partscore deal at many tables. Some typical auctions:

- Pass-Pass-1♠-Pass; 2♠ /
- Pass-Pass-1♠-Pass; 2♠-Pass-Pass-2NT (minors); DBL-3♦-3♥ /
- Pass-Pass-1♠-Pass; 2♠-Pass-3♥-Pass; 4♥ /
- Pass-Pass-1♠-Pass; 2♠ (Drury Fit)-2♦-2♥-3♦; 3♥-Pass-4♥ /
- Pass-2♦-2♠-3♦; 3♠ / ... or South might raise himself to 4♠
- Pass-2♦-2♠-3♦; DBL (responsive)-Pass-4♥ /
- Pass-2♦-3♦ (majors)-4♦; 4♥ /

Might declarer in a major-suit contract lose a trick to the ♥Q? That will surely happen when hearts are trumps on occasions when East has preempted in diamonds, but in spades declarer might have time to get a count by playing on clubs, placing East with six diamonds, two known spades, three clubs and therefore two hearts. The play might not get that far, however.

Another occasional variation might develop where East has not bid diamonds and West leads a club honor; if declarer ducks and West does not play a diamond declarer will have time to finesse the ♣J and discard his diamond loser on the ♣A.

As game will be bid about as often as it's missed and as game will occasionally fail, E/W will do best not to compete too vigorously for the partial; N/S won't have to double 4♦ to score well.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

|              |               |
|--------------|---------------|
| ♠ 10 5       |               |
| ♥ 10 7 4     |               |
| ♦ J 4 3      |               |
| ♣ Q 10 7 5 2 |               |
| ♠ K Q 9 2    | ♠ A 8 7 6 4 3 |
| ♥ J 8 5 2    | ♥ A 9         |
| ♦ A Q 10     | ♦ 9 8 7 2     |
| ♣ A 9        | ♣ 6           |
| ♠ J          |               |
| ♥ K Q 6 3    |               |
| ♦ K 6 5      |               |
| ♣ K J 8 4 3  |               |

Although the East hand is neither a typical one-bid nor a classical weak 2♠, most contestants will choose one of those actions rather than pass as dealer, not vulnerable.

South will double 1♠ without concern and will probably double 2♠ also, but with mild reservations. West will start with a redouble or artificial raise of some sort after a 1♠ opening, but where East's first call was 2♠ West might settle for a jump to 4♠. North will mention his clubs if the auction is low enough, but will not get busy where he's not obliged to act, so N/S will rarely get as high as 5♠, which would cost them 500 and earn them a joint bottom.

If East does consider 1♠ or 2♠ sufficiently flawed to lead him to pass South will open 1♣ and West will double for takeout much more often than overcall 1NT (both majors, diamond support, anti-positional club guard). Though North will raise clubs to the two, three, or four level – perhaps via an artificial 2NT or 3NT – East will drive to game in spades and West will not move towards slam. If South goes on to 5♣ in one of these scenarios West will usually double, but if his side's agreements include a forcing pass, he might prefer to give East the first vote on

whether to declare or defend (West's strong trumps, aces, combined honors in diamonds are good for declaring, but his balanced hand and sharp holdings in the minors point towards defending). As it happens, East can do nothing bad if West solicits his opinion; it's that third easy undertrick that makes double the winning choice on this layout. Were spades three-zero, 5♠ would still be cold but 5♣ doubled would be down only 300.

Where West prefers a 1NT overcall East will be no less inclined to commit to 4♠, so E/W +450 will be by far the most common result, the main exceptions being the ill-judged 500-point saves at 5♣ doubled.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

|                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| ♠ A J 10 8 7 6 3 |                |
| ♥ A 5            |                |
| ♦                |                |
| ♣ Q 8 6 3        |                |
| ♠ Q              | ♠ 2            |
| ♥ Q 10 7 6 4     | ♥ K 9 2        |
| ♦ J 8 7 3        | ♦ A Q 10 9 6 2 |
| ♣ K 7 4          | ♣ A 5 2        |
| ♠ K 9 5 4        |                |
| ♥ J 8 3          |                |
| ♦ K 5 4          |                |
| ♣ J 10 9         |                |

With their clubs three-three E/W can't get a club ruff against an enemy spade contract, so N/S will make 4♣ if permitted to play there, five if East ever leads the ♦A to set up the king for a heart discard before broaching hearts.

E/W, meanwhile, could lose as many as five tricks, as few as three, but probably four, playing in diamonds, so they have a paying sacrifice at the five level. Some common auctions:

- (a) Pass-Pass-1♠-2♦; 3♠-4♦-4♠-5♦; DBL /
- (b) Pass-Pass-1♠-2♦; 2♠-DBL\*-4♠-DBL\*; Pass-5♦-Pass-Pass; DBL /, but in this scenario North might bid 5♠ over 5♦.
- (c) Pass-Pass-4♠-5♦; 5♠-DBL /, but here West might bid 6♦, which the whole world would double.
- (d) Pass-2♥ (5+♥/4+ other)-2♠-4♥; 4♠-Pass-Pass-5♦; Pass-Pass-5♠/DBL /

The play in 5♦ doubled is interesting: say a spade lead and club switch, won in West to lose the diamond finesse; declarer wins the club

continuation, draws trumps and exits in clubs to force the defense to break hearts or yield a ruff-and-discard. That's for down two. If the defenders do not switch to clubs at trick two, declarer has the option of following the same two-down line or going after hearts with the possibility of down one or down three, depending on whether he picks up the ♡J.

The most frequent results will be N/S +620, +650, and +300. If N/S take the push to 5♣ and East does not set up dummy's ♦K, N/S -100 will grace the frequency sheets ... down at the bottom of the page.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

If N/S find a spade lead and continuation they can hold E/W to nine tricks in notrump; otherwise declarer will take the first 11. In 5♣, the safer strain for game, there are no more than 11 tricks available regardless of which suit is led.

As it's Matchpoints we can expect to see the equivalent of Pass-Pass-2NT-Pass; 3NT / much more often than we see West invite slam in notrump or clubs.

South's opening lead problem is a classic strategy-tester: the spade lead can win big if North produces a spade honor and might even gain if it concedes a spade trick but develops a couple of timely winners; the diamond lead can gain if declarer is two-two in diamonds even with all the missing honors, or if North has the ace and dummy a singleton honor, or if North has a lesser honor and gains the lead before South to lead through declarer's remaining honor-ten, and it has a better chance not to cost; the obscure and apparently passive heart lead might gain by hitting North's length or by giving nothing away, but could as easily locate the queen or jack for declarer. South will make his choice on the basis

of his overall philosophy (for example, "fourth-best from longest without an exceptional reason to do otherwise" or "strongest holding with at least four cards") and interest in trying to stay even with the field versus his perception of needing to take some chances to try for a very good result at this point in the session.

I believe the diamond lead will be more popular and therefore that there will be more +660s than +600s.

Board 33. Love All. Dealer North.

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

6♣ is a respectable contract, better than respectable with North declaring to protect the club tenace from a challenging club lead.

With North opening 1♡, a strong club or perhaps a heavy Flannery 2♦, South is a favorite to declare a spade contract, though scientific transfer positive responses to a strong club might permit North to grab the declaration. In practice it won't matter whether North or South plays a spade contract because the club finesse works and if declarer rejects it to establish hearts that suit comes in too (in combination with two-two trumps and the ♦A inside) ... unless declarer takes a losing third-round ruffing finesse against the ♡Q after West's ten appears on the second round.

East will overcall 2♦ or 3♦ far more often than he passes, and his choice will often affect N/S's approach. Where South will not shy away from bidding 2♣ over 2♦ (North might just bid Blackwood, but might splinter and pass a retreat to 4♣, or splinter and continue with 5♣, whether or not South bids 4♡ over 4♢) he might not be willing to force to game with 3♣ over a 3♦ overcall, instead preferring a negative double (reserving his options over a possible 3♡ rebid by North: 3♣, 3NT, 4♡, 4♢ agreeing hearts). If South does risk 3♣ over 3♦ North is likely to drive to slam, but over a negative double North

will choose between a 4♦ cue bid (destination uncertain to South) and a very heavy but clearly-oriented jump to 4♣. We can imagine N/S missing slam at some of these tables.

Although few Easts will pass over 1♥ there will be some cases where N/S can bid uncontested. Where North raises 1♠ to three rather than force to game with a 4♦ splinter, some employ 3NT as an inquiry, a useful treatment that leaves North room to show singletons cheaply (4♣ or 4♦) or minimum/maximum 4=5=2=2 hands (4♥ or 4♠). If South can do this over 3♣ he will learn that his ♦K is wasted and that North couldn't quite force to game; whether he makes a further move toward slam is a close decision as 5♣ might be in jeopardy where North has: AJxx, AQJxx, x, Kxx, or 6♣ could be virtually cold where North has: AJxx, AQJxx, x, Axx. To the brave will go the spoils this time as it would be very unusual for declarer to go down in 6♣.

Board 34. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| ♠ A 6          |             |
| ♥ A J 10 6 5 2 |             |
| ♦ Q 9          |             |
| ♣ 10 6 5       |             |
| ♠ K 9 5 4      | ♠ Q J 8 7 3 |
| ♥ 8 3          | ♥ Q 9       |
| ♦ A J 3        | ♦ 10 6 2    |
| ♣ K 9 8 4      | ♣ 7 3 2     |
| ♠ 10 2         |             |
| ♥ K 7 4        |             |
| ♦ K 8 7 5 4    |             |
| ♣ A Q J        |             |

N/S can take 10 or 11 tricks in hearts, vulnerable for +620 or +650, but E/W have a nine-card spade fit to tempt them to sacrifice at 4♣. That will be a good move for E/W if they convince N/S to go onto 5♥ and declarer gets the play wrong to go minus, or if N/S double 4♣ and fail to negotiate their third-round diamond ruff to collect only 500 rather than 800. However, with two balanced hands and nothing in reserve in terms of high cards, N/S are likely to defend 4♣ doubled rather compete to 5♥, and as South will often have bid diamonds getting the ruff will not be a tall order, so this is one time where bidding 4♣ over 4♥ (or before N/S can bid 4♥) may not be such a clever idea.

N/S may have the auction to themselves, and bid: 1♦-1♥; 2♥-4♥ /, 1♦-1♥; INT-3♥; 4♥ /, or North might jump to 4♥ over INT or offer a

choice of games (South will choose 4♥) through a checkback sequence of some sort. Or North might use a transfer sequence or simply respond 4♥ where South opens a weak notrump. This would not be a good time for North to simply drive to 3NT as a spade lead will defeat that game. How might E/W get into the auction?

- (a) A rabid East might open 2♣ (we've all seen them)-DBL-4♠-5♥ /
- (b) East, fluent in Italian, might overcall a 1♥ response with 1♣
- (c) A restless West might overcall 1♦ with 1♣ (this breed is somewhat more rare)

If East leads the ♠Q and declarer wins and gets the hearts right, he will in theory end in North because he wanted to cater to a four-nil break which he could handle only with the length in West; he will not want to burn the third-round trump entry to lead the first diamond from dummy, so will either lead the ♦Q from hand or test East with the ♦9, trying to look like a guy with a singleton to convince East to rise with the ace if he has it. Here West will win appropriately, cross to East's ♠J and get a club switch, forcing declarer to choose between the 50% club finesse and the 36% three-three diamond break. We can certainly see declarer going wrong to hold himself to 10 tricks.

Declarer might duck the opening lead, to prevent that late club switch, but there is no reason why East won't switch to clubs at trick two, especially where West has discouraged in spades. If East leads the ♣3 or ♣2 on the go it would take a big play by declarer to rise with the ace, play ♥A and start diamonds; West ducks, takes the second diamond and plays a spade but declarer wins, goes to the ♥K, ruffs out diamonds, goes to the ♥7, and discards a spade, losing only to the ♣K for +650.

Board 35. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

|                    |              |
|--------------------|--------------|
| ♠ --               |              |
| ♥ 7 6 3 2          |              |
| ♦ K Q 10 8 4       |              |
| ♣ A 7 4 2          |              |
| ♠ 10 9 7 6 5 4 3 2 | ♠ J          |
| ♥ A J              | ♥ K Q 10 8 5 |
| ♦ 9                | ♦ A J 7 5 3  |
| ♣ K 8              | ♣ 6 5        |
| ♠ A K Q 8          |              |
| ♥ 9 4              |              |
| ♦ 6 2              |              |
| ♣ Q J 10 9 3       |              |

At unfavorable vulnerability, West will content himself with 3♠ over South's 1♣ opening. Although East might raise to 4♠, that will be a minority position. South could bid 3NT or 4♣ but the instinctive choice is to pass the negative double. Although declarer seems to have six losers (four trumps and two clubs), the ♣K is protected for the moment and South can't gain the lead in time to lead the ♣Q through the king with profit.

Though the lead of the ♣A might not bring North immediate good cheer when South follows with the queen and the king does not appear, the lead doesn't actually cost if declarer plays South for all the trumps. On the lead of the ♦K, for example, declarer wins and starts on hearts; if South does not ruff declarer makes the contract by discarding clubs on this trick and the next heart winner; if South ruffs high, declarer makes the contract by discarding a club, losing only a club and three trumps; if South ruffs low, however, he defeats the contract: declarer can over-ruff and loses three trumps and two clubs. Too close for comfort!

But that's the best that N/S can do. In clubs, their best strain, their maximum against best defense is only eight tricks. On a red-suit lead, E/W get a diamond and a ruff, two hearts, and a red-suit over-ruff with the ♣K. A spade lead would do rather less well as declarer can take the trump finesse thanks to the spade entry, and will lose three tricks.

It's rare that an analyst gets to predict that the most common result will be a one-trick set of a doubled partial, but that's not a bad estimate for this deal. There will be a fair number of +730s too for E/W and a few -500s in 4♠ doubled, and there won't be many N/S pairs declaring club contracts. Any South wise enough to wriggle into 3NT will come to eight tricks on a spade lead, only six on a red-suit lead as long as East arranges to endplay dummy in diamonds rather than switch to a spade after taking his red-suit winners.

Board 36. Game All. Dealer West.

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| ♠ Q 9       |              |
| ♥ 9 7 3 2   |              |
| ♦ K Q 8     |              |
| ♣ A K 8 7   |              |
| ♠ A K J 8 7 | ♠ 10 6 3 2   |
| ♥ 8         | ♥ J 6 4      |
| ♦ J 5 4     | ♦ A 10 7     |
| ♣ Q 9 6 2   | ♣ 10 4 3     |
|             | ♠ 5 4        |
|             | ♥ A K Q 10 5 |
|             | ♦ 9 6 3 2    |
|             | ♣ J 5        |

The West hand isn't much of a one-bid, but nearly every West will start with 1♠ or 2♠ (weak and either one- or two-suited) rather than pass. North will double and East will pass, raise gently, or raise more dramatically, depending on inclination and which opening West chose.

The winning action is for South is to double 3♠ or 4♠ and for North to pass that double. N/S are entitled to two clubs and a club ruff, a diamond, and a heart, costing E/W 200 or 500 points. Those penalties would be excellent results for E/W if N/S could make 4♥, but E/W are entitled to two spades and two diamonds; the N/S maximum is +140.

This is a somewhat random deal to close out the session because there won't be much deep reasoning that goes into an E/W decision to open the bidding or compete to 3♠/4♠, or that goes into a N/S decision to bid 4♥ or defend a doubled spade contract.

If you got this one right, however, you've been successful, and if you got most of today's deals right you've been very successful and we'll see your name in lights all over the world.

Thanks so much for participating. We'll see you again in June, 2010, a year older and wiser.



**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!

Residence: Toronto

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.

Results can be found at:

**[www.ecatsbridge.com](http://www.ecatsbridge.com)**

as can details about the World Championships in Beijing, together with a lot of other information about the World Bridge Federation and its work.

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