

<p># 1 ♠ QT853 N/None ♥ KJT732 Opt. res. ♠ 2 -920 ♣ Q</p> <p>♠ K ♠ AJ42 ♥ 4 ♥ A9865 ♦ AKJT4 ♦ Q95 ♣ AKT932 ♣ 4</p> <p>8 ♠ 976 18 11 ♥ Q 3 ♦ 8763 ♠ J8765</p>	<p># 2 ♠ AK3 E/NS ♥ 432 Opt. res. ♠ AKT9854 1400 ♣ -</p> <p>♠ QJT965 ♠ 84 ♥ QT5 ♥ 8 ♦ 7 ♦ Q632 ♣ 652 ♣ AKT984</p> <p>14 ♠ 72 5 ♥ AKJ976 9 ♦ J 12 ♣ QJ73</p>	<p># 3 ♠ T3 S/EW ♥ J4 Opt. res. ♠ KQT752 -630 ♣ J97</p> <p>♠ KQJ95 ♠ 62 ♥ KQ73 ♥ T865 ♦ 3 ♦ AJ964 ♣ A86 ♣ KT</p> <p>7 ♠ A874 15 8 ♥ A92 10 ♦ 8 ♠ Q5432</p>	<p># 4 ♠ Q74 W/All ♥ KQJ93 Opt. res. ♠ 963 -140 ♣ 95</p> <p>♠ AK832 ♠ 5 ♥ 7 ♥ A8642 ♦ QJ842 ♦ T75 ♣ A6 ♣ KJT4</p> <p>8 ♠ JT96 14 8 ♥ T5 10 ♦ AK ♠ Q8732</p>
<p># 5 ♠ Q6 N/NS ♥ 9763 Opt. res. ♠ 9875 -110 ♣ KQ8</p> <p>♠ K32 ♠ AJ84 ♥ A842 ♥ QJ5 ♦ AQ64 ♦ T3 ♣ 72 ♣ T954</p> <p>7 ♠ T975 13 8 ♥ KT 12 ♦ KJ2 ♠ AJ63</p>	<p># 6 ♠ KQ65 E/EW ♥ 95 Opt. res. ♠ AQ82 400 ♣ QT4</p> <p>♠ 987432 ♠ T ♥ 73 ♥ AKQJT6 ♦ T74 ♦ J93 ♣ 65 ♣ 872</p> <p>13 ♠ AJ 0 ♥ 842 11 ♦ K65 16 ♣ AKJ93</p>	<p># 7 ♠ KQT97 S/All ♥ QJ Opt. res. ♠ 6432 -620 ♣ T7</p> <p>♠ J632 ♠ A8 ♥ A95 ♥ KT632 ♦ KJ7 ♦ AQ98 ♣ J52 ♣ 83</p> <p>8 ♠ 54 10 13 ♥ 874 9 ♦ T5 ♠ AKQ964</p>	<p># 8 ♠ Q86 W/None ♥ K96542 Opt. res. ♠ KJ8 -430 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ A43 ♠ 95 ♥ 73 ♥ AQJ8 ♦ 653 ♦ A97 ♣ AQJ93 ♣ KT82</p> <p>9 ♠ KJT72 11 14 ♥ T 6 ♦ QT42 ♠ 764</p>
<p># 9 ♠ QJ2 N/EW ♥ J52 Opt. res. ♠ 5 -660 ♣ QJ8653</p> <p>♠ 83 ♠ AK765 ♥ AK9 ♥ Q4 ♦ KT93 ♦ J62 ♣ T974 ♣ AK2</p> <p>7 ♠ T94 10 17 ♥ T8763 6 ♦ AQ874 ♠ -</p>	<p># 10 ♠ 87543 E/All ♥ KT74 Opt. res. ♠ A 620 ♣ KQ7</p> <p>♠ KJ92 ♠ QT6 ♥ Q862 ♥ J53 ♦ 42 ♦ KQ96 ♣ T62 ♣ J54</p> <p>12 ♠ A 6 ♥ A9 9 ♦ JT8753 13 ♣ A983</p>	<p># 11 ♠ AT983 S/None ♥ T854 Opt. res. ♠ Q73 100 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ - ♠ Q2 ♥ 93 ♥ KQJ762 ♦ AKJT984 ♦ 62 ♣ K973 ♣ AJT</p> <p>6 ♠ KJ7654 11 13 ♥ A 10 ♦ 5 ♠ Q6542</p>	<p># 12 ♠ AK53 W/NS ♥ JT3 Opt. res. ♠ Q 600 ♣ AK865</p> <p>♠ J8762 ♠ T ♥ A74 ♥ KQ982 ♦ 3 ♦ T764 ♣ Q943 ♣ JT7</p> <p>17 ♠ Q94 7 ♥ 65 10 ♦ AKJ9852 ♠ 2</p>
<p># 13 ♠ AJ43 N/All ♥ AK Opt. res. ♠ K83 1370 ♣ KQJ8</p> <p>♠ 752 ♠ KQT96 ♥ QT84 ♥ 9753 ♦ 952 ♦ 74 ♣ A76 ♣ 42</p> <p>21 ♠ 8 6 ♥ J62 8 ♦ AQJT6 ♠ T953</p>	<p># 14 ♠ 653 E/None ♥ T842 Opt. res. ♠ K3 420 ♣ J986</p> <p>♠ 97 ♠ KJ2 ♥ 9763 ♥ KQ ♦ Q75 ♦ J9864 ♣ AKT4 ♣ Q72</p> <p>4 ♠ AQT84 9 ♥ AJ5 12 ♦ AT2 15 ♣ 53</p>	<p># 15 ♠ Q6 S/NS ♥ K9 Opt. res. ♠ AKT852 -450 ♣ 632</p> <p>♠ 8 ♠ AKJT542 ♥ 87432 ♥ AQJ5 ♦ QJ94 ♦ 6 ♣ Q74 ♣ 8</p> <p>12 ♠ 973 5 15 ♥ T6 8 ♦ 73 ♠ AKJT95</p>	<p># 16 ♠ Q3 W/EW ♥ QT654 Opt. res. ♠ T8764 -2220 ♣ 9</p> <p>♠ T4 ♠ AKJ5 ♥ A2 ♥ K9 ♦ AJ9 ♦ Q53 ♣ QT8743 ♣ AK65</p> <p>4 ♠ 98762 11 20 ♥ J873 5 ♦ K2 ♠ J2</p>
<p># 17 ♠ T86 N/None ♥ J Opt. res. ♠ KQ942 430 ♣ AT63</p> <p>♠ J932 ♠ 754 ♥ K532 ♥ T9874 ♦ 863 ♦ A5 ♣ Q9 ♣ K42</p> <p>10 ♠ AKQ 6 ♥ AQ6 7 ♦ JT7 17 ♣ J875</p>	<p># 18 ♠ J94 E/NS ♥ AK92 Opt. res. ♠ 872 -400 ♣ Q93</p> <p>♠ T3 ♠ AK65 ♥ QJ85 ♥ 64 ♦ AJ96 ♦ KQ3 ♣ AK2 ♣ J864</p> <p>10 ♠ Q872 15 ♥ T73 13 ♦ T54 2 ♣ T75</p>	<p># 19 ♠ A753 S/EW ♥ J864 Opt. res. ♠ AT6 450 ♣ Q6</p> <p>♠ Q9 ♠ K42 ♥ A9753 ♥ KT2 ♦ J974 ♦ Q8532 ♣ J2 ♣ 98</p> <p>11 ♠ JT86 8 ♥ Q 8 ♦ K 13 ♣ AKT7543</p>	<p># 20 ♠ J983 W/All ♥ QT7 Opt. res. ♠ QJ54 630 ♣ Q3</p> <p>♠ KT75 ♠ AQ2 ♥ 9432 ♥ J865 ♦ 32 ♦ T96 ♣ J94 ♣ 875</p> <p>8 ♠ 64 4 7 ♥ AK 21 ♦ AK87 ♠ AKT62</p>
<p># 21 ♠ J32 N/NS ♥ AJ73 Opt. res. ♠ AK8 90 ♣ K84</p> <p>♠ Q965 ♠ K84 ♥ K2 ♥ T9854 ♦ QJ73 ♦ T ♣ AT5 ♣ Q973</p> <p>16 ♠ AT7 12 ♥ Q6 5 ♦ 96542 7 ♣ J62</p>	<p># 22 ♠ AJ98 E/EW ♥ J932 Opt. res. ♠ J8 140 ♣ J54</p> <p>♠ KT72 ♠ 654 ♥ Q ♥ 874 ♦ AQ93 ♦ 6542 ♣ AKQ9 ♣ 732</p> <p>8 ♠ Q3 20 ♥ AKT65 0 ♦ KT7 12 ♣ T86</p>	<p># 23 ♠ 7652 S/All ♥ K9732 Opt. res. ♠ - 650 ♣ KJ83</p> <p>♠ 843 ♠ K9 ♥ AJ ♥ QT65 ♦ K9732 ♦ Q854 ♣ 974 ♣ A62</p> <p>7 ♠ AQJT 8 ♥ 84 11 ♦ AJT6 14 ♣ QT5</p>	<p># 24 ♠ 9 W/None ♥ K3 Opt. res. ♠ KJT4 -100 ♣ T97643</p> <p>♠ KQJ74 ♠ T8 ♥ T74 ♥ J9865 ♦ 6 ♦ AQ987 ♣ AK82 ♣ J</p> <p>7 ♠ A6532 13 ♥ AQ2 8 ♦ 532 12 ♣ Q5</p>



**Message from  
Gianarrigo Rona,  
President, World Bridge Federation**

Dear Bridge Friends

The World Wide Bridge Contest is a long-standing tournament in the World Bridge Federation's calendar, now in its 27th year, and I do hope you all enjoyed this event and found the hands interesting and challenging – my thanks go to Eric Kokish for his excellent and most entertaining commentary.

The World Wide Bridge Contest has been joined by four new Simultaneous Pairs events held during the year for your enjoyment. These new events are much simpler ones, and are run specifically to raise funds so that the WBF is in a better position to support, promote and develop Youth Bridge.

The World Bridge Federation has always been strongly committed to the promotion of Youth Bridge, which we strongly believe represents the future of our wonderful sport. So, as well as the four new events, it has been decided that any profits made from this event will also be used specifically to assist the development of Youth Bridge. Our Youth Projects will include better teaching aids for countries trying to encourage young players, assistance for youngsters to attend World Championships and other initiatives to encourage youngsters to learn bridge.

You will find the dates of these new events on the back cover of this brochure. Please join us for as many of them as you can.

The WBF Website, at [www.worldbridge.org](http://www.worldbridge.org) will have information about the 2013 World Bridge Teams Championship to be held on the magical island of Bali in Indonesia. This Championship includes the World Transnational Open Teams, a championship that any players who are bona fide members of their NBO can participate in – it is a really exciting tournament, giving players the opportunity of enjoying not only a wonderful venue but an event where they can play against or watch some of the greatest names in bridge today. Do give consideration to joining us – the WBF would welcome your presence.

Once again, thank you for taking part in the World Wide Bridge Contest – and please continue to enjoy your bridge.

With warm regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gianarrigo Rona'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

**Gianarrigo Rona, President**

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

North players who do not have a system opening for weak major two-suiters will have to choose between a disciplined pass and an atypical weak two-bid, natural or via a Multi 2♦ where part of the vernacular. A few enterprising souls will take it a step further and open 3♥. West, with a wonderful hand, will face a number of different scenarios that will affect his approach dramatically.

Where North passes, East might pass too, but most will open 1♥ or a specialized two-bid (2♦ or 2♥) that depicts four spades, five hearts and about 11-16 HCP. If West is permitted to open in fourth seat, the bidding might occasionally proceed: 1♣-1♥; 2♦-2M/2NT; 3♦-4♦; 4NT-5♠ (2 key cards plus the ♦Q); 6♦/7♦-Pass. However, it's far more likely that North will overcall 1♥ or 2♥ or compete with a two-suited cue-bid or specialized overcall; at these tables East will be keen to seek a penalty, and it's barely possible that West will go along with that opinion despite his distributional power – the numbers will range between 300 and 800; where West instead continues to describe his hand, East should revalue his hand positively and the partnership should reach at least 6♦.

Where East opens 1♥, it might proceed: 2♣-2M; 3♦-3NT; 4♦-5♦; 6♦-Pass. However, East's controls are slam-suitable and he might bid 4♣ over 4♦, agreeing diamonds; if he does that West will use Blackwood and get the most favorable reply. If East starts with a conventional 2♦ or 2♥, West will check on shape, discover that East is 4=5=3=1, and head for 6♦ or 7♦. In this sort of scenario, West can see that a club ruff or two will give him a good play for seven, and will probably take the plunge as he expects everyone to bid at least six once East has opened.

Where North opens 2♥ or a Multi 2♦ (Pass-2♥ ♠pass or correct♥), West will cue-bid, jump cue-bid (strong minors), jump to 4NT (minors), or double (hoping to survive spade bids from East). Whether East accurately appreciates the value of his three golden cards in combination with the ruffing potential in clubs is difficult to project, but it's possible that some E/W pairs will stop at game, and it's likely that there will be more pairs in six than in seven.

It's a good grand slam, but the poor breaks in the minors pose a threat. A trump lead deprives declarer of a third ruff in dummy, and a spade lead takes out an entry to ruff a club prematurely, and declarer can't both take all his ruffs and cash the second high club without establishing a trump winner for South, but if he goes about his business, cashing the ♠A en route while leaving the heart suit until the end, he will be able to squeeze North in the majors (without having to guess the distribution) for a thirteenth; a heart lead or premature play of the heart suit by declarer would preclude this winning line.

Although a heart lead is not especially attractive against seven, North does have a difficult lead; he is more likely to lead a heart against six. As seven might fail on any lead if declarer misjudges the play, those who stop in six might score reasonably well, and if there are enough unsuccessful grand slams, even the game bidders might not fare too badly.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

Although East might not consider his hand ideal for 3♣, 1♣, or its Precision equivalent – 2♣, most will vote for one of those actions rather than pass as dealer at favorable vulnerability.

While South has an easy 1♥ overcall and a pragmatic 2♥ overcall of a natural limited 2♣, it won't be quite as straightforward over a 3♣ opening; nonetheless, most will volunteer 3♥, liking their chances of catching some support from a partner likely to be quite short in clubs. Where the bidding started 1♣-(1♥), West will compete with 1♠, a weak 2♠, or an enterprising 3♣, trading on the vulnerability. Facing a wide-ranging 1♥ overcall it's not clear how far North will go, especially in a jammed auction, and it's possible that some will stop at 4♥.

After 2♣-(2♥), West might introduce spades but might well settle for a gentle raise in clubs, particularly when East has guaranteed at least six clubs. Whether those Wests intend to bid spades later is far from obvious, but there will be some who compete all the way to 4♣ if given the opportunity.

After 3♣-(3♥), West will consider jumping to 5♣, but regardless of West's action it will be difficult to convince North that he should not drive to slam, perhaps with a sniff at seven that South would reject.

Those who bid slam will leave West to decide whether it pays to save majestically at 6♣, but it would be surprising to discover that there were many such sacrifices, especially when N/S were under pressure in the auction and might have guessed inaccurately. As it happens, the most likely result in 6♣ doubled would be -1400, a genuine gain versus the 1430 available to N/S in 6♥.

However, 'available' is not the same as 'taking to the bank' and to make 12 tricks in hearts on a club lead, declarer must ruff in dummy, and take a first-round finesse in trumps to neutralize the impending threat in clubs, a technical play that would be clear-cut at IMPs, but less attractive at Pairs, where safety plays are best reserved for unusual contracts that cry out "please make me; don't worry about overtricks." On a spade lead, declarer can win, play two high trumps and play on diamonds; although West ruffs the second high honor, dummy retains two timely entries (club ruff, high spade) – one to establish diamonds with a ruffing finesse, the other to cash the established diamond winners.

Whether the declarers in game will score well for

taking 12 tricks will depend on how many of their counterparts fail in slam. Keep in mind that 6♣ can't be made and that there will be a few pairs who alight in that slam.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

There are some systems that advocate opening the South hand, but pass will be a much more popular choice. Over West's 1♠, a weak jump overcall of 3♦ will have a significant following, and some will try an unsound 2♦ just to get into the fray facing a passed partner unlikely to bury them. In this case, while South won't pose any threat to North, East's role will be rather different. If East can double 2♦ or 3♦ for penalty he will usually do so, but if a double would be negative (by far the most common treatment), East will pass and hope that West can protect with a double, which would be the case on this layout. As N/S can be held to five tricks in diamonds, their only hope for a decent result would be to buy the contract at the two-level, concede 500, and hope that E/W reach 3NT or 4♥ (or a less likely 4♣) and chalk up +600, 620, 630, or 650. That extra undertrick (for -800) at 3♦ doubled will be very expensive indeed.

Left alone, EW will bid 1♠-INT; 2♥-3♥; 4♥, although conservative Easts might pass 2♥ at Pairs, especially where West has limited his hand more narrowly than in standard methods. To legitimately hold a heart contract to 10 tricks, North must lead a spade, securing an eventual trick with the ♥J with a third round spade ruff in front of dummy. This line of defense is unlikely, but declarer might start spades himself before playing a second round of trumps and suffer the same unfortunate ruff when South ducks the first spade.

3NT won't be declared very often, but it might produce some interesting play if South leads a club to the jack and king, then divines to continue with the ♣Q when in with the ♠A. Declarer will need to take excellent views in hearts and clubs to make his contract, but if he makes three he will probably make four: four spades, three hearts, and three tricks in the minors.

Where South opens 1♣ or a Precision 1♦, 2♦ or 2♥, N/S should have a better chance to avoid a big penalty, and where South shows a limited three-suiter short in diamonds, West might stay out of the auction altogether and collect a number of 50s from 2♦ or 3♣.

Perhaps it's presumptuous to predict that E/W +800 will be a fairly common result, but in some clubs that will definitely be the case. E/W +650 should still be an excellent score, as there will be some +620s, +600s, +500s, +200s, and +170s.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

East has an uncomfortable rebid after 1♠-INT; 2♦, especially in systems where 2♦ might be the indicated rebid with 5=3=3=2 distribution. The winning action is to pass 2♦, a strain that is likely to produce 10 tricks for +130. Many Easts will bid 2♥, however, and West is not quite strong enough to take a third bid, which is widely recognized as constructive rather than corrective. 2♥ figures to go one down, but might occasionally make or go two down.

West players who opt to bid over 2♥ will do well whether they try 3♦ or an eccentric 2♠, which might produce an overtrick for +140 and a superb score.

What else could happen? Well, it's possible that a few reckless Norths will enter the auction on

the second round of bidding, exposing themselves to a penalty of at least 200 and more probably 500 points in 2♥ (doubled). Those will be the best E/W scores, but they'll be rare enough that the popular +130 should score satisfactorily.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

If South opens a weak notrump in third seat, West might feel he needs more to double, and INT will end the auction. If West doubles INT, that too might end the auction, but in some partnerships N/S will either be forced to escape (or play INT redoubled) or choose to do so, and E/W will usually double any two-level contract.

In INT, doubled or not, a red suit lead will concede a trick and the battle for the odd trick will take many different turns after that, with E/W more likely to prevail. N/S -100 might be quite a good result if enough E/W pairs can collect a penalty of 200 or more, scramble +110 or +140 in a major-suit contract (it's not easy to see how E/W would finish in hearts), but E/W -200 will surely be a disaster.

Where South opens 1♣, West will double and East will bid 1♠ whether or not North bids a red suit, and East will declare 1♠, or perhaps 2♠ if North competes to 2♣ and E/W do not double.

Where South opens 1♦ in a strong-club system, West will have no easy way into the auction and N/S will probably finish in INT, not doubled, down 100 or 200.

Spade contracts will produce eight tricks without much effort: four trumps (one on a third round diamond ruff in East), two hearts and two diamonds. If the defense does not lead and continue trumps, declarer can develop a ninth trick with a club ruff in West, beating all the other E/W partials and 100-point sets on defense.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Looking at all the cards, N/S would prefer to declare 5♣ or double any E/W heart contract higher than the one-level. But what will happen in real life?

East will most often open 1♥, but some will vote for a very sound weak 2♥ or a Multi 2♦.

South will overcall 1♥ with 2♣ and will have to find a meaningful rebid over North's 2♥ cue bid. With some extra values but lacking a suitable natural rebid, South will resort to the dread return cue bid, for the moment sending just that message. In partnerships where a 2♠ or 3♦ advance would have been forcing over 2♣, North will have the option of bidding 3♠ or 4♦ over 3♥ without overstating his length, but whatever North does over 3♥, the partnership should finish in 5♣, the par contract.

Where East starts with 2♥, South will try 3♣ and the partnership should discover that the values for game are present but hearts are a problem. They too should find a route to 5♣.

West has no reason not to lead a heart so N/S +400 will be the overwhelmingly popular result. If West indulges his imagination and leads something else, he will soon appreciate the danger in this type of initiative, as -440 will be awful.

The most interesting variations will occur where East starts with a Multi 2♦ as South might have additional systemic options – 2NT (16-18) or double (14-16 or very strong). At these tables N/S might sail into 3NT without investigating the stopper situation. If East is on lead he will be

clever enough not to double and will soon chalk up a delightful +100. Where South overcalls 2NT and is raised to three, East will be hopeful that West will lead a heart and should not double to raise a red flag for his opponents. Indeed, West will have no trouble leading a heart this time as he has no hope of establishing and running his spades and East is marked with a heart suit. Of course, N/S might still find their club fit (say after: 2♦-double-2♥ (pass or correct)-3♥-double, but at least E/W will have some chance to beat par at these tables.

Note that even with diamonds three-three, E/W can hold a diamond contract to 10 tricks with three rounds of hearts, West uppercutting with the ♦10 to promote a trump trick for East.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

Although the South hand is an imperfect vulnerable one-bid (or natural, limited 2♣) or three-bid, there will be plenty of support across the field for those choices and it's not unlikely that the "normal" pass will be a minority action.

Where South passes, so will West, and North will face a decision not unlike South's: whether to risk a very light third-seat 1♠ opening, a more tempting weak 2♠ (or Multi 2♦), or settle for an impeccable pass.

At the tables where both South and North pass initially, East will open 1♥ and likely see: (2♣)-2♥-(2♠). Although game is not completely out of the question for East, he would need to find a particularly good fit and a maximum; by trying for game he might reach one opposite several unsuitable hands and he figures to do better in

the long run by competing to 3♥ or by passing as N/S do not have a known fit and E/W figure to have only eight combined trumps if West can't bid again. E/W do best by defending 2♠ or 3♠, as both will go two down, and doubling would simply turn a very good score into a superb one.

After 1♣-Pass-1♠, East will try 2♥ or double, depending on his priorities (best chance for the five-three heart fit versus the safety in finding a playable strain). West might raise a 2♥ overcall to game, try for game with a black-suit cue-bid, or settle for a gentle raise to 3♥, but South might remove some of those options by bidding again over 2♥. If East doubles 1♠, South will volunteer 2♣ while the price is right, and West will need a way to show his strength while lacking the luxury of having a four-card red suit to bid. The ideal solution is an extended responsive double, implying equal length in the reds, but not everyone will have that club in his bag and some of them will pass while others will double for penalty or guess which red-suit to bid. This time, those speculative penalty doubles should turn out very well, as two timely trump leads and a first round duck of the ♠A should give the defense six tricks.

If South opens 2♣, North might buy the contract if he raises to 3♣, but that won't be much fun for his side. A 2♠ response will probably convince East to double rather than bid 3♥, and leave West with an awkward decision best solved this time by passing; some will guess which red suit to bid; some will hope for a combined club stopper by bidding notrump; others will cue-bid and hope to land on their feet.

A 3♣ opening figures to lead to a reopening 3♥ and a raise to four, and the lucky lie of the trump suit will allow the declarers in heart contracts to take 10 tricks, playing the suit the natural way: low to the ace. Sure, North could ruff the third club, hoping to score his remaining honor when declarer over-ruffs and finesses on the way back, but in practice, declarer should discard his unavoidable spade loser and hope the trumps come in after that. Lots of possibilities here, but E/W will be plus at most tables, from 110 through 800.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

Because of the strong club suit, most will open the West hand (1♣, 1NT, or a Precision-style 1♦). North will overcall one of a minor with 1♥ or a weak 2♥, which will leave East to decide whether to try for a three-trick set or pass up that opportunity to drive to game or slam. As trying for a penalty will usually (nearly everyone favors negative doubles these days) involve passing the overcall and waiting for opener to protect with a takeout double, most Easts will not be keen to adopt that strategy over 1♥, especially after 1♣, as the club fit suggests that some of their side's honors might not stand up on defense. However, over 2♥, East will be more favorably disposed to try to hold North to five winners for a penalty of 500 points, better than any non-vulnerable E/W game.

In practice, because N/S's losers are aces and trump tricks and East can't prevent declarer from cashing two diamonds and a spade and forcing the defenders' long-trump hand with a third round of spades, heart contracts are likely to produce six tricks, which would make those E/W decisions to defend look bad: E/W +300 (or +100) will score poorly.

After 1♣-(1♥), East will bid 3NT at many tables, but really should take it more slowly as he can envision a slam opposite many suitable minimum openings. But even if East cue-bids 2♥, he's going to bid notrump at his next turn to keep the highest-scoring strain in the picture, and West is going nowhere with his balanced minimum. Where North overcalls 2♥, East has reason to fear that a 3♥ cue bid will endplay West, who might go past 3NT for want of a heart stopper, so at these tables, East will more often jump to 3NT. If East opts for the 3♥ club-fit cue bid, West might bid 4♣ rather than stall with 3♠, prompting

East to drive to an overly ambitious 6♣ rather than settle for a soft score in 5♣ once past 3NT.

Where West opens INT, a 2♥ overcall will be less attractive, as partner will expect a better hand, or at least a better suit. Left alone, E/W will usually sail into 3NT on a Stayman auction, but if North does risk 2♥, East might well try for an adequate penalty, with no evidence of a big fit in clubs.

As long as North maintains parity with dummy's heart length and does not part with a diamond (far from obvious), the declarers in notrump won't be able to build an eleventh trick on a heart lead. The reason for this is that if North doesn't guard the third round of diamonds, South will have to do so and he will also need to guard against the third round of spades when declarer takes a second heart finesse and cashes the ace; declarer will build a second trick with the third spade or diamond in the West hand. E/W +460 will be excellent, but given the opportunities for E/W to misjudge the auction, +430 will be good too.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Left alone, E/W might bid a simple INT-3NT, which offers plenty of tricks (usually 11), thanks to the three-three break in spades and the location of the ♦Q.

However, it will often be far less simple. North might open 3♣, unsound though that might be. How should East deal with that? A 3NT overcall will work well, even if West makes a slam move, as East will put on the brakes in time. A 3♣ overcall will force a decision on West: should he try 3NT lacking a true club stopper? Or should he raise to 4♣, hoping East is short in clubs and that the prime cards are just what East needs to make up for the poor trump holding? That decision will

prove regrettable as N/S can cross-ruff the first five tricks in the minors for -200 (worst case), but even +650 won't be much good for E/W with +660 readily attainable. Or should West pass 3♣, hoping that East has a moderate overcall and there is no good game available? A takeout double of 3♣ with only two hearts and only modest extra values is far less attractive, but it might yield a superb result if West passes for penalty and secures +800.

Where East opens 1♠, South might deem his five-five collection suitable for a two-suited cue bid despite its low point count, dreadful holding in his RHO's suit, and high defense-to-offense ratio. At these tables, West will double everything. Even if the defense compresses its three trump winners into two against a heart contract, depriving North of any diamond ruffs will limit N/S to five tricks, which will be more than enough to compensate E/W for their vulnerable game. It's likely that more Souths will compete over a INT opening than over 1♠, especially if they can show both suits wholesale, and they will have some hope for a good score if they can alight in 2♥ doubled and E/W lead trumps without separating their three winners or if the defenders find a different losing line; 2♥ doubled down only three, -500, will be excellent for E/W.

If South does not come in over 1♠, West will respond INT or 2♣, depending on system, but even after a more limited INT, E/W should reach game when East raises to 2NT or rebids 2♣ and is given the opportunity for a third bid over 2♣, 2NT, 3♣, or an artificial 2♦.

Apart from the 500s and 800s, 650s and -200s, 660 will be a very common result for E/W and probably above average.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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



3NT isn't much of a contract for N/S, but that's where they'll finish more often than not after an uncontested auction. Some examples: (1) 1♦-1♠; 2♦/2♣-2♥; 2NT-3NT/ (2) 1♦-1♠; 2♦-2NT; 3♣-3NT/ (3) 1♦-1♠; 2♣; 2NT-3NT/

Regardless of the lead, declarer's spade spots are so weak that the defenders should be able to untangle three tricks in the suit. That means declarer won't be able to relinquish the lead twice, as he will usually have to do in the course of developing diamonds. Therefore, he will need to take four tricks in clubs and three in hearts. He can manage the first of these tasks if clubs are three-three, if the jack-ten are doubleton, or if West has honor doubleton and declarer takes a third round finesse against East's honor-fourth. The second assignment is a bit more daunting: the technical play is to lead towards the ace-nine of hearts, playing the nine if East follows low and playing off the high honors later; that yields a third heart trick when East has queen-jack of hearts or one of the honors with at most two low cards. We can see that following this plan will bring home nine tricks in notrump and an excellent result for N/S if they reach game, and perhaps a good one if they stop a trick short in the highest-scoring strain.

East has an uncomfortable lead against a notrump contract, but will lead a heart when no one has bid the suit and often even when North has the suit. Now declarer's winning line in hearts is a bit different: after, nine, queen, king, he must cross to the ♥A, come to a club, and lead the ♥7 to catch the jack. It's easy to see that he might instead go wrong by leading the ♥10, playing to smother West's eight when East has led from J653.

Alternatively, East might lead a club, and it would be reasonable to choose the jack when dummy has shown some length in the suit. That might convince declarer to take a third-round club finesse against East's putative ten, but would East really lead the ♣J rather than a low card from jack-ten-empty fourth through dummy's length?

Minor-suit contracts offer 10 tricks, and the fate of these +130s will turn on how well the declarers in notrump manage the play. Although it's difficult to imagine a scenario in which N/S would finish in a heart contract, it's interesting to note that this unexceptional lie of the cards yields

10 tricks on a cross-ruff even on a trump lead. If you achieved +170 with the N/S cards you will have a good story for the post-mortem.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ A 10 9 8 3          ♥ 10 8 5 4          ♦ Q 7 3          ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ —          ♥ 9 3          ♦ A K J 10 9 8 4          ♣ K 9 7 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 2          ♥ K Q J 7 6 2          ♦ 6 2          ♣ A J 10</p> <p>♠ K J 7 6 5 4          ♥ A          ♦ 5          ♣ Q 6 5 4 2</p>
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Everyone knows that spades rule, and this deal fits the bill as N/S can take 11 tricks in the boss strain without breathing hard despite being outgunned 16-24 in HCP. Although there will be a few votes for 2♠, 3♠ or pass with the South hand, nearly everyone will open 1♠. West could make a case for any number of diamonds from two to five, and North will most often raise to 4♠ when legal, causing East to wonder why he has such a good hand with everyone bidding around him. But can East really bid 5♥ with any degree of confidence, with a terrible spade holding and only weak two-card support for his partner's suit? Some will take that particular plunge or pass (particularly where West has overcalled 3♦ or 4♦) but double will be a fairly popular choice. West will not want to pass a double, and will certainly take it out if it's not defined as pure penalty, leaving N/S with the next guess. North, with a likely diamond trick and an ace, might double 5♦. South will not want to pass a double, and will almost certainly take it out if it's not defined as pure penalty; if North passes 5♦, South will bid 5♠. Where it will end no one knows, but this is one of those deals where bidding one more for the road will usually be the winning strategy.

E/W can take 11 tricks in diamonds, and a bit less obviously also in hearts. Say that South leads a spade: declarer ruffs in dummy, comes to the ♣A, and ruffs the ♠Q, then plays ace-king of diamonds; South can ruff or not, but as declarer is now pretty much forced to play South for the ♣Q, he will lose only two trump tricks. If instead South leads a minor suit against a heart contract, declarer can

come to 11 tricks by starting on diamonds, which South can ruff without profit or allow declarer to ruff out the suit, ruff a spade and play a winning diamond, handcuffing the defenders.

It won't be easy for E/W to bid on over 5♠, or to avoid doubling it, and it's quite likely that E/W -450 will score quite well because there will be a significant number of -650s and some -690s. N/S pairs who sell out to 5♦ or 5♥ will score very badly whether or not they double.

This will be one of the most heatedly discussed boards of the session.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

The par contract for N/S is 5♦, but it will come as no surprise that many pairs prefer to take their chances in 3NT, particularly where East has not mentioned his heart suit.

North will open 1♣ in all systems and East will overcall 1♥ or perhaps a weak 2♥ if his partnership considers such actions acceptable at the prevailing vulnerability. Or perhaps even if not! West will raise to 2♥ over 2♦ and possibly to 3♥ or even 4♥ where East has entered the auction with a weak jump overcall and South has risked a forcing 3♦. It's one thing to endorse light initial actions but quite another to treat them as if they were "normal" bids, and here West will do best – at least in theory -- not to venture beyond the three-level as his side's maximum is only six tricks and North will not hesitate to double when he runs out of better alternatives. N/S will be pleased with their score where they collect 800, but the fate of +500 will turn largely on the number of N/S pairs who attempt 3NT and fail.

The other negative aspect of overcalling and raising hearts is that N/S will be warned that

hearts are a problem for notrump and so head for the safety of 5♦ when neither a heart stopper nor heart control emerge from their constructive exchanges.

Where East does not compete, N/S might bid: 1♣-1♦; 1♠-3♦; 3♥-3♠, with those major-suit bids at the three level ostensibly functioning as notrump probes. North might reason that as he did not bid 3NT over 3♦, he can afford to bid 3NT over 3♠ to suggest a partial stopper in hearts. If South is on the same page he will remove 3NT and get his side to 5♦, but there will be plenty of -100s for 3NT-1 where N/S had their free run in the bidding.

Once past 3NT, North will consider taking a shot at 6♦, but if he gives South a chance to deny a heart control he will know enough to resist temptation.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

Although N/S have only 29 combined HCP and only eight-card fits available, they have excellent slams in clubs or diamonds within their reach. But should South make an effort opposite a 2NT opening bid? And if he does, are methods in place to cater to both minors, to show spade shortness, and to stop at 4NT if slam seems out of reach? Perhaps at IMPs or Rubber Bridge (with the sweetener of 100 for honors), South might be more inclined to go past 3NT, but at Pairs, caution on marginal slam deals is a winning strategy and in real life we can expect to see a vast number of N/S pairs bidding 2NT-3NT, which will yield a routine 11 tricks when East leads a spade honor and declarer ducks.

Those unwilling to settle for 3NT without a fight will have some confidence in their methods. A popular treatment is to use 3♠ to show both

minors or perhaps just one long minor, in some variations treating 3♠ as a puppet to 3NT to allow responder to describe his hand type at his next turn; here South might be able to show both minors and spade shortness via a conventional sequence akin to 3♣-3NT; 4♠, after which North will drive to 6♣, trying for seven until he learns there's an ace missing. Other approaches include Baron and a Stayman start followed by a natural bid in a minor, which needn't guarantee a major. Whether the club fit materializes after an auction that begins 2NT-3♣ is not at all clear, but even if South focuses only on diamonds, North will like his hand for slam.

Where North opens a strong club, East might stick in a 1♠ overcall, but even if West raises, N/S should have enough room to investigate slam in (at least) diamonds, and if South does not make a regressive move North will drive to six.

There's nothing to the play in 6♣ or 6♦ (a heart ruff in North is the twelfth trick), so the bidding will be critical this time. The slam bidders figure to score very well and their E/W opponents will have to suffer the consequences while reflecting on their bad luck.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

That junky eight-loser East hand adds up to 12 HCP but it doesn't look anything like an opening bid, even non-vulnerable. Not that this will stop true believers from opening, but can anyone really be confident that something good will come of it?

Where East passes, South will open 1♠ and North, despite his weakness in high cards, might reasonably respond INT or 2♠, hoping to make life more difficult for his opponents and occasionally provide just what South needs in order to make a game. South will usually a pass a

standard INT response but will continue with 2♦ where INT is forcing or semi-forcing, as North's maximum is a poor 12 points. North's 2♠ rebid will depict a very weak raise with three-card support or a wider-range hand with only two, and South should give up at Pairs, trying to protect a likely plus.

Where East opens 1♦, West will have an easy negative double of South's 1♠ overcall. North might raise to 2♠, but even where this is known to be weak, that ♦K appears to be such a questionable asset that passing over the double will seem the prudent approach. If North passes, East will rebid INT, which might well get past everyone, though N/S might compete to 2♠. West will hate to sell out so cheaply with some useful cards and a fit for opener's suit, and some will double again or try a hopeful 3♦, which will work well if it's passed out, down only 100, and cause no harm if N/S compete to 3♠, but if South doubles 3♦ and defends accurately, he can chalk up +300 for a superb score.

Where East opens a rather disgusting weak notrump, South will double and if E/W can play there systemically, they will choose to do so unless East decides unilaterally to escape to 2♦, which might in turn convince South to introduce his spades. At some of the weak notrump tables, where E/W's options are to play INT redoubled or to seek a better spot, West will probably opt for the former, leading to N/S +200 or +600 if North stands his ground. We can imagine North finishing in 2♣, perhaps doubled, if South assumes his partner has a long suit when he escapes to 2♣, but more often than not, N/S will find a route to 2♠ after this start.

In spade contracts, declarer can come to 10 tricks if he uses dummy's two entries (♦K and diamond ruff) to finesse in spades and not to make a heart play. We can see that hearts take care of themselves on this lucky layout, but declarer is not clairvoyant and might well opt for the single spade finesse and use the other entry for a heart play, catering to both heart honors or honor-doubleton in East and holding himself to nine tricks in the process.

N/S minus scores will be rare, but could occur where South takes North's spade raise seriously, drives to game, and misjudges the play.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

With such a disparity in suit length, East will usually insist on spades, even if he shows his hearts and catches support. It's difficult to take exception to that strategy, but this time there is an extra trick available to E/W in hearts as declarer can ruff a spade in West, which might have been necessary to establish the suit, and take a heart finesse, which is enough to bring in that suit without loss.

South will usually pass, but some will open 3♣, deeming the suit quality more important than the missing seventh card at this vulnerability. Where South passes North will open 1♦ or perhaps INT (range to be determined), a heavy weak 2♦, or a busy 3♦. Many Easts will jump to 4♣ regardless of what his opponents have done so far, but some will double while others will use an artificial bid to show both majors, intending a strong bid in spades whether or not West expresses a preference for hearts.

Where South opens 3♣, North might take a shot at 3NT but might prefer to pass, raise clubs or try to get a diamond lead by bidding his suit in forcing mode. It's unlikely that N/S will do more than that, however, and East will nearly always buy the contract at 4♣. Though North suspects his opponents might be too high, he lacks the evidence and overall defensive assets to venture a penalty double. Just as well, as 4♠ is cold and N/S have nowhere profitable to go, in any case.

It's easy to accept this sort of analysis as comprehensive because, really, what else could happen? Well, might it transpire on a few occasions that East, after showing a big spade suit, will continue with 5♥ if North goes on to 5♣? And if he does, won't West pass 5♥, leading to a rare E/W +450 and a spectacular score?

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

If East were the dealer, this could prove to be a deal where nearly every E/W pair bids 6NT on a sequence in the family of 2NT-6NT, but West is the dealer and will open 1♣ or a natural limited 2♣ (or perhaps a weak notrump). Should that make it easier or more difficult to reach 6NT, the par contract?

After 1♣-1♠; 2♣, East is going to drive to at least 6♣ or 6NT and might opt to use Blackwood or a surrogate Blackwood bid such as Minorwood or Kickback, or Optional Blackwood (which includes a first-step negative vote from responder to the ace or key-card ask). Some would treat 4♣ as forcing, and others would have a conventional forcing raise available, but apart from this group, those who want to learn more about West's hand will stall, where applicable, with 2♦ (artificial or not) or 2NT (natural, forcing to at least 3♣ in partnerships who prefer not to end in 2NT when opener is weak and has promised at least six clubs). In addition to avoiding an undignified slam off two cashing diamonds or two aces, E/W would like to play in clubs rather than notrump when West is short in diamonds and would like to reach seven when West has the ♠Q and the red aces, regardless of whether his six-plus-card club suit is headed by the queen. Some of these tasks may not be easy to complete, but keeping the bidding low offers the best chance to learn about the ♠Q and diamond control and Blackwood later can clear up the ace situation.

There are too many variations to consider, but it's likely that far more E/W pairs will finish in 6NT than 6♣ or a grand slam. With both the ♦K and ♠Q aside, virtually any line that declarer chooses will produce 13 tricks, including one that involves having the ♠10 covered, cashing the ♦A, the high hearts, and running clubs to squeeze South in

spades and diamonds. Anyone taking only 12 tricks in any slam contract will pay a heavy price.

E/W scores will include +1390, +1460, +2140 and +2220. We'd rather not think about +1370, +1430, and -100.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

Unless North opens light and convinces South to do too much, most N/S pairs will finish in 3NT with South declaring. Whether North raises INT to 3NT or uses a method to show his heart shortness with (at least) five-four in the minors, South won't have much interest in a minor-suit game or slam despite his high-card maximum within a 15-17 range.

West will usually lead a heart, but some might try a spade if North shows heart shortness and South is content with notrump nonetheless. That won't matter, as declarer will come to 10 tricks in the form of three spades, two hearts, four diamonds and a club.

Apart from the handful of N/S pairs in 5♣/5♦ (+400) or in slam (-50), the only outliers will

be +460 in notrump when hearts are never played and declarer has time for three club tricks, four diamonds, three spades and the ♥A.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

The nearly universal contract will be 3NT, E/W, with West declaring where East opens in a minor and rebids 1♠, and with East declaring after showing a balanced hand at one of his first two turns to bid.

To hold declarer to nine tricks, North must not lead a heart (or an unlikely club). While a spade lead is best, a passive diamond should work well too, as long as North does not break hearts or discard incorrectly on the thirteenth club and diamond by releasing a spade: if North comes down to two spades and three hearts in the endgame, declarer can cash ace-king of spades and lead a heart to the jack, winning the last trick with the ♥Q.

Where East declares, South might not lead his four-card suit even if East has not shown spade length in the auction, instead trying to do something useful for North, who has most of his side's honor strength. But South's choice of leads won't matter as declarer can't come to a tenth trick unless North errs, which is particularly unlikely with the West hand exposed.

In a desert of E/W +400s, the rare +430 will loom on the horizon like an oasis.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

South will open 1♣ or a natural, limited 2♣. Left alone, N/S should be able to locate their spade fit quite early, but we can imagine South rebidding 2♣ rather than 1♠ with a three-card disparity in his suit lengths and such weak spades. In that scenario, South might still be able to get his hand type across via: 1♣-1♥; 2♣-2NT; 3♣, but where the sequence has never been discussed, North might believe that 3♣ can't be natural once South did not rebid 1♠.

Hyper-aggressive West players might stoop to overcalling 1♥ despite the adverse vulnerability, which might convince North to try 1NT or 2NT

rather than 1♠ or a negative double. When East raises hearts, South might focus on clubs or notrump, and the spade fit could get lost in the shuffle.

In notrump the defense is entitled to three tricks, but might lose one of them if East leads the ♥K and continues the suit, or if hearts are not cashed and the discarding on the run of the clubs proves too difficult. N/S +460 should be a top, but the more common +430 will probably score poorly, as the declarers in spades are more likely to finish +450 (or +480) than +420.

In spade contracts, the defense risks losing its heart trick if the suit is not led, but two rounds of hearts will be a popular start. Declarer ruffs and leads a spade honor (the ten is less likely to be covered than the jack). West must cover on this layout to give declarer any problem; declarer takes the queen with the ace and leads toward the ten-eight, East following low. Does declarer have a straight 50-50 guess now? Not at all: playing the eight "wins" when East started with nine-four-two and West king-queen doubleton, but if that is the position, West will play a third heart to force out the ♠10 and East's nine will come back to life. So the eight can't gain; therefore declarer should play the ten, hoping for the actual lie of the cards.

If the defense did not start by forcing the South hand to ruff, declarer has both his options in the trump suit and could do the wrong thing. If East started with K942, it won't matter whether declarer plays the eight or ten on the second round as East will always be able to force the South hand to secure a second trump winner.

Where West does not cover a spade honor, his nine will simplify the later play in the suit for declarer as North's ♠7 can draw East's last trump even if the defense forces the South hand a second time.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

South will be left to open in fourth seat, and will start with 1♣, 2♣, or 2NT. Where South represents his hand as balanced at his earliest opportunity, the final contract will nearly always be 3NT or 4NT, but if South shows at least five clubs and four diamonds, there is some chance that the partnership will reach 6♦.

For example, after: 1♣-1♠; 2♦-3♦, where 3♦ is constructive, South might find it difficult to stop short of slam, although a careful investigation might do the trick: 3♥-3NT; 4♣-4♦; 4♥-5♦ (no spade control); Pass. The problem with this sort of delicate exploratory approach is that it pinpoints the lead and, more importantly, gets the partnership out of notrump and into a low-scoring strain, a cardinal sin at Pairs. Would it be easier if North responds 1♦ to 1♣? That would highlight a venerable but often-ignored issue: how does opener show a game-forcing raise in diamonds? Well, he can't do it directly unless the partnership treats 2♦ or 3♦ as at least a one-round force, not (yet) popular agreements; in practice, where neither 2♦ nor 3♦ would be forcing, opener must jump-shift into a major and hope to sort things out afterwards. Here, it might proceed: 1♣-1♦; 2♥-2NT; 3♦-3♥; 3NT; Pass, but we can appreciate that the bidding might well be complicated after South opens 1♣.

Where South shows 20-21 balanced, North will get his side to 3NT, but where South upgrades his control-rich hand to 22-24 or 23-24 balanced, very ambitious Norths might look for slam because their control-poor eight-count includes two four-card suits and some attractive intermediates in the majors. That seems overly aggressive, especially at Pairs.

Unless the defense leads and continues spades, N/S will take 12 tricks in notrump, diamonds or clubs as long as declarer is not negatively inspired to finesse against the jack of clubs. Not you, of course. Defenders who cash their spade tricks should score very well, regardless of the contract, and N/S stand a better chance of avoiding this unfortunate development where North declares notrump, better still if North has bid spades en route.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

North's strong notrump opening will usually buy the contract. Where system dictates a 1♣ opening, North will rebid INT (15-17) over 1♦ to the same effect, but where North opens 1♥ (popular in the UK, for example), South will respond INT and North should pass.

With diamonds four-one, declarer in INT will usually need to do some work to find a seventh trick. Say that East leads the ♥10 where North has not bid the suit (he might lead low instead if he starts declarer's known suit), covered all around to add some potential late value to the six-seven of hearts. Declarer starts on diamonds and although he could guard against singleton honor in East by leading the second round towards the North hand, the entry position precludes that line and cashing the second high honor will be the normal way to proceed. East is already under a bit of pressure but reluctantly must part with a heart or a club lest declarer have an easy ride to a second spade trick. When North continues diamonds, East can part with a card in the other rounded suit. West wins and returns a heart ducked to East, who can't continue the suit and does best to switch to clubs, but declarer will have an exit card in clubs and the defense will be forced to either break spades or give declarer a third heart winner or the long diamond. If East instead discards two hearts to keep all his clubs, the defenders can play on clubs, doing their best not to allow declarer to use the ♣J as an entry to knock out West's last diamond winner with the ♠A the entry to cash the long diamond (if West starts with the ♣A it might seem that declarer can unblock the ♣K with profit, but now West switches back to hearts and when declarer wins to lead towards the ♣J, East takes the queen (ten from West) and cashes his heart, squeezing

South out of a spade or the long diamond; East exit with a low spade and declarer has no good answer regardless of his discard on the high heart. If East leads a club to the ten and king and the early play is similar to the developments after a heart lead, declarer might come to a position where everyone is down to three spades and a red card, each of declarer's being a loser with the lead in North; the winning play from this point is not easy to see – declarer must lead the ♠J, and East must cover. Declarer wins the ♠A and exits with a diamond and West must concede a trick to South's ♠10. Without going into great detail, declarer might manage an eighth winner on a club lead by calling for South's jack, forcing West to take the ace or concede a second club trick. Remarkably, that allows declarer to duck the second club and isolate East's long club, and now three rounds of diamonds leave West with no viable continuation: if he cashes his diamond, declarer must discard a spade.

Where South declares INT, West will often lead a spade, allowing declarer to build a second spade trick painlessly, but any other lead opens up the possibility of an eighth trick: you may already have noted that to accomplish this declarer must make the counter-intuitive play of a low club to the jack, mirroring the essential play on a club lead from East!

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Will West be able to record a plus with his excellent hand? The smart money says no, but your experience may be different.

If South opens a weak notrump, West will double, and that might end the auction: South will chalk up +280 for eight tricks or perhaps +380 for nine when West does not cash his ♦A after running

clubs and gets squeezed out of it. Or East, unwilling to concede one of those numbers, might gamble on an unsound escape, hoping not to buy the contract or to find an undoubled contract that costs only 100 points; 2♦ might achieve one of those goals. Or North, either by choice or due to system dictates, might show both majors rather than declare INT redoubled, methods precluding finishing in INT doubled. That will get his side to a comfortable 2♥ and leave West to decide whether he can afford a further bid; the best that E/W can do in this scenario is to sell out and go -110 or -140, but most Wests will double, either hopefully or explicitly for takeout, leading to -200, -500, -470, or -570.

Where South opens 1♥, North will raise to 2♥ or 3♥ over West's double or employ an artificial Mixed Raise (four trumps and about 6-9 HCP). West will certainly double 2♥ or 3♥, but might consider passing if South retreats to 3♥ over (say) a 3♦ Mixed Raise, realizing that East might be broke and that 3♥ might be going down with nothing on for E/W. Although East's takeout to 4♦ might not be doubled, E/W are in -300 territory, nothing worth bragging about.

Should North somehow become declarer in hearts (Pass-INT-Double-2♥ (both majors), etc), East can strike a blow for his side by finding a diamond lead, but where South declares, the defense cannot prevent a ninth trick if declarer plays West for both diamond honors and also king-ten of spades; West cashes clubs and exits in trumps. If declarer simply plays East for the ♦Q, as he might in 2♥, he will lose five tricks, but if he advances the ♠Q early, West must cover, and it costs nothing to play all his trumps but one, West in all likelihood parting with two diamonds and the thirteenth club. That makes it safe to cash the last trump, and West will have to release a spade or the ♦Q; if the ♦Q, dummy parts with a spade and declarer concedes a diamond to build a trick there; if a spade, declarer discards a diamond and finesses against the ♠10 to take four spades and five hearts for the same +140 (or +570, or +530).

"But I had such a good hand" is not what East will want to hear in the post mortem.

### Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

N/S, on a good lie of the cards, can take 11 tricks in spades and will often have an unimpeded auction, but whether or not they contract for game will turn on North's willingness to take a somewhat aggressive action.

If it begins: 1♦-1♥; 1♠, North won't love his diamond void and weak four-card support, but where some will be content with 2♠, others will raise to three, or even four. Where South opens INT (at this vulnerability, 12-14, 13-15, 14-16 and 15-17 are all comprehensible with a hand worth considerably more than its raw point count), North will use Stayman if his 2♥ follow-up to a potential 2♦ reply would be an accurate description, but will have to sign off in 2♥ in other systems. As hearts plays two tricks worse than spades, those N/S pairs might be considering a change of methods in the post mortem.

If South's systemic opening is 1♣, West might overcall 1♦, and over a negative double by North, East will redouble, cue-bid, or jump to 2NT to show a four-trump limit raise. Where North bids 1♥ or uses a transfer (via double) to show hearts, East might bid a natural 2NT. Too much E/W bidding might well push N/S into game when South bids voluntarily at the three-level, but it's also possible that N/S will sell out to 3♦, doubled or not. Obviously N/S +800 will be wonderful, but +300 might be fine too if the N/S partials outnumber the games.

We can see that declarer needs only one finesse in spades on this layout to make the maximum, and the defense might resolve that issue by leading a trump on the go. With clubs three-three, declarer can negotiate three diamond ruffs if he needs them, and later lead towards the ♥K. The most



challenging defense is ♥A, heart, East ducking the first round of clubs but winning the second to play a third heart, West discarding his remaining club as South ruffs with an honor. Declarer can still negotiate 11 tricks, but will have to take at least one good view from that point in the play.

N/S will score very well for +650, and +620 should be quite good too, but +200 and +170, which will not be uncommon results, figure to be below average

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

If North does not come in over 1♠, East will respond INT. Over West's 2♣, East will have an interesting rebid problem: a case could be made for 2♦, 2♥ and 2♠, each with a different upside. Least risky is 2♠, which is sure to secure at least a seven-card trump fit. As holding spade contracts to eight tricks requires the defenders leading two rounds of trumps, E/W +140 will be very good, +110 respectable. If instead East tries 2♦ over 2♣ on the strength of his suit quality, and plays there, the defense should prevail: E/W -50 or -100. If instead East bids 2♥ over 2♣ (30-point tricks vs 20 in diamonds) with an upside in partnerships whose 2♥ indicates five hearts and two spades (the Bart Convention), the eight-card fit will come to light, but West, with an improved hand, might move towards game. 3♥ should prove too high, with many variations possible in the play: E/W +110 or -50, or perhaps -100 (in 4♥).

The North hand would not be the prototype for a three-level weak jump overcall with neither side vulnerable in anyone's textbook, but with six-four distribution and a good playing hand, active Pairs players will not wait for the perfect combination. If it does start 1♠-3♣, East lacks the strength for a three-level negative double, but those who have that tool available will often use it because

they can handle any suit bid by West and because their club shortness suggests that West might not be able to reopen 3♣ comfortably or compete effectively if South were to raise. South has both good defense and three or four good cards for declaring, so rather than pass, might redouble to ask for some cooperation or raise to 4♣, hoping his opponents will misjudge. Indeed, if South redoubles, North might double an E/W contract at the three level or higher.

N/S's maximum in clubs is eight tricks, and if they bid higher and West can pass a negative double or double for penalty, he will often do so, scoring very well for +300 but not so well for +100 unless there are a significant number of E/W pairs going minus.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Some will pass the North hand, but many more will open 1♠ or perhaps a weak notrump to strike the first blow at favorable vulnerability.

East will double 1♠ and South will raise to 2♠ or 3♠ (either directly or via an artificial mixed raise). East is strong enough to double again in all these scenarios, but with only three hearts he might prefer to introduce his main suit, especially in partnerships where double-the-suit suggests a flexible hand rather than a powerful one-suiter. In theory, E/W's maximum on offense is nine tricks in clubs, N/S's eight tricks in spades, so judging the right level to sell out will usually be critical on this deal. Although E/W +100 for 3♣ doubled down one isn't adequate compensation for +110 in clubs, it's the best they can do ... unless North misguesses the ♠Q for -300 or the defenders allow E/W to make 4♣ for +130 (for example, on two rounds of spades, declarer draws trumps and leads towards the ♦J to build an entry to

lead towards the ♥K after establishing a diamond winner for a heart discard from dummy).

Where North opens INT, East's double might well end the auction, and if declarer guesses everything wrong he might take only three tricks, a true outlier on a deal that will usually produce small plus and minus scores to one side or the other. If N/S can wriggle into spades, West might take his chances by passing an extra-value takeout double and we might see some +470s for N/S.

Where North passes, East will open a natural or artificial 1♣. West will usually pass unless forced to bid, and North will reopen with 1♠, which South will probably raise to only two over East's takeout double. N/S might well sell out to 3♣ at these tables. Where West responds with a negative 1♦ to a strong 1♣, South might raise North's 1♠ overall to three after East doubles. We might see 3♣ doubled -100 at some of these tables.

Any E/W minus will be quite awful, but perhaps finding a winning defense against 4♣ won't be so obvious to N/S; ♠A, ♥10, ducked to the king will do it – North needs to be careful not to play the ♥A or the suit will be frozen for the defense.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Should East open his light major-suit five-five, vulnerable, or should he bid later, hoping to show both his suits wholesale without overstating his high-card strength? There is no correct approach with this type of hand, but in real life, there will be more bidders than passers. West's choice of spade raise will be based on factors such as minimum expected spade length, maximum

expected strength (as in strong-club systems), methods (such as partnership parameters for a Mixed Raise, or a Limit Raise that includes shortness, or a "weak" Splinter Raise, or a game raise), tactics (shutting out potentially profitable competition), style, and judgment. North has a fair number of points but they're junky points that might not translate into many tricks on offense, and it's not clear whether North will double (or overcall in clubs) over 2♠, let alone three, or an artificial Mixed Raise or a 3♣ or 4♣ Splinter Raise whether that double would be takeout of spades or show clubs.

If West offers a limit raise, East with only six Losing Trick Count losers, will bid game and make it, losing only two trumps and a club with the ♥K onside. N/S's maximum is only eight tricks, so if they get busy in the auction and concede penalties of 200 or 500 they'll need help from the E/W field or lose to all the pairs going -170 against spade partials. Saving at 5♣ will prove a very bad idea unless the defenders don't find their diamond ruff or East lays down the ♥A after ruffing the third diamond; West, with nothing to contribute in either major, really has no suit-preference message to send and East might not read the ♦7 (the middle card remaining) correctly but cashing the ♥A without clear indication is too big a play.

If East passes, North might well be left to open INT or 1♣. If East can show both majors (2♣ and 2♦ are common mediums for this message, but there are many others on the market), West will compete in spades, but perhaps not to the four level. In between, South will bid 2NT or 3NT or 3♣ (or an artificial 2♥/2♠ to raise clubs), depending on North's opening bid and the methods in place. It's conceivable that N/S will buy the contract in 2NT and quite likely in 3NT if South raises that high, and if East has nothing to go on, he might lead a heart, allowing North to take eight tricks for a super score. A spade lead does a trick better for the defense, and no one will divine to lead a diamond for West to switch to the ♥10 (well, not unless West has made a lead-directing bid in diamonds).

There will be venues where E/W +620 will be a

near-universal result simply because of the local methods and general approach to this type of combination, but across the field we can expect quite a variety of contracts and results.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

<p>♠ K Q 9 ♥ K Q 10 9 7 5 ♦ 10 6 ♣ 6 3</p>	<p>♠ A 10 6 4 3 2 ♥ 8 4 2 ♦ A 8 ♣ A 7</p>	<p>♠ 7 5 ♥ 6 3 ♦ Q 9 2 ♣ Q J 10 9 8 5</p>
<p>♠ J 8 ♥ A J ♦ K J 7 5 4 3 ♣ K 4 2</p>		

After 1♦-Pass-1♥, East will usually settle for 1♠. Although a free 2♦ rebid by South is nothing of beauty with a balanced minimum and very weak interior spot cards, there is no security in passing either, and many Souths will risk further action. North will choose from among 3♥, 2NT and 2♥, depending primarily on whether South has rebid 2♦ or passed, and if South considers his hearts more important than his otherwise mediocre hand, he will push forward.

With the ♣A outside and an otherwise good lie for declarer, 3NT can't be beaten, but 4♥ requires an accurate guess in diamonds. As many N/S pairs will not be in game and some of the game bidders will fail, +600 will be a fine score and +620 better still. As for the partials, +170 might not be too bad if there are enough +150s or -100s.

If a hungry West dares to throw in a weak jump overcall of 3♣ he may regret his enterprise when North stretches to bid 3♥ and South, forced to keep bidding, tries 3NT, which North will pass. If West leads a club and East continues clubs, declarer can come to 10 tricks and a top by leaving hearts alone to lead the ♠8 to the king. If East ducks, declarer leads a diamond and East can't prevent declarer from taking a diamond and a second spade. Declarer can't afford to start spades by leading the jack as East can duck that with profit. Try it yourself.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

<p>♠ — ♥ A K Q 8 7 3 ♦ A Q 6 4 ♣ K 9 7</p>	<p>♠ K Q 5 3 ♥ J 9 4 ♦ 9 ♣ Q 8 5 4 2</p>	<p>♠ J 9 6 ♥ 6 ♦ K J 8 7 3 2 ♣ 10 6 3</p>
<p>♠ A 10 8 7 4 2 ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ 10 5 ♣ A J</p>		

N/S might bid uncontested: 1♥-1♠; 2♦-3♥; 4♣-4♥; 5♦-5♠; 6♥/ or: 1♥-1♠; 3♦-3♥; 4♥-4♠; 5♣-5♥; 6♥/ or: 1♥-2♥; 3♦-3♠; 4♣-5♠; 6♥ / or: 1♥-2♥; 3♣\*-4♣; 4♦-4♥; 6♥/. On all these auctions North will have reason to believe South does not have the ♦K, and so might not drive to slam.

If East gets busy in the auction, trading on the vulnerability -- particularly over a strong club -- he might convince his opponents to stop short of slam, fearing handling charges in diamonds. Alternatively, though, a diamond bid by East will point declarer to a winning route to 12 tricks, which will be good for N/S whether or not they reach slam.

Against silent opponents, we can envision declarers in hearts taking a relatively early diamond finesse and losing either a second diamond trick or a diamond ruff (declarer can ruff a club in South and throw one diamond on the ♠A).

North can take 12 tricks on a neutral lead if he divines or is tipped to the diamond position: in the course of taking a club ruff and discarding a diamond on the ♠A, declarer ruffs two spades in hand, extracting all of East's cards outside diamonds; then a diamond towards the ten finishes off the helpless East.

Some artificial systems will randomly have South bid hearts before his partner, which limits N/S's potential: West can lead his singleton diamond, after which there are only 11 winners available.

N/S +1430 will be outstanding, and +680 will be very good too as there will be plenty of -100s and +650s.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

N/S have a 500-point save in spades against E/W's 620 in hearts, or at least that's the case if the declarers in hearts get a favorable lead (not two rounds of diamonds, leaving time for the spade finesse to discard a diamond) or take an inspired view in clubs to neutralize North's jack.

In real life, the bidding might not reach the four level. If East overcalls 1♦ with INT, West might settle for a partial in hearts, with East either taking a simple transfer or passing a natural 2♥ correction. N/S might find a way into the auction if E/W threaten to quit at 2♥ (takeout double by North, or a natural 2♠ by South), but that will hardly be routine. More Easts will double 1♦, however, and South would do well to bid spades while the auction is still low. At these tables, West will pick a number of hearts and North a number of spades, and although East has plenty of points, he has lots of losers, and might not go past 3♥ if West hasn't shown much. It's possible that N/S will steal the hand at 3♠, but that won't happen very often: E/W will probably reach 4♥ more often than they stop at 2♥ or 3♥.

If the defense cashes two diamonds – much more likely with South on lead – declarer can still come to 10 tricks either by leading the ♣10 on the first or second round of the suit to pin South's doubleton nine, or by taking the spade finesse (necessary because trumps are three-one) and eliminating trumps, spades and diamonds before leading a club to the queen, a play that would hold his club losers to one even if North had started with ace-jack-nine. North would take the ♣Q with the ace and either concede a ruff and discard or lead a club from the jack into declarer's split tenace.

It's not clear whether N/S will lead a diamond or a spade against a heart contract at any level, or whether N/S will bid 4♠ if E/W do reach game, but 4♠ doubled -500 doesn't rate to be a good score for N/S as E/W would need to both reach 4♥ and make it, a strong parlay.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

After West overcalls 1♥ with 2♦, North will wonder whether he should raise hearts or try for a significant penalty on defense, which most often will involve passing 2♦ and waiting for South to reopen with a takeout double. In general, it pays to exhaust your own potential before trying for a penalty, especially at low levels against non-vulnerable opponents, and with quite a good hand for hearts, it's likely that 2♥ will be the popular choice. South has a good offensive hand, but shouldn't try for game with so little in high cards and weak trumps.

West, with a near-minimum two-level overcall, a balanced hand, and a terrible heart holding, really should sell out to 2♥, but there is a school that considers selling out to an apparently comfortable two of a major non-vulnerable to be a cardinal sin, and its members might risk another bid, probably double. Bingo! That locates a playable spade fit and will push N/S to 3♥, after which East will have to decide whether to pass, double, or forge on to 3♠, perhaps undoing any good work West might have done by protecting against 2♥. Although it's sound strategy to compete vigorously to push your opponents to the three level and dare them to get home from there, that approach isn't always the winner. Here, for example, 3♥ will nearly always make while 3♠, doubled or not, will usually produce eight tricks after a series of ruffs and over-ruffs.

If North passes the 2♦ overcall, East will consider 2♣ but will probably pass, and if South is willing to cater to partner's trap pass he will ignore his lack of spade support and minimum point count to double and North will get his wish. 2♦ doubled or not, is likely to finish one down as North figures to get endplayed in trumps on several different variations in the play. But East might not sit for the double, escaping to 2♣ or perhaps redoubling for rescue. It's possible that N/S will misjudge in this scenario by doubling 2♣ unsuccessfully or by over-reaching to 4♥.

Any N/S minus will be awful, and the popular +140 should score well as there are many more ways for N/S to do worse (+50 or +100 vs 2♦ or only +110 in 2♥) than better (+300 versus 3♣ doubled on a repeated club leads without blocking the suit).

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

♠ A Q 5 4 ♥ K Q 2 ♦ J 8 ♣ 10 8 7 6  ♠ K J 10 ♥ 10 8 6 5 ♦ A K 3 ♣ A 9 3	♠ 8 3 ♥ A J 4 3 ♦ 9 4 2 ♣ Q J 4 2  ♠ 9 7 6 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ Q 10 7 6 5 ♣ K 5
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West's 14-16 or 15-17 INT might well end the auction as East's empty eight-count isn't worth a move that might easily jeopardize a likely plus in search of at best a 25-point game.

If East prefers an aggressive approach his Stayman inquiry will locate the heart fit, but while that would improve East's hand significantly, he might give some thought to taking advantage of this good news by trying to do a trick better in a heart partial than he might have done by passing INT. If East raises to 3♥, West should pass.

Where West's system opening in a weak notrump framework is 1♣, he will raise a 1♥ response to 2♥ and East might try for game if that gentle raise could be made with a balanced 17-count, but most will pass 2♥ in that scenario. South, who will appreciate that North has some cards, might protect with a double on the strength of

his length in the unbid suits, and might achieve a fine result if E/W sell out to 2♠, which will go only one down. E/W might go on to 3♥, of course, and might well make that, but their best move would be to double 2♠ for +200 and a superb score. Where West opens 1♥, some Norths will double despite the flaw in diamonds and sub-minimum strength, and South might well compete to 2♣ over 2♥. The Norths who pass 1♥ might reopen 2♥ with 2♠ or a takeout double, and again the issue will be whether E/W sell out quietly, double for penalty, or take the push to 3♥.

There will be some variations in the play in hearts and notrump, depending on the opening lead and declarer's approach to the heart and club suits. If declarer misgusses absolutely everything he might lose two spades, two hearts (playing South for honor-doubleton by leading the ten, king, ace, then a low card from East), a diamond (wildly unlikely as South can't get in to cash a third-round winner before declarer builds a spade trick for a discard) and a club, but in practice declarer will probably get the hearts right by leading low toward the ace-jack, after which nothing bad can really happen, even if the defense has started diamonds ... unless South is somehow permitted to win a club trick in time to cash a diamond winner.

Against notrump contracts, North will lead a spade or a club, depending on the level of the contract and his personal experience with aggressive versus passive defense. On a spade lead, declarer will win and lead a low heart. North will do best to split his honors to retain an exit card in the suit, but even if he doesn't, declarer is unlikely to cash ace-king of diamonds before establishing his heart tricks, so North should be able to get off play in that suit. Now declarer will have to read the distribution well to come to nine tricks after North parts with a club on the fourth heart: the winning line is to cash the other high diamond and exit in spades, and to follow low from dummy when North exits in clubs after taking his three spade winners. On an initial club lead, declarer should play low from dummy to give his ♣9 some added value and should manage nine tricks from there with normal play in hearts.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

N/S have 11 easy tricks in spades or diamonds after E/W cash two club tricks, probably 12 if they don't (even with the ♥K well-placed, declarer must take the finesse in a scenario that will not be risk-free).

West will open 1♣, a natural limited 2♣, or a somewhat cavalier 3♣. While some Norths will deem it acceptable to overcall 1♣ with 1♠ or a weak 2♠, most will pass. Though East has a textbook pass, many players these days will consider 1♥ routine, and others will rely on a weak jump response as their systemic solution, hoping the six-four shape will make up for the poor quality of the long suit.

Where East passes 1♣, South will double, and bid strongly later, whether North is permitted to respond 1♠, volunteers 2♠ over West's 2♣, or passes over 2♣. With nothing resembling a club stopper or control, N/S should finish in 4♠ whether South cue-bids in clubs or simply raises spades.

Where East responds 1♥, South is strong enough to double though he lacks the expected four-card support for one of the two unbid suits. North has a big fit and despite his lack of high cards should jump in spades if West passes and also if West rebids 2♣ (perhaps a somewhat arguable move). After 1♣-Pass-2♥, South might not be as keen to double, and even if he does, he won't have an easy continuation if North makes a minimum response in spades; alternatives (admittedly unsatisfactory ones) to double are a heavy 3♦ and a hopeful 2NT. At these tables, a few N/S pairs might not find their par contract.

Where West opens 2♣ or 3♣, South will double, and should survive even if North doesn't show

some early signs of life, but after the rare 3♣-Pass-Pass-double; Pass-3♣-Pass, we can imagine South guessing to pass.

Board 33. Love All. Dealer North.

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

The South hand looks a lot like West's on Board 32, and here too its holder might open 1♣, a natural limited 2♣, or 3♣ (much more attractive non-vulnerable after partner has passed).

West will overcall 1♣ with 1♠ and most will also bid their long suit over a 2♣ or 3♣ opening although there will be a significant number of doublers. North will usually compete with a negative double over a 1♠ overcall, and West might double South's 2♣ rebid for takeout, although East's silence and North's bid offer good reasons not to risk a second bid. In that scenario, North might raise to 3♣ or redouble, but most will pass. East has a good hand in context and will choose from among 2♦, 2♥, and 2♠, with 2♥ probably the least attractive after the negative double. East's bid will generally end the auction, though North might change his mind and compete to 3♣ over 2♠ or perhaps double 2♥ or 2♦.

Where South opens 2♣, North's further participation in the bidding will depend to a large extent on whether South guarantees six cards in his suit. A 2♠ overcall will end the auction unless North boosts to 3♣, and while 3♣ might buy the contract, it's far more likely that West will double and East will not be sufficiently inspired to pass the double, the last legitimate chance for an E/W plus (300 with sensible defense, which involves knocking out dummy's ♦A before declarer can establish a discard on the ♥K); 3♦ and 3♠ will probably go only one down but 3♥ is likely to fare at least a trick worse.

3♣ will be a fairly popular third-seat choice, and at

these tables E/W will be hard pressed to achieve a plus score: apart from East leaving in a takeout double, it's difficult to project anything positive happening for the traveling pairs. At Pairs, the only true indicator of the quality of any marginal action is its effectiveness, and on this occasion, 1♣ figures to be far less effective than its elder cousins in the same strain.

To hold spade contracts to eight tricks, the defense must lead three rounds of clubs to build a trump winner (declarer has nothing useful to discard on the third club to prevent this), but some Souths will switch to their singleton heart after one or two rounds of clubs; now declarer can win the ace, draw trumps, and finish with five spades and two tricks in each red suit. N/S will score horribly for -140 although -110 would have been no great shakes either.

Board 34. N/S Vul. Dealer East

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

At favorable vulnerability, many will open the East hand as dealer, starting with 1♣, 1♦ or 1NT according to system dictates.

Where South has a system bid to show spades and diamonds he will probably look no further, but at many tables, South's initial action will be a 1♠ overcall of East's minor-suit opening. West will support East's suit or perhaps show support for both minors in some strong-club systems. While North doesn't have much and his clubs may have lost some of their modest luster thanks to East's opening bid in the suit, four-card support and a void are enough to merit some sort of spade raise. South will bid game if North has not yet done so, and it's unlikely that E/W will compete to the five level, though some will double 4♠ "on power", such as it is.

At unfavorable vulnerability it won't be clear to North how high to go facing a two-suited action, and at the same time, South won't know how far to go after a minimum response to his forcing bid. This is one of the reasons that some partnerships reserve two-suited bids for fairly weak or very strong hands. If South has to come in over a weak notrump, however, a simple overcall will not be a viable action: he'll have to choose between a double (fine on strength) and perhaps a two-suited bid (with a stronger hand than partner will expect).

With spades two-two and two (of East's) diamond honors ruffing out in three rounds, E/W can't do anything to prevent N/S from taking 11 tricks in spades (declarer uses clubs for transportation to ruff diamonds and eventually can lead towards the ♥K and use diamond equals to knock out West's ♦A).

There will be some N/S +990s, +790s, a few +800s and +150s, but +200, +170, +620 and +650 will be much more common. It will take some doing for N/S to go minus, but there will be a few of those too.

Board 35. E/W Vul. Dealer South

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

There are lots of possibilities on this one, though E/W are entitled to a substantial plus, either by bidding and making 5♦ or 3NT or doubling a high-level N/S effort.

The South hand, easy to justify as a straightforward pass, will look more like a weak 2♠, Multi 2♦, or 3♣ opening to those who believe in that sort of thing. The spade guys will catch a raise to 4♠ from a hopeful North, leaving East

to decide whether he can afford to double for takeout at this level with such a light hand. If East passes, West might think of doubling for penalty, but he really doesn't have the material for it. If East doubles 4♠ for takeout, West will have a delicate decision between taking the money in non-vulnerable undertricks and trying for the vulnerable game bonus with the additional possibility of reaching a good slam. All this E/W angst can be attributed to South opening the bidding with non-traditional values, which is not to say you have to like that sort of pre-empt.

If South passes, West will open 1♦ and North will overcall 1♥. With all those spades out there East would like to take up some bidding space, but might not be keen to make a splinter bid in spades (where available) for fear of letting the dormant South double to show spade length and perhaps locate a good fit for a sacrifice. East is likely to start with a 2♥ cue bid, in most partnerships showing a diamond fit and a good hand. Although it's possible that E/W might stop in a diamond partial after this type of start, most will fetch up in 5♦ or 3NT.

5♦ won't present any problems but 3NT involves a bit more play as declarer needs a ninth trick; however, as North has all the cards, it's unlikely that declarer will fail. The main chance for the defense is that East will declare and put up dummy's king on a spade lead, catering specifically to North holding queen-third. On a heart lead, North can't play two rounds of the suit on this layout. If he puts in the queen, reserving his options, his only safe exit when he gains the lead with the ♦A is a club, but when declarer wins the queen and runs diamonds, North won't be able to stand the pressure; if he blanks the ♠A, declarer can get home without building a spade trick – he can just play three more rounds of clubs and wait for North to give him a second heart trick.

E/W +600 will be the most common result, and there will be some pairs missing game. Although there will be some N/S pairs buying undoubled major-suit contracts, there will be more -500s in 4♠ doubled; all of those N/S pairs should score well.

Board 36. Game All. Dealer West.

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

These days, there seems to be a trend towards upgrading balanced hands with five- or six-card suits, and we can see why some will consider this West hand appropriate for 1♦, intending a jump rebid in notrump to represent a balanced 18-19 points: the decent six-card suit is a nice plus feature and the black suit holdings might be worth more than their raw point count if West is declarer, but against that the “unsupported” heart holding might be worthless while any hand with four queens and a jack screams to be downgraded. Some will open 1♦ and plan to rebid 3♦, but this hand is miles from the prototype for that plan: the suit is poor for a jump rebid and all those slow honors outside diamonds might not take a trick. Perhaps the most accurate approach is to open 1NT (15-17), and that will be a popular strategy when West is within the partnership's high-card range.

If North had a cheap three-suited action available, he might use it, but that would be a rare possibility and where North passes East will transfer to spades. South's hearts are not very strong and he has excellent defense against spades, so he might not double East's 2♥ transfer where the double would show hearts. If West bids 2♠ rather than something stronger, North might come in with a takeout double despite the danger that East might have a strong enough hand to look for a vulnerable penalty. South, expecting no less than North has this time, will probably jump to game. Where South has doubled 2♥, North might not bid game: much will depend on partnership style for that double, as some would double with as little as QJ1098 and out, while others would require at least one top honor and greater length and strength. If North can make a game try over



West's 2♠ – say with an artificial 2NT – he will, but otherwise he'll have to choose between 3♥ and 4♥ and this 22-point game might be missed.

Where West opens 1♦, North and East rate to pass, and whether South protects with a double or 1♥, N/S will reach game more often than not. Some Easts, for whom passing a one-bid is blasphemy, will respond 1♠, and a thin 2♥ overcall will not be every South's cup of tea. If South passes and West rebids 2NT, that might end the auction, although South might go for the jugular with a penalty double to suggest a spade lead; East might not sit for that, however, and E/W will fetch

up in 3♦ doubled or 3♠ doubled, down a lot (800 or 1100). If 2NT slips past everyone, declarer will be held to three or four tricks, but might score well if there are enough bigger penalties or N/S games.

If West rebids 3♦ instead, it would not be outrageous for South to reopen with a double, which North will happily pass.

It would be lovely to conclude the session with a joyous deal, but this is not one of those – it's more a case of bad things happening to good people. We'll see you tomorrow with a fresh set of boards laden with new opportunities.



**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.

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