

ACBL-wide International Fund #3 • Friday evening • 7/23/10

Bd: 1 ♠ A Q 5
 Dlr: North ♥ A J 10 7 3
 Vul: None ♦ 6 4
 ♣ A Q 8

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

♠ K J 9 8 2
 ♥ K Q
 ♦ Q J 9
 ♣ 7 6 3

Some Norths will open 1NT to describe their strength and shape in one bid; others would never consider suppressing a five-card major. After 1♥-1♠, North will have an awkward rebid and may try 2♣. If South continues with 2NT, North can proceed with 3♠ (forcing), and if South fears that he faces a singleton diamond, he may bid game in spades. If instead North opens 1NT, South may transfer to spades and bid 3NT next. North is sure to convert to 4♠. North-Souths who get to 3NT — which wouldn't

seem so tough with 29 HCP and adequate stoppers — will collect an easy +460. Pairs at 4♠ may do less well, especially if South is declarer and West leads a club. If East leads a heart, North will win, draw trumps and expect to run the hearts. When East discards on the second heart, North must judge not to finesse in clubs to avoid +420 and no matchpoints.

Bd: 2 ♠ Q 8 6 5 3
 Dlr: East ♥ J 10 7
 Vul: N-S ♦ A 6
 ♣ Q 6 2

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

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

We wouldn't consider preempting as South, not from fear of being -1100, but because South's hand would make a good dummy for a heart or club contract. (South might play at 3♦ when cold for 4♥.) But to each his own style. If South opens 3♦, he may succeed in shutting out West and will be +110 even against best defense. A few Wests will stretch to double 3♦. East-West will survive if East guesses to respond 3♠ — a makable contract despite the 5-0 trump break — but if he responds 3♥, perhaps to leave room for West to bid 3♠, East-West

may be -100. Many Wests will get to open 1NT. After two passes, South may not be able to try 2♦ since that bid would be conventional, but he might jump to 3♦ and buy the contract. East-West will need to find their spade fit and register +140 for a good matchpoint result.

Bd: 3 ♠ 8
 Dlr: South ♥ Q 8 6 2
 Vul: E-W ♦ J 7 5 2
 ♣ K 10 5 2

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

♠ K J 9 5 3 2
 ♥ J 9 7
 ♦ Q 9
 ♣ 9 7

If West is left to open 1♦, East will respond 1♠, and West can jump to 3♣. East will rebid 3♠ or take a 3♦ preference, and West will have a shot at 3NT. In this day of uninhibited obstructive bidding, however, some Souths will start with a cheesy weak 2♠. West will double, and East will pass for penalty. East-West will collect +300 or +500 depending on how the play develops. For instance, if West finds an early club shift, East may get rid of a heart on a fourth round of clubs, preventing declarer

from scoring a heart trick. South may be pleased even if he is -500, since it seems East-West should be able to score up a vulnerable 3NT with their 27 HCP. Even if North leads a club instead of a heart, West will need precise play to win nine tricks. East-West will get a top for +600.

Bd: 4 ♠ A K J 9 3
 Dlr: West ♥ Q 7 4 3
 Vul: Both ♦ K 3
 ♣ Q 10

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

♠ 10
 ♥ A K 5 2
 ♦ 7 5 4
 ♣ J 9 7 6 4

After North-South start with 1♠-1NT, 2♥, South has a tough decision: North's non-jump change of suit might conceal a hand worth 18 points, and 4♥ could be on; but North could have a 12-point hand, and 3♥ might be too high. It's a problem area for "Standard" bidding. South's good trumps might induce him to raise, but whether North will go to game is unclear: he has weak trumps, probable wasted spade strength and minor-suit losers. As the cards lie, North may fail at 3♥. East will lead the ♥10, and

North can win nine tricks only if he takes an early spade finesse to discard two diamonds from dummy — a tall order. If instead North tries to set up the clubs, he'll take eight tricks at most, and some Norths will mismanage the play and go down a lot. North-South may score a goodly number of matchpoints for -100.

Bd: 5 ♠ Q 3
 Dlr: North ♥ A Q 10 9 6
 Vul: N-S ♦ 10 8
 ♣ K 9 7 5

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

♠ 10 9
 ♥ K J 3
 ♦ A K Q J 9 6 2
 ♣ 6

Some Norths will be willing to open 1♥. (Most Norths would open on ♠32 ♥AQ1096 ♦108 ♣KQ97.) If East overcalls 1♠, South can respond 2♦ (or jump to 3♦ if that bid would show strength). West will support in spades, and after North passes, East may leap to 4♠ as a two-way action. At tables where North passes as dealer, we'd expect Pass-1♠-2♦, 2♠-3♥ ... and East will bid 4♠ sooner or later. No matter how the auction develops, most North-Souths will push to 5♥ over East-West's 4♠.

North-South will be disappointed to go down one — until it comes to light that 4♠ by East-West is cold. (If South reasonably led his singleton club against 4♠, East could make an overtrick.) North-South may score average for -100. One or two pairs will be -650 against 5♠ doubled for a icy zero.

Bd: 6 ♠ Q J 7 6 2
 Dlr: East ♥ Q 7 3
 Vul: E-W ♦ A 10 5
 ♣ Q 2

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

♠ A 10 9
 ♥ J
 ♦ 9 7 2
 ♣ A K 8 6 4 3

East will open 1♥, South will overcall 2♣ and many Wests will offer a featherweight raise to 2♥. Then North will usually join in with 2♠, South can raise and North-South will reach their spade game. If East leads a high heart, his winning defense is to continue with a second high heart, forcing dummy to ruff and assuring a defensive trump trick. If East shifts at the second trick (or if he happens to lead the ♦Q at the first trick), North can pick up the trumps with a finesse, run the clubs for 12 tricks.

North-South should score above average for +450, but at a few tables North will bid notrump at some stage, and North-South will land at 3NT. The same 11 tricks are unstoppable, and North-South will be +460, losing only to pairs who get imperfect defense against 4♠ and register +480.

Bd: 7 ♠ K 9 6 2
 Dlr: South ♥ A
 Vul: Both ♦ Q J 10 7
 ♣ K J 10 9

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

♠ 10 8
 ♥ Q 10 9 8 6 5 3
 ♦ K
 ♣ 6 5 3

This board is difficult to predict — the players have judgment calls — but it may be traumatic for some Easts. If South wants a more typical hand to preempt and passes as dealer, North will open 1♦. East can overcall 1♠, and South will pass unless he wants to indulge in an atypical "one-suit negative double." After two passes some Norths will see no future in acting again; others may try 2♣. Then East may bid 2♦, which West should treat as natural, and South may compete with 2♥, passed out.

If West leads the ♠J, East can take the ♠AQ, cash his side aces and lead a third spade, and the defenders get two trump tricks for down one. A score of +100 may be much better than East-West will do if South opens 3♥. After two passes, East will have a major headache. If he balances with 3♠, North can double for +500 and a top for North-South.

Bd: 8 ♠ 3 2
 Dlr: West ♥ K J 10 9 8 6 4
 Vul: None ♦ J 4
 ♣ 10 5

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

♠ K Q 4
 ♥ 5 2
 ♦ K 10 9
 ♣ K Q J 6 4

West will often open 1NT, and North may shut out everybody with a 3♥ preempt. East will lead the ♠10 — king, ace — and North will win the spade return and lead a trump from dummy. (He would like to wait to play the trumps until he learns more about the deal but can't profitably do so.) When West follows with the seven, declarer must guess. To play the jack looks best, gaining when West has A-Q-7, so perhaps North might guess right and end up losing one trick in each suit. North-South should score well in the matchpoint column

for +140, but at a few tables, West will open 1♦, and after North's leap to 3♥ is followed by two passes, West may feel impelled to reopen with a double. When East takes out to 3♠, South can judge well to double for penalty, and North-South can get six tricks for +300 and a top.

Bd: 9 ♠ J 10 5
 Dlr: North ♥ 9 2
 Vul: E-W ♦ K Q 10
 ♣ Q 10 6 5 3
 ♠ A K 4 3 ♠ Q 7 2
 ♥ 8 3 ♥ K 7 6 4
 ♦ 8 6 5 4 2 ♦ A 9 3
 ♣ A 9 ♣ K J 8
 ♠ 9 8 6
 ♥ A Q J 10 5
 ♦ J 7
 ♣ 7 4 2

When East opens 1♣, a few Souths will try 1♥. West can make a negative double and East will bid 1NT. If instead South doesn't overcall, West responds 1♠ and East rebids 1NT. In either case, West has a close decision whether to bid 2NT or 3NT. If South leads the ♥Q against 3NT, East scores his king and has nine tricks when spades break and a club finesse wins. But say South leads a safe ♠9. East can win in dummy and lead a diamond, ducking North's king. If North leads the ♥9 and another

heart, South wins, but if he cashes the ♥A, he gives up the ninth trick. If instead South exits safely, East can succeed by setting up the diamonds. If after the ♥9 wins, North continues diamonds, East can win, cash his black-suit tricks and endplay South with a heart. East-West may get an 80% board for +600; some pairs won't reach game.

Bd: 10 ♠ Q 9 5
 Dlr: East ♥ 9 6
 Vul: Both ♦ K Q J 4 3
 ♣ Q 9 8
 ♠ 8 6 ♠ K 10 7 4
 ♥ J 10 ♥ A K 5 3 2
 ♦ A 8 6 2 ♦ 10 5
 ♣ A 10 7 6 2 ♣ 5 4
 ♠ A J 3 2
 ♥ Q 8 7 4
 ♦ 9 7
 ♣ K J 3

Silence should reign supreme at most tables. Nobody has the makings of a normal opening bid. Of course, normality is in disfavor among many players who open light, distributional hands — or even light hands without much distribution. A few Easts will start with 1♥ or perhaps 2♦ (Flannery). Then West will take a minus playing at 1NT or 2♥. A few Souths will open 1♣ despite the skimpy high-card strength because they have length in both majors. When North responds 1♦, East will act; if he

doubles, West will have to respond 1NT and will likely go down there. If East overcalls 1♥ and two passes follow, North might try 2♦, which he can make for +90. Any East-West with a plus score will win almost all the matchpoints.

Bd: 11 ♠ A 10 8
 Dlr: South ♥ A Q 3 2
 Vul: None ♦ A J 7 5
 ♣ Q J
 ♠ J 9 7 5 ♠ 4
 ♥ K 9 7 4 ♥ J 8 6
 ♦ Q 8 3 ♦ K 9 2
 ♣ 5 4 ♣ K 10 9 8 3 2
 ♠ K Q 6 3 2
 ♥ 10 5
 ♦ 10 6 4
 ♣ A 7 6

Some Norths will open 1♦ because a 1NT opening would show fewer values. East may preempt with 3♣, but South, a passed hand, can try 3♠, and North will raise. If East declines to act, South responds 1♠ and North jumps to 2NT. Then some Souths may look for and find a 5-3 spade fit and bid game at spades; other Souths will simply raise to 3NT. A few Norths will open 1NT, and if East stays out, South can transfer to spades and bid 3NT next. North will probably convert to 4♠. If West leads a club against 4♠,

South can make an overtrick for +450 — for instance, by finessing in hearts, ruffing two hearts in his hand and ruffing a club in dummy. Although 3NT might be a winning contract on a different lie of the cards, it may produce only nine tricks, and +400 will be a poor result for North-South.

Bd: 12 ♠ Q J 9 8
 Dlr: West ♥ 9 8 6 5
 Vul: N-S ♦ Q 10 5
 ♣ Q 2
 ♠ A K 10 ♠ 7 5 3
 ♥ K Q 2 ♥ A 10 7 3
 ♦ A K 8 6 ♦ 4
 ♣ K J 10 ♣ 9 8 7 5 4
 ♠ 6 4 2
 ♥ J 4
 ♦ J 9 7 3 2
 ♣ A 6 3

West can open 2♣ and rebid 2NT to show a balanced 23 or 24 points. East will use Stayman and settle into 3NT when West denies a four-card major. North will lead the ♠Q, and West takes the king. If declarer starts the clubs next by leading the king, South can win and return a spade, setting up two spade tricks for North while he has the ♣A as an entry and holding declarer to his contract. But if, for whatever reason, West happens to lead the ♣J or ♣10 at the second trick, North must take his queen or lose it. Since North can't profitably

continue spades, West has time to set up the clubs and make two overtricks for +460. No North will find your lead and mine, the ♦Q (or ♦10) that would always hold West to nine tricks and give North-South most of the matchpoints.

Bd: 13 ♠ A 4
 Dlr: North ♥ Q 3
 Vul: Both ♦ K Q 5 4
 ♣ K J 6 3 2
 ♠ 9 7 2 ♠ Q 8 5
 ♥ K J 9 5 4 2 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ 9 7 ♦ A J 10 3 2
 ♣ 10 5 ♣ Q 7 4
 ♠ K J 10 6 3
 ♥ A 10 8
 ♦ 8 6
 ♣ A 9 8

North's hand is awkward to describe. To open 1♦ and bid 2♣ over a major-suit response would risk landing at a 4-2 diamond fit. Many Norths will open 1NT. If South bids 2♥ (transfer), West may double to suggest a lead. After two passes, South will try 3NT, passed out. If East leads a heart, West takes the king and shifts to the ♦9: king, ace. North wins the next diamond and may take the ♠A and lead to the ♠J. When the ♠K clears the suit, North can come to his ♥Q, go to the ♣A and take two more

spades. He'll lose a club at the end for +630. Some Easts will lead a diamond against 3NT, and North will win and may lose a finesse to the ♣Q next. East shifts to a heart, but North can grab the ace and end with 11 tricks when the spades come in. South could actually make 6NT with best play, but North-South should score well for +660.

Bd: 14 ♠ 8 5 4 2
 Dlr: East ♥ 4
 Vul: None ♦ 10 5 3
 ♣ Q 10 7 6 3
 ♠ Q 10 9 7 ♠ K J 6
 ♥ A 10 ♥ Q J 9 6
 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♦ 9 6
 ♣ K 8 5 ♣ A J 4 2
 ♠ A 3
 ♥ K 8 7 5 3 2
 ♦ A K Q J
 ♣ 9

Many Easts will open 1♣ despite having skimpy defensive values. If South overcalls 1♥, West can make a negative double, and if East rebids 1NT, South will compete with 2♥ or 2♦. After two passes, some Easts will give up, but a few will push on boldly with a 2♠ bid. At tables where East passes as dealer, South will open 1♥, and after two passes, East will have a reopening decision. If he tries 1NT, South will bid 2♥ or 2♦, probably passed out. As it happens, only a double-dummy defense, starting

with a diamond opening lead, can hold South to seven tricks at hearts. At diamonds, South can take seven tricks after a likely trump lead. As in many partscore deals, any pair with a plus score may do well on the recap sheet, but East-West can get a top if they play at 2♠, taking eight or even nine tricks for +110 or +140.

Bd: 15 ♠ 9
 Dlr: South ♥ Q 5 4
 Vul: N-S ♦ Q 9 8 5
 ♣ Q J 5 3 2
 ♠ Q 10 4 ♠ K 7 6 5 3 2
 ♥ J 10 8 3 ♥ K 7 6
 ♦ K J ♦ 3 2
 ♣ 9 8 7 4 ♣ A 6
 ♠ A J 8
 ♥ A 9 2
 ♦ A 10 7 6 4
 ♣ K 10

South will often open 1NT, and after two passes, East will often take advantage of the vulnerability to balance with 2♠ or maybe with a conventional bid such as 2♣, Cappelletti, to show a one-suited hand. After East-West arrive at 2♠, North won't want to sell out and can double or try 2NT (if South would interpret either call as for takeout) or bid 3♣. After that start, many results are possible: North might play at 3♣ for +110; East-West might compete as high as 3♠; North-South might find their diamond

fit where they can make game if North is declarer. (The ♥J opening lead will beat 5♦ by South.) Oddly, North-South can take ten tricks at clubs if South is declarer but one fewer if North declares. North-South's best chance for a top is to double East at 3♠. Unless East guesses everything right, he'll be -300.

Bd: 16 ♠ J 7
 Dlr: West ♥ 8 4
 Vul: E-W ♦ K Q J 9 4
 ♣ 10 8 7 2
 ♠ K 10 4 ♠ Q 8 3 2
 ♥ A 10 6 2 ♥ K 9 3
 ♦ 10 2 ♦ A 6 3
 ♣ K Q J 5 ♣ 9 4 3
 ♠ A 9 6 5
 ♥ Q J 7 5
 ♦ 8 7 5
 ♣ A 6

If West opens 1♣, North should pass (or maybe risk 2♦). A 1♦ overcall should be sound since the bid has limited competitive value and no obstructive value. If North passes, East bids 1♠, and West can raise to 2♠. After two passes, many Souths will pass but some will risk a balancing double. North will respond 3♦ and may play there. At some tables, North will overcall 1♦ strictly as a lead-director. When East responds 1♠, South has many possible actions: a diamond raise, a 2♣ cuebid, or a

conventional double to show hearts plus a diamond fit. In any case, North-South will compete to 3♦, and East-West will sell out again. Norths at 3♦ will be down two against careful defense, but North-South may get a fair result for -100 since Easts at 2♠ can be +110.

Bd: 17 ♠ 10 9 7
 Dir: North ♥ Q 2
 Vul: None ♦ K J 10 8 5 4
 ♣ 6 5

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

♠ A Q 6 5 2
 ♥ 10 8 6 3
 ♦ 9
 ♣ K 3 2

Many Norths will open 2♦. After two passes West will double, East responds 2♥, West will try 2NT and East has just enough to raise. Some Wests may bid 3NT themselves on the assumption — a common assumption in coping with a preempt — that East has a few values. (If North passed as dealer, more East-Wests might stop tentatively at a partial.) If North leads the ♦J, West can win with dummy's queen, pass the ♣J, lead to the ♣Q, cash the ♥AK, and take the ♦A, two more clubs and the ♥J. Then he exits

with a spade, and South must concede a trick to the ♠J at the end for +430 to East-West. A spade opening lead would give away nothing, and West could take only nine tricks. A few East-Wests will land at game at a suit. Since East can take ten tricks at 4♥, East-West should score well for +420.

Bd: 18 ♠ 10 8 5 4 2
 Dir: East ♥ K 5 3
 Vul: N-S ♦ A J
 ♣ 9 4 3

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

♠ K 3
 ♥ Q 4
 ♦ 8 6 5 3
 ♣ A 10 8 6 2

It wouldn't occur to us to open 2♥ as East with nine HCP outside hearts, but the contract may be 2♥ even if East passes. West will open 1♣, East responds 1♥, West bids 1♠ and East may take a shy view and rebid 2♥ to preserve a plus. Indeed, perfect defense will hold him to eight tricks. Even if East did open 2♥, passed out, South would have no reason to get desperate on opening lead (such as by leading the ♠K), and if South leads the ♦8, North can take the ace and shift to a spade, ducked to the king.

South leads another diamond and gets in later with the ♣A to give North a diamond ruff for the fifth defensive trick. East-West may score well for +140, but after 1♣-1♥, 1♠, some Easts will invite with 3♥, and West may blithely try 3NT. If he takes the right view in diamonds, the notrump game is unbeatable!

Bd: 19 ♠ 10 6 5
 Dir: South ♥ 8 7 2
 Vul: E-W ♦ K 8 6
 ♣ 10 8 6 3

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

♠ A 3
 ♥ 10 9 5
 ♦ J 9 3
 ♣ J 9 5 4 2

East-West should negotiate this slam deal. East has at least nine possible winners and adequate defensive values and can open 2♣. If West is willing to issue a positive response of 3♦, East rebids 3♥ and West tries 3♠. Then East can take over with Blackwood and bid slam when West shows an ace. (Many Wests will want a better suit — perhaps two of the top three honors — for a positive 3♦ response and will respond 2♦, waiting. East rebids 2♥, and West tries 3♦, then 3♠ over East's 3♥. East can use

Blackwood again.) When East finds that an ace is missing, he should place the contract at 6♥ since his suit is solid, and East-West will register an easy +1430. A few Easts may risk 6NT, but if North produces a Lightner double to ask for a diamond opening lead, North-South can be +100 for a matchpoint top.

Bd: 20 ♠ J 7
 Dir: West ♥ K Q 10 5 3
 Vul: Both ♦ 10 8 7
 ♣ A K 8

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

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

If the auction starts 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♥ ... West must decide whether to rebid 3♦ freely. A "free bid" should show more than merely a good suit, but the modern style is to rebid a long suit that may offer a vehicle for competing. If West does rebid 3♦, North may try 3♥ since he has a sound overcall, and East-West will brew themselves a pot of trouble if they bid on; they could be -500 at 3♠ doubled or 4♦ doubled. Some North-Souths may sell out to 3♦ or 2♠ for +100 and a poor matchpoint result. Norths who play at 3♥ should make it for +140,

though a complex defense will win five tricks: East leads a high spade and then a low spade for West to ruff, and next comes a club shift. If North draws trumps, he loses three diamonds; if he tries for a diamond ruff in dummy, East gets a club ruff.

Bd: 21 ♠ K 6
 Dir: North ♥ J 6 4
 Vul: N-S ♦ J 6
 ♣ A Q 6 4 3 2

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

♠ J 4 3
 ♥ 7 5
 ♦ A Q 9 7 5
 ♣ 10 9 8

North would be more apt to open if his long suit were a major. If he passes, East will open 1NT. If West risks a Stayman response, North might double as a lead-director. East will bid a major — perhaps his stronger hearts if East-West have no agreement as to which major he should bid first — and after two passes, North won't compete because the vulnerability threatens. If instead West passes 1NT, many Norths won't act because a 2♣ bid would be conventional and a 3♣ bid perilous. At tables where

North opens 1♣, East may double, overcall 1NT or maybe try 1♥. East-West should play at a major-suit partial, but a few pairs may reach game. Easts at hearts can be +170 by playing the spades to best advantage. Easts at 1NT will get a diamond lead and might salvage +150 — but few matchpoints — by putting up dummy's king.

Bd: 22 ♠ Q 9 7 4
 Dir: East ♥ J 6 2
 Vul: E-W ♦ J 9 8
 ♣ J 10 9

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

♠ 10 6 2
 ♥ 7 3
 ♦ 6
 ♣ Q 8 7 5 4 3 2

Here's an easy grand slam. East will open 1♦, and when West responds 1♥, East might raise to 4♥ or jump to 4♣ as a "splinter" bid to show heart support, game-going strength and club shortness. West has enough controls and trick-taking power to take command of the auction, and Blackwood will tell him what he needs to know: when East admits to three aces and two kings, West can comfortably bid seven. If instead West uses a Blackwood variation such as "Key Card," he can discover that East

has four key cards, then learn that East has the ♦K. West should take care to bid the grand slam at notrump. Pairs who lose focus and halt at 7♥ made find themselves scoring well below average.

Bd: 23 ♠ Q 9 2
 Dir: South ♥ A K 9
 Vul: Both ♦ A K 9 8 7
 ♣ K 10

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

♠ 10 8 3
 ♥ 5
 ♦ J 10 5 3 2
 ♣ J 8 5 3

When West opens 1♣, North can double, intending to show 17 or more points by bidding 1NT or 2♦ if South responds in a major suit at the one level. Instead, East is likely to jump to 2♥, preemptive. After two passes (West should rule out a game at hearts), some Norths will try 2NT, passed out. Other Norths will show strength by doubling again. When South takes out to 3♦, North will usually pass, and South should have no trouble taking ten tricks for +130 since the bidding will have marked

West with the ♣A and the ♠AK. Norths at 2NT can do better since no defense stops nine tricks for +150, and one or two Norths will boldly convert South's 3♦ bid to 3NT, hoping for five diamonds, two hearts, a club and another trick from the card gods. Sure enough, enterprise will be rewarded with +600 and a cold top.

Bd: 24 ♠ A 6 2
 Dir: West ♥ A 10 9
 Vul: None ♦ K 7
 ♣ K Q J 8 4

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

♠ J 10 9 8
 ♥ J 7 6
 ♦ Q J 6 4
 ♣ 5 3

North will invariably declare 1NT, but the play will be complex. East will lead a diamond, won by North's king. Then lines of play will diverge, but here's a fanciful scenario: if North returns a diamond, East must take his ace to hold declarer to eight tricks. If instead dummy wins, North can lead the ♠J: queen, ace. He next leads the ♣K. (If he leads another spade, West can win and shift to a heart. North must duck, and East wins and sets up his long diamond while he still has the ♣A.) Say East takes the

♣A and exits with the ♣9. North can win and lead a spade to dummy. West ducks, and North continues with a heart: ten, queen. East can cash the ♦A but must then lead a heart. North takes two hearts and exits with a spade, and West must lead from his ♣107 to the ♣J8! In real life, North may be +120 for about an average result.

Bd: 25 ♠ 6
 Dir: North ♥ K Q 10 5 4 3 2
 Vul: E-W ♦ 10 8 6
 ♣ 7 3

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

♠ K J 10
 ♥ J 8 7 6
 ♦ 2
 ♣ K Q J 8 4

When North opens 3♥, East lacks the values for a 3♠ overcall. South may raise to 4♥, and West may feel constrained to act because he'll think his opponents are trying to steal. Many Wests will try 5♦, and East will do well to pass despite his two aces, giving his partner plenty of room to compete. A few Wests will double 4♥, and East can judge well to bid only 4♠. North-South would be -300 at 5♥ doubled, but South has some defense and will usually sell out. It seems Wests at 5♦ must lose two spades and a club, but on any lead,

West can run the trumps, catching South in a spade-club end-position to make the contract. Against 4♠, South may lead the ♣K, and East should appraise his contract as worth assuring: he can take the ♠A and start the diamonds, losing two trumps and a club for +620 and a top.

Bd: 26 ♠ 7
 Dir: East ♥ A J 8 6
 Vul: Both ♦ K Q J 10 3 2
 ♣ A 7

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

♠ —
 ♥ K Q 10 5 4 2
 ♦ 8 7 6
 ♣ Q 10 5 4

This deal will require delicate competitive judgment. East can open 1♠; he has defense, winners and an easy rebid. If South lets the vulnerability deter him from acting, West will leap to 4♠, but North may try 4NT for takeout (planning to convert 5♣ by South to 5♦ to show the red suits) or bid 5♦. To double might be right but would encourage South to pass unless he had a good reason to bid. East may go to 5♠, but if South acts, North-South may reach 6♦, which can be beaten with a club or a heart lead, or 6♥ by South, which is cold.

If instead the auction starts 1♠-3♥, 4♠ ... North may try 4NT, but South may not be sure whether that bid is meant as Blackwood. We don't expect the par result - 6♠ doubled for +500 to North-South - to be achieved often. We predict, not too confidently, that the most common contract will be 6♥.

Bd: 27 ♠ J 6 2
 Dir: South ♥ K J 10 3
 Vul: None ♦ A 7 5
 ♣ K 6 5

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

♠ K 9 8 3
 ♥ Q
 ♦ Q J 10 4 2
 ♣ A 8 7

If South opens 1♦, some Wests will preempt with 2♥. North-South can punish that indiscretion: North can pass, South can scrape up a re-opening double, North can pass for penalty, and best defense will collect +500 and a top for North-South. At other tables, West will notice that he has a fistful of losers and settle for a 1♥ overcall. (We'd rather pass than preempt with that hand.) Then North will be less sanguine about trying for a penalty and may leap to 3NT. If East leads a heart, North can take 11 tricks

(even if West lets dummy's queen win) by bringing in the diamonds and leading toward the ♠K. If instead East happens to hit on a club lead, perhaps after West has judiciously stayed out of the auction, North can still take ten tricks but only with precise play. North-South may score below average for +430.

Bd: 28 ♠ A K 10 2
 Dir: West ♥ 3 2
 Vul: N-S ♦ 8 5 3
 ♣ K J 6 5

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

♠ Q J 6
 ♥ K Q 7 5
 ♦ A Q 6 2
 ♣ 9 8

North's 11 points comprise 2½ quick tricks; North has a better 11-count than South had on Board 10. If North opens 1♣, East can overcall 1♥, and South will dismiss any thoughts of a penalty at the vulnerability and jump to 3NT. If instead North passes as dealer, as we would, East will open 1♥. South can't act, but after West passes, North can reopen with a double, and even if South settles for an invitational jump to 2NT, North can raise since his hand could hardly be better. Against any defense, South

can come to nine tricks. If West leads the ♦J, South can win with the queen and reach dummy enough times to lead toward his heart honors. He will also lead to the ♣J at some point to get four spades, one club, two hearts and two diamonds. North-South should score only a little above average for +600.

Bd: 29 ♠ J 10 8 4
 Dir: North ♥ 7 3 2
 Vul: Both ♦ A 10 8 4
 ♣ 10 5

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

♠ A K 9 3 2
 ♥ Q 6
 ♦ Q 5
 ♣ K Q 6 4

If East-West prefer sound initial actions, South will open 1♠ in third seat, West will pass and North will bid 2♠. South may try for game with 3♣ - a questionable view since at least one red queen may be worthless - and North will sign off at 3♠. If instead East-West like to bid, East will open 1♥, and South will overcall 1♠. Whether West bids 2♥ or 2♦, North will support with 2♠. South won't try for game on that auction, but West will compete to the three level (East-West could make 3♥), and South must go

to 3♠ to buy the contract. If the defenders lead hearts, South ruffs the third heart and leads the ♣K. If East wins and passively returns a black suit, South must guess the trumps to get home - a tough order unless he has a clue from the auction. North-South may score 75% of the matchpoints for +140.

Bd: 30 ♠ K J 6 5 3
 Dir: East ♥ A 10 2
 Vul: None ♦ 6 4
 ♣ Q 10 7

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

♠ Q 2
 ♥ K 8
 ♦ 9 8 3
 ♣ J 9 8 6 4 2

East's hand is good to pass; to open 2♥ with a ragged suit, two side aces and playability in spades would be poor. If West opens 1♦, North may overcall 1♠, and East can bid 2♥. When West rebids 2NT, East can continue with 3♥, and West should prefer a disciplined pass. If South leads the ♠Q, East can duck, win the next spade, come to the ♣A, return a diamond to dummy and throw his last spade on the ♣K. He ruffs a club and leads a trump to the jack and ace. North can lead his last diamond, and

when South takes the ♥K, he gives North a diamond ruff, holding East to nine tricks. East-West may score below average if they are +140. Not every North-South will find the best defense, and a few Wests will upgrade and open 1NT. Then East-West will reach 4♥ by West, and unless North leads a spade, East-West will be +420.

Bd: 31 ♠ 3
 Dir: South ♥ K 10 9
 Vul: N-S ♦ A K Q 4 2
 ♣ K 6 5 2

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

♠ A K 6
 ♥ Q 8 3 2
 ♦ 8 7 5 3
 ♣ 10 7

North-South's auction may begin 1♦-1♥, 2♣-2♦, 2♥ ... and then South should make a move since he has a maximum for his bidding, and North has suggested extra strength. Since South has two spade stoppers, he can leap to 3NT, passed out. If West leads a spade, South wins and can get home by locating the ♥J. Some Souths may start with five diamond tricks (South must be careful to preserve his ♦3 to avoid a blockage). Other Souths will lead a heart to dummy's king immediately.

East takes the ace and returns a spade, and South wins, runs the diamonds and lets the ♥10 ride to land nine tricks. South will have an easier guess at some tables since East will have overcalled 1♥. North-South should still get to 3NT, but if West innocently leads a heart, South has a route to ten tricks for +630 and a matchpoint top.

Bd: 32 ♠ Q 10 7 6
 Dir: West ♥ J 7 6
 Vul: E-W ♦ K Q 8 4 3
 ♣ 10

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

♠ 4 3
 ♥ A 2
 ♦ J 9 2
 ♣ K J 9 7 5 4

And there came a vicious misfit - really not so vicious since East-West have a playable eight-card heart fit. We'd expect this auction: 1♠-2♥, 2♠-3♣, 3♦-3♥, 4♥. Alas, that sequence may tip off South to the best defense: the lead of the ♥A and then the ♥2. East can take dummy's king, pitch a club on the ♦A, come to the ♠A, draw trumps and attack clubs, but he'll lose three clubs to South for down one. If instead South's opening lead is a passive spade, East can take the ace, ruff a club (without cashing

the ace), discard clubs on the ♦A and ♠K, ruff a diamond and ruff a club with the ♥K. Those ruffs will give him ten tricks for +620 and a matchpoint top, but East-Wests who obtain a plus score on this ill-fitting deal may do well in the matchpoint column.