

ACBL-wide International Fund #1 • Saturday afternoon • 1/28/12

Bd: 1 ♠ 10 7 6 5 4
 Dir: North ♥ 9 8 4
 Vul: None ♦ J 5
 ♣ 10 9 5

♠ A K 8 2
 ♥ Q 6
 ♦ K 8 3
 ♣ J 8 7 4

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

♠ Q J 9 3
 ♥ K 7 3 2
 ♦ Q 7 2
 ♣ 6 3

East-West can make a slam in either minor. At 6♣ declarer can set up the diamonds for 12 winners, and though 6♦ seems to be off a heart and a trump, declarer (East) can strip the black suits and endplay South with his trump trick for a heart return. Getting to slam may be harder than making it. After 1♦, 1♠, East must decide whether he has enough to reverse. If he doesn't like his spade void and settles for a 2♣ rebid, West will have to resort to a "fourth-suit" bid of 2♥ to force. Then if East raises to 3♥, West may

judge that his spade honors are wasted opposite shortness and bid 3NT, and East may retire. If instead East reverses to 2♥ at his second turn, West can stall with 2NT. When East bids 3♣ next, West may again take a timid view and stop at game. If you found a route to a slam and made it, well done.

Bd: 5 ♠ K 7
 Dir: North ♥ 6 4 3
 Vul: N-S ♦ K 10 6 5
 ♣ J 8 5 3

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

♠ A Q 8
 ♥ K 5
 ♦ 9 8 4 3 2
 ♣ A 10 7

♠ J 9 3 2
 ♥ A Q 8 7
 ♦ A J
 ♣ Q 4 2

We expect somebody to play at 1NT. If East opens 1♦ and South doubles for takeout, West has three possible actions: a quiet pass, an "ignore-the-double-and-look-for-your-own-contract" 1♥ response and a descriptive bid of 1NT. Nobody could say which action will be a long-run winner. If West is a 1♥ bidder, a few Norths may stretch to compete with 1NT, but most Norths will pass. Then East will rebid 1NT, passed out. If instead West bids 1NT over the double, he will play it there. With either East or West declaring at 1NT, seven

tricks are likely, but East-West may score poorly for +90. They may do best, as it happens, if West passes over the double, and North responds 1NT, passed out. East will lead a diamond, and North will struggle for winners. Down two is likely, giving East-West +200 and most of the matchpoints.

Bd: 2 ♠ Q 8 6 2
 Dir: East ♥ K Q
 Vul: N-S ♦ 5
 ♣ K Q 9 6 5 3

♠ 10
 ♥ A J 7 6
 ♦ A J 9 7 4 2
 ♣ 8 2

♠ 9 7
 ♥ 4 3 2
 ♦ K Q 8 6 3
 ♣ A 10 4

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

Many Souths will open 2♠ despite holding four cards in the other major. (North might have to pass with one spade and five hearts.) If West passes, North will raise to 4♠, the defenders will take their aces and South will rack up +420. But if West is willing to stretch to overcall 3♦, East will compete to 5♦, and then all North-South can do is double for +100 after West takes a winning view in hearts. At tables where South passes in second seat, some Wests will open 1♦, and we'd expect 1♦-2♣-3♦ (limit). South will get to bid spades, and the contract should

be 5♦ doubled again. Some Wests may open 2♦, however. (They have four hearts, but if East has hearts, North-South may have a big spade fit.) Whatever North does, East may jump to 5♦. East-West will score well for -100 but will get a top if North-South push on to 5♠.

Bd: 6 ♠ A J 2
 Dir: East ♥ K 8 6
 Vul: E-W ♦ J 9 7 5 3
 ♣ 5 3

♠ 9 8 7 6
 ♥ A Q 4 2
 ♦ K 10 8
 ♣ Q 7

♠ 5
 ♥ 9 7
 ♦ Q 6
 ♣ K J 10 9 8 6 4 2

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

Many Easts will open 3♣; the vulnerability will deter a higher preempt. South is barely worth 3♠, and North can raise to 4♠. Some Souths will prefer to double 3♣, but North can cuebid 4♣, and North-South should still reach the spade game. If West leads the ♣Q, South can win, draw trumps and lead the ♦A and a diamond. East takes the queen and forces with a club, but South can concede a second diamond and lose only to West's ♥A. Souths who start the diamonds early -- often best if trump control may be an issue

-- may come to grief. East can win the second diamond, lead a heart to West, pitch his last heart on the ♦K and get a heart ruff. It's notable that East might do well not to preempt. South would open 1♠, North would raise to 2♠ and South might not try for game. We think North-South will score a 75% board for +420.

Bd: 3 ♠ 5 4
 Dir: South ♥ J 10 9 8 4
 Vul: E-W ♦ A 9 8 3
 ♣ A 5

♠ A J 8 3
 ♥ 7 5
 ♦ K 10 7 5
 ♣ K 9 6

♠ K
 ♥ Q 3 2
 ♦ Q 6 4 2
 ♣ Q J 10 7 3

♠ Q 10 9 7 6 2
 ♥ A K 6
 ♦ J
 ♣ 8 4 2

The deal may be passed out occasionally, but most Souths will be willing to open a weak 2♠ despite having four times as many high-card points outside their suit as within it. To be sure, South does have good spade intermediates. If everyone passes, we expect eight tricks at most tables. If West leads the ♥7 (likely), South can actually take nine tricks. East has nothing to gain by covering dummy's jack, and South can proceed to take the ♦A and ruff diamonds in his hand, using the ♣A and a club ruff as entries. At the end,

West will have to ruff a high heart and give South an extra trump trick. In real life, most Souths will be +110, but at a few tables, East will balance hungrily with a double. Then West will have a choice of conceding -470 or, if he takes out, being -200 at a club or notrump partial.

Bd: 7 ♠ A J 9 4
 Dir: South ♥ A 7 5
 Vul: Both ♦ K 7 4
 ♣ K 7 6

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

♠ K 8 5 3
 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ 10 8 3
 ♣ 10 5 3 2

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

When West opens 1♥, North has three reasonable actions. Since he has balanced pattern and good defensive values, a pass is possible, but if North passes on this deal, East may scrape up a 1♠ response, the North-South spade fit will be gone forever, and they may sell out to 2♥, -110 for a match-point zero. A few Norths will overcall 1NT, an action we dislike with skinny values, a single primary heart stopper, and no source of tricks. South will do well to get his side to spades and stop safely below game. We predict most

Norths will double 1♥. Then South's hand isn't quite worth a game-invitational jump response to 2♠, and the contract will often be a spade partial. Competent defense will hold South to eight tricks, and North-South should score a little above average for +110.

Bd: 4 ♠ A 10 8 2
 Dir: West ♥ A K Q 5 3
 Vul: Both ♦ J 8 3
 ♣ A

♠ K Q J 6 5
 ♥ 8 4
 ♦ 5
 ♣ K Q 9 6 3

♠ 9 4 3
 ♥ J 6 2
 ♦ A 9 4 2
 ♣ J 8 7

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

We usually open 1♠ with 5-5 in the black suits. We get the major suit mentioned quickly and make it harder for the opponents to come in. If North doubles, East can raise to 2♠ and South may try 3♦. Then North can bid 3♥, and South should raise. (If instead West competed aggressively with 3♠, North could double for at least +500; but he may continue with 4♥, placing South with spade shortness and heart tolerance.) At tables where West opens 1♣, we'd expect Dbl-Pass-1♦, 1♠-2♥-Pass-3♥,

Pass-4♥. East could hold North to +650 by leading the ♦A and a diamond, but if he leads a spade, North can win and proceed thus: spade ruff, ♣A, spade ruff, club ruff, draw trumps. A diamond to the king wins, and declarer can ruff another club and continue diamonds. East must give dummy a diamond at the end, and North scores +680.

Bd: 8 ♠ A Q
 Dir: West ♥ 4 2
 Vul: None ♦ 10 9 8 2
 ♣ J 8 7 6 3

♠ K 9 7 5 3
 ♥ Q J 8 6 5
 ♦ 4 3
 ♣ 5

♠ J 10 8 4 2
 ♥ K 10 9
 ♦ ----
 ♣ K Q 10 9 2

♠ 6
 ♥ A 7 3
 ♦ A K Q J 7 6 5
 ♣ A 4

We expect a variety of results. If South sees three passes, he may open 2♣. If East-West stay out, North-South will find their diamond fit and may cuebid to 6♦ for +920 and a top. If instead South opens 1♦, West may try a lightish 2♦ Michaels cuebid. East can leap to 4♠, and North-South are likely to play at 5♦. Many Easts will feel constrained to act in third seat. If East opens 1♠, South may double, and West will leap to 4♠. After two passes, South will try 5♦, but North is unlikely to raise. Some Souths will jump to 3♠ over East's 1♠, showing a

long, solid suit and asking North to bid 3NT with a spade stopper. If West boosts to 4♠, will North be up to bidding 4NT? Finally, if East opens 1♣, South may leap to 3NT and play there. North-South should do reasonably well if they get to notrump and score +460.

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

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

♠ A K 8 5 4
 ♥ -----
 ♦ A 8 5 4 2
 ♣ K J 3

North-South can make slam on 26 high-card points -- some of them useless -- but getting there would be hard even in the absence of an East-West barrage. East has a sound 2♥ opening, and most Souths will start to show their two-suiter by overcalling 2♠. If West puts it right up to 4♥, North will bid only 4♠ because his ♥K will look like a wasted value, and though South may suspect that his side is being talked out of something, he can't reasonably continue. In fact, 6♠ is a fine spot, making if diamonds break

3-3 (they do) or if the club finesse wins (it does). We can't imagine North-South reaching slam even if South's first action is a double, but they might get there if South starts with a conventional two-suited overcall. In any case, any pair who is +980 will score almost all the matchpoints.

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

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

♠ J 9 7 6 2
 ♥ K 9 8 5 2
 ♦ K 4
 ♣ A

When East opens 1NT, most Souths will enter with a conventional takeout for the major suits -- perhaps DONT or Cappelletti. For South to act is risky, but the reward may be great. Then North or South may play at 2♥, and the opening lead from either side of the table should be a trump. (East should surely lead a trump to protect his spade tricks.) Declarer -- say, North -- takes the king, cashes the ♣A and leads a spade. East wins and leads a second trump, and declarer wins and leads the ♣Q to ruff out the king. He

ruffs a spade and takes the ♣J and a winning club, pitching dummy's diamonds. West ruffs with his high trump, but with best play declarer can lose only two more tricks. We predict that North-South will score well for +140: East would be down one at most at 1NT, and North would be +90 at a club partial.

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

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

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

East, with three Quick Tricks and a chunky suit, can open 1♠, and some Wests will settle for a heavy (or systematically constructive) raise to 2♠. After two passes, South can fight for the partial with a balancing double. Then West may show his clubs, but whatever North does, East-West will compete to 3♠ and buy the contract. Other Wests may take a rosier view and respond 1NT, forcing. East will have to hold his nose and rebid 2♦, and West will jump to 3♠ to invite game. East will reject. Say South leads a trump -- best

for the defense. East can win with the eight and lead a club. If South plays low, East had better guess right. If he plays the king, he can set up the clubs and take ten tricks; but if he finesses with the ♣J, he may not take eight. We predict that East-West will score at least a 75% board for +170.

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

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

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

East's balanced 18-count looks less promising than his hand on board 22. The high-card structure includes three jacks, and no helpful spot cards are present. Still, most Easts will observe their 1NT range of 15 to 17 points and open 1♦. West will respond 1NT, East can raise to 2NT, and then West may pass, raise to 3NT or bail out to 3♣. If North leads a spade against 3NT, declarer can never succeed against reasonable defense and may go down two or more (North will do well to duck declarer's first club finesse). Wests at 2NT with the same lead can

take eight tricks in theory by playing low (or the ♠A) from dummy. In practice, many play variations are possible, and down one or two is likely. Wests at 3♣ will probably lose a trick in each suit, but East-West may still score most of the matchpoints for +110.

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

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

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

Silence may reign supreme at some tables, but in today's bidding environment, passed-out deals are being threatened with extinction. Passed out may be a disastrous result for North-South here since they can go plus in three different partials. If North risks a 1♥ opening in third chair, planning to pass any response, some Souths may settle for a raise to 2♥ (especially if they happen to be playing constructive single raises). Other Souths will respond 1♠, hoping to support the hearts at their next turn (there won't

be one here), and a few Souths may try a (perhaps forcing) 1NT response. If North-South stop low, South can manage eight tricks at spades or notrump. Norths at hearts can assemble nine tricks with best play, and North-South will surely get a top for +140.

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

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

♠ 10 7
 ♥ K J 4
 ♦ A K 10 9 6
 ♣ A J 6

South's 1NT opening will usually be passed out, and West will lead the ♠K. If the defense takes four spades tricks ending in the East hand, South will be obliged to make two uncomfortable discards. He could in theory pitch a diamond and a heart, put up the ♥K on East's low-heart return, go to the ♦Q, return a club to his jack and end with eight tricks. In practice, South will probably let go a heart and a club, and then even if he guesses right on a heart lead by East, he will take only six tricks for down one. Souths who misguess in hearts will go down two, -200, for a

zero. At a few tables, East will take full advantage of the favorable vulnerability to balance with a conventional takeout for the majors. Then West will play at 2♠, but North-South should take six tricks for +50 and a good matchpoint result.

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

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

♠ Q 8 5 3
 ♥ A Q 10 4 2
 ♦ 8 7
 ♣ J 2

The board will sometimes be tossed in. Nobody has an opening bid, but that won't stop some players from opening. A few Wests will open 1♣; they would rather their long suit were a major and contained more honors. North has little to gain and much to lose by overcalling 1♦, vulnerable. East will respond 1♥ and pass West's 1NT rebid. A couple of Easts may roll the dice by opening 1♥ after two passes. Then some Wests may try 2♣ and go down there, but other Wests won't be able to respond 2♣ since that bid would be conventional;

they may try 2NT or a (perhaps) forcing 1NT, passed out. Can East-West make a contract? If West plays at 1NT with a diamond lead, he could take seven tricks at double dummy, but if he tries to set up the hearts -- the natural play -- he goes down. If you got a plus score on this one, you won most of the matchpoints.

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

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

♠ 10 8 4
 ♥ J 3
 ♦ A Q 8 6 3 2
 ♣ 7 5

East will open 1♣ in third seat, and South will often jump to 2♦. Then West could try 3♣ if East would understand that West promises no more than a sound raise to 2♣. Perhaps West will pass instead, and after North passes, East will reopen with a double. West will bid 3♣, passed out. At tables where West does bid 3♣ at his first turn, East will try for game. He may bid 3♥ next, but West will sign off at 4♣. That contract looks safe enough, but in fact East will need a good guess in hearts to make it. At a few tables, after 1♣-2♦, 3♣-Pass, East may risk 3NT,

daring South to lay down the ♦A if he has it. Then North-South could be +200 with a spade lead (or the ♦A and a spade shift); but if South leads low diamond, East can guess how to win two heart tricks and make his unlikely contract for +600 and a top.

Bd: 17 ♠ 9 6 5 3
 Dlr: North ♥ Q 7
 Vul: None ♦ K J 6 4
 ♣ K 9 3

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

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

West has good Quick Trick structure, length in both majors and two tens; he will open in fourth seat, often with 1♣. When East responds 1♥, some Wests will raise to 2♥ -- it is best to rebid normally unless your opening bid was subminimum -- but East will usually decline to try for game with so many losers. Other Wests will pass 1♥, and North may balance with a double. East can redouble, and after South runs to 2♦, West's 2♥ should end the auction. Matchpoints will be swung in the play. If South leads a diamond, North-

South will inevitably get a diamond plus a trump and two clubs, holding East to +140. But if South leads the ♠Q, East can take the ace, lose a trump finesse, win the diamond return, pick up the trumps with a second finesse and run the spades to pitch his diamond loser for +170 and an East-West top.

Bd: 18 ♠ Q 7 5
 Dlr: East ♥ 10 9 7 4
 Vul: N-S ♦ A 10 8 6
 ♣ 6 4

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

♠ 10 9
 ♥ A Q J 6 5
 ♦ Q J 9 4
 ♣ A 9

We expect East to open 1♠ and South to overcall 2♥. If West passes, many Norths will pass, letting East rebid 2♠. Then after two passes, North will compete with 3♥, and after two more passes, West may risk 3♠, passed out. If South leads the ♦Q to the king and ace, and North shifts to a trump, declarer can take ten tricks by finessing with the ♠J and forcing out the ♣A. East-West will score well for +170, especially since at some tables, North will raise to 3♥ at his first turn, perhaps silencing East -- and everyone else. That action by North seems to

support the view that you should always raise with a fit even if your high-card values are limited: South can make 3♥, losing two spades, a trump and a club, and North-South will get a top for +140.

Bd: 19 ♠ 6 2
 Dlr: South ♥ A 6 4
 Vul: E-W ♦ K J 7 6 4
 ♣ Q 3 2

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

♠ Q 9 8 7
 ♥ J 9 8 2
 ♦ 9 8
 ♣ 9 8 6

If you were East, how were your powers of guessing? We expect most Easts to play at 3NT. West has only 1/2 Quick Tricks but two tens and length in both majors; he'll usually open 1♣. Then East may respond 2NT or 3NT, routinely reaching a notrump game. Some Easts will respond 1♦, and after West rebids 1♥, East may jump to 3NT. A few Easts will try for 6♣ but will get no cooperation from West. "Deep Finesse" asserts that East can take 11 tricks, but he may need to guess everything in sight. A spade opening lead by South will make his task a little

easier. If instead South leads a heart or a passive ♦9, East will have to locate both black queens. We predict that most Easts will take ten tricks, and +630 to East-West may score average. Easts who make the maximum for +660 will get a top.

Bd: 20 ♠ Q 10 9 6
 Dlr: West ♥ A J 2
 Vul: Both ♦ 7 6
 ♣ K 8 7 2

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

♠ J 8 5 3
 ♥ 9 6 3
 ♦ 5 4 3
 ♣ A 9 3

If West were to open an emaciated weak 2♥ despite the adverse vulnerability, East would leap to 3NT, passed out. If instead West passes, wanting more classical values for a weak two-bid, East will open 1♦ in third position and West responds 1♥. East can jump-shift to 3♣ and convert West's 3♥ rebid to 3NT. South will lead a spade. After East wins, he won't have time to do anything with the clubs and will instead lead the ♥K to establish his ninth trick. We think most East-Wests will handle this deal routinely, and +600 to East-West should be a common and average result.

Bd: 21 ♠ 3 2
 Dlr: North ♥ A Q 9 7 3
 Vul: N-S ♦ Q 3
 ♣ K J 10 2

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

♠ 9 8 7 4
 ♥ K J
 ♦ 10
 ♣ A Q 9 7 5 3

Judgment calls at every turn make this deal hard to predict. After 1♥ by North, 2♦ by East, some Souths will stretch to bid 3♣. North will raise to 4♣, and South may try 4♥. At other tables, South will want more values to bid a new suit at the three level and will double (negative). Whether North then bids 3♣ or tries to slow things down with 2♥, East may act again with a double, and the eventual contract may be 5♦ doubled, down one. That would be a good East-West result if North-South could make game, and indeed

South may make 5♣ when the defenders fail to cash out. But if North plays 4♥ and East leads two high diamonds, declarer will ruff in dummy, take the ♥K and try to come to a high club to draw trumps. East will ruff, and East-West can take two spades and another ruff for +200 and a top.

Bd: 22 ♠ K 8
 Dlr: East ♥ K 10 9 7
 Vul: E-W ♦ Q J 7 6 3
 ♣ 5 3

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

♠ 10 9 7 6 3
 ♥ A J 8 2
 ♦ 8 5
 ♣ Q 7

Easts who open 1NT will play there. After South leads a spade, East will take ten tricks: three spades, two diamonds and five clubs. At most tables, East-West will be using a 1NT range of 15 to 17 points, and East will open one of a minor. Expert opinion is divided on the better opening bid with 3-2-4-4 pattern. (We like 1♣ unless the diamonds are much stronger.) At tables where East is a 1♦ opener, West will respond 1NT and pass East's raise to 2NT. North may lead a heart, holding West to nine tricks, +150. If East prefers to open 1♣, some Wests will jump to

3♣ as an inverted raise, and East may pass for +150. Other Wests will raise to 2♣, and East may try 2NT next, passed out, making four on a spade lead. We think East-West will need +180 for a good matchpoint result. Tops will go to pairs who wander into 3NT and make it.

Bd: 23 ♠ J 9 8 7
 Dlr: South ♥ K J 2
 Vul: Both ♦ Q 3 2
 ♣ J 7 4

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

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

We expect most Souths to open 1NT. A 1♥ opening would leave South with an awkward second bid, and he need not fear being transferred into a 5-2 spade fit when a 5-3 heart fit exists. North has a close decision, but his flat pattern and secondary values argue against both a Stayman response and a raise to 2NT. Say North-South bid boldly to 3NT, and West leads a spade. East wins and exits safely with a heart. If South runs the hearts, both defenders will come under pressure, and South can always take nine tricks if he reads the discards perfectly. The only lead to

beat 3NT is a diamond, setting up East's suit before South can get nine tricks. Souths who play at hearts can take nine tricks similarly. We think North-South will get a top for +600, but will score well if they make an overtrick at 2NT for +150.

Bd: 24 ♠ K
 Dlr: West ♥ A 8 7 5 4 3 2
 Vul: None ♦ A Q 5 2
 ♣ K

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

♠ A 10
 ♥ K 9
 ♦ J 6 3
 ♣ A 9 6 4 3 2

Here's a test for North-South: to reach the 70% 6♥ that makes as the cards lie. After 1♥-2♣, North can rebid 2♦. The quality of his heart suit doesn't merit a jump to 3♥, and diamonds may be the best trump suit. Then some Souths will force with 2NT (playing a forcing 2/1 style). When North bids 3♥ next, South can raise, and North can issue a slam try that South can accept with his aces and useful red-suit honors. In "Standard" methods, South may jump to 3NT at his second turn. Then even if North bids only 4♥, South may try for slam since North's sequence will

suggest extra strength. Few pairs will reach the scary contract of 6NT, but after a spade lead, South can take the ♠K and ♣K and play off three rounds of hearts. West must make a helpful return, and North-South will be +990 for an icy top.

Bd: 25 ♠ J 9 8 4
 Dlr: North ♥ J 5 4
 Vul: E-W ♦ 10 5 4 3
 ♣ Q 3

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

♠ A 10
 ♥ K Q 10 9 8
 ♦ J 9 8
 ♣ J 10 5

When East opens 1NT, West must decide whether to try for game. His hand isn't as strong as its point count suggests, since the diamond honors aren't carrying their weight. Most Wests will try Stayman, though, and East will deny a major. Then each player can judge well: West to bid only 2NT and East to pass. South will lead the ♥Q, conventionally asking North to play the jack if he has it. (This method is popular but not foolproof; your analyst once led the queen from K-Q-10-9-8, and his partner, with A-x-x, took the ace and shifted, thinking declarer had the king.)

If North drops the jack, and East wins the second heart and leads a spade, South may well hop up with his ace and cash out. After all, East might hold a five-card diamond suit. We think East-West will score 75% of the matchpoints for +120.

Bd: 29 ♠ K Q 9 2
 Dlr: North ♥ J 8 2
 Vul: Both ♦ J 10
 ♣ K J 10 5

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

♠ J 8 5
 ♥ A Q 7 6 4
 ♦ 5 4 3 2
 ♣ 7

Many East-Wests will bid 1♦, 1♥-1♠, 1NT ... and then East must judge whether to pass or seek a better spot with 2♣. At matchpoints, we expect most Easts to sit for 1NT; after all, their singleton heart is the king, and no trump fit is assured; West's shape could be 2-5-3-3. West will make 1NT if North leads the unbid club suit or maybe the ♠K but should go down one with any other lead. If East prefers to try 2♣ at his third turn, everyone will pass, and he should scramble in with eight tricks despite the foul break

in trumps. At a few tables, North will climb in with a passed-hand double -- an action we consider ill-judged. If East passes, South may respond 1♠ or 1NT and play there for +80 or +90. To get a strong matchpoint result, though, we think North-South must be +100 at least on defense.

Bd: 26 ♠ Q
 Dlr: East ♥ A K 10 8
 Vul: Both ♦ K 9 8
 ♣ A K Q 9 8

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

♠ A 10 6 5 4
 ♥ 7 3 2
 ♦ Q 7 6 5
 ♣ J

We expect North-South to land at 3NT. After three passes, some Norths may start with a forcing 2♣ or some other strength-showing bid, but many Norths will open 1♣. After South responds 1♠ and North "reverses" to 2♥, the auction will continue depending on the methods North-South employ after a reverse. In any case, they should manage to stop at the notrump game. Suppose South is declarer, and West leads a heart. South takes the king, comes to the ♣J, returns a diamond to dummy's king and runs the clubs. He has nine winners, and since West will be in trouble for discards, South may

find himself taking a tenth trick at the end. The best lead for the defense is the ♠9, after which the timing of the play is different and South may be held to nine tricks. We predict North-South will win about 70% of the matchpoints for +630.

Bd: 30 ♠ 2
 Dlr: East ♥ J 9 4 2
 Vul: None ♦ J 10 6 5 3
 ♣ 5 4 2

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

♠ A 9 8 6 4 3
 ♥ A K 8
 ♦ A K
 ♣ 9 6

South's 1♠ opening will often be passed out. If West leads the singleton ♠Q, South can win and play off the ♠A and a second spade. East wins and gives West a diamond ruff, and the defense also takes two clubs and another trump, holding South to eight tricks and +110. At some tables, East will balance fearlessly with 1NT. South can double for penalty. If everyone passed, North-South could beat the contract three tricks for +500 in theory, but South may indiscreetly lead a low spade instead of a high red-suit honor, letting declarer escape for down one.

In practice, West may run from 1NT doubled to 2♣, and after two passes, South will try 2♠, passed out for +110 again. North-South can get a top if East-West compete unwisely to 3♣; South can hammer that for +300 at least.

Bd: 27 ♠ K 9 6 4
 Dlr: South ♥ 9 4 3
 Vul: None ♦ 9 6 5
 ♣ 10 9 5

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

♠ 10 3
 ♥ K 7 5
 ♦ 8 3 2
 ♣ K 7 6 4 3

When West opens 1NT, East will often transfer to hearts and probe with a 2♠ bid next. If West bids 2NT at his third turn, many Easts will settle for a conservative raise to 3NT. Some Easts may judge their hand worth about 16 points and try 4NT: "quantitative" since no trump suit has been agreed, not Blackwood. Then West must judge luckily to reject the try for slam. (True, he has only average high-card strength, and his degree of fit for East's long suits is poor.) If North leads the ♣10 to the jack, king and ace, West will lose a heart finesse and later -- since he

has only 11 tricks -- the spade finesse. East-West will score well for +460 since many pairs will get to slam, and pairs who are -50 will be entitled to grumble: we can't say for sure, but we think 6NT would come home more often than not.

Bd: 31 ♠ 8 4 3 2
 Dlr: South ♥ 8
 Vul: N-S ♦ K Q 6 3 2
 ♣ Q 6 2

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

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

Most Souths will open 1♠. South has only 11 high-card points, but that suit looks worth mentioning. When West doubles, North has options. Some Norths will do no more than merely raise to 2♠. Other Norths may jump to 3♠, preemptive. Then East-West may be shut out, but they will get a plus score. West can take the top clubs and give East a ruff, and the red aces cash for down one. Other Norths will try 2NT as a conventional limit raise, and then East has barely enough to compete with 3♥. West has extra values and may raise to 4♥, and North-South

will do well to let this play since routine defense will earn a one-trick set. South cashes two spades, and even if he fails to shift to a diamond, East can't quite bring off an endplay against North. North-Souths who are +50 should do well in the matchpoint column.

Bd: 28 ♠ 8 5 4 2
 Dlr: West ♥ K Q J
 Vul: N-S ♦ A J
 ♣ 8 6 3 2

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

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

When East opens 1♦, some Wests will dredge up 2♦. After two passes, most Souths will reopen with a double, and North will try 2♠, passed out. At other tables, West will pass 1♦, perhaps because he uses inverted raises; a weak raise to 3♦ won't appeal. Then North can balance with a double, South will respond 2♣ and West may back in with 2♦. After two passes, South will have nowhere to go unless he wants to try a value-showing double, asking North to do something intelligent. As it happens, the distribution is so sterile and the high cards so evenly divided

that nobody can make much. East can win seven tricks at diamonds, North-South eight at clubs. Norths at 2♠ may make it for +110 -- the play may be complex -- but seven tricks are the limit with best defense. We think plus scores will be worth a lot of matchpoints.

Bd: 32 ♠ K 3
 Dlr: West ♥ J
 Vul: E-W ♦ Q J 8 7 2
 ♣ A Q 9 4 3

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

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

We expect the auction to start 1♦-1♠-2♥-2♠. (When South bids 2♥, he plans to rebid 3♥ at his next turn, showing a long suit but minimum values for a two-level response.) Then North will usually pass instead of trying 3♣ since the bidding has downgraded his hand: he has no heart fit, and his ♠K looks like a worthless card. After East passes, we think South might bid 4♥. The North hand is marked short in spades and may have heart tolerance. Indeed, South has a play for ten tricks opposite the actual (totally unsuitable) North hand, so how bad can it be

to bid game? West will lead the ♠J, and the defense can play three rounds, forcing dummy to ruff and setting up a trump trick for East. Still, South will get home if he guesses right in clubs, and North-South should pick up 80% of the matchpoints for +420.