

ACBL Charity Game

Analysis by Brian Gunnell, author of Bridge Bites and founder of The Wednesday Game (www.wednesdaygame.com).

1

♠ KQT7	West	North	East	South
♥ AK4		1♦	Pass	Pass
♦ K754	1♠	1NT	2♠	3♠
♣ K4	All Pass			

South could make a Weak Jump Shift, if available, but otherwise a Pass seems to be the most prudent course of action. North's 1NT rebid (opposite a silent Partner) shows 18-19, after which South cheerfully competes to 3♠.

The Play in Clubs: West leads the ♥Q, won in Dummy. The ♠K is taken by West's Ace, the Heart return is won in Dummy and Declarer's Heart loser goes on the ♠Q. Now the ♠T is finessed and when the dust has cleared Declarer will have 9 tricks.

2

♠ Q6	West	North	East	South
♥ KQ7		1♥	Dbl	Pass
♦ AKQJT632	Pass	2♦	Rdbl	2♠
♣	Pass	3♦	Pass	Pass
	3♥	4♦	Dbl	All Pass

This wild deal could produce a thousand different auctions, maybe even the one shown above.

The Play in Diamonds: East starts out with a high Club, but Declarer ruffs that, sets up a Heart ruff in Dummy, and it's 10 tricks. An opening trump lead doesn't help the defenders' cause as they are unable to lead a second one to stop the ruff.

The Play in 4♥: North might try a spectacular underlead of her Diamonds (in search of a Club ruff), but that is a dubious strategy when holding natural trump tricks (although great merriment would ensue if North did lead a low Diamond, Dummy played low and South's Eight won the trick!). Instead, North plays Diamonds from the top and Declarer ruffs the second one. The bidding places North with Club shortness and most or all of the missing major suit high cards. That being so, Declarer can make his contract by cashing ♠A and ♠K, and leading a low Heart. North must win but is now end-played ... either she leads a trump and gives up a trick that way ... or she must lead a Diamond and concede a ruff and sluff.

3

♠ T86	South	West	North	East
♥ K763	Pass	Pass	1♣	1♦
♦ AK	Dbl	2♦	2♥	All Pass
♣ QJ75	South's Negative Double showed both majors, and perhaps she was tempted to take one more call in view of her Club shortness and extra trump. But even if she does bid again there's no guarantee that North will go to game. As can be seen, there are 10 tricks available in Hearts, but that does require a 2-2 Heart break (or extreme good fortune in Spades), and we cannot see many N-S pairs bidding this game.			

4

♠ T72	West	North	East	South
♥ QT86	Pass	Pass	1♣	1♦
♦ AT72	1♥	2♦	Dbl	Pass
♣ Q6	3♣	3♦	All Pass	

East's Support Double showed three Hearts, and North's 3♦ was perhaps inspired by the Law of Total Tricks. But this deal is not a triumph for the Law as 3♦ is down two on routine defense (Club opening lead won by East's Ace, and a low Spade at Trick 2). In fact, if Declarer misguesses the Spades there is a Spade ruff for down three!

29th November 2010 Set 69894

5

♠ 5	West	North	East	South
♥ T2		1♦	Pass	1♥
♦ AQ8642	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦
♣ A932	All Pass			

Disciples of the Rule of 20 (in which we add our HCP to the number of cards in our two longest suits and open if the total is 20 or more) will open 1♦ with North's hand. That's all well and good, but it does mean that N-S will be in danger of getting too high. However, if North opens one-of-a-suit with that type of hand, then South must show a modicum of

restraint and not force to game with her moderate 12-count.

The Play in 3♠: Dummy wins the Spade lead, a Club goes on the other high Spade, then ♠A and out a Club. West wins this and fires back a low trump, Declarer takes her Ace and ruffs a Club. West should not overruff! If he does, Declarer's ♦Q drops East's Jack for 10 tricks ... if West does not overruff then Declarer still has a guess in the trump suit and may go wrong (she shouldn't but let's give her the opportunity!).

6

♠ AJT76	West	North	East	South
♥ 8			1♦	3♥
♦ 93	3NT	All Pass		
♣ 96543	The Play in 3NT: If North congenially leads Partner's suit then Declarer has no more than 11 tricks ... but if North leads a Spade then Declarer scores an extra Spade trick and 12 in total.			

The Play in 6♥: This makes if trumps are 2-2, and if trumps are 3-1 then it will be necessary to score four Clubs. The combined chances are 76%, so a fine slam, but a hard one to reach, with or without a Heart preempt.

The Play in Hearts: The obvious losers are a Spade, two Hearts, two Diamonds and a Club. So, seven tricks for Declarer? No, the defense can force Declarer by repeated Club leads, holding her to six tricks.

7

♠ KJT8764	South	West	North	East
♥ QT2	2NT	Pass	4♥	Pass
♦ KT	4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass
♣ Q	5♣	Pass	5♦	Pass
	6♣	Pass	7NT	All Pass

This grand slam deal provides us with a few Roman Key Card nuances. Some points of interest:

- Bidding 4NT after the Jacoby auction 2NT 3♥, 3♠ is a natural slam invitation ... but bidding 4NT after a Texas Transfer is Roman Key Card.
- 5♣ shows 1 or 4 Key Cards (using 1430 responses).
- 5♦ is the cheapest non-signoff and as such is the Queen Ask.
- 6♣ says "I have the ♠Q and also the ♠K". Furthermore, it denies the ♥K by the failure to respond 5♥.
- 7NT: Unless South tragically has ♠AK doubleton, North counts 13 tricks.

8

♠ K42	West	North	East	South
♥ AKJ4	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
♦ Q4	Pass	3♥	Pass	??
♣ AK97	What next? 4NT would be natural here, denying a Heart fit, showing four Spades and inviting slam. How about 4♦? That's also natural (at least a 5-card suit) and with obvious slam interest. Unless yours is one of those rare partnerships that have a well-defined follow-up to 4♠, perhaps 4NT is the way to go, and we will leave it to North to decide whether or not to accept. When the missing Spade honors are favorably placed and the Diamonds are not 5-1, it is the optimists who are rewarded.			

9 ♠ A6542
♥ A2
♦ A96
♣ AK5

♠ 8 ♠ KT3
♥ KJ943 ♥ QT5
♦ 73 ♦ KQJ8
♣ J9432 ♣ Q86

♠ QJ97
♥ 876
♦ T542
♣ T7

Dlr North
E-W Vul

contract, as picking up ♠KTxx for no losers is less than 40%. On the actual layout there are 9 tricks only when the Spades decline to oblige.

10 ♠ K
♥ Q94
♦ KQ
♣ AQ98653

♠ 87 ♠ Q652
♥ AKT873 ♥ 2
♦ J74 ♦ 86532
♣ KT ♣ J42

♠ AJT943
♥ J65
♦ AT9
♣ 7

Dlr East
Both Vul

Declarer has lots of potential tricks, but there is blockage in Spades and Diamonds. Should Declarer go after the Spades or the Clubs?

(a) *If Declarer goes after Spades*, she wins the ♠K in hand, overtakes the ♠K in Dummy, knocks out the ♠Q, wins the Diamond return with Dummy's Ace, runs the Spades, and finesses the ♠Q for the 9th trick. This line requires the onside ♠K and 4-2 or 3-3 Spades. That's 42%, apparently.

(b) *If Declarer goes after Clubs*, she wins the first trick with Dummy's ♠A, finesses the ♠Q, cashes the ♠A, loses a Club, wins the Diamond return, and runs the Clubs. 9 tricks again. This line requires the onside ♠K and 3-2 Clubs, and that's a mere 34%.

11 ♠
♥ KT4
♦ KQ763
♣ KQJT7

♠ K52 ♠ AT843
♥ 9875 ♥ AJ62
♦ 982 ♦ J5
♣ 862 ♣ 94

♠ QJ976
♥ Q3
♦ AT4
♣ A53

Dlr South
None Vul

and Declarer will grab her 11 tricks while she still can.

Did Any Pairs Get to 6♣ or 6♦? Nicely done if you achieved this feat! You needed 3-2 Diamonds, and had to organize that Heart ruff in the South hand, but all in all it's a pretty good slam. Hard to reach, though.

12 ♠ J94
♥ QJ85
♦ 963
♣ K65

♠ Q53 ♠ A8
♥ 73 ♥ A62
♦ 5 ♦ AKJT74
♣ AJ87432 ♣ Q9

♠ KT762
♥ KT94
♦ Q82
♣ T

Dlr West
N-S Vul

T9) but is more likely to be from KJ or KT or K9. So Declarer guesses to play the Queen from Dummy, then a low Club to the Queen (North wisely ducking) and a Club back to Dummy's Ace. The Diamond finesse loses and it's 10 tricks. An opening Heart lead holds Declarer to 9 tricks.

West North East South
1♠ Pass ??

If N-S are playing Bergen Raises then South will bid a preemptive 3♠ and North will raise to game. If South does not have that as an option she must choose between: (a) Pass (eminently reasonable), or (b) 2♠ (somewhat dubious), or (c) a Forcing NT followed by a Spade bid (our choice). Pass turns out to be the winner because if South makes so much as a peep North will charge into game. Anyway, 4♠ is a so-so

West North East South
Pass 2NT Pass 2♠
Pass 4♠ All Pass 3♦

In the above auction, South's 3♦ showed a feature and, one way or another, we expect that many Souths will declare 4♠. It's not a terrible contract but on the lie of the cards it has no chance. West leads Hearts, gives Partner a ruff, and the ♠Q will be the setting trick. Down one.

Anyone for 3NT? North will play this, let's say that East leads a Diamond.

South West North East
1♠ Pass 2♥ Pass
2♠ Pass 3♣ Pass
3♦ Pass 3NT All Pass

In this 2/1 auction, 2♠ did not guarantee a 6th Spade, and could be (as here) merely a bid of convenience (2NT was not ideal without a Heart stopper ... and bidding 3♦ with such a No Trumpish hand hardly seemed right either). But, whatever the methods, we expect N-S to declare 3NT, probably from the North side. East will presumably lead a low Heart

and Declarer will grab her 11 tricks while she still can.

Did Any Pairs Get to 6♣ or 6♦? Nicely done if you achieved this feat! You needed 3-2 Diamonds, and had to organize that Heart ruff in the South hand, but all in all it's a pretty good slam. Hard to reach, though.

West North East South
3♣ Pass ??

Do you play *Switchwood*? If so then 3♣ 4♦ and 3♦ 4♣ are both Roman Key Card. Using this gadget, East bids 4♦, planning to boot out 7♣ if West has the ♠AK, and to cover in 5♣ if West does not have both. Yes, with that source of tricks in Diamonds, this really does look like a 5 or 7 hand.

The Play in Clubs: North has a pretty obvious ♥Q opening lead. 11 tricks.

The Play in 3NT: South leads the ♠6, which could be from J976 (not JT, nor

13 ♠ AQ
♥ AKQ
♦ J4
♣ KJT962

♠ 963 ♠ 854
♥ JT6 ♥ 97
♦ KQ3 ♦ T8762
♣ AQ73 ♣ 854

♠ KJT72
♥ 85432
♦ A95
♣

Dlr North
Both Vul

If North shows a 4-card major then South would try for slam, but when she responds 3♠, South bids 3♠ (or 3♥ if playing Smolen) showing 5-4 in the majors, and lets North pick the contract. North might well be nervous about the Diamonds and go for the 5-2 Spade fit. The bottom line is 11 tricks in Hearts, Spades or No Trump. Easy to play, awkward to bid.

14 ♠ AK65
♥ KQJ9
♦ K7
♣ KQ7

♠ Q74 ♠ J2
♥ 43 ♥ AT752
♦ QJ9632 ♦ A
♣ 83 ♣ A9642

♠ T983
♥ 86
♦ T854
♣ JT5

Dlr East
None Vul

Declarer's only chance ... and, if West leads one of East's suits, then West will later show up with the ♠Q, again making it pretty clear where is the ♠A (Declarer will recall that West was unable to respond to 1♥ and can hardly have as many as 6 HCP).

15 ♠ Q862
♥ AQJT97
♦ A83
♣

♠ K9 ♠ J543
♥ K65 ♥ 43
♦ KQT6 ♦ 975
♣ AQT8 ♣ K643

♠ AT7
♥ 82
♦ J42
♣ J9752

Dlr South
N-S Vul

who took care not to ruff the opening lead with the Seven.

16 ♠ 86
♥ QJ743
♦ 9864
♣ 32

♠ KJ7 ♠ T9
♥ T96 ♥ K2
♦ QJ7 ♥ T32
♣ Q864 ♣ AKT975

♠ AQ5432
♥ A85
♦ AK5
♣ J

Dlr West
E-W Vul

Clubs, Declarer ruffing the second round. Now Declarer cashes the ♠A, and leads a Heart to Dummy's Queen and East's King. East shifts to a Diamond but it is too late. Declarer wins that, concedes a Spade, wins the Diamond return, cashes the ♥A and leads a third Heart. Her luck is in when the defender with the long trump also has the long Heart. Now that Diamond loser disappears. Note that it was necessary to lose the Heart while Dummy still had a trump, otherwise Declarer would get forced by repeated Club and Diamond leads.

The Play in Clubs: North never gets in to lead a Heart through Declarer, and eventually a Heart goes away on Dummy's Spades. Making 9 tricks.

West North East South
2NT? Pass ??

That 2NT opening is hardly ideal, but then neither is the alternative of opening 1♠ and reversing (or jump shifting) into Hearts. If North does open 2NT what should South do? There's a "game or slam?" decision to be made, also a "Spades, Hearts or No Trump?" decision. Our own guess (and that's all it is) would be to treat the South hand as 5=4 in the majors (those Hearts hardly qualify as a 5-card suit anyway) and use Stayman.

West North East South
Pass Dbl 1♥ Pass
Pass Dbl 2♣ Pass
Pass 3♠ All Pass

North strives mightily to reach game, doubling twice and then raising to 3♠. But South is not going anywhere with that hand and 3♠ is where the matter rests. The key to making 9 tricks is to avoid losing two Diamonds, which should be easy enough ... if West's opening lead is the ♦Q that will make it clear that a singleton ♠A is

South West North East
Pass 1NT 2♥ All Pass

After West's 15-17 1NT, one way or another, North will get to declare 2♥, and let us say that East leads a Club. Declarer ruffs that, of course, and, if she remembers that age-old advice about thinking at Trick 1, she will be sure to ruff with the *Nine*. Now Declarer crosses to the ♠A, runs the ♥8, finesses a second time, draws the last trump, and sets up a second Spade trick. That's nine easy tricks for you and for those other Declarers

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

All Pass

Sure, East is vulnerable and he does not quite have opening values, but in third seat such suits have to be bid. By most standards, South is too strong to overcall 1♠ so she doubles first and bids Spades next time around, and later competes to 3♠.

The Play in 3♠: A Diamond lead beats 3♠, but West might well lead

17

♠ T94
♥ AJ862
♦ K5
♣ QT2

♠ K32 ♠ QJ86
♥ KT7 ♥ Q43
♦ Q732 ♦ J986
♣ A93 ♣ K4

♠ A75
♥ 95
♦ AT4
♣ J8765

Dlr North
None Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♦	1♥	Dbl	Pass
1NT	Pass	2♦	All Pass

In 4th seat, after three Passes, the Rule of 15 helps us decide whether or not to open ... we add the HCP to the number of Spades, and open if the total is 15 or more. On that basis, West's hand just squeaks in, though he might consider passing anyway because of the square shape. If West does open, he may well end up declaring 2♦, will he make it? North

leads the ♠T to South's Ace, and back comes the ♥9, won in Dummy. How to play the trumps? As North has long Hearts, South is more likely to have the Diamonds. So Declarer crosses to his ♣A, plays a trump to the Jack and Ace, then later finesses against South's hoped-for Ten. 8 tricks.

18

♠ KQJT
♥ 9762
♦ AQ9
♣ T8

♠ 92 ♠ A654
♥ JT85 ♥ AK43
♦ J5 ♦ K62
♣ Q7432 ♣ AJ

♠ 873
♥ Q
♦ T8743
♣ K965

Dlr East
N-S Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1NT	Dbl	2♦
??			

The balancing 1NT comes in various sizes, almost all of them showing fewer HCP than a direct 1NT overcall. 11-15, or thereabouts, is fairly common, so let's assume that this is the N-S style. East's Double of 1NT shows a good hand, typically one that was too good to open 1NT. South is too weak to pass 1NT doubled, and guesses to bid a natural 2♦. Now,

what should West do? He is maximum for his earlier Pass, and Partner has since shown some extras, so passing does seem rather feeble, wouldn't you say? With North bidding No Trump, and with both East and South bidding Diamonds naturally, it seems quite likely that East has three Diamonds and 4=4=3=2 shape. If West is convinced by this logic he'll take a shot at 2♥ and will be rewarded with 9 tricks and +140!

19

♠ QT854
♥ KT4
♦ AKT
♣ 42

♠ K3 ♠ A962
♥ AJ732 ♥ 86
♦ J ♦ 76542
♣ QJT53 ♣ 87

♠ J7
♥ Q95
♦ Q983
♣ AK96

Dlr South
E-W Vul

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1♣	1♥	1♠	Pass
1NT	Pass	??	

Without West's 1♥ overcall, North's 2♦ here would generally be played as New Minor Forcing. Is that still on in this situation? There's no need for it to be, North can use the opponent's overcall to his benefit by playing that (a) the 2♥ cue-bid can be used to investigate game, and (b) 2♦ is natural and weak. So, if 2♥ is the way to look for a 5-3 Spade fit, should that be North's bid? No, North should just

bid 3NT directly (avoiding defensive Heart ruffs in 4♣ if South is 3=4=2=4). **The Play in 3NT:** After West leads a Heart, 3NT cannot be made with accurate defense: Heart won by Declarer, Spade to East's Ace, another Heart, after which West still has an entry to the established Hearts and it's down one. But a wily Declarer such as yourself no doubt made it harder for the defense. You won the opening Heart with Dummy's Ten and led the crafty Spade Ten. It would be a tough play for East to leap up with his Ace but that's what is required. If he fails to rise to the occasion then West can either win the ♠K (using up his entry before Hearts are established) or else duck (in which case you have 9 tricks).

20

♠ JT82
♥ 72
♦ T863
♣ AK6

♠ Q3 ♠ 754
♥ T9843 ♥ AJ5
♦ AQ94 ♦ K7
♣ 98 ♣ QJ752

♠ AK96
♥ KQ6
♦ J52
♣ T43

Dlr West
Both Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	??

N-S will probably play this one in a Spade part-score, but first South must find a call over the 1♣ opening. Do you pass with that decent hand but square shape? Or are you tempted to overcall 1♠, partly as a lead-director? Or do you double, while planning a groveling apology for the moment when you put this hand down as Dummy? All are reasonable choices, we abstain, so make your best guess and then try to win 8 tricks in 2♠.

21

♠ Q9864
♥ A8753
♦ 753

♠ JT ♠ Q8763
♥ T32 ♥ J
♦ KT9 ♦ QJ64
♣ AQJ64 ♣ KT9

♠ AK9542
♥ AK75
♦ 2
♣ 82

Dlr North
N-S Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	1♠
2♣	Dbl	3♣	4♥

All Pass
North is not good enough to bid 2♥ over 2♣, so she makes do with a Negative Double. East nudges things up to the three-level and South must not be a wimp! She has only 14 HCP, that's true, but she has terrific playing strength, and merely competing with 3♥ would be woefully inadequate.

The Play in 4♥: The defense cashes two Clubs and shifts to a trump. Now Declarer scores 11 tricks in splendid style: the ♥A wins the trump shift, ♠A and ♠K are cashed (pitching Diamonds from Dummy), ♦A, Diamond ruff, Spade ruff (West pitches a Diamond), Club ruff, Spade ruff, Diamond ruff. At Trick 12 another Spade is led and West falls victim to a Trump Coup!

Anyone for 5♠ Doubled? If the defense leads trumps it's only +500 for N-S ... but if they go after their own ruffs they can score the magic +800.

22

♠ Q2
♥ K753
♦ AQT52
♣ AK

♠ KJT43 ♠ 9875
♥ AQ2 ♥ T4
♦ 93 ♦ KJ
♣ JT4 ♣ Q9763

♠ A6
♥ J986
♦ 8764
♣ 852

Dlr East
E-W Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♠	Dbl	2♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♥

All Pass
With 4-card support, East might well have competed to the 3-level, but was perhaps deterred by the vulnerability, weak trumps and defensive values. 3♠ is down one, probably undoubted. **The Play in 3♥:** A Spade lead would be most unfortunate for the defense, so let's assume that West tries the ♣J instead. Dummy wins that and, for

want of a convenient entry to hand, Declarer leads a small trump to her Nine and West's Queen. West shifts to a Diamond, and if Declarer guesses right she'll hop up with the Ace and play another Heart. The defense never does score a Spade and Declarer has 10 tricks. Nicely played! If the defense is to score 4 tricks then West must find an opening Diamond lead (forcing an entry for a timely Spade shift from East).

23

♠ 54
♥ T9653
♦ T652
♣ T3

♠ T76 ♠ KQ83
♥ KQJ8 ♥ A
♦ J987 ♦ AKQ3
♣ K7 ♣ 9652

♠ AJ92
♥ 742
♦ 4
♣ AQJ84

Dlr South
Both Vul

<i>South</i>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>
1♣	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	2♥	Pass	3♣
Dbl	3NT	All Pass	

East is strong enough for an off-shape Double, and he would have to rebid a stopperless 1NT if West had responded 1♥. However, when West shows values East tries a cue-bid and the auction wends its way to 3NT. North leads the Club Ten, of course, ducked by South. It would be an insult to the opponents to play this one out trick by trick, and Declarer spares them that tedious fate by claiming 9 tricks immediately.

24

♠ 9854
♥ 984
♦ 4
♣ A9852

♠ AK32 ♠ QJ76
♥ J2 ♥ 76
♦ 9762 ♦ Q5
♣ JT3 ♣ KQ764

♠ T
♥ AKQT53
♦ AKJT83
♣

Dlr West
None Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	Pass	1♣	4NT!
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥

All Pass
After East's third-seat 1♣ opening South is willing to play in six of Partner's better red suit. South could have tried the Unusual 2NT, but that might allow West to get in a Spade lead-director (he presumably won't on the actual hand), so surely the way to go is 4NT, which is equally "unusual" and has the benefit of freezing West out of the auction.

If East Leads ♠K: The Spade loser goes away, then ♦A and a ruff, planning to cross back on a Heart and ruff another Diamond (makes an overtrick if Diamonds are 3-3, or one defender has ♦xx without the ♥J). But it's all moot when the ♦Q falls.

If East Leads ♠Q: Now Declarer is fighting just to make 12 tricks. He may adopt the line above ... or, as the opening trick marks West with ♠AK, he might place the ♦Q with East and finesse. 12 tricks either way.

25 ♠ J98
♥ 2
♦ J873
♣ A9865

♠ A73 ♠ KT654
♥ 75 ♥ Q983
♦ AK642 ♦ T5
♣ QJ3 ♣ 72

♠ Q2
♥ AKJT64
♦ Q9
♣ KT4

Dlr North
E-W Vul

that North is forced to overruff with a natural trump trick. That is indeed the case, but now North cashes the ♠A, crosses to South's ♠K, after which a fourth Heart promotes the sixth trick for the defense.

26 ♠ K875
♥ KT63
♦ J6532
♣

♠ T32 ♠ Q4
♥ A97 ♥ QJ42
♦ Q94 ♦ AK7
♣ Q763 ♣ AKT9

♠ AJ96
♥ 85
♦ T8
♣ J8542

Dlr East
Both Vul

more promising, don't you think? That just happens to be the only lead which allows Declarer to make his contract! Oh, well! There is one small point in the play. When Declarer is playing on Clubs he will be careful to cash the Ace (or King) first, that caters for a 5-0 Club break in either direction, whereas cashing the ♠Q first is fatal on the actual layout.

27 ♠ 43
♥ T862
♦ T96532
♣ T

♠ AK95 ♠ J6
♥ Q43 ♥ KJ97
♦ Q8 ♦ AK
♣ A873 ♣ KJ654

♠ QT872
♥ A5
♦ J74
♣ Q92

Dlr South
None Vul

like Clubs and have something in Hearts", or it could mean "I have something in Hearts but am nervous about 3NT (Diamond weakness)". If West does bid 3♥, we'd suggest that East make a natural slam invitation of 4NT, after which West must decide whether his lovely Clubs are enough to overcome his abhorrence for the rest of the hand.

The Bottom Line: 6♣ is a reasonable contract, clocking in at 53%. But here it's down one. As for 6NT, that is a poor contract, needing not only Club luck, but also a 12th trick from the majors.

28 ♠ T8
♥ A3
♦ AQT9642
♣ T7

♠ Q62 ♠ KJ743
♥ T5 ♥ 9842
♦ 8753 ♦ J
♣ AQ42 ♣ K98

♠ A95
♥ KQJ76
♦ K
♣ J653

Dlr West
N-S Vul

The Play in Hearts: South might get lucky and be allowed to play in 2♥, no doubt after a 2♣ overcall from West. West leads the ♠A, but that just makes life easier for Declarer. In the fullness of time Declarer's Club loser goes away on the ♦J and it's 8 tricks.

The Play in Spades: East will do well to balance with 2♠, it probably won't be doubled and, anyway, can only be beaten if the defense finds a trump promotion. South leads ♥A, ♥K, and a third Heart. Dummy cannot afford to ruff high, so he ruffs low, hoping

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♣	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

If E-W are playing Inverted Minors then West will not have a suitable Club raise at his disposal ... not good enough for a 2♣ raise ... not suitable for 3♣. But the hand looks No Trumpish anyway, so most Wests will respond 1NT and end up declaring 3NT. What will North lead against 3NT? Her longest suit is Diamonds but it's tempting to lead a major in this auction. Which major? Hearts look

Nowadays East's sequence is played by many as natural and strong, showing 5+ Clubs, often with slam interest. West loves his Club support, of course, but the red suits are rather dire. It would be most embarrassing for West to bid 3NT and then to watch the defense cash five Diamond tricks, when 6♣ was cold. So, we'd suggest an ambiguous 3♥. That could mean "I

like Clubs and have something in Hearts", or it could mean "I have something in Hearts but am nervous about 3NT (Diamond weakness)". If West does bid 3♥, we'd suggest that East make a natural slam invitation of 4NT, after which West must decide whether his lovely Clubs are enough to overcome his abhorrence for the rest of the hand.

The Bottom Line: 6♣ is a reasonable contract, clocking in at 53%. But here it's down one. As for 6NT, that is a poor contract, needing not only Club luck, but also a 12th trick from the majors.

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT

All Pass

North may have only 10 HCP, and her hand does fail the Rule of 20 test (see Board 5) by a smidgen, but the hand looks too good for a preempt, even a vulnerable one, don't you think? So, North opens 1♦, after which South's 3♣ was primarily intended to see if North had belated Heart support (and it might well have the pleasant side-effect of discouraging a Club lead against 3NT). A Club lead would hold Declarer to 10 tricks, but after other leads there are 13 available.

29 ♠ T3
♥ 7
♦ KT8742
♣ AQT3

♠ 865 ♠ AK92
♥ KQ9642 ♥ AJ85
♦ A ♦ J53
♣ K95 ♣ 84

♠ QJ74
♥ T3
♦ Q96
♣ J762

Dlr North
Both Vul

idea is to throw in North, forcing her to lead a Club or else to concede a ruff and discard. It's a terrific plan but, alas, it is South who wins that Diamond trick after which a Club lead through Declarer holds him to the same 10 tricks as everybody else. Style points only, we are sorry to say.

30 ♠ J9
♥ A8752
♦ QT32
♣ A4

♠ T3 ♠ A62
♥ KT64 ♥ Q
♦ AK5 ♦ J764
♣ QJ73 ♣ KT865

♠ KQ8754
♥ J93
♦ 98
♣ 92

Dlr East
None Vul

Using those methods, East bids 3♣, but West has nothing more to say. And without Lebensohl? Then, East has no good bid ... not enough for game ... too much for 3♣ (which could be bid with a very weak hand).

The Play in 3♣: 10 tricks are possible when the ♥J comes down in three rounds (allowing Declarer's Diamond loser to disappear).

The Play in 3NT: It's a rotten contract but it makes! Declarer ducks a Spade, and scores 9 tricks when North turns out to have ♥A, ♦Q and ♠A.

31 ♠ K92
♥ AJT43
♦
♣ AT952

♠ QJ864 ♠ AT5
♥ K2 ♥ Q9
♦ AJ64 ♦ Q9872
♣ 76 ♣ QJ4

♠ 73
♥ 8765
♦ KT53
♣ K83

Dlr South
N-S Vul

A Heart-Spade battle will lead us to one of three destinations:

If West plays Spades there will be 9 tricks, one way or the other ... either, the defense will get a Diamond ruff ... or, there'll be no ruff, but Declarer won't have the necessary entries to pick up the Diamonds.

If South plays Hearts (no doubt after a Michaels auction) then a Spade lead ends all suspense and Declarer has 9 tricks.

If North plays Hearts (after North overcalls 2♥) then Declarer can do a trick better. Her objective is to keep West off lead (avoiding the Spade lead through) while drawing trumps and setting up the Clubs ... Diamond lead is ruffed by Declarer; over to the ♠K; Heart finesse to East's Queen; the Diamond return is ruffed; cash ♥A and ♠A; exit a Club. 10 tricks!

32 ♠ J93
♥ A86
♦ KJT75
♣ KQ

♠ Q ♠ 642
♥ KJ73 ♥ QT954
♦ 984 ♦ A2
♣ AT642 ♣ J83

♠ AKT875
♥ 2
♦ Q63
♣ 975

Dlr West
E-W Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♣
Dbf	Rdbl	2♥	4♠

All Pass

North's second bid was a Support Redouble, showing three of Partner's Spades. Over to South. That is not a hand where it pays to be a point-counter and merely to invite game with 3♣. No, sir (or madam)! South has six Spades, shortness in the enemy suit, and a fitting card in Diamonds. All of that adds up to a 4♣ bid, wouldn't you say? 4♣ is very

much the winning bid (11 routine tricks), and if South feebly decides to invite game it's possible that North will decline (after all, she does have the useless ♠J and the doubleton ♠KQ as minus factors).