

ACBL-wide International Fund #2 • Wednesday afternoon • 5/11/11

Bd: 1 ♠ J 8 6 5
 Dlr: North ♥ 10 9 6 2
 Vul: None ♦ A 6 3
 ♣ J 5

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

♠ A K 10
 ♥ Q 5
 ♦ 9
 ♣ A K Q 7 4 3 2

An active set opens with a taxing deal. If the auction starts 1♣-1♦ overall, North is worth a negative double, and if East raises to 2♦, South can cuebid 3♦. North will try 3NT, and South can guess to pass in the best spot (yet, North might bid the same way with Q865, K962, A63, J5). Other Wests will make it tougher with a preemptive jump to 2♦. Then North may decline to double with such skimpy values, and if East raises to 3♦, South must make a good decision to double and then pass if North takes out to 3NT. At

some tables South will open 2♣: he does seem to have adequate playing tricks and defensive values. Then we would expect 2♣-2♦-Pass-3♦... leaving North-South to grope. Declarers at 3NT could take 12 tricks after a diamond lead, but we expect them to cash out for ten tricks and +430, beating pairs who land at 5♣.

Bd: 2 ♠ 9 3 2
 Dlr: East ♥ A 8 6 4 3
 Vul: N-S ♦ A 10 8 6
 ♣ J

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

♠ Q 6 4
 ♥ K 10 7 2
 ♦ Q 5
 ♣ 9 7 6 5

If West opens 1NT, East should raise to 3NT, put down the dummy and ask his partner to make it. The clubs should produce tricks at notrump, and the cheaper nine-trick game will usually be easier than 5♣. East will be nervous when North leads a heart to the king and South returns the ♥2; but all is well. West's nine forces out the ace, and West can win the third heart and run the clubs. North must find five discards, and if he lets go three diamonds and two spades, declarer may let the ♠J ride at the end and make two over-

tricks for +460 and a top. North might do better to discard three diamonds and two hearts, masquerading as a man with the guarded ♠Q. Then West might cash the ♠AK at the end or perhaps exit with a diamond to try for an endplay. We predict North-South will score well above average for -400.

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

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

♠ Q 9 7 5 3
 ♥ K 10 8 3
 ♦ 7 5
 ♣ 10 9

East-West can score well with a winning — if not theoretically correct — bidding decision. After 1♣-1♥, most Wests will rebid 1NT, and East may then try 2♦ (“new minor forcing”) or 3♦. After West takes a heart preference, East may bid 3NT to offer a choice of games: he has extra high-card strength and ragged hearts. West will usually pass. Some Wests will raise 1♥ to 2♥. Now East may simply bid 4♥, but if he knows West is often apt to raise with three-card support, he

may prefer a probing bid, and East-West may still land at 3NT. As it happens, 4♥ would often produce +620, but East will be down one due to the bad trump break. If North leads a club against 3NT, West can win nine tricks with an endplay or by guessing the ♠Q. (At double dummy he can take ten.) East-West should win 80% of the matchpoints for +600.

Bd: 4 ♠ 5 4
 Dlr: West ♥ K Q J 3 2
 Vul: Both ♦ 8 4
 ♣ K J 7 5

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

♠ A K 10 8 6
 ♥ A
 ♦ K Q 9 6 5
 ♣ A 8

Most Souths will open 1♠, though a case exists for 2♣: a one-bid would cause embarrassment if North passed with 54,876, J10874, K52. As it is, North will respond 2♥, and South bids 3♦, a “high reverse” promising extra strength. When North tries 3NT next, South will pass since his partner is a passed hand and the hands don't appear to fit well. North could take 12 tricks if East indiscreetly led the ♠Q, but otherwise the play may be awkward. If East leads the ♣9, North may grab the ace, saving an entry to his hearts (but in fact he could

still win 11 tricks after ducking to his jack). After a red-suit opening lead, North would have many routes to 11 tricks. We predict +660 to North-South, but we know what would happen if we sat East-West. Our opponents would bid to 6♥ — the only makable slam — handing us a zero.

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

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

♠ A 9 8 3
 ♥ J 2
 ♦ K 7
 ♣ A Q 9 7 2

North-South will start 1♥-2♣, 2♦-2♠. If South's hand were weaker, he would show his spades first; as it is, he can show his suits in the natural and economical order: longest first. Though expert opinions would vary, we think North's third bid should be 2NT even though South's “fourth-suit” 2♠ may not promise much in spades. If South has heart support, or a diamond fit, or solid clubs, he can finish describing his hand. South would actually raise to 3NT, which should be the contract at every table in any case. If East leads the ♠K,

North will take the ace and finish with 12 tricks when the cards lie well for him. But if instead East leads a low spade, or if he leads, say, the ♦9 and then fails to split his honors when North tracks a sneaky ♠10 later in the play, North can squeeze him in the black suits for 13 tricks, +720 and a top.

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

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

♠ Q
 ♥ Q 3
 ♦ Q 10 4 3 2
 ♣ 8 6 5 4 3

Some Easts will decline to open 2♥ with two aces, but we think East has about what a first-seat 2♥ at “red” vulnerability should show. West can raise to 4♥; but even if East passes or opens 1♥ as dealer, East-West should end at 4♥. East should win at least ten tricks, but the quest for an overtrick will be arduous. If South leads the ♠Q, East makes five by taking the ♠A, ♣A, ♥AK, and ♣K for a spade discard. He ruffs a spade and leads a diamond to the king and ace. If West returns a spade, East ruffs and leads

the ♦J, pinning North's nine and allowing for a ruffing finesse against South's ten later. East could also win 11 tricks by conceding a spade and setting up the long spades, guessing the lie of the trumps in the process. We predict +620 to East-West at most tables. Easts who are +650 should win all of the matchpoints.

Bd: 7 ♠ A Q J
 Dlr: South ♥ A 2
 Vul: Both ♦ A 9 8 4
 ♣ 10 8 5 2

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

♠ K 7 2
 ♥ Q 7 6 5 3
 ♦ K Q J 5
 ♣ 9

South might open if he had more defense and a stronger long suit. North will often open 1NT though almost half of his HCP are stuck in a short suit. South will probably transfer to hearts and bid 3♦ next. (Most pairs define a new-suit bid after a transfer as forcing; your analyst likes a non-forcing treatment.) Then North can try 3♠, showing values there but doubt about notrump, and South should steer away from 3NT. North-South's best matchpoint spot might be 4♥, and pairs who reach it might be +620 on another day. Here,

the cruel trump break limits them to nine tricks. North-Souths at 5♦ can make with double-dummy play: declarer can ruff two clubs, draw trumps and set up the ♥Q for the 11th trick. We think North-South should score well for +150 at a diamond partial; in real life, some pairs will be +600 at 3NT against weak defense.

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

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

♠ K Q 5
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ A 10 7
 ♣ Q 8 6 5 3

At many tables, East-West will bid 1♦-1♠, 2♦-Pass, buying the contract when South can't balance. North has an awkward choice of leads, and not every North will find the best lead of a spade that gives nothing away. Then careful defense should net two spades, two trumps and two hearts for +50 to North-South. At a few tables, West will raise East's 1♠ response to 2♠. That might be a winning action if East had a minimum responding hand with five spades or if he had a hand such as A1054, K52, 1042, KJ2 (he could bid 2NT next, and West would sign off

at 3♦). As it is, East will be marooned at 2♠, and if South leads a heart, East will need inspired play to escape with seven tricks and salvage -50 and a few matchpoints for his side.

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

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

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

A few Easts will open a lusty 1♠. South will bid 2♥, West raises to 2♠ and North can try 2NT. East can't risk competing with 3♠; North could double for +200. South may try 3♣ next, and North's 3♥ preference will be passed out. At tables where East doesn't open, South will open 1♥, and North may think he's too heavy for a 2♥ raise and temporize with 1♠, silencing East. South will rebid 2♣, and North's invitational jump to 3♥ will end the auction. (If North settles

for a direct raise to 2♥, East may try 2♠, and then East-West may play at 3♠ doubled, -200.) If East-West have bid spades, West will lead the ♠A and ♠10 against 3♥. If not, he may lead a diamond. In any case, South can win nine tricks only if he takes the ♥AK instead of finessing. We think North-South will score somewhere above average for +140.

Bd: 13 ♠ K 4
 Dlr: North ♥ K 10 8 5
 Vul: Both ♦ K 6
 ♣ 10 9 8 6 5

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

♠ J 10 9 5 2
 ♥ J 9 7
 ♦ 8 2
 ♣ Q 4 3

6♦ is a reasonable contract, and 7♦ can be made. Did you bid slam or have it bid against you? After 1♥, 1♠ response, East must rebid 2♦ despite his extra strength. (The difficulty in handling such medium-strength hands often drives players to adopt a forcing-club system.) West will usually raise to 3♦; his hand is worth more, but he has no attractive alternative. Then East may try 4♣, West can leap to 5♦ based on his excellent fit and ♠A, and East can reasonably go on to 6♦. If South leads

the ♠J, East can take the ace and pick up the trumps with a finesse. He can take the ♣AK, ruff a club, guess well to finesse with the ♥Q, and ruff two hearts in dummy to set up his fifth heart for the 13th trick. East-West may earn a top just for reaching and making slam. In real life, many pairs will languish at 3NT, +600 or +630.

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

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

♠ A 5 4
 ♥ 8 6 4 3
 ♦ A J 7 5
 ♣ 9 7

When North opens 1♥, South can issue a limit raise to 3♥; he has four trumps, a ♦J that is backed up by the ace, and a possible ruffing value in clubs. North has too many losers to go on. If East leads a trump, North can draw trumps and take his best play for a third diamond trick: a finesse with the jack. That play offers about a 50% chance; to take the ♦KA and ruff a diamond, hoping to drop the queen, is inferior. So North will lose a diamond, a spade and two clubs for +140. He might take ten tricks if East's opening

lead is the ♦6. North might judge that the lead is not low from an honor and might reason that East would have no cause to lead an aggressive diamond from the queen; so North can ruff out the queen to get a spade discard. We think North-South will get a 70% result for +170. One or two pairs will be +620.

Bd: 14 ♠ 2
 Dlr: East ♥ K J 2
 Vul: None ♦ A K 9 7 5
 ♣ 9 8 7 2

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

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

We could understand a strong 1NT opening by South: his high-card structure and three tens make the hand worth more than its HCP count. Then North could raise to 3NT or look for other games with 2♦ (forcing Stayman) or 2♠ (minor-suit Stayman). At most tables South will open 1♣, North will respond 1♦ and South will bid 1♠. Then some Norths will invite with 2NT, others with 3♣. Over 2NT, South is likely to raise, and over 3♣ he may continue with 3♦, obliging North to try 3NT. East will lead a heart, and North can win and try a losing diamond finesse. If East exits safely, North will take only nine tricks, but we still think North-South may score well for +400 since a few pairs will miss game. Moreover, if South plays at 3NT, a spade lead will still mean nine tricks, but if West happens to lead a heart, South may not make even 1NT.

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

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

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

When South opens 1♠, North has options: pass, a 2♠ raise, and a psychologically unencouraging but chance-giving (and often forcing) 1NT response. We wouldn't consider 2♠ with such a barren hand, but if North raises, South will bid 4♠. If instead North responds 1NT, South isn't quite worth a game-forcing jump-shift to 3♦. If he bids 2♦, North will return to 2♠, and South will try for game with 2NT or 3♠, passed out. As to the third option, if North passes 1♠, East will

balance with a double. South can redouble or try 2♦, and North-South may buy the deal at 2♠. On a good day South would make an overtrick at 4♠, but today the defense can pick him clean: ♦A, diamond ruff, ♣Q, diamond ruff, ♣A, diamond ruffed with the ♠J. Down three! North-Souths who get out for -50 may win most of the matchpoints.

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

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

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

At most tables, South's 1NT opening will end the auction. Even if East has a gadget available to show, say, clubs and a major, he may judge not to use it at this vulnerability: if East-West can make 2♣ for +90, they may do better to defend against 1NT and collect +100 or more. If West leads the ♦Q, declarer can take the ace and return the ♦10 to get three diamond tricks. East will discard hearts, and West still has time for the club shift that will hold declarer to seven tricks; but if West exits with a fourth diamond, South can come to

eight tricks with best play. At some tables, West's opening lead will be a spade: three, nine, ten. South will try the ♦AK next, see the break and continue with a heart to his king. He can always win seven tricks with best play. We predict that North-South will score about average for +90.

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

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

♠ J 10 9 6 2
 ♥ A 9
 ♦ 9 5 2
 ♣ 8 6 3

We expect most East-West to reach 4♥. A "Standard" auction will be 1♣, 1♥-2NT, 3♦-3♥, 4♥. At the adverse vulnerability, North-South can't afford to compete in spades. It looks as if West will duly take ten tricks. If North leads the ♦J, West will win and lead a trump to the nine, jack and queen. Then a few Norths may underlead the ♠A and present West with an overtrick, but most Norths will cash the ♠A. If North's opening lead happens to be the ♣Q, declarer is in

danger from a third-round club ruff. He can avoid it by putting up his king on the first trump or, more reasonably, by leading a spade at the second trick and later discarding his third club on the ♠K. We think +420 to East-West will be a common and average result.

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

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

♠ 10 8
 ♥ Q 9 6 4
 ♦ 7 4 2
 ♣ Q J 9 2

At some tables, South will decline to respond to North's 1♦ opening, and West will balance with 1♥. Then North might double for takeout, bid 1♠ or perhaps try 1NT, and North-South would probably play at a notrump partial. At other tables, South will scrape up a 1♥ response. North won't be happy about either rebidding 1♠ (with 18 HCP) or jump-shifting to 2♠ (forcing to game when South may have a weak hand), and some Norths will compromise with 2NT, passed out. North-South may reach game at tables

where South responds 1♥ and North rebids 1♠. Then if South sees it through with 1NT, North will raise to 3NT, and East-West will struggle in vain to beat the 23-HCP game. They have four obvious tricks but no suit in which to develop a fifth, and South will emerge with +400 for almost all the matchpoints.

Bd: 17 ♠ A 9 7 5
 Dlr: North ♥ K 8 5 3
 Vul: None ♦ K J 9
 ♣ 9 2

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

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

This board should strike no sparks. South will usually open 1NT, bolstered by his three tens. North will issue a 2♣ Stayman response and will raise South's 2♠ rebid to 4♠. West will lead the ♠K and a second club to East's ace. East can then see that the lead of a third club is safe — a trump shift is too dangerous — and South will ruff in dummy and make the normal percentage play in trumps, losing to the queen and making the contract on the nose. We expect North-South to register +420 at almost every table.

Bd: 21 ♠ A 4
 Dlr: North ♥ J 8 5
 Vul: N-S ♦ 6 5 3 2
 ♣ A K 3 2

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

♠ 10 7
 ♥ 7 6 3 2
 ♦ J 7 4
 ♣ Q 9 6 5

East-West should get to slam. When North opens 1♣ (surely there will be no 1♦ openers), many Easts will overcall 1♥. If West can respond 1♠, forcing, East can raise to 3♠, and if West cuebids 4♦ next, East won't stop short of 6♠. At many tables, a new-suit 1♠ bid by West won't be forcing. (That is the style of most experts, though your analyst agrees with the late Edgar Kaplan, who advocated a forcing treatment). Then West must start with a strength-showing 2♣

cuebid and bid spades next. East might then jump to 4♣ — a "splinter" bid to show spade support and club shortness — and West will be off to the races. A few Easts will double 1♣ for takeout, but again West's cuebid will start the partnership toward slam. East-West should score a 75% board for +980 and a top for +1210 when North indiscreetly doubles 6♠.

Bd: 18 ♠ Q
 Dlr: East ♥ 9 4 3
 Vul: N-S ♦ Q 3
 ♣ A K Q 8 6 5 4

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

♠ K 6 4
 ♥ A 6
 ♦ A K 7 5 4 2
 ♣ 3 2

South will open 1♦, and with East a passed hand, West will be willing to preempt in spades despite the taboo of four cards in hearts. If West bids 3♠, North will try 4♣ and may convert South's 4♦ to 5♣, passed out. Best defense would prevail: East leads a diamond for West to ruff, and a heart return assures the defenders of two more tricks. But if East leads the ♠10, North can be +620. West might induce the killing diamond lead if he risked a "Lightner" double of 5♣; and if North-South happened to bid to 6♣, West

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

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

♠ J 6 5
 ♥ A Q 10 5
 ♦ 6 4 2
 ♣ K Q 4

Most Souths will open, setting North-South the problem of avoiding an unmakeable game. After 1♣-1♦, 1♥, many pairs will be treating a jump-rebid by responder as invitational, so North must wheel out a "fourth-suit" 1♠, merely asking South to bid again. South really shouldn't bid notrump next unless he has something good in spades, but some Souths will try 2NT, and North will raise to 3NT. If instead South prefers a disciplined 2♦ preference, North-South aren't out of the woods, since North will try

again with 3♦, and North-South may still get too high, especially if they think "fourth-suit" bids are game-forcing. (Similarly, if North forces with 3♦ at his second turn, North-South must know what that bid is forcing to.) Pairs who are +130 at a diamond partial should score well, but a few Souths will make 3NT when West never attacks spades.

would surely double for that lead. North-South's best chance for a strong result may be to bid game at notrump. Over North's 4♣, South might try 4NT, which North might treat as to play; or North might cuebid 4♠ over South's 4♦, letting South try 4NT. Even if West leads a heart, South will have 11 tricks for +660.

Bd: 19 ♠ A Q J 9 8 2
 Dlr: South ♥ —
 Vul: E-W ♦ 9 2
 ♣ A Q 5 4 3

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

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

All we can predict here is that there will be as many different auctions as tables in the game. With the lucky lie of the cards, North-South can make three different grand slams, but they may bog down before reaching any slam. After 1♥-1♠, South is too heavy for a non-forcing jump to 3♥; he may jump-shift to 3♦. North may then rebid 3♠, and if South tries 3NT, North can continue with 4♣. South may then bid 4♥ to play, and if North merely bids 4♠ next, concerned about the lack of a fit, South may take a timid view also and pass. But North

Bd: 23 ♠ J 8 7 6 5
 Dlr: South ♥ 10
 Vul: Both ♦ Q 9 8
 ♣ J 10 5 2

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

♠ Q 9 3 2
 ♥ A K 7
 ♦ 10 7 6 4
 ♣ A 9

When South opens 1♦, many Wests will risk 1♥, hoping East's hand may be short in diamonds, long in hearts. Indeed East's hand is great for hearts, and he'll drive to game. He might try a "splinter" 4♦ bid to show a heart fit and diamond shortness, but West will sign off due to his weak trumps. West should make 4♥ somehow. Say North leads a trump, and South plays three rounds. West can win in dummy, throw a club on the ♠A and lead a club. If South ducks, the ♣Q wins, and West can guess to take the

♦AK, ruff a diamond and pitch his last club on the ♠K, making five. At tables where West passes over 1♦, some Norths may find a 1♠ response, and if East doubles, East-West will reach 4♥. But if North declines to respond, East will double, and if West headhunts by passing, South may escape for -500 and a good matchpoint result.

does have 13 HCP and almost self-sufficient spades opposite a partner who forced to game. If North makes any slam move, such as a jump to 5♠ over 4♥, North-South may reach the good matchpoint contract of 6NT. We think they will get a fine matchpoint result for +1020.

Bd: 20 ♠ A K 9
 Dlr: West ♥ Q J 9 2
 Vul: Both ♦ A 4 2
 ♣ 10 8 3

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

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

A few Wests will open 1♥, and since East is too heavy for a single raise, he'll often respond 1NT (forcing) and jump to 3♥ — passed out — over West's 2♦ rebid. But at many tables, West will pass as dealer. (Most Wests would open on 5, KQ1053, AQ963, 32, but the actual hand lacks body.) North will hold his nose and open 1♣, and after South responds 1♠, West can act with an "Unusual" 1NT bid. Then East-West may buy the deal at a heart partial; North-South can't afford to go to 3♠, where they would suffer -200.

Bd: 24 ♠ J 5 3
 Dlr: West ♥ J 8 5
 Vul: None ♦ A K 10 6 5
 ♣ 10 5

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

♠ Q 9 7 6
 ♥ 7 4 2
 ♦ J 7 4
 ♣ 9 8 2

Many Easts will open 2NT, and West's raise to 3NT will end the auction. South will lead a spade, and East will take a prosaic ten tricks. We expect +430 to East-West at most tables. The only variation will occur when East opens 2♣, treating his hand as too heavy for a 2NT opening. West will often respond with an artificial 2♦ — negative or waiting — and if North risks a lead-directing double, East-West must take care. If East unwisely goes ahead and bids 2NT, South will lead a diamond against the

eventual 3NT, and the defense can run the diamonds for down one. East spin straw into gold by passing, letting West bid 2NT. Then East can raise, and East-West may even wind up being +460 for a top when North leads a diamond.

Against 3♥, the defense can lead and continue spades, forcing the West hand. If declarer is careful to dislodge the ♦A before he takes the ♥AK, he can end with nine tricks. We think East-West will score slightly above average for +140. A few pairs will reach 4♥, an unlucky contract that may be doubled.

Bd: 25 ♠ 10 9 8 6 5
 Dir: North ♥ Q 10 8 6
 Vul: E-W ♦ A
 ♣ K J 8
 ♠ K Q J 7 4 ♠ 3 2
 ♥ A K 2 ♥ 5 4 3
 ♦ 8 2 ♦ K 10 9 4 3
 ♣ A Q 6 ♣ 10 7 3
 ♠ A
 ♥ J 9 7
 ♦ Q J 7 6 5
 ♣ 9 5 4 2

At most tables, West's 1♠ opening will end the auction. Suppose North leads a safe ♠10, and South takes the ace and shifts to the ♣5, ducked to North's jack. Another middle trump goes to West, with South pitching a diamond. West can then lead a diamond, and North wins and leads a heart. West is sure of four trump tricks (or three trumps and the ♦K) plus two high hearts and a club. Unless North contrives to get himself endplayed, or the defense drops a trick in some other fashion, West will make his contract exactly. East-West

may score no better than average for +80: at a few tables, South will balance hungrily with 2♦. West will double for takeout, and East can risk a penalty pass. The defense should collect two hearts, a club and three trump tricks for down one, and East-West should get a fine matchpoint score for +100.

Bd: 26 ♠ Q 7
 Dir: East ♥ Q J 7 5
 Vul: Both ♦ 8 7
 ♣ 10 9 8 7 4
 ♠ A 10 9 5 3 ♠ K J 8 4
 ♥ K 10 9 ♥ 6 3
 ♦ Q J 10 ♦ A K 4 3 2
 ♣ K J ♣ A Q
 ♠ 6 2
 ♥ A 8 4 2
 ♦ 9 6 5
 ♣ 6 5 3 2

East will open 1♦ (please, not 1NT with that hand), and when West responds 1♠, East can raise to 3♠, showing four-card support, a hand worth about 17 points, and unbalanced or semibalanced pattern. West should want to try for slam: an East hand such as KQ84,63,AK432,A2 would make 6♠ cold. We suspect, however, that most Wests will settle for 4♠ since no move toward slam will be obvious. A few Wests may try 5♠, and others may cuebid 4♣. East will cuebid 4♦ in return, but then both players will face close judgment

decisions. A few Wests will roar indelicately into 6♠ via Blackwood. Slam has about a 50% chance, and most declarers at spades will cash the top trumps and take 12 tricks. We predict East-West will score 11 matchpoints on a 12 top for +980, and any pair who happens to play at 3NT will do almost as well.

Bd: 27 ♠ A
 Dir: South ♥ Q 9 5 2
 Vul: None ♦ 9 5 4
 ♣ A 10 4 3 2
 ♠ 5 4 ♠ Q 10 9 6 3
 ♥ A 10 8 6 ♥ K J
 ♦ A J 7 3 2 ♦ K Q
 ♣ K 7 ♣ 9 8 6 5
 ♠ K J 8 7 2
 ♥ 7 4 3
 ♦ 10 8 6
 ♣ Q J

West will open 1♦ in second seat, East will respond 1♠ and West must rebid 1NT. A 2♦ rebid would suggest longer (or at least much stronger) diamonds, and a "reverse" to 2♥ would promise more than minimum strength. East can raise to 2NT, but West can't go on. North will lead a club, which happens to cost his side a trick. West could then take nine tricks by taking the ♣K, finessing with the ♥J, cashing the ♥K, running the diamonds (overtaking the second diamond and playing for an against-the-odds 3-3

break) and taking the ♥A. In practice, many Wests will be content to assure a plus by cashing the ♦KQ and the ♥KA and finishing the diamonds. We suspect East-West may score below average for +120. A few pairs will go minus, but others will be +150 and a few will rack up +400.

Bd: 28 ♠ K 10 8 2
 Dir: West ♥ 10 7 5 2
 Vul: N-S ♦ K 9 5
 ♣ 10 7
 ♠ 9 7 ♠ A Q J 6 5
 ♥ K J 4 ♥ A Q 8
 ♦ 10 3 2 ♦ A 7 4
 ♣ J 9 6 5 4 ♣ Q 3
 ♠ 4 3
 ♥ 9 6 3
 ♦ Q J 8 6
 ♣ A K 8 2

The West players must judge whether to respond with a five-point hand. (See also Boards 11 and 16.) If West prefers a textbook pass, North can't balance. South will lead the ♣K and shift to the ♦Q. East can reach dummy twice in hearts to take two trump finesses, but the defense will win a trump trick, two diamonds and two clubs, holding East to eight tricks. Nobody can say with certainty whether a response by West is a winning tactic, but this time East-West will fare poorly if West tries 1NT. He'll find himself catapulted into 3NT, and

North will lead a heart. West can again finesse twice in spades and clear the suit to set up an eighth trick, but that will prove all he can take. East-Wests who are +110 should earn most of the matchpoints.

Bd: 29 ♠ A K J 9
 Dir: North ♥ 9 8 4 2
 Vul: Both ♦ A 10 8 5
 ♣ A
 ♠ 5 4 3 2 ♠ 8
 ♥ A K ♥ 10 7 6 3
 ♦ Q J 7 3 2 ♦ K 9 6
 ♣ K 2 ♣ Q 9 6 5 3
 ♠ Q 10 7 6
 ♥ Q J 5
 ♦ 4
 ♣ J 10 8 7 4

North will open 1♦ and raise South's 1♠ response to 3♠. West, who has heard the opponents bid both of his suits, can't act despite his opening count. South has little excuse to bid again. West, on opening lead, has general strength, and North's bidding has suggested a distributional hand; since West has North's (possibly long) diamonds tied up, the indicated lead is a trump. As it happens, West can afford to take the ♥AK first, then lead a trump; and in fact, any reasonable defense will hold South to nine tricks.

South can cash the minor-suit aces and embark on a crossruff, but he can win only seven trump tricks in all. We think +140 to North-South will be the usual result, but a few North-Souths will attempt the pushy game and finish down one, giving East-West a top.

Bd: 30 ♠ A 8 6
 Dir: East ♥ 6 4
 Vul: None ♦ A 8 7 3
 ♣ J 10 7 5
 ♠ K J ♠ 10 9 7
 ♥ A J 7 5 ♥ K Q 10 9 3 2
 ♦ K Q J 4 2 ♦ 9
 ♣ 6 2 ♣ 9 8 4
 ♠ Q 5 4 3 2
 ♥ 8
 ♦ 10 6 5
 ♣ A K Q 3

If East opens 2♥, South needs more to try 2♠. If he passes, some Wests will raise to 4♥. Others will force with 2NT and pass East's 3♥ rebid. If instead West raises to directly to 3♥, a few Souths may back in with 3♠ or a double after two passes. At tables where South does overall 2♠, West must judge. If he jumps to 4♥, North may feel constrained to try 4♠. As to the play, note that the LOTT is on target. At hearts, East is off a diamond, two clubs and a spade. He may need a spade guess to avoid a

fifth loser, and if South hasn't bid but starts by cashing two high clubs, East may correctly place the missing spade honors. At spades, South is off a heart and two diamonds and must guess the trumps for nine tricks; the bidding and the concept of "restricted choice" may help him. Pairs in either direction who are +140 should score well.

Bd: 31 ♠ K J 10 6 3
 Dir: South ♥ —
 Vul: N-S ♦ Q 9 6 2
 ♣ A K 10 5
 ♠ Q 5 ♠ A 4 2
 ♥ A K 8 7 3 ♥ Q J 10
 ♦ A 10 4 ♦ 7 5 3
 ♣ 9 4 2 ♣ Q J 8 7
 ♠ 9 8 7
 ♥ 9 6 5 4 2
 ♦ K J 8
 ♣ 6 3

When West opens 1♥, North should overall 1♠: he lacks the values to double first and then bid spades. Moreover, East-West may be about to bid a lot of hearts, so North should get his five-card suit into the game promptly. East's hand is heavy for a single raise since he has an ace plus "quacks" that are in combination; he might reasonably try 1NT, 2♣ or a negative double. Suppose he settles for 2♥. After two passes, North can reopen with a double, East can show a maximum by redoubling, and South

will run to 2♠. After two passes, East will probably try 3♥, leaving North with the final guess, and Norths who make a bold decision to bid on may get a top since 3♠ can be made with best play for +140. If West is left to play at 3♥, he should win only seven tricks, and North-South may still get a fair matchpoint result for +100.

Bd: 32 ♠ J 9 7 6 3
 Dir: West ♥ A J 6 4 2
 Vul: E-W ♦ 5 3
 ♣ 6
 ♠ 5 ♠ A K Q 8 2
 ♥ K Q 9 ♥ —
 ♦ A J 9 7 6 ♦ K Q 10 4
 ♣ A 8 7 4 ♣ K Q 9 5
 ♠ 10 4
 ♥ 10 8 7 5 3
 ♦ 8 2
 ♣ J 10 3 2

East-West should handle this grand-slam deal. When West opens 1♦, East can initiate an investigative auction with a strong jump-shift to 2♠. (Those who play weak jump-shifts may find the auction awkward.) If West rebids 2NT, East can continue with 3♦ or 4♦, announcing that his jump was based on a big diamond fit. If West then cuebids in clubs, East can bid 7♦. Even if West is a pessimist and signs off at 3NT, East can continue with a 4♥ cuebid, and

then a 5♣ cuebid by West will let East bid the grand slam. Optimistic Wests may try Blackwood at some point, and East may respond 6♦, showing one ace and a void. Then West must guess East's void in order to bid seven. We think most East-Wests will get the job done somehow, and East-West should score only about 60% of the matchpoints for +2140.