

# ACBL-Wide Charity Pairs—Wednesday evening, March 21st, 2012—Set 84900

## Analysis by Barry Rigal

Board: 1 ♠ Q 10 7 3  
 Dealer: North ♥ K 8 7 3 2  
 Vul: None ♦ 10 9  
 ♣ 10 8  
 ♠ 8 4 ♠ K J 9 6  
 ♥ A Q 5 ♥ J 9 4  
 ♦ J 8 5 4 3 ♦ A Q 6 2  
 ♣ A K 9 ♣ Q 2  
 ♠ A 5 2  
 ♥ 10 6  
 ♦ K 7  
 ♣ J 7 6 5 4 3

East will open 1♦ and West should have an inverted minor raise available to describe his values and diamond support. East can show his spade stopper, letting West jump to 3NT to limit his hand and promise club and heart stoppers. There is a strong argument now for North to lead a spade rather than a heart; on a heart lead declarer wins in hand and knocks out the ♦K. If West reads the position perfectly he can fly up with the ♥A and set up spades; but that isn't going to happen. On an opening spade lead declarer needs to guess that suit to make even 10 tricks.

Board: 5 ♠ K J 5 4  
 Dealer: North ♥ Q 9 7 5  
 Vul: N-S ♦ 2  
 ♣ K Q 10 3  
 ♠ 7 3 ♠ Q 8 2  
 ♥ A J ♥ K 8 6  
 ♦ A J 10 8 5 4 ♦ 9 7 3  
 ♣ 8 5 4 ♣ A J 7 2  
 ♠ A 10 9 6  
 ♥ 10 4 3 2  
 ♦ K Q 6  
 ♣ 9 6

Assuming North does not open, then West might well decide to pass out the board rather than open 2♦. If West does open 2♦, North has an easy double and East will raise to 3♦. If South passes now, West will play 3♦ on a top club lead. Declarer does best to duck and cut the defenders' communications, but N/S can still prevail on precise defense. If South finds a responsive double of 3♦ (an overbid facing a passed hand) North might bring home 3♥ as the ♥J is inside, just so long as North places East with the ♠Q. 3♠ can be beaten on the heart ruff.

Board: 2 ♠ K J 7 4 3 2  
 Dealer: East ♥ -----  
 Vul: N-S ♦ Q 9 4  
 ♣ 8 5 4 2  
 ♠ Q 10 6 5 ♠ A  
 ♥ A Q 7 5 ♥ 9 8 6 2  
 ♦ 2 ♦ A J 8 7 5 3  
 ♣ A J 10 7 ♣ K 9  
 ♠ 9 8  
 ♥ K J 10 4 3  
 ♦ K 10 6  
 ♣ Q 6 3

Over East's 1♦ opening most Souths will overcall 1♥ (too dangerous is no excuse) and now West will double, and surely end up declaring 3NT. North can be excused for not leading his partner's suit here; a club lead picks up South's queen, but a spade lead gives declarer a headache. If he takes the deep finesse in hearts and guesses clubs he can end with at least nine tricks; but some will misguess clubs, or misjudge the deal in other ways. Meanwhile, if South does not bid, his opponents, E/W may well reach 4♥; this can only be made with the sight of all four hands.

Board: 6 ♠ A K J 5  
 Dealer: East ♥ A Q 6 2  
 Vul: E-W ♦ 7 4  
 ♣ K 10 5  
 ♠ Q 10 9 6 2 ♠ 8 7 3  
 ♥ 9 8 ♥ 10 4 3  
 ♦ A Q J 6 3 2 ♦ K 9  
 ♣ ----- ♣ A J 9 8 3  
 ♠ 4  
 ♥ K J 7 5  
 ♦ 10 8 5  
 ♣ Q 7 6 4 2

In third seat West might ignore the vulnerability and preempt – a 3♦ bid might well mess up the opponents as well as his partner. It is unclear what will happen next; and even if West opens 1♦ it won't be easy for N/S to come to a stop in a heart partscore. Imagine the following sequence in 4♥ by North, though; after three rounds of diamonds North ruffs high. He draws trumps, leads a spade to the jack, and runs the spades, ruffing the fourth. In the three-card ending dummy plays a club to the king, and East must concede!

Board: 3 ♠ K 8 5  
 Dealer: South ♥ A K 8 6  
 Vul: E-W ♦ A K Q 6 2  
 ♣ 3  
 ♠ 10 4 3 ♠ J 9 7 2  
 ♥ ----- ♥ 10 7 5 4 2  
 ♦ J 10 7 3 ♦ 9 8 4  
 ♣ Q J 10 7 6 2 ♣ 4  
 ♠ A Q 6  
 ♥ Q J 9 3  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ A K 9 8 5

You would expect N/S to find hearts, use keycard, then have to decide whether to play 7♥ or 7NT. In 7♥ on a passive spade lead it looks natural to win ♠Q and cash ♥Q, planning to ruff a diamond and claim. Our second consecutive 5-0 split forces declarer to cash both spades and just one club, not obvious by any means. Now after the three top diamonds declarer can cross-ruff the minors. Yes, 7NT works on an extended minor-suit squeeze but you wouldn't want to be there.

Board: 7 ♠ Q 8  
 Dealer: South ♥ 9 3 2  
 Vul: Both ♦ K 5 4  
 ♣ Q J 10 5 3  
 ♠ A 5 4 2 ♠ J 7  
 ♥ A K 7 ♥ 8 6 5  
 ♦ 9 8 ♦ A Q J 10 3 2  
 ♣ K 9 8 4 ♣ A 6  
 ♠ K 10 9 6 3  
 ♥ Q J 10 4  
 ♦ 7 6  
 ♣ 7 2

Although some aggressive passed hand Souths will wander into their opponents' auction, I'd expect a fair number of E/W pairs to bid unopposed to 3NT, leaving North on lead with a blind choice of the majors. Many will look no further than their club sequence, though a few bright sparks may go for the brilliancy prize by leading a LOW club (a better idea at teams than pairs). With the ♦K behaving, there are 11 top tricks for E/W in 3NT, and many indirect chances for a 12th. +690 should rake in the matchpoints for E/W.

Board: 4 ♠ 9 7 6 5  
 Dealer: West ♥ A 8 5  
 Vul: Both ♦ K J 5  
 ♣ A 7 5  
 ♠ A J 10 8 4 ♠ K Q 2  
 ♥ K 6 ♥ 10 3 2  
 ♦ A 9 7 3 ♦ Q 4  
 ♣ K 2 ♣ Q J 10 6 4  
 ♠ 3  
 ♥ Q J 9 7 4  
 ♦ 10 8 6 2  
 ♣ 9 8 3

Most Wests will open 1♠ and receive a constructive raise, then try for game and play 4♠. On the likely trump lead West wins in hand and drives out the ♣A. North must duck the first club, or life is simple for declarer. West wins the trump return, then has no choice after the 4-1 break comes to light except to draw trump and play North for the ♦K; today his luck is in. Yes, some sick puppies will open the West cards 1NT and get to 3NT; he will get lucky on a spade lead, when he will surely take at least ten tricks.

Board: 8 ♠ J 8 6 2  
 Dealer: West ♥ 9  
 Vul: None ♦ A J 8 5 3  
 ♣ 6 4 3  
 ♠ Q ♠ A 10 9 5 3  
 ♥ A Q 10 7 6 4 2 ♥ J 8 5 3  
 ♦ ----- ♦ 10  
 ♣ Q J 10 8 5 ♣ A K 2  
 ♠ K 7 4  
 ♥ K  
 ♦ K Q 9 7 6 4 2  
 ♣ 9 7

Most Wests will open 4♥, planning to act again if necessary, over which the value bid with the East cards looks to be simply to blast 6♥ without giving anything away. Even if East used Blackwood he wouldn't know how to get to seven scientifically, and today the grand slam needs trumps to behave -- and Keycard Blackwood would keep you out of it. I suppose a small percentage of the field might find their way to the grand slam and find their luck is in when the trumps behave.

Board: 9  
 Dealer: North  
 Vul: E-W

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

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

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

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

After North opens 1♠ South shouldn't raise to 2♠ with most of his values in a potentially worthless side-suit. Indeed, after 1♠ - 1NT - 2♣ a good case could be made for rebidding 2♥ -- look how many tricks the South hand might be worth in hearts, compared to in spades. Today both 2♥ and 2♠ are awkward contracts, which can be defeated. Against 2♠ the defenders must set up their clubs, while against 2♥ the bad trump break makes the defender's life easy. Meanwhile, if E/W can get into the auction they can score up 3♦ for 110, to beat all those +100s.

Board: 13  
 Dealer: North  
 Vul: Both

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

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

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

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

Neither East nor South has anything approaching a classical preempt, but some Souths will open 2♦ in third seat. If South passes, as most will, West can open 2NT. East should now drive to 4♥ via a transfer. It will come as no surprise that trumps break 5-0 -- not for the first or last time this set -- but even given that, the defenders have to be a little careful to set the game. A small trump lead nets the defenders five winners, but even if North leads a spade honor declarer should not be allowed to make ten tricks.

Board: 10  
 Dealer: East  
 Vul: Both

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

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

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

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

When South opens 3♦ West must double despite his aceless hand. Now North will surely bounce to 5♦ as an advance save against 4♠, putting East under a lot of pressure. Does he double and collect his 200 or 500, or should he gamble out 5♠? Doubling seems to be the restrained action here; you will almost always beat their game, while some pairs may not get to game your way, or go down -- and maybe you might get lucky and register 800. That reasoning produces a painless 500; this is the best E/W can do, since 5♠ has no play at all, apparently.

Board: 14  
 Dealer: East  
 Vul: None

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

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

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

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

In second seat you'd expect South to open 1♣ and West to overcall 1♠. Now North has too many clubs to be happy about defending; still, what else can he do but pass and hope for a re-opening double? The final contract here rates to be 1♠ now, and the normal lead of ♣Q allows N/S to emerge with +100. In a sense this is the best N/S can do; E/W could rescue themselves to 2♥ if someone doubles a spade contract for penalties. Still, some N/S pairs might play a no-trump partscore more rewardingly.

Board: 11  
 Dealer: South  
 Vul: None

♠ J 9 8  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ K 9 7 6  
 ♣ A K Q 9 7

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

♠ K Q 10 4  
 ♥ K 10 7 4 3  
 ♦ Q 2  
 ♣ 10 2

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

South's spade suit is highly unsuitable for a weak two, but many may yield to minimal temptation and open 2♠. Whether West bids or not, North should drive to the four level at once, though it might be wiser to throw in a lead-directing call along the way if South is likely to be on lead. In terms of par, E/W do best to defend and set 4♠ a trick. In practical terms, many E/W pairs will play in a red suit at the five level or higher. If East declares hearts then, on the lead of ♠A, some will make 12 tricks -- and North will collect 100% of the blame, deservedly.

Board: 15  
 Dealer: South  
 Vul: N-S

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

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

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

♠ K J  
 ♥ A 7 3  
 ♦ A K 9 6 4  
 ♣ A J 9

After South opens 2NT North will use Smolen: Stayman then 3♥ shows five spades and four hearts, game-forcing. South might opt to play the 5-2 fit for fear of blocked spades. Indeed, in 3NT on a club lead there are communication issues. Declarer's optimum line is to win the club lead and cash ♠K then overtake the ♠J and run the ♦10; if this loses, South has retained the diamond entry to the spades. When the ♦10 holds, declarer runs the spades, pitching two hearts and a club from hand, then repeats the diamond finesse for a splendid +490.

Board: 12  
 Dealer: West  
 Vul: N-S

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

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

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

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

Some will treat the West cards as a strongish no-trump, which might even end the auction. If so, West probably gets out for down one or two in 1NT on the lead of the ♥9, a card he would do well to duck. But most Souths will balance into 2♠ and make anywhere from seven to nine tricks depending on the accuracy of the defense. Elsewhere, West will open 1♥ and now East has to decide whether to respond 1NT to try to keep his opponents out, or whether to pass and hope that it is his side's deal. If South does play 2♠, the spade guess will swing a passel of matchpoints.

Board: 16  
 Dealer: West  
 Vul: E-W

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

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

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

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

Assuming nobody opens the West cards 2NT (why distort a hand type you can show perfectly in many other ways?) E/W will have a reversing sequence that starts 1♣ - 1♠ - 2♦. There is no standard way to develop the East cards now, but E/W might well find their way to hearts if East can show his 5-5 pattern. 6♥ is the best slam today, since it will make if either spades or clubs behave, while other slams have fewer chances. Anyone who brings home a slam here should score very well.

Board: 17  
 Dealer: North  
 Vul: None

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

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

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

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

The field will be all over the place here, after South sets up a game-forcing auction and shows his great clubs. Some will play game in spades, some clubs, some no-trumps, while quite a few may take a shot at 6♣ -- a poor spot that will surely go down today -- perhaps by at least one trick. With the bad breaks in both black suits, only the uninspiring contract of 3NT by North can be brought home -- and you still have to guess the position better than any human declarer is likely to do.

Board: 21  
 Dealer: North  
 Vul: N-S

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

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

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

♠ K 6 5 3  
 ♥ A 9 7  
 ♦ 7 6 5  
 ♣ A K 10

North has a marginal opening, on a deal where any positive action will help N/S reach a delicate 3NT. Even if North passes, South rates to open 1♣, and North will bid 2NT over West's jump overcall to 2♥, letting South raise to game. If North opens 1♦, a comparable auction may see South declaring 3NT. South has just eight top winners and if the defenders attack spades, declarer will have his work cut out for him; it is certainly not clear whether to win or duck. The contract is likely to come down to guessing clubs -- East had better not discard too many clubs too early!

Board: 18  
 Dealer: East  
 Vul: N-S

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

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

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

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

It will be hard for E/W to play partscore here. Almost everyone will bid: 1♦ - 1♥ - 3♥ - 4♥. If West declares 4♥ on a club lead, with South discouraging, it looks natural to win in dummy and try a diamond to the king and ace. North might as well return a trump, and declarer wins in dummy, plays ♦Q and ruffs a diamond, then cashes one top club, pitching a diamond from dummy, and leads a spade to the queen and king. This line produces nine tricks -- and that may score well enough, given the unfriendly lie of the cards.

Board: 22  
 Dealer: East  
 Vul: E-W

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

♠ 10 5  
 ♥ 10 2  
 ♦ 10 9 7  
 ♣ Q 10 7 5 3 2

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

♠ 8 6 4  
 ♥ A K 6  
 ♦ A 6 4 2  
 ♣ J 8 6

When East opens 1♠ South will stretch to double (it is safer, paradoxically, to come in now than to delay till the opponents have limited their hands). North should jump to 4♥ now, but is going to find himself in a contract with no chance to succeed except on an unlikely minor-suit squeeze in East, or an even more improbable bare ♦K. No game comes home here -- but, curiously, E/W could make ten tricks in clubs, if push comes to shove, so N/S can justify their overbidding if necessary. Making 3♥ will get N/S a fine score.

Board: 19  
 Dealer: South  
 Vul: E-W

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

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

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

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

West's hand is not ideal for a 2NT rebid after opening a minor and hearing a 1♠ response, but most will settle for the simple action rather than reversing into diamonds, or inventing a strong jump shift into clubs. If West does rebid 2NT he will play 3NT, against which the defenders can cash four hearts. Notice that 4♠ is a far better game; not only does it rate to take 11 tricks (except on repeated trump leads) it is also a much better contract, because you can probably survive 4-2 trumps easily enough.

Board: 23  
 Dealer: South  
 Vul: Both

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

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

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

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

After 1♥ - 1♠ - 2♦ what if anything ought South to bid? Some might pass and try to stay out of trouble, some will correct to 2♥, others may cross their fingers and rebid 2♠, comforted by their initial pass that North won't play them for that good a spade suit. Over the 2♠ call North will probably drive to 4♠, expecting to be able to ruff a club in his hand. On a top diamond lead declarer should probably play ace and a second club, and thus find a way to ten tricks one way or another.

Board: 20  
 Dealer: West  
 Vul: Both

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

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

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

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

Most Wests will open 1♦ (yes, passing is reasonable) and East might well elect to preempt to 3♦, setting South a horrible problem. No one will be cowardly enough to pass, but the choice is a simple 3♠ bid, or an aggressive Michaels cue-bid, or even a take-out double, crossing your fingers and hoping not to hear a 4♣ response. Today the Michaels cuebid works far better than the other actions, getting North to 4♥. That contract that would only be in jeopardy on a trump lead and a misguess after a diamond switch.

Board: 24  
 Dlr: West  
 Vul: None

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

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

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

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

When North opens 1♣ any red-blooded East will bid 4♥. South's heart void strongly suggests that a negative double will be passed out; equally, a bid of 4♠ or 5♣ is highly unilateral, though none the worse for that. Unless South bids 4♠ North should get his side to five of a minor, and West rates to compete to 5♥ as a two-way shot. 5♥ can in fact be made on a spade-diamond squeeze. By contrast 5♣ is far more challenging to make. A trump lead is best, after which declarer must win in hand, ruff a heart, play ace and a spade to endplay East.

Board: 25 ♠ 9 6 5 3 2  
 Dealer: North ♥ A K 6 5  
 Vul: E-W ♦ 4 3  
 ♣ K 5

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

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

Although this deal may well be passed out, I suppose South will open 1♠ at quite a few tables and a Drury sequence rates to see his side settle in 2♠, over which East could and should balance with 2NT for the minors. When E/W find their diamond fit, North will re-compete to 3♠. With his fifth trump and good hearts that looks an entirely reasonable action, but it turns a small plus into a minus. All of this suggests that passing the South cards might be a good idea – who'd a' think it?

Board: 29 ♠ 3  
 Dealer: North ♥ A Q J  
 Vul: Both ♦ J 10 5 3 2  
 ♣ A Q 9 7

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

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

When Norths open 1♦ East will double, and it is tempting for South to raise diamonds. However, I suspect most Souths will bid 1♠, and now should West double (penalties NOT responsive) or bid clubs then compete in spades? The latter approach works better at the table – despite the 4-0 club break E/W have a very simple nine tricks in clubs, losing three trumps and a heart. By contrast, E/W can only come to seven winners in spades, and N/S have a painless eight tricks in diamonds.

Board: 26 ♠ 9 5 4  
 Dealer: East ♥ Q 3  
 Vul: Both ♦ J 7  
 ♣ A Q 10 8 7 6

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

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

When East opens 3♥ it is very hard to blame South for acting here – after all, why shouldn't South be facing the West not the North cards -- when 4♠ his way is cold? The gamble of doubling would backfire spectacularly today, since North will jump to 5♣ and be doubled and set at least 1100! Conversely, if South bids 4♦ he will be more likely to escape undoubled in his final contract. 3♥ might be the contract at quite a few tables, with nine or ten tricks the normal result one way or another.

Board: 30 ♠ 6 2  
 Dealer: East ♥ K J 8  
 Vul: None ♦ A Q 8 7 4 3 2  
 ♣ 8

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

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

After East opens 1♠ some Wests will be able to respond 2♥ without forcing to game, but more Wests will start with a 1NT call, planning to introduce hearts later. When North preempts to 3♦ East rates to jump to 4♠, and now West will be tempted to bid on with a 5♦ cuebid. That may tempt East to bid 5♥ but E/W can stop in 5♠ -- just as well, because the spade finesse is losing and declarer will have to find the ♣Q to bring home 11 tricks. +450 is going to be an extremely common result here.

Board: 27 ♠ J 10 8 7 4  
 Dealer: South ♥ 10  
 Vul: None ♦ K 9 6 3  
 ♣ A J 8

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

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

The South cards can most accurately be described by opening 1♥ and rebidding 3♥ over 1♠ -- yes, you'd like to be able to show the spade support, but the jump rebid looks to be the least lie. North has a natural 3NT bid now, and it would be a big gamble for South to act again now. In 3NT on either minor suit lead declarer can come to nine winners by any normal line that involves cashing out the hearts -- but I suppose North might take the spade finesse after a diamond lead. The spade game will rack up 11 tricks and outscore no-trumps.

Board: 31 ♠ K 10 5 3 2  
 Dealer: South ♥ K 7  
 Vul: N-S ♦ J 9  
 ♣ A J 6 5

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

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

When South shows the red suits, Norths may simply jump to 3NT or use fourth suit and then bid 3NT. If North produces an invitational 2NT call at his second turn, South should be able to bid 3♦, non-forcing. North must correct to 3♥, and let South play there. Today is a day for discretion: with the red suits lying so unfavorably, a club lead will set 3NT easily enough, while hearts might make as many as nine tricks. Of course, if you switch the East and West cards, 3NT would be a cinch.

Board: 28 ♠ K J 9 8 6  
 Dealer: West ♥ 9 7 6 4  
 Vul: N-S ♦ K Q  
 ♣ K Q

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

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

The typical auction will see North open 1♠ and East overcall 2♥. South can get his slam values and heart control across very nicely by jumping to 4♥ as a splinter in support of spades. North might well sign off, but it would only be mildly aggressive to use keycard now (since facing three aces and the trump queen he can underwrite slam). The disappointing response will let him sign off in 5♠, where diligent research has not discovered any line of play that will produce a number of tricks other than 11.

Board: 32 ♠ A J  
 Dealer: West ♥ K J 10 6  
 Vul: E-W ♦ K J 5  
 ♣ 9 7 4 3

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

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

Unlike deal 31, a spade partscore looks quite high enough for South; but with spades lying miraculously well and the ♥Q onside declarer ought to find a way to bring home ten tricks in spades. Note that on a club lead South should duck the ♣K to try to keep West off play and avoid the embarrassing diamond shift. After winning the second club he will finesse in trumps, cash the ♠A, then ruff a club back to hand to draw the last trump and finesse the ♥J. Now ten tricks will prove straightforward, probably for a good score for N/S.