

ACBL-Wide Charity Game #2 – Nov. 5, 2014 – Set 107574

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

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

♠ A J 4
 ♥ Q J 6 4 3
 ♦ K 5
 ♣ Q 6 5

At many tables N/S will bid unopposed to 2♥ via a third-in-hand 1♥ opening, typically via Drury, letting South deny game interest. But the occasional West will be in position to risk an overcall or balance of 2NT for the minors, gambling on finding East with either values or a fit. Alas, today partner comes through with the worst possible hand he could hold, and E/W should be doubled and set at least 300. Against 2♥, the defenders must work hard to cash their club tricks before one gets away on the top diamonds. +140 will be surprisingly common, with +110 scoring N/S poorly.

Bd:5 ♠ K 7 6 3
 Dlr: North ♥ A 8 6
 Vul: N/S ♦ A 10 9 5
 ♣ 7 4

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

♠ 8 5 4
 ♥ 7 4 3 2
 ♦ K Q J
 ♣ A J 8

This board might commonly be passed out, though N/S have two 11-counts facing one another that today offer decent play for partscore in all four sensible strains. The best practical result N/S can get is to stop in 1NT, a contract they could reach in a variety of ways. The way the cards lie, they should be able to establish an extra trick in each black suit, to bring home +120 with a minimum of discomfort, no doubt for an excellent pairs score. Anyone going plus with the E/W cards will scoop the pool here.

Bd:2 ♠ A Q 5 3
 Dlr: East ♥ K 10 9 8 5
 Vul: N/S ♦ 6 5
 ♣ 3 2

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

♠ J 10 2
 ♥ Q J 7 4
 ♦ A J 8
 ♣ J 8 4

In third seat some Wests may open 1NT for obstructive purposes, and might even play there, collecting +90 after an initial heart lead. Will that be good or bad? It is hard to tell, because if West opens 1♣, N/S may find their way to hearts, where they have eight tricks painlessly enough. Equally, E/W might end up in a minor-suit partscore. Absolute par on this deal is for E/W to play diamonds rather than clubs, because the entry position allows you to take 10 tricks in one strain and only nine in the other. Results of +130 will be few and far between for E/W.

Bd:6 ♠ A 9 7
 Dlr: East ♥ A 8 7 4 3
 Vul: E/W ♦ 5
 ♣ Q 8 6 3

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

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

Aggressive Norths may intervene over a strong notrump – especially if they can show hearts and a minor. If North passes, then West rates to declare 1NT on a low heart lead, after which he will play to set up diamonds. South must win his ♦A and shift to the ♣10 to hold declarer to seven tricks. If North comes in to show either hearts and a minor, or clubs and another suit, it will be a real struggle for N/S to collect more than seven tricks, wherever they end up. In diamonds, E/W can find their way to +110, even on the best defense of an early club lead.

Bd:3 ♠ J 2
 Dlr: South ♥ K J 8 6 4 3
 Vul: E/W ♦ K Q 6 3
 ♣ Q

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

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

North's opening bid in third seat is a question of tactics as well as judgment. Some might preempt, but a one level call may show values and keep the opponents out just as effectively. You pay your money, you take your choice. Today a 3♥ call might silence East, but should not prevent West from reopening. The real question may be whether E/W will find 5♣ on their combined 21 HCP. Many will stop off in less successful strains (spades) or at less rewarding levels (partscore), so +600 or even +620 in 5♣ will earn a fine score for East.

Bd:7 ♠ Q J 4
 Dlr: South ♥ Q 10 5
 Vul: Both ♦ A K 7
 ♣ A 8 6 5

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

♠ A 8 7 5 3
 ♥ 7 3
 ♦ Q 9 4
 ♣ K Q 3

Some Souths will deem their hand worth a 1♠ opening, while if they don't, a few foolhardy Wests might pretend they have a weak-two opening. In the first instance North will make a slam-try en route to 4♠. If South passes, and West opens 2♥, then North should overcall 2NT and South will transfer and offer a choice of games. This is again likely to lead to a contract of 4♠, probably by North. Par today is for N/S to scramble 10 tricks in notrump by shutting out the hearts, while 4♠ by North is unluckily defeated on two club ruffs.

Bd:4 ♠ Q J 6 3
 Dlr: West ♥ 10
 Vul: Both ♦ K 10 9 5
 ♣ K 10 7 4

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

♠ A 7 5
 ♥ A Q J 6 4 3
 ♦ 4 2
 ♣ Q 8

Some Souths will choose an opening bid of 2♥ if their methods allow them to do so, but most will open 1♥. West may stretch to double now – without much justification – and if he does, he should be appropriately punished when North takes East to the cleaners either in clubs or notrump. The defenders ought to hold East to at most five tricks in clubs, and in 1NTx by East, on a low spade lead and a shift to the ♥10, one can imagine penalties of 1100 being recorded. Thus any South who scores +140 in hearts may be disappointed with the matchpoint result.

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

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

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

Few Wests will open here, so East kicks off with 1♥ in third seat, and West can then choose between a 1NT or 1♠ response. (The danger of bidding 1♠ is to finish up in a 4-3 fit, though a call of 1NT may lose the spades.) After 1♥ - 1NT - 2♣ might West find an eclectic raise to 3♥? If he feels that a doubleton double-honor constitutes three-card trump support, then he might even start the ball rolling with Drury, I suppose. E/W can take nine tricks in either clubs or hearts, but do far less well in notrump. +140 should earn E/W a fine result here.

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

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

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

Whether East elects to overcall 1♦ over 1♣ or stays discreetly silent, one would imagine that at 99 tables out of 100 South will follow a direct or indirect route to 4♥. The exceptions could come where South has some delicate modern science to get North to be declarer, perhaps by using transfer responses to 1♣? With three losers in aces and trump tricks, the overwhelmingly common result will be N/S+420, with a few Wests managing to lose their ♦A by doing something careless or undignified (I'll let the pained East choose the appropriate word).

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

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

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

If West is allowed to open in fourth seat (yes some incorrigibles may deem the North hand worth a 1♠ bid), he will start with 1♣, doubled by North, with East redoubling to show values. Presumably South will bid 1♥ for the lead, and now West has no textbook to advise him what to do. I'd close my eyes and bid 3♥, then over my partner's 3NT call produce a slam try of 4♣, and accept the sign-off in 4NT. With clubs behaving and the ♥A and ♦K outside you can make 6♣ or 6NT from the West seat, but +690 should also score E/W reasonably enough.

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

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

♠ Q J
 ♥ K 9 8 6
 ♦ 10 9 8 6
 ♣ K 5 2

When East opens a Culbertson-approved 1♣, West will respond 1♠, and North will double. This allows East to raise spades, and South to come in with 3♥. A few Easts may aggressively re-compete to 3♠ now. West will sometimes be doubled there, and set 200, but even 3♠ undoubled should test his declarer play. If the defenders cash four red-suit winners and shift to trumps, West can draw three rounds of trumps ending in hand. Then he plays off the heart winner, and passes the ♣J, to escape for down one. -100 may matchpoint reasonably enough, with N/S cold for +140 in hearts.

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

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

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

When West overcalls 1♥ over South's 1♣, North's hand is more appropriate for a negative double than a response of 1NT, letting East raise to 2♥. It is hard to imagine South not joining in with 3♣ now, after which West can logically compete to 3♥. Now North's double might shake the rafters, even if he is using bidding boxes. He may be surprised and disappointed that all his side can collect is their three aces and two trump winners. Since N/S can take nine tricks in diamonds (though how they get there is less clear), 3♥x down one is actually par on the deal.

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

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

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

In third seat North has a normal 1♠ opening, over which foolhardy Easts will overcall 2♦ — he neither has the high cards, side-suit shape nor trump length for this action. If East passes, N/S rate to buy the contract in 2♠, making +110 unless declarer runs into a club ruff. By contrast, if East overcalls, E/W may find their way to a red suit at the three level, with 3♥ on the weaker eight-card trump fit a much easier contract to handle than 3♦. This phenomenon has a name — the Vondracek effect.

Bd:15 ♠ A 6 4
 Dlr: South ♥ Q 10
 Vul: N/S ♦ Q 9 8 2
 ♣ A 8 4 2

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

♠ 7 5
 ♥ 4
 ♦ J 10 7 6 5
 ♣ K Q 9 7 3

Most Wests not playing a weak notrump will open 1♦ here and find their way to 4♥ from the East seat, making the predictable 10 tricks on a top club lead. There will be a very few pairs missing game here, and a small number of people somehow reaching 4♥ from the West seat. They may thus avoid the club lead, and find a way to 11 tricks. Of course, any N/S pairs locating their minor-suit sacrifice would find themselves going for far too large a penalty.

Bd:12 ♠ A Q 8 6
 Dlr: West ♥ Q J 10 8 4
 Vul: N/S ♦ 10 6
 ♣ K 4

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

♠ 5 2
 ♥ A 6 2
 ♦ Q J 9 7 4
 ♣ Q J 5

More Wests will pass than open this awkward 11-count, though the vulnerability may tempt a few Wests to open 1♣ or even 1♦. Assuming West passes, N/S rate to bid and raise hearts, letting West double and dig his side into deep trouble. If East is forced to bid spades, North should be happy to double. After repeated trump leads the defenders might hold East to five tricks in 2♠x. In 2♥ North has nine tricks; however, he will have to be careful to prevent the defense promoting a trump one way or another.

Bd:16 ♠ K J 7 5 2
 Dlr: West ♥ K J 4 2
 Vul: E/W ♦ 5
 ♣ K 7 6

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

♠ 8 4 3
 ♥ A Q 6
 ♦ K 8 6 3
 ♣ A 4 3

At favorable vulnerability, no one could blame North for opening his hand, given his honor-suit structure and easy rebid. But this won't work well today, since South will surely drive to game now. With the diamond ace offside and all the trump honors unfavorably located, eight tricks are the limit for N/S in 4♠. I'd expect any North who finds a way to stop in 2♠ will come close to garnering every single one of the matchpoints, while even -50 should register above average for N/S.

Bd:17 ♠ Q 5 3 2
 Dlr: North ♥ 6
 Vul: None ♦ K 9 7 6 4
 ♣ J 9 8
 ♠ K 10 8 7 4 ♠ A 6
 ♥ Q J 9 7 3 ♥ 10 5 2
 ♦ J 5 ♦ Q 10 3 2
 ♣ 7 ♣ 10 6 5 4
 ♠ J 9
 ♥ A K 8 4
 ♦ A 8
 ♣ A K Q 3 2

A few Souths may go low and open 1♣, but most will have to decide between showing a strong balanced hand or describing a game force with clubs and hearts, my choice. All normal routes will lead N/S to 3NT, though it could be played either way up, and with nine top winners, the battle is on for overtricks. The defenders do best to set up hearts, but with diamonds not breaking, only a spade lead makes the route to an overtrick simple. 5♣ should also prove easy to handle, so long as declarer takes his heart ruffs in dummy.

Bd:21 ♠ Q 10 5
 Dlr: North ♥ A K Q
 Vul: N/S ♦ A 10 8
 ♣ 9 8 7 4
 ♠ A K 9 ♠ 8 3
 ♥ 5 4 ♥ J 10 9 8 3 2
 ♦ J 7 5 4 3 ♦ K
 ♣ Q 6 3 ♣ A 10 5 2
 ♠ J 7 6 4 2
 ♥ 7 6
 ♦ Q 9 6 2
 ♣ K J

The adventurous Easts will preempt to 3♥ over 1NT instead of bidding 2♥ (the sensible call even if it shows hearts and a minor, as in Cappelletti). Curiously, if East bids 2♥, South might simply bid 2♠, relying on partner to move on with a fit, while over 3♥ the choice seems to be between a negative double and a forcing call of 3♠. 4♠ can be defeated easily enough, but the defenders need to lead clubs to trick one to beat North's 3NT, (and at double-dummy South could always find a way home with nine tricks).

Bd:18 ♠ 10 9 6
 Dlr: East ♥ A Q 2
 Vul: N/S ♦ A K Q 10 6 4 3
 ♣ —
 ♠ J 7 4 3 2 ♠ 8
 ♥ K 5 ♥ J 10 6 4 3
 ♦ 7 ♦ 9 5 2
 ♣ A K 9 8 4 ♣ 10 7 5 3
 ♠ A K Q 5
 ♥ 9 8 7
 ♦ J 8
 ♣ Q J 6 2

South's 1♣ opening will get North thinking about slam immediately - and even more so when South introduces his spades. After a game-forcing fourth-suit sequence, allowing South to show a minimum balanced hand, there will be plenty of pairs reaching 6♦, which is dependent either on spades behaving, or holding the heart losers to one. That seems straightforward enough on a heart lead, but in any event all routes produce 12 tricks...don't they? Bidding slam should score N/S well - but not if they select 6NT.

Bd:22 ♠ A Q
 Dlr: East ♥ K 7
 Vul: E/W ♦ J 9 6 5 3
 ♣ K J 8 4
 ♠ 6 3 2 ♠ K J 10
 ♥ 9 6 4 3 ♥ A 10 5
 ♦ 2 ♦ A 10 8 4
 ♣ Q 9 5 3 2 ♣ A 7 6
 ♠ 9 8 7 5 4
 ♥ Q J 8 2
 ♦ K Q 7
 ♣ 10

Another strong notrump, this time for East, with South having a far less attractive entry into the bidding (presumably, he would show the majors if he dared to intervene). As if to demonstrate what a foolhardy idea it is to act here, N/S can make a partscore in diamonds or notrump, but not in either major! Playing a defense such as Meckwell, where double shows the majors or one minor, South might score a goal by doubling, after which North ought to work out to pass. If South stays silent, 1NT figures to go two down on repeated spade leads.

Bd:19 ♠ K Q 10 8
 Dlr: South ♥ 6 5 3 2
 Vul: E/W ♦ 8 5
 ♣ K 8 5
 ♠ A J 7 6 ♠ 9 5 4 3 2
 ♥ K ♥ A
 ♦ J 10 9 7 6 4 ♦ K 3
 ♣ 6 2 ♣ Q J 9 7 4
 ♠ —
 ♥ Q J 10 9 8 7 4
 ♦ A Q 2
 ♣ A 10 3

The South cards are unsuitable for a high-level preempt, despite the combination of the vulnerability plus the void in spades arguing for aggression. On opening 1♥, South will hear his partner raise hearts, after which one could not blame East too much for entering the auction in what some define as a pre-balancing sequence. South will bounce to 4♥, and quite a few Wests may try their luck in 4♠, doubled by North with avidity. Yes, 4♥ makes painlessly enough, but +450 may prove an unrewarding pairs result, since 4♠x goes down a cool 1100!

Bd:23 ♠ 10 9 7 5 4
 Dlr: South ♥ J 9 7 6 5 2
 Vul: Both ♦ A
 ♣ A
 ♠ — ♠ 8 2
 ♥ Q 3 ♥ 10 8 4
 ♦ K 9 7 4 ♦ J 10 6 5 3
 ♣ K J 8 7 5 4 2 ♣ Q 9 6
 ♠ A K Q J 6 3
 ♥ A K
 ♦ Q 8 2
 ♣ 10 3

The South hand is an Acoll two-bid, but not nearly good enough for a 2♣ opening. After a 1♠ opening, and perhaps a 4♣ preempt from West, North must do more than bid 4♠. If he bids 5♣, South will try 5♥, and maybe North can bring himself to bid 6♦, letting South leap to 7♠ - how could he do less with that trump suit? Of course it is far easier with the sight of all four hands, and getting to 6♠ won't score N/S that badly. Mind you, there might even be some 7♣ sacrifices along the way, cheap at 1100 or so.

Bd:20 ♠ 3
 Dlr: West ♥ Q 9 7
 Vul: Both ♦ K Q 8 5 4
 ♣ A Q 10 5
 ♠ K 8 5 ♠ A Q 7 6 2
 ♥ A J 8 5 2 ♥ 10 6 4
 ♦ 9 ♦ 6
 ♣ 8 6 3 2 ♣ K J 9 4
 ♠ J 10 9 4
 ♥ K 3
 ♦ A J 10 7 3 2
 ♣ 7

Most Easts will not hesitate to overcall 1♠ over 1♦, and now N/S have a tough job to decide on both strain and level here. Today the diamond game is simplicity itself, with just the two major-suit aces to lose. Conversely, notrumps is a complex affair. If the defenders play four rounds of spades, then declarer will have to guess to knock out the ♥A for his ninth trick. However, the defenders have many routes to success, either by West attacking clubs, East shifting to hearts for the ♥J from West, or even working out to duck an early spade to retain communications.

Bd:24 ♠ 7 4 2
 Dlr: West ♥ A Q J 3 2
 Vul: None ♦ —
 ♣ A K 6 4 2
 ♠ Q 6 ♠ K 10 3
 ♥ 8 4 ♥ K 10 9 7
 ♦ A K Q J 6 5 4 ♦ 10 7 3 2
 ♣ 9 7 ♣ Q 3
 ♠ A J 9 8 5
 ♥ 6 5
 ♦ 9 8
 ♣ J 10 8 5

If West opens 1♦, North can show hearts and clubs, letting South pick clubs and permitting North to drive to 5♣. There, the favorable lie of the spades and clubs compensates for the heart finesse losing. It may be harder for North if West opens a gambling 3NT. North might double then bid hearts, but South can do best for his side by declaring spades, a strain that might produce 10 or even 11 tricks. The E/W save in 5♦ costs 300, which will matchpoint respectably - but only if the field is bidding and making game, by no means a sure thing.

Bd:25 ♠ 95
 Dlr: North ♥ J765
 Vul: E/W ♦ KQ63
 ♣ 953
 ♠ AKQ62 ♠ 843
 ♥ KQ10 ♥ 8432
 ♦ 982 ♦ 1074
 ♣ Q10 ♣ K84
 ♠ J107
 ♥ A9
 ♦ AJ5
 ♣ AJ762

In third seat at pairs South may upgrade his aces and five-card suit and treat his hand as a strong notrump. When West shows his spades, North must double for takeout, letting South introduce his clubs, and leaving North the problem of whether to look for a better strain. West might well come to +110 in spades against all but the most passive of defenses; equally, N/S can come to +90 in diamonds, and +110 in clubs. (Win an early heart, cash ♣A, then run four rounds of diamonds to pitch a heart, while a defensive trump trick vanishes).

Bd:29 ♠ 106
 Dlr: North ♥ A87
 Vul: Both ♦ J932
 ♣ J754
 ♠ J ♠ AK752
 ♥ KJ9654 ♥ Q
 ♦ AK106 ♦ Q874
 ♣ A8 ♣ Q92
 ♠ Q9843
 ♥ 1032
 ♦ 5
 ♣ K1063

After East opens 1♠ and hears a 2♥ response no one would bid 3♦ as opposed to repeating the spades... would they? (It is sensible to play 3♦ promises extra shape or extra high cards, and East has no reason to go to the three level). Now the action might sensibly continue 3♦ - 4♦ - 5♣ - 6♦. This gets you to a decent slam, wrecked on the rocks of a poor trump break. It will be highly aggravating for the unlucky E/Ws to discover that with hearts breaking favorably, accurate play will yield at least 11 tricks in a notrump or heart game.

Bd:26 ♠ A862
 Dlr: East ♥ J32
 Vul: Both ♦ QJ6
 ♣ K109
 ♠ 97 ♠ KQJ54
 ♥ 84 ♥ Q106
 ♦ K1054 ♦ A983
 ♣ AQ876 ♣ 4
 ♠ 103
 ♥ AK975
 ♦ 72
 ♣ J532

E/W will generally bid unopposed here. If using a semi-forcing notrump the auction should go: 1♠ - 1NT - 2♦ - 3♦, West knowing East will have four diamonds, for a comfortable +110. But if a forcing notrump is in use, then West might convert 2♦ to 2♠, with the fear of a 4-3 diamond fit at the back of his mind, or just the idea that at pairs the 5-2 spade fit figures to play well enough. This is true enough on a top heart lead, but technically the defense could prevail against 2♠ on an initial club lead. As Dana Carvey might say: "Not gonna happen!"

Bd:30 ♠ A5
 Dlr: East ♥ J873
 Vul: None ♦ 97
 ♣ J8653
 ♠ 109872 ♠ KJ63
 ♥ 4 ♥ AK1065
 ♦ AK82 ♦ J6
 ♣ 942 ♣ AQ
 ♠ Q4
 ♥ K92
 ♦ Q10543
 ♣ K107

Wherever a natural base is in use one would expect East to open 1♥ and produce a jump raise in spades, giving West a simple task to boost to game. North's normal club lead gives the defenders a club trick at once, and South rates to shift to diamonds. After this, declarer might sensibly elect to ruff out hearts before drawing trumps, in which case the defenders can manage to promote a second trump trick for themselves. For the record, if East plays 6♠, he can bring home 12 tricks by first guessing spades, then ruffing out the ♥K.

Bd:27 ♠ J4
 Dlr: South ♥ K10742
 Vul: None ♦ Q76
 ♣ A74
 ♠ 862 ♠ AK93
 ♥ AQ8 ♥ J653
 ♦ 10942 ♦ K5
 ♣ KJ10 ♣ 632
 ♠ Q1075
 ♥ 9
 ♦ AJ83
 ♣ Q985

A candidate for a pass-out? Not really at this vulnerability, where one can imagine most Norths will feel compelled to open 1♥ (or even 2♥) and East would find a call if he did not. After the projected 1♥ call, East must pass, letting South respond 1♠ and North might now pass or bid 1NT depending on how macho he feels. 1NT plays acceptably for six or seven tricks (only a club lead defeats it), but curiously 1NT by E/W is also cold. Who'd have thought it? Anyone who scores +100 or more will have a great board.

Bd:31 ♠ AK92
 Dlr: South ♥ AJ9654
 Vul: N/S ♦ K7
 ♣ 5
 ♠ Q103 ♠ J8
 ♥ 1032 ♥ Q7
 ♦ A10654 ♦ QJ832
 ♣ K8 ♣ 10964
 ♠ 7654
 ♥ K8
 ♦ 9
 ♣ AQJ732

Whether or not South stretches to open 1♣, one would expect N/S to play 4♠ at most tables, though it is conceivable that a few tables may use keycard and contract for 11 tricks. With both majors behaving, the defenders seem to have a trump trick and the ♦A, and this is all they will collect at most tables. However, should the defenders go passive, you can imagine the diamond loser getting away on the heart winners. Even if that happens, declarer will still have a little work to do in order to come to 12 tricks.

Bd:28 ♠ A9
 Dlr: West ♥ A9752
 Vul: N/S ♦ Q42
 ♣ 964
 ♠ KQ4 ♠ 7632
 ♥ KJ108 ♥ 64
 ♦ AK105 ♦ 876
 ♣ 87 ♣ Q1032
 ♠ J1085
 ♥ Q3
 ♦ J93
 ♣ AKJ5

It is hard to see who might possibly find a call over a strong notrump from West, though some perverted souls might treat the North cards as having a major worth bidding, and one can imagine the fans of DONT treating the South hand as clubs and a major, I suppose. Against 1NT, North's normal heart lead gives declarer a fast route to six tricks, but some N/S pairs will register +110 in one of the various strains where that number is available. Moreover, believe it or not, 3NT by South can be brought home with some extremely double-dummy play in the club suit.

Bd:32 ♠ 1073
 Dlr: West ♥ Q73
 Vul: E/W ♦ A10432
 ♣ 82
 ♠ KQJ985 ♠ A642
 ♥ A ♥ 10
 ♦ Q97 ♦ 65
 ♣ 1043 ♣ AKQJ75
 ♠ --
 ♥ KJ986542
 ♦ KJ8
 ♣ 96

Depending on E/W's methods after West's 1♠ opening bid, East will either force in clubs, set spades as trumps, or splinter in hearts. South rates to intervene ferociously in hearts, after which East may retaliate by jumping to 6♠ (maybe after keycard) and daring North - who might raise hearts or even sacrifice in that suit - to find the diamond lead to beat the slam. Today, North might well kick off with the ♦A, and should not have any problems knowing what to do next. Note that 7♥ can escape for -500 if declarer finds the ♦Q, better than -1460, but not exactly a triumph either.