

ACBL Charity Game #2 — Monday Evening, Nov. 30, 2015 — Set 113454

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

A few matchpoint hounds will open 1NT as North. If they do, East has the choice of passing (probably ending the auction) or showing the majors — in which case West may drive to game or invite with 3♠ — his choice may depend on his knowledge of East and North. It will be hard to defeat 4♠ by West — North will surely lead a top diamond. Now declarer simply has to guess which opponent has the doubleton club honor. If East plays 4♠ after North has opened 1♦, South might prefer to lead ♥J. Now North can win ♥A and shift to ♣A, to get the decisive ruff.

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

At matchpoint pairs there is virtually no auction where the opponents might not balance at a low level. So if N-S find their heart fit and attempt to play 2♥, could an aggressive East or West find a way into the auction? They had better not; while 2♥ handles painlessly for +140, and will do so at the majority of tables, E-W will regret any attempt to seize the declaration. N-S ought to double them and collect a minimum of +300 against either a club or spade partscore.

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

The East cards constitute a light but reasonable non-vulnerable 1♣ opener. If so, West will bid and rebid his hearts. Even so, you would expect N-S to find a way to compete to 3♦. This is a perfect hand for the Law of Total Tricks: each side has an eight-card fit in a red suit, but against normal defense the two-level is the limit for either side. I suppose the defenders might waste their club honors (especially if North somehow becomes declarer) to allow N-S to come to +110 in diamonds. And without an early spade lead North can come to eight tricks in notrump.

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

A straightforward sequence should see E-W bid 1♣ - 1♥ - 2NT - 3NT and take between nine and 11 tricks there (the diamond finesse may seem risky, but if spades are known to be 4-4, it looks safe to take it). However, if East has a way to show clubs and a mild slam-try facing the known real extra values opposite, E-W may reach the playable slam of 6♣. The spade ruff in dummy makes slam a little better than 50%, as you need two things out of the club finesse, diamond finesse and (barring a squeeze) a diamond break. Today would be your lucky day.

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

E-W's main task here is to bid to 4♥; they will do this if West shows a strong heart raise as a passed hand. North's job is more complex; you'd expect him to bid and repeat diamonds, not introducing his spades until relatively late in the auction. With 4♥ a lucky make because the ♠Q is onside and the defenders cannot maneuver to take a club ruff, N-S do best to save in 5♦. There seems no practical chance of allowing this contract to come home, but E-W will have to content themselves with a doubled undertrick, and a likely poor result in the process.

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

West can open 1♣ and reverse into hearts, and East will raise hearts and settle in 4♥. He has extras, but poor trumps and no aces, so cannot risk going past game. Against 4♥, the defenders do best to cash two diamonds, then shift to spades to shorten declarer's trumps. West should win ♠A and play ♥A, then cash the top clubs and ruff a club. But ruff high or low? The high ruff would be fatal, since West's remaining trump spots can't survive the 4-1 trump break. Few will find the testing defense at trick three, but if they do, West will need to be on form to make his game.

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

West does not have a classic vulnerable weak two-bid, but one should never say never... If West passes, N-S figure to bid game, but which one? 4♥ is a decent spot, even on repeated spade leads — but not against the 6-1 trump break! Since 3NT is off the spade suit, the mundane 5-4 diamond fit is where you want to be today. If declarer unblocks hearts, before taking the top trumps, he will come to 12 tricks painlessly — and doubtless a fine score. He rates to lose out only to those who play 3NT and don't receive a spade lead, since slam bidders will be few and far between.

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

You'd expect West to pass, then hear 1♥ on his left, passed back to him. Most are going to sell out and defend 1♥, a contract that could take anywhere between seven and nine tricks. Other hotheads will balance into spades, after which N-S should find clubs and bring home 10 tricks there, technically the par spot on the deal. With such a variety of bad splits and unfavorable lies in all four suits, penalties may be the order of the day, with +100 the most common traveler result. Those who attempt 5♣ on a spade lead will be entitled to count themselves truly unlucky.

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

Aggressive Souths may open a lead-directing 1♦ in third seat; it is an overbid, but the suit quality and vulnerability are on your side. If South bids, West will overcall 1♠, and North rates to raise to 2♦. When East makes a competitive double to show the unbid suits, West will bid either 3♥ or 4♥. 4♥ turns out to be a fine contract; even on repeated diamond leads, declarer can survive by ruffing then running the ♥8. Curiously, if left to their own devices, the lack of diamond wastage may not be evident to E-W, who may settle for partscore. Live by the sword...

Bd: 13 ♠ A K Q 8 5 4
 Dlr: North ♥ J 9 7
 Vul: Both ♦ Q 7 5 2
 ♣ —
 ♠ 10 9 7 6 2 ♠ 3
 ♥ Q 3 ♥ K 10 6 4
 ♦ K 9 8 ♦ A J
 ♣ Q 7 6 ♣ A K J 10 8 3
 ♠ J
 ♥ A 8 5 2
 ♦ 10 6 4 3
 ♣ 9 5 4 2

When North opens 1♠, he may be optimistic about playing game or slam. But after East overcalls 2♣, South will pass and West is going to raise to 3♣. North might now risk a 3♠ rebid (after which East may take him off the hook by bidding on in front of his partner). If North passes at his second turn, then West might hear East introduce his hearts, and now he has an easy 3NT call. After a top spade lead, the defenders have to be careful to cash out their four winners. Notwithstanding that, 600 from 3NT or 5♣ will represent an excellent result for E-W.

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

When South opens 1♥, West should double rather than bid 2♣ — the former action is far more flexible, with a hand perfectly playable in three suits. Whether North drives directly to 4♥, bids 2NT to show a trump raise or redoubles to show values may depend on his basic system. In practice, N-S may find it impossible to reach a red-suit slam, which needs a 3-3 diamond break. Given that, the best results for N-S may come from defending spade sacrifices for 800 or more, should East suffer a rush of blood to the head.

Bd: 14 ♠ 7 6
 Dlr: East ♥ Q 10 9 5
 Vul: None ♦ Q 8
 ♣ J 9 8 7 5
 ♠ A 9 8 ♠ K Q 10 5 4 2
 ♥ J 6 ♥ A 2
 ♦ A J 9 4 ♦ K 7 6 3
 ♣ Q 10 6 3 ♣ 2
 ♠ J 3
 ♥ K 8 7 4 3
 ♦ 10 5 2
 ♣ A K 4

Whatever response West makes to a 1♠ opener, the auction should end up with him putting his partner in 4♣. The best lead for the defenders is hearts, but South will surely cash a top club and must then steel himself to shift to hearts to give the defenders any chance to hold declarer to 10 tricks. Still, even after this switch, East might drop the ♦Q after finding South (who has not bid) with 10 points in hearts and clubs. +420 may well generate a surprisingly poor matchpoint outcome for E-W.

Bd: 11 ♠ J 8 3
 Dlr: South ♥ K Q J 10 8 4 3
 Vul: None ♦ 9
 ♣ K 8
 ♠ A Q 10 6 2 ♠ 9 5 4
 ♥ 5 ♥ A 9 6
 ♦ A 10 7 6 4 ♦ J 8
 ♣ 5 3 ♣ A Q J 6 4
 ♠ K 7
 ♥ 7 2
 ♦ K Q 5 3 2
 ♣ 10 9 7 2

When South passes initially, some Wests will open 1♠ — which will be followed by a heart preempt from North and a comfortable final contract of 4♠ by E-W. Yes, East can make 3NT, but declarer would age several years in the process. If West passes at his first turn to speak, North may try to steal the pot by preempting to 4♥. But West is surely going to protect over 3♥ with 3♠ and might just risk a balance of 4♠ over 4♥. Collecting +450 figures to earn E-W a decent score — though a few pairs are going to rack up +500 on defense to hearts.

Bd: 15 ♠ Q 9 5
 Dlr: South ♥ 8 5 4
 Vul: N-S ♦ K Q 10 7
 ♣ A 9 2
 ♠ J 6 4 2 ♠ K 3
 ♥ A Q 10 2 ♥ K 3
 ♦ 5 4 ♦ A 9 2
 ♣ Q J 10 ♣ K 8 6 5 4 3
 ♠ A 10 8 7
 ♥ J 9 7 6
 ♦ J 8 6 3
 ♣ 7

After two passes, most Norths will open 1♦ both for lead-directional purposes and to obstruct the opponents. E-W will compete in clubs to at least the three level, but South is likely to bid on to 3♦, and it may prove hard to double him there. Indeed, the real problem for E-W may be whether to go on to 4♣. After a diamond lead, East might win and go after hearts. If not, 4♣ may come down to the spade guess when North shifts to that suit on winning ♣A. A false-card by North at trick one in diamonds could deceive East later in the play.

Bd: 12 ♠ J 8 7 3
 Dlr: West ♥ A 9 8 3 2
 Vul: N-S ♦ A J
 ♣ J 4
 ♠ 2 ♠ A K Q 10 9
 ♥ K J 4 ♥ 10 7 6
 ♦ Q 10 9 6 4 3 ♦ K 7
 ♣ 8 6 5 ♣ 10 7 2
 ♠ 6 5 4
 ♥ Q 5
 ♦ 8 5 2
 ♣ A K Q 9 3

West might exploit the vulnerability to open 2♦ — he is in range, though his suit is technically under strength. Preempting will make the subsequent auction hard to predict; but it may be a case of "Last bidder gets the zero", as nothing higher than 2♦ should come home. You can imagine E-W getting too high in spades or diamonds and N-S going overboard in the other three strains. Few will manage to bring home a contract here, though 2♦ might produce overtricks after a spade lead.

Bd: 16 ♠ A Q 9 5
 Dlr: West ♥ Q 10 2
 Vul: E-W ♦ Q 10 4 3
 ♣ 10 5
 ♠ K J 3 2 ♠ 8 7 6
 ♥ K 7 ♥ A 8 6 5 4
 ♦ K J 6 5 2 ♦ —
 ♣ K J ♣ 9 8 7 6 4
 ♠ 10 4
 ♥ J 9 3
 ♦ A 9 8 7
 ♣ A Q 3 2

Some degenerates may treat the West cards as a strong notrump, but simplest is for West to open 1♦ and rebid 1♠, which East should gratefully pass. Now North has to fight the natural instinct to attack trumps. He must instead lead a club for South to find the killing spade shift. If West opens 1NT, then East can transfer his partner into 2♥. A low diamond lead lets West discard from dummy — but even so, declarer will find himself short of tricks. The par contract here? South cannot be stopped from making 3NT. Bidding it is another matter.

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

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

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

The North cards do not look like a preempt (and that action might lose his side's spade fit). After an initial pass by North, East will bid 1♣, South will overcall 1♦ and when West passes, North must respond 1♥. Even now it may still not be straightforward for N-S to find spades if East ups the ante with a jump in clubs. As you can see, N-S can take 11 tricks in spades, but only 10 in hearts after a club lead. It may look simple for N-S to reach the spade game, but those who do will deserve their fine score.

Bd: 21 ♠ —
 Dlr: North ♥ A J 8 7 5 4
 Vul: N-S ♦ 8 7 5 4 2
 ♣ Q 6

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

♠ K J 7
 ♥ Q 9
 ♦ 10 9 3
 ♣ 9 8 7 4 2

North's assets looks closer to a weak 2♥ opener than anything else (the weak side suit isn't an insuperable stumbling block). When East overcalls 2♠, that ought to get his side to game — more will pick spades than notrump, I suspect, though one could understand West's desire to protect the ♥K. After North's preempt, declarer is favorite to get trumps right by running the ♠Q and holding his losers to one. Since a few E-W pairs will elevate themselves to the five level, this guess may be especially critical for them.

Bd: 18 ♠ 10 7 6
 Dlr: East ♥ J 7 5 2
 Vul: N-S ♦ 3
 ♣ 10 9 7 6 5

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

♠ K Q 8 4
 ♥ A 9
 ♦ 10 5
 ♣ A Q 8 3 2

East's hand might constitute a weak two-bid for some, but at this vulnerability many will open 1♦. After a 2♣ overcall, West is going to drive his partner to game. He is likely to look for a heart fit but will probably settle for 3NT, where there are just eight tricks available. The top E-W score may come from doubling a N-S pair who bid clubs too aggressively or bringing home 3NT against a South who elected to introduce his spades, not his clubs. Making 4♦ rates to earn E-W a decent result.

Bd: 22 ♠ A 8 3
 Dlr: East ♥ J 9
 Vul: E-W ♦ A K Q 9 8 4
 ♣ J 2

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

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

Another weak two-bid (yes, some people might consider the South cards a one level opener, but we don't talk to them) and North has a two-way shot to raise this to 4♠. If it doesn't come home, maybe the opponents can make something? West will lead his singleton diamond, and it looks logical to ruff this in hand to run the ♠10 since South doesn't want West to cover. When East wins his singleton king, a club shift defeats the contract at once. Alternative defenses might get more — or considerably less. Few pairs will bring home game here except on serious defensive error.

Bd: 19 ♠ J 10 7 4 3 2
 Dlr: South ♥ 7 6 5
 Vul: E-W ♦ K
 ♣ 10 8 5

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

♠ A K 6
 ♥ Q 10 3
 ♦ Q J 8 3
 ♣ A Q 4

Is South too strong for a 15-17 notrump? The ♥10 and compact honor structure are offset by the 4-3-3-3 shape, but few will look beyond the HCP. If South does go low, North will transfer him into 2♠. After a top heart lead, the fall of the ♠Q should result in his collecting +170. Will that score poorly for N-S? It isn't clear. If South shows a balanced 18-19 count, North will declare 3♠ or 4♠. Against 4♠ by North an initial heart lead might set the game — though if North smoothly plays low from dummy at trick one, few Wests are going to have the nerve to insert the eight!

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

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

♠ Q J 9 6 4
 ♥ K J 6
 ♦ Q 9
 ♣ 7 6 2

After West opens 1♦, North will overcall 1♠ and East will double (a non-forcing 2♥ call would be nice, but few play this anymore). Now N-S want to out-compete E-W in spades. With 19 total trumps, you might imagine there would be at least one makeable spot at the three level and that some pairs would bring home a four-level contract? Not so. Against 3♠ a club lead, or ♥A lead followed by a club shift, produces a club ruff to defeat 3♠. Equally, in 3♥ declarer cannot cope with the ♥J and ruff his spade loser in dummy, as he runs into a club overruff. Odd, isn't it?

Bd: 20 ♠ A 7 2
 Dlr: West ♥ 9
 Vul: Both ♦ 9 8 2
 ♣ A K 9 4 3 2

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

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

On this counter-intuitive deal, after West opens 1♥, East will surely drive his side to game (possibly in spades, concealing the heart fit). N-S ought probably to be looking to sacrifice against either major-suit game. But the cards have a mind of their own: E-W have four top losers, and might run into a heart ruff in spades. Curiously, it is E-W who have to sacrifice, because N-S can theoretically play both minors for no losers. So absolute par on the deal is for E-W to save in 6♥ over six of a minor. While no one will do that, scores of 950 or so for N-S may be surprisingly common.

Bd: 24 ♠ A 4 3
 Dlr: West ♥ 9 7 3 2
 Vul: None ♦ 7 4
 ♣ A K 7 3

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

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

Almost our first simple auction — after 24 boards! E-W will bid unopposed to 3NT, maybe by West on an auction such as 1♣ - 1♦ - 1NT - 3NT — an exception coming if West opens a Precision 1♦. Then North may double and find his side suffering a world of hurt. North is probably going to lead his four-card major against 3NT and concede the first 10 tricks. But if he can work out to kick off with a top club, the defenders can cash the first five tricks. Pity the North who fishes out a low club at trick one and sees South cover the eight with the nine.

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

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

♠ 7 3 2
 ♥ A K 7 5 4 2
 ♦ 7
 ♣ 9 8 7

At pairs, and favorable vulnerability, quite a few Norths may open 1NT. Let he who is without sin...If so East may overcall to show a major-minor two-suiter, or diamonds and a major, but South rates simply to transfer his partner to 4♥. At double-dummy the defenders can take the club ruff, then arrange a trump promotion via repeated diamond leads, with two spade winners still to come. In practice, most defenders will lose at least one undertrick along the way. If North goes low in the auction, his side might buy the hand in 2♥. Best of all is to rack up +120 at notrump.

Bd: 29 ♠ A 8 7 4 2
 Dlr: North ♥ K J 7
 Vul: Both ♦ A Q J 5
 ♣ A

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

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

After North opens 1♠, South may find it awkward to describe his values. He isn't worth a 2/1 in hearts, but his hand is by no means perfect either for a limit raise in spades, or for 1NT followed by a jump in spades. The N-S cards do belong in slam, both 6♥ and 6♠ needing one of the majors to behave. But hearts is a far better strain, since it may survive a hostile break in either major. Of course with both majors behaving in such friendly fashion, making 12 tricks in slam should not be hard. In fact, scoring up the overtrick may turn out to be relatively important.

Bd: 26 ♠ A K 8 4 3
 Dlr: East ♥ 10 8 4 2
 Vul: Both ♦ 10 2
 ♣ 8 7

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

♠ Q J 10 9 6
 ♥ K 7 3
 ♦ K 7
 ♣ K Q 5

N-S have a spade fit, E-W a diamond fit, so who will win the bidding war? Normally you'd expect N-S, with 21 HCP between them and the boss suit, to be in the driving seat; not today. The 3-0 spade break and hugely favorable lie of the diamonds means that, despite the heart finesse losing, E-W can come painlessly to 11 tricks. By contrast, the 5-5 spade fit has five top losers. Some N-S pairs will be allowed to buy the contract at the three level, and down 100 is likely to matchpoint very well for them.

Bd: 30 ♠ J 10 4
 Dlr: East ♥ J 8 4
 Vul: None ♦ 7 3 2
 ♣ J 10 9 6

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

♠ Q 8
 ♥ A K 6 3
 ♦ A J 9 8 6
 ♣ 8 3

Only the most perverted of 14-16 notrumpers would open the South hand anything but 1♦. West will overcall in spades, and East will raise, which figures to end the auction. N-S can make absolutely nothing here, so the bulk of the matchpoints hinge on whether West can bring home the overtrick in 2♠. After repeated diamond leads, at double-dummy declarer should win and take the ♠A and ♠K, then ruff a diamond high. Now he cashes off the top clubs and tries a heart to the nine, endplaying South.

Bd: 27 ♠ K Q 10
 Dlr: South ♥ Q 9 8
 Vul: None ♦ A 7 3 2
 ♣ 8 3 2

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

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

A strong notrump will be passed out by all but the most hungry of N-S pairs — even Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector, might blanch at acting with the South cards. Some Norths will lead a fourth highest diamond, some a top spade (I'd go with the latter, myself). Curiously, the spade lead doesn't cost. The defenders should come to five tricks, no matter what they do — they do not even have to shift to diamonds, since declarer surely can't find material for a ninth winner, can he? The flattest deal of the day? Maybe, but any E-W who unluckily find spades may regret their decision.

Bd: 31 ♠ Q 7 3
 Dlr: South ♥ Q 9 5
 Vul: N-S ♦ K J 2
 ♣ 6 4 3 2

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

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

E-W are going to have an unopposed auction, but whether they settle for partscore in spades, hearts or notrump, or reach game in one of those denominations is almost a matter of chance. The heart game is poor and sunk immediately on repeated diamond leads, but after a club lead it at least has play. 4♠ may actually come home unless the defenders attack diamonds at once, and 3NT by West is proof against any defense. Making +140 will surely be respectable enough for E-W.

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

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

♠ A K 8 3
 ♥ Q 6 4
 ♦ 10 8 7
 ♣ 8 6 5

Typically West will open 1♦ and hear North double. Now East has the option of passing or of responding 1♠. Without the double, it looks routine to bid 1♠, but after the double it looks more sensible to pass, perhaps with the idea of backing in later. As it happens, South will bid 1♠ himself, a strain in which his side can collect +140. If East balances over 1♠, E-W can bid on to 2♦, but N-S can re-compete to their spade partscore. An E-W pair who can escape for -100 will score excellently.

Bd: 32 ♠ 8 7 4
 Dlr: West ♥ A K Q 7 6
 Vul: E-W ♦ J 10
 ♣ J 7 3

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

♠ A 6 5
 ♥ 5 4
 ♦ 7 5 2
 ♣ A Q 10 6 5

The final deal of this set may prove a damp squib, passed out at many tables. But if North opens 1♥ (many will do so, given the natural desire to make a lead-directing call at favorable vulnerability), then N-S may struggle to stop in 1NT or 2♥. In fact both sides can make +110; N-S can do so in hearts or clubs, E-W can somewhat surprisingly manage that feat in their 4-3 spade fit. As is usual with deals of this sort, any plus score is likely to matchpoint reasonably enough.