

<p>1 ♠ RD ♥ 4 ♦ RF1043 ♣ DF752</p> <p>♠ A72 ♥ A10932 ♦ D96 ♣ 83</p> <p>12 10 16 2</p> <p>♠ 109653 ♥ D876 ♦ 752 ♣ 6</p> <p>Dir: N Vul: None</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - - - - - S - - - - - E 3 1 5 2 5 O 4 1 6 3 6</p>	<p>2 ♠ DF76 ♥ A653 ♦ 1086 ♣ A2</p> <p>♠ 1043 ♥ 104 ♦ ARDF42 ♣ 64</p> <p>11 10 5 14</p> <p>♠ R5 ♥ RD72 ♦ 95 ♣ RDF87</p> <p>♠ A982 ♥ F98 ♦ 73 ♣ 10953</p> <p>Dir: E Vul: N-S</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 4 - 4 2 - S 4 - 4 2 - E - 1 - - - O - 1 - - -</p>	<p>3 ♠ R743 ♥ ARD76 ♦ F ♣ R106</p> <p>♠ ADF96 ♥ 9 ♦ D10872 ♣ D4</p> <p>16 11 8 5</p> <p>♠ 2 ♥ F10542 ♦ R6 ♣ F9873</p> <p>♠ 1085 ♥ 83 ♦ A9543 ♣ A52</p> <p>Dir: S Vul: E-W</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 3 - 4 - 1 S 3 - 4 - 1 E - 3 - 2 - O - 3 - 2 -</p>
<p>4 ♠ RF83 ♥ A9843 ♦ 9 ♣ 1087</p> <p>♠ 97542 ♥ 6 ♦ 6532 ♣ R65</p> <p>8 3 15 14</p> <p>♠ AD ♥ F1075 ♦ AR1074 ♣ 93</p> <p>♠ 106 ♥ RD2 ♦ DF8 ♣ ADF42</p> <p>Dir: W Vul: Both</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - 2 3 2 1 S - 2 3 2 1 E 1 - - - - O 1 - - - -</p>	<p>5 ♠ AD98 ♥ 85 ♦ A9873 ♣ D10</p> <p>♠ 64 ♥ 962 ♦ R102 ♣ 87532</p> <p>12 3 9 16</p> <p>♠ F32 ♥ AF74 ♦ DF65 ♣ AR</p> <p>♠ R1075 ♥ RD103 ♦ 4 ♣ F964</p> <p>Dir: N Vul: N-S</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - 4 2 3 2 S - 4 2 3 2 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>	<p>6 ♠ AF943 ♥ ♦ D653 ♣ R763</p> <p>♠ D10875 ♥ R852 ♦ 9 ♣ DF5</p> <p>10 8 13 9</p> <p>♠ R62 ♥ D10643 ♦ A7 ♣ 1092</p> <p>♠ AF97 ♥ RF10842 ♦ ♣ A84</p> <p>Dir: E Vul: E-W</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 1 - - 1 - S 1 - - 1 - E - 2 3 - - O - 2 3 - -</p>
<p>7 ♠ RD2 ♥ RF1084 ♦ D972 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ A85 ♥ 6 ♦ AF4 ♣ ARD1084</p> <p>11 18 4 7</p> <p>♠ F9763 ♥ AD5 ♦ 1065 ♣ 62</p> <p>♠ 104 ♥ 9732 ♦ R83 ♣ F973</p> <p>Dir: S Vul: Both</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - - 2 1 - S - - 2 1 - E 4 - - - 2 O 4 - - - 2</p>	<p>8 ♠ RD983 ♥ F1094 ♦ ♣ 10865</p> <p>♠ A76 ♥ 76532 ♦ R3 ♣ F43</p> <p>6 8 16 10</p> <p>♠ F54 ♥ RD8 ♦ A982 ♣ 972</p> <p>♠ 102 ♥ A ♦ DF107654 ♣ ARD</p> <p>Dir: W Vul: None</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - - 1 1 - S - - 1 1 - E - 5 - - 2 O - 5 - - 2</p>	<p>9 ♠ 109 ♥ 62 ♦ F98653 ♣ 764</p> <p>♠ F754 ♥ 109 ♦ RD74 ♣ AR9</p> <p>1 13 16 10</p> <p>♠ D86 ♥ AD853 ♦ 2 ♣ D532</p> <p>♠ AR32 ♥ RF74 ♦ A10 ♣ F108</p> <p>Dir: N Vul: E-W</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - - - - - S - - - - - E 4 3 3 5 5 O 3 3 3 4 5</p>
<p>10 ♠ 87543 ♥ F102 ♦ AR7 ♣ R3</p> <p>♠ AR1096 ♥ 654 ♦ F43 ♣ 42</p> <p>11 8 15 6</p> <p>♠ D2 ♥ 987 ♦ D982 ♣ D1086</p> <p>♠ F ♥ ARD3 ♦ 1065 ♣ AF975</p> <p>Dir: E Vul: Both</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - - - - - S - - - - - E 1 1 1 3 3 O 1 1 1 3 3</p>	<p>11 ♠ R952 ♥ D8 ♦ A32 ♣ R642</p> <p>♠ F104 ♥ 10762 ♦ 975 ♣ D98</p> <p>12 3 11 14</p> <p>♠ A3 ♥ A953 ♦ F6 ♣ AF1053</p> <p>♠ D876 ♥ RF4 ♦ RD1084 ♣ 7</p> <p>Dir: S Vul: None</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 5 1 2 2 3 S 5 1 2 2 3 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>	<p>12 ♠ F3 ♥ 2 ♦ DF632 ♣ AD1063</p> <p>♠ 10875 ♥ 1086 ♦ A1087 ♣ F7</p> <p>10 5 15 10</p> <p>♠ ARD6 ♥ F974 ♦ 94 ♣ 982</p> <p>♠ 942 ♥ ARD53 ♦ R5 ♣ R54</p> <p>Dir: W Vul: N-S</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 3 1 - 1 - S 3 1 - 1 - E - - 2 - - O - - 2 - -</p>
<p>13 ♠ R1092 ♥ RDF8 ♦ A10 ♣ A74</p> <p>♠ 864 ♥ 7 ♦ F987632 ♣ 83</p> <p>17 1 12 10</p> <p>♠ ADF3 ♥ 96 ♦ 54 ♣ DF1065</p> <p>♠ 75 ♥ A105432 ♦ RD ♣ R92</p> <p>Dir: N Vul: Both</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 4 - 3 4 4 S 4 - 2 4 4 E - 2 - - - O - 2 - - -</p>	<p>14 ♠ F93 ♥ RD108 ♦ AD76 ♣ 109</p> <p>♠ 1072 ♥ F76 ♦ 98543 ♣ 52</p> <p>12 1 16 11</p> <p>♠ D865 ♥ 932 ♦ 10 ♣ ARD76</p> <p>♠ AR4 ♥ A54 ♦ RF2 ♣ F843</p> <p>Dir: E Vul: None</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 4 1 4 4 3 S 4 1 3 4 3 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>	<p>15 ♠ 3 ♥ AD8 ♦ DF974 ♣ A976</p> <p>♠ 54 ♥ RF965 ♦ R1052 ♣ 84</p> <p>13 7 9 11</p> <p>♠ ARF9762 ♥ 73 ♦ ♣ DF52</p> <p>♠ D108 ♥ 1042 ♦ A863 ♣ R103</p> <p>Dir: S Vul: N-S</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 6 2 1 6 4 S 6 2 1 6 4 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>
<p>16 ♠ 2 ♥ R762 ♦ A83 ♣ F9862</p> <p>♠ ADF754 ♥ 1083 ♦ R5 ♣ 43</p> <p>8 10 10 12</p> <p>♠ 9863 ♥ ADF ♦ 102 ♣ RD75</p> <p>♠ R10 ♥ 954 ♦ DF9764 ♣ A10</p> <p>Dir: W Vul: E-W</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 4 - 3 - - S 4 - 3 - - E - 1 - 2 1 O - 1 - 2 1</p>	<p>17 ♠ F10 ♥ RF10632 ♦ 83 ♣ RF5</p> <p>♠ 754 ♥ A975 ♦ 542 ♣ 1084</p> <p>9 4 11 16</p> <p>♠ R92 ♥ 4 ♦ ADF96 ♣ AD93</p> <p>♠ AD863 ♥ D8 ♦ R107 ♣ 762</p> <p>Dir: N Vul: None</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N 5 5 4 3 5 S 5 5 4 3 5 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>	<p>18 ♠ 97542 ♥ 107 ♦ R3 ♣ R652</p> <p>♠ R ♥ 43 ♦ AD64 ♣ ADF743</p> <p>6 16 4 14</p> <p>♠ AD3 ♥ ADF9 ♦ F52 ♣ 1098</p> <p>♠ F1086 ♥ R8652 ♦ 10987 ♣</p> <p>Dir: E Vul: N-S</p> <p>♣♦♥♠SA N - - - 2 1 S - - - 2 1 E 1 3 - - - O 1 2 - - -</p>

RECAP: N-S-E-W Avg HCP:10.44-10.06-11.44-8.06 Bal:14-17-16-17 Voids:3-2-5-1 Singles:12-10-9-11 7+Suit:0-2-1-3

<p>19 ♠ D108642 Dir: S ♥ RF6 Vul: E-W ♦ 10 ♣ F108</p> <p>♠ A75 ♥ 753 ♦ 87542 ♣ 65</p> <p>♠ R9 ♥ AD10942 ♦ ♣ AR973</p> <p>7 ♠ F3 ♥ 8 ♦ ARDF963 ♣ D42</p> <p>N - 1 - - 1 S - 1 - - - E 5 - 7 2 - O 5 - 7 2 -</p>	<p>20 ♠ AD7643 Dir: W ♥ 7 Vul: Both ♦ D973 ♣ 94</p> <p>♠ 10 ♥ A9642 ♦ A102 ♣ RF65</p> <p>♠ F52 ♥ RDF8 ♦ F84 ♣ D102</p> <p>8 ♠ R98 ♥ 1053 ♦ R65 ♣ A873</p> <p>12 10 10</p> <p>N - 1 - 3 1 S - 1 - 3 1 E 2 - 4 - - O 2 - 4 - -</p>	<p>21 ♠ F108 Dir: N ♥ F632 Vul: N-S ♦ D74 ♣ RD4</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ A108 ♦ 8652 ♣ F9875</p> <p>♠ AD963 ♥ RD54 ♦ R ♣ A102</p> <p>9 ♠ R742 ♥ 97 ♦ AF1093 ♣ 63</p> <p>5 18 8</p> <p>N - 1 - - - S - 1 - - - E 4 - 2 1 - O 4 - 2 1 -</p>
<p>22 ♠ A96 Dir: E ♥ 94 Vul: E-W ♦ AR96 ♣ 10963</p> <p>♠ 87 ♥ AF1062 ♦ F8 ♣ RF82</p> <p>♠ R5432 ♥ 3 ♦ 7432 ♣ A74</p> <p>11 ♠ DF10 ♥ RD875 ♦ D105 ♣ D5</p> <p>10 7 12</p> <p>N - 1 - - 1 S - 1 - - - E 1 - 1 - - O 1 - 1 - -</p>	<p>23 ♠ R4 Dir: S ♥ D962 Vul: Both ♦ R2 ♣ F10764</p> <p>♠ 1073 ♥ 73 ♦ ADF1093 ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ A952 ♥ ARF104 ♦ 85 ♣ R2</p> <p>9 ♠ DF86 ♥ 85 ♦ 764 ♣ AD93</p> <p>7 15 9</p> <p>N 3 - - - - S 3 - - - - E - 2 1 - - O - 2 1 - -</p>	<p>24 ♠ ARD7 Dir: W ♥ 9764 Vul: None ♦ 1032 ♣ D8</p> <p>♠ F98 ♥ F2 ♦ D ♣ F1097532</p> <p>♠ 63 ♥ AR1085 ♦ AR87 ♣ AR</p> <p>11 ♠ 10542 ♥ D3 ♦ F9654 ♣ 64</p> <p>5 21 3</p> <p>N - - - - - S - - - - - E 4 2 4 1 2 O 4 2 4 1 2</p>
<p>25 ♠ 32 Dir: N ♥ R93 Vul: E-W ♦ AF1094 ♣ RD7</p> <p>♠ AD ♥ 1064 ♦ 872 ♣ F9643</p> <p>♠ R1087 ♥ F87 ♦ D65 ♣ A108</p> <p>13 ♠ F9654 ♥ AD52 ♦ R3 ♣ 52</p> <p>7 10 10</p> <p>N 1 4 3 3 3 S 1 4 3 3 3 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>	<p>26 ♠ A8 Dir: E ♥ 86 Vul: Both ♦ A62 ♣ A97643</p> <p>♠ D4 ♥ R1032 ♦ 109854 ♣ D2</p> <p>♠ RF9763 ♥ F7 ♦ R7 ♣ RF8</p> <p>12 ♠ 1052 ♥ AD954 ♦ DF3 ♣ 105</p> <p>7 12 9</p> <p>N 2 - 1 - - S 2 - 1 - - E - 1 - 2 1 O - 1 - 2 1</p>	<p>27 ♠ D98 Dir: S ♥ F82 Vul: None ♦ 1063 ♣ 8754</p> <p>♠ AF54 ♥ 76 ♦ ARD2 ♣ RD3</p> <p>♠ R102 ♥ AR1054 ♦ 954 ♣ F2</p> <p>3 ♠ 763 ♥ D93 ♦ F87 ♣ A1096</p> <p>19 11 7</p> <p>N - - - - - S - - - - - E 4 6 5 6 6 O 4 6 5 6 6</p>
<p>28 ♠ RF Dir: W ♥ A1085 Vul: N-S ♦ RDF743 ♣ 5</p> <p>♠ D7 ♥ A1082 ♦ ARF10976 ♣</p> <p>♠ D109762 ♥ F942 ♦ ♣ D83</p> <p>14 ♠ A8543 ♥ R63 ♦ 965 ♣ 42</p> <p>14 5 7</p> <p>N - 2 1 - - S - 3 1 - - E 4 - - 1 2 O 4 - - 1 2</p>	<p>29 ♠ F72 Dir: N ♥ ADF7 Vul: Both ♦ D2 ♣ DF87</p> <p>♠ A1093 ♥ 8632 ♦ 843 ♣ R4</p> <p>♠ R864 ♥ 1094 ♦ F1075 ♣ 95</p> <p>13 ♠ D5 ♥ R5 ♦ AR96 ♣ A10632</p> <p>7 4 16</p> <p>N 4 4 4 2 3 S 4 4 4 2 3 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>	<p>30 ♠ A643 Dir: E ♥ 107 Vul: None ♦ F932 ♣ 643</p> <p>♠ D1098 ♥ 64 ♦ R75 ♣ DF108</p> <p>♠ RF52 ♥ AD93 ♦ 10 ♣ R952</p> <p>5 ♠ 7 ♥ RF852 ♦ AD864 ♣ A7</p> <p>8 13 14</p> <p>N - 4 2 - - S - 4 2 - - E 2 - - 3 - O 2 - - 2 -</p>
<p>31 ♠ ADF532 Dir: S ♥ DF94 Vul: N-S ♦ RD4 ♣</p> <p>♠ 1096 ♥ A98542 ♦ 72 ♣ 85</p> <p>♠ R84 ♥ 10 ♦ R108653 ♣ 1072</p> <p>15 ♠ 7 ♥ RDF763 ♦ A ♣ AF963</p> <p>4 6 15</p> <p>N 6 2 4 4 4 S 7 2 4 4 4 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>	<p>32 ♠ A10932 Dir: W ♥ R53 Vul: E-W ♦ 543 ♣ R10</p> <p>♠ F75 ♥ A9642 ♦ AF ♣ D76</p> <p>♠ R6 ♥ DF108 ♦ RD9 ♣ AF85</p> <p>10 ♠ D84 ♥ 7 ♦ 108762 ♣ 9432</p> <p>12 16 2</p> <p>N - - - - - S - - - - - E 4 2 5 1 2 O 4 2 5 2 2</p>	<p>33 ♠ A3 Dir: N ♥ RD32 Vul: None ♦ AF92 ♣ AD4</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ 10985 ♦ 107643 ♣ F76</p> <p>♠ RD10972 ♥ 764 ♦ ♣ R1092</p> <p>20 ♠ F864 ♥ AF ♦ RD85 ♣ 853</p> <p>1 8 11</p> <p>N 2 6 5 3 5 S 2 6 4 2 5 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>
<p>34 ♠ 104 Dir: E ♥ 2 Vul: N-S ♦ F10632 ♣ A10532</p> <p>♠ 653 ♥ ARD94 ♦ A9 ♣ R74</p> <p>♠ AF872 ♥ F53 ♦ R85 ♣ D6</p> <p>5 ♠ RD9 ♥ 10876 ♦ D74 ♣ F98</p> <p>16 11 8</p> <p>N 1 1 - - - S 1 1 - - - E - - 4 4 3 O - - 4 4 3</p>	<p>35 ♠ R5 Dir: S ♥ F65 Vul: E-W ♦ DF10975 ♣ A6</p> <p>♠ 64 ♥ AD82 ♦ R864 ♣ D93</p> <p>♠ AD93 ♥ R ♦ A32 ♣ F10872</p> <p>11 ♠ F10872 ♥ 109743 ♦ ♣ R54</p> <p>11 14 4</p> <p>N - - 1 - - S - - 1 - - E 4 1 - 1 3 O 4 1 - 1 3</p>	<p>36 ♠ RD6 Dir: W ♥ AR7 Vul: Both ♦ R97543 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ 109543 ♥ D ♦ 1062 ♣ 10642</p> <p>♠ F2 ♥ 96532 ♦ A8 ♣ AF75</p> <p>15 ♠ A87 ♥ F1084 ♦ DF ♣ RD98</p> <p>2 10 13</p> <p>N 2 3 4 3 5 S 2 3 4 3 5 E - - - - - O - - - - -</p>

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

After 1♦-double, South might risk 1♠ or an atypical raise to 2♦ for the nuisance value, but whether South bids or passes, West will usually jump in hearts and East will get his side to 4♥ much more often than 3NT. There is some danger for N/S that an imaginative diamond raise by South might convince North to do too much, or that an aggressive free bid of 3♣ by North might convince a previously silent South to do too much (4♦ doubled is probably too expensive, not to mention five), but there won't be many tables where N/S buy the contract.

If North leads a diamond, declarer will run it to the queen and have a chance for 12 tricks with successful views in trumps and clubs. To duplicate that result on a more likely spade lead, declarer, after ♠A, ♥K, ♥J, must play *specifically* a low spade, and then play low if North exits with a low club. While that seems an inconceivable line, when North has bid both minors and South shows up with the ♥Q, declarer might place North with his precise shape and all the outstanding honors.

Even if the bidding hasn't pointed to South being longer in hearts than North, declarer should not simply credit North with the ♥Q to make up the high cards for his opening bid. Assuming declarer will never take a first-round finesse against North's hypothetical queen (catering to his queen-fourth), low to the king allows declarer to play South for the long queen by repeating the finesse.

There are many variations possible in hearts (or notrump), most of them leading to 11 tricks when North comes under pressure while declarer picks up South's ♥Q, and will have to release a club. If declarer then plays a club and North does not split his honors, declarer can survive even if does not finesse: he ruffs the third round of clubs with his last trump and plays a spade; North wins and cashes a high club but then must lead from the ♦K to concede a second diamond trick; declarer gets two spades, five hearts, two clubs and two

diamonds; North gets two black-suit tricks.

Without the luxury of a trump suit to ruff a club in West or a diamond in East, the declarers in notrump will still be able to arrange 11 winners without double-finessing clubs by playing five rounds of hearts, regardless of the lead.

While +450 E/W will be the most common result, there will be some +480s, a few +420s and even fewer missed games. Notrump contracts will be rare, but offer the chance for +490 and +460, both superb scores. N/S pairs who concede -500 or more will regret their exuberance.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

After South's second-seat 1♣, West will overcall 1♦, 2♦ or 3♦ according to his beliefs, but North will feel no pain in making a negative double over any of those diamond bids. Although it's possible that a few N/S pairs will miss game – perhaps: Pass-1♣-3♦-double; pass-3♥ / -- it would take two fairly conservative actions by the partnership for that to happen. While South has no aces, he has more than a minimum and excellent playing strength for a contract in hearts, clubs or notrump. Where North has shown both majors, South should show some sign of life.

Some (mostly 14-16 pairs but a number of 12-14 and 15-17 pairs, as well) will perceive the South hand as appropriate for a INT opening, too strong to open 1♣ and rebid INT over a 1♠ reply. Some West players might not have a way to show a one-suited diamond hand at the two level, and will choose between 3♦ and a hopeful pass, and a few of the passers might catch North passing the heavy 12-14 notrump. I'd like to place a small wager on West leading his fourth-best diamond in that scenario, for a rare E/W plus score. At the tables where North can make a negative double of a 3♦ overcall, the INT opener won't be sure of finding his partner with four hearts and will typically settle for 3♥, and North might pass, happy to have found a fit.

Where system or style dictates a 1♥ opening for South, N/S will reach game one way or another. Despite their favorable vulnerability and West's fine suit, E/W can take only seven tricks in diamonds and will almost never sniff at a 5♦ sacrifice, so N/S +800 will not grace the frequency sheet. However, there will be some E/W pairs who buy the contract at 3♦ doubled or 4♦ doubled, and both -300 and -500 should score extremely well.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

Where South passes as dealer, West will open 1♠ and North will overcall 2♥. After East's raise to 2♠, South will pick a number of hearts that suits his mood, personality, or perhaps his partnership's strategy. For example, South might settle for a gentle 3♥, hoping to avoid pushing his opponents into a makeable "in-rhythm" game they would bid over a bounce to 4♥; or South might jump to 5♥, hoping for a make, a profitable save against 4♠, or – best of all – a misjudged 5♠ down by E/W when 5♥ was going to fail, or South might make the bid in front of his nose – 4♥.

In some parts of the world, nearly every South will open 2♥, weak with at least five hearts and length in a minor. West will risk a 2♠ overcall and both North and East will probably raise their partner to game, with North more likely to double 4♠ than pass or bid 5♥.

If everyone does everything right, N/S can take 10 tricks in hearts and E/W eight in spades, nine in diamonds.

What's likely to happen?

- Pass-1♠-2♥-2♠; 3♥-3♠-4♥-double /
- Pass-1♠-2♥-2♠; 4♥-4♠- double /
- Pass-1♠-2♥-2♠; 4♥-Pass-Pass-double /
- Pass-1♠-2♥-2♠; 5♥-Pass-Pass-double /

Best defense against a heart contract is to cash the ♦A, then the ♠A, and then have West switch to the ♣4: as the ♦K has been established to discard a club from the North hand, it's open to declarer to play either opponent for the ♣A and declarer could go wrong by playing opener for the ♠A. If West plays a club earlier, going up with the king works only if East has the ♦A and clubs are blocked (which of course they could be, West having Axx (with Ax, West could play ace and another so East could cash the ♣Q when he wins his putative ♦A). That position is quite interesting and will come into play in some variation at many tables, but just as often declarer will simply play West for the ♣Q and lose only one trick in that suit.

In spades, declarer might entertain some hope of losing only three tricks, but with the trumps as they are and the defense starting a force in hearts, a bit of care will be needed to avoid losing control: declarer can ruff the second heart and start diamonds; South wins the second round and plays a club (a heart would allow declarer to discard a club, ruff in dummy and play a trump, and now the defense has a second "tap suit" (clubs) so declarer will lose two spades and one of each. That won't be good for E/W if the contract is 4♠ doubled (-500) but if E/W buy the contract in 3♠ doubled or 4♠ not doubled, -200 will probably score quite well, as N/S won't bid 5♥ often and N/S +420 or +590 will be much more common results.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

4♥ is an excellent contract for N/S but thanks to the unfortunate trump layout, it will fail on a not-unlikely club lead. Might they sensibly reach this 22-point game? If East opens 1NT in third position, N/S's defensive methods will come to the fore; among the more common ones that will locate the heart fit are: (1) double = a

four -card major and a longer minor; (2) 2♦ = diamonds and a major; (3) 2♦ = diamonds and hearts; (4) 2♣ = hearts and a minor; (5) 2♣ = hearts and another; (6) 2♥ = hearts and a minor. Although the bids that indicate only four cards in the major without going past two of the minor have the greatest safety, they might not always name or suggest the specific suits. Some Souths will have to choose from among a natural 2♦ overall, a conventional overcall that indicates an unspecified one-suited hand, a quiet pass, and a very aggressive penalty-oriented double.

Uncontested, West will pass INT or convert to 2♣, probably via a transfer. Where South and West pass INT, North might do so also (and go +100, -90, or -120, depending on the lead and continuation). Where West gets his side to 2♣, South might reasonably double for takeout, intending to convert clubs to diamonds; North could pass and chalk up +500, but is rather more likely to take out to 3♥, which figures to end the auction and net N/S +140.

Where South is able and willing to enter the auction over INT West might show his spades even when South's intervention takes him off the hook. Although N/S would again do best to double or sell out without doubling (+200), they are more likely to compete in hearts when North has reason to place his partner with length in that suit, and they might well reach the unlucky game, -100.

Where East opens 1♣ (too strong for INT in his system), South will overcall 1♦ and soon have to decide whether to raise North's 1♥ to two or three ... or even to game: picture North with nothing but five or six decent hearts to see how much this South hand has improved with the ♠K a big favorite to be with East if North doesn't have it.

Where East has opened 1♣, West will surely lead a club against a heart contract, but at those tables North will nearly always be declarer and East might well lead a spade, giving declarer time to cash the ♥A and continue spades effectively to discard a club loser from South while establishing diamonds for +170 or +620. At the tables where East opens INT, West might reasonably lead a club without a club bid to guide him, but where North declares, East is more likely to lead something other than a club.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

♠ A Q 9 8
♥ 8 5
♦ A 9 8 7 3
♣ Q 10

♠ 6 4
♥ 9 6 2
♦ K 10 2
♣ 8 7 5 3 2

♠ K 10 7 5
♥ K Q 10 3
♦ 4
♣ J 9 6 4

♠ J 3 2
♥ A J 7 4
♦ Q J 6 5
♣ A K

N/S have lots of points, including all the aces and double stoppers in every suit, but they can't quite make their most likely game (3NT) on a club lead and continuation, or 5♦ on any lead but a spade, or 4♠ with normal play after a plain-suit lead.

Where North opens 1♦, some enterprising Easts will double for takeout, an eye on the vulnerability, and some others will try 1♥ rather than compromise on the expected strength for a takeout double.

At least in theory, entering the auction could work very badly if N/S arrange to double 2♣ or even 1♥ as the best that E/W can do against good defense is down two, -300; even -100 figures to be bad, however, as most N/S pairs will be going set in game. As any plus will be good for N/S, those pairs who inadvertently (or otherwise) stop short of game will reap a serendipitous matchpoint reward.

Uncontested, N/S will often bid:

1♦-1♥; 1♠-3NT /,

or 1♦-1♥; 1♠-2♣*; 2♦-2NT; 3NT /,

or: 1♦-1♥; 1♠-2♣*; 2♥-3♦; 3♠-3NT /.

West might not see a bright future in his unimpressive club suit, but nothing else will stand out as a promising alternative, and simple will be best this time, East taking care not to block the club suit.

At pairs scoring, South will try not to finish in 5♦ on the way to six, but if he gets the sense that North is short in hearts after declining several opportunities to show modest support, he might go past 3NT and finish in 4NT (two down) more often than 5♦ (down only one).

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

There was a time not so long ago when hardly anyone would overcall 1♦ with 1♥ with the South hand; today it may be true that hardly anyone would pass! As hearts is the strain in which E/W can do best – nine tricks – the thin overcall rates to bury the eight-card fit and so achieve something good for N/S.

West will bid 1♠ whether or not South overcalls, and will in all likelihood bury the N/S five-three spade fit, their best strain (in which they can take seven tricks). North will pass over 1♠ and East's 2♦ rebid should end the auction unless North risks a penalty double or a bold 2♣. Unless the defenders mess up the clubs to allow declarer a third trick in the suit, 2♦ should yield only eight tricks whether the defenders negotiate heart ruffs or force declarer in spades at the appropriate point in the play. E/W +90 will be a common result, with some +180s, +110s, +280s, and a few -50s, +100s and +200s (defending 2♠).

Where South does not overcall, West might not pass East's 2♦ rebid, especially in partnerships that would open 1♦ and rebid 2♦ over 1♠ with 1=4=5=3 distribution. If West tries a hopeful 2♥, he will want to pass a raise to 3♥, a bid that is forcing in standard systems; in some partnerships where 2♥ is always natural (and never a third-suit force with something in hearts), East will raise all the way to 4♥, which is a trick too high this time, although perhaps only in theory.

Despite the five-nil heart break, 4♥ by West is tough to beat as it requires a low spade lead from North. On a more likely club lead, declarer can come to 10 tricks in some variations in the form of two clubs, one diamond and seven trump tricks on a cross-ruff featuring an *en passant* play to score the eight of trumps if South ruffs in with relatively early with the ♥10. The timing is a bit different where East declares a heart contract, as South can lead a trump or a spade, or even a club, North carefully covering an honor at trick

one to leave declarer in the wrong hand to lead diamonds towards his honors.

Another way E/W might find their heart fit where South does not overcall involves an increasing popular treatment (especially in North America) that uses a jump response of 2♥ to one of a minor to indicate five spades and four or five hearts with modest strength. With a void in West's main suit, and holes in the minors, it's not clear whether East will like his hand enough to bid game or even try for game, but just finding the heart fit will normally secure a good score for E/W as they will rarely declare from the East side and North will rarely find the killing spade lead when West declares. Heart contracts are most likely to yield +170, but there will be a number of +420s, some 140s, +590s, -50s and -100s.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

After Pass-1♣-1♥, East might raise to 2♣, but most will pass. South will raise to 2♥ in either case and where East was silent West will choose between double and 3♥, the latter indicating an eight- or nine- trick hand with big clubs and no heart stopper. Where East has raised to 2♣, 3♥ would be the most descriptive action, but some will bid 2♣, 3♦, or 4♥, committing to at least 5♣.

It's not easy to see why E/W would fetch up in 3NT after N/S bid and raise hearts, but if that were to happen N/S have only to avoid a "surprise" spade lead and play on hearts to go plus on defense.

It's possible that a few N/S pairs will compete to 4♥ and play there, doubled. Whether -500 will be reasonable or horrible will turn on whether the popular E/W 5♣ contract is made more often than it fails.

Both sides will have a role in determining the outcome. For example, if the defense starts with two rounds of hearts, declarer can get home by drawing trumps, conceding a spade, winning any return in hand, ruffing a heart (if needed) to

isolate the heart guard in North, ruffing a spade, and running trumps to squeeze North between the ♦Q and the high heart. As the key to reaching the position is to leave the ♦K in dummy, declarer must win a diamond switch by South (should he win his side's spade trick) with the ace to retain access to the long heart in the end game. Should declarer play this way rather than take the diamond finesse? To an extent the bidding will provide some clues: when declarer ruffs the third heart South will show up with the ace-queen, and will have one of the spade honors as North would lead a spade from the king-queen-jack, so if South also had the ♦Q he might have done more than raise gently to 2♥.

Can N/S do anything to prevent declarer from executing that elegant line of play? Yes, they can: North must lead a heart and South must switch to a diamond at trick two; declarer must win the ace to have any chance, and when he gets around to playing spades, North must get his honors out of the way to ensure that South (who must play the nine if declarer leads the ♣4 from dummy, or cover the ♠10) wins their spade trick to lead a second diamond to kill the impending squeeze. Isn't that dangerous for South as declarer might have ace-jack-nine of diamonds and put in the nine to neutralize the queen? In a vacuum, yes, but in the context of the full deal, North will be squeezed out of his ♦Q if South does not switch to diamonds and declarer plays accurately, so the diamond switch, though difficult, is the best technical play.

With both the defense and declarer play far from obvious, it's difficult to project the eventual success rate for 5♣, so the N/S pairs conceding a penalty in 4♥ doubled will have to wait for the scores to be posted to see how they fare on this interesting deal.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

West, bless him, has two important cards for East among his modest assets, and the mission for E/W will be to identify the perfect fit and find a route to their unassailable 5♦.

Where North lacks a weak-majors opening bid or the will to commit a weak two-bid in spades, he will probably overcall 1♠ after West responds 1♥ to East's 1♦. East has the strength to rebid 3♦ and will probably look no further despite the missing top cards in his suit. The danger in 3♦ is that partner's first thought will be 3NT when he has both a spade guard and a diamond honor, as in this case.

3NT can be beaten with careful defense. Say that North leads a spade honor and continues to South's jack when declarer ducks. Declarer can't afford to take the second spade either, and if South loses focus and plays a third round, declarer wins and knocks out the ♦A for +430. But South can see five tricks for his side if he switches to the ♥8 and will hate himself if he doesn't do this. Yes, we can see that switching to a heart honor instead will set 3NT two tricks, but anyone who makes that play will be a direct descendant of Gordon Gecko. E/W -50 will be the most common result.

West's sufficiently inspired to try 3♠ over 3♦ will reach 5♦ and earn themselves a huge score.

It's not likely that N/S will do much bidding, but even if they get to the three-level in a major, it will be difficult for E/W to double, which would bring in +300, and they might just reach 5♦ rather than the doomed 3NT. Minus 300 would be a good save for N/S against 5♦, but hardly anyone will reach 5♦ with the E/W cards and very few will make 3NT, so it would be best for N/S to exercise restraint this time.

However, having said that, a two-level opening by North might just give E/W a hard time. What should East do? Double is uncomfortable without heart support or overwhelming high-card strength while 4♦ (if available) goes past 3NT and "sounds" like a more top-heavy suit, and 3♦ is an underbid of sorts. If East were to settle for 3♦, West might pass, and there will be some E/W +150s on the score sheet, probably good results. Stronger actions over 2♠ or 2♥ will probably get E/W to their cold 5♦, so in this respect also N/S will do better by not taking aggressive action.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Although there are living North players who will open 3♦, let's pretend we don't recognize them for our discussion.

A significant number of South players, however, will participate in the bidding, either by overcalling a 1♣ opening with 1♥, or showing their colors wholesale with their favorite anti-notrump scheme when East opens a strong notrump. That might convince East to play in 3NT rather than 4♠ if the four-four fit is revealed, which in theory should be bad for N/S as both 4♠ and 3NT can produce 11 tricks (the former only if East declares), but even worse for N/S is the possibility that someone will stop to double at the two level, where the penalty figures to be 800 points, wherever the interlopers eventually hang their hats.

Uncontested, some Wests will simply raise INT to 3NT (lots of points, weak spades) but more of their number will use Stayman and reach 4♠ from the strong side.

The first key to taking 11 tricks in both strains is for East to finesse the ♦10, something that might happen early for the declarers in spades when South leads his singleton diamond. The second important move is to take the club finesse. In notrump each of those plays gains a genuine trick and allows declarer to concede two heart tricks without counting on extra spade winners, while in spades it's essential to develop an elimination (cashing ace-king of spades and three rounds of clubs before playing the ♦A). Whether South ruffs the ♦A or discards and gets thrown in with the ♠Q his fate will be the same. He can concede a ruff-and-discard that disposes of West's second losing heart, or he can play a heart and lose his second trick there.

With West on play in 4♠ (perhaps after: 1♣-1♥-1♠), North leads a heart and the defense plays three rounds, forcing declarer to ruff with the ♠J to get home with 10 tricks and a below-average score.

Apart from significant penalties conceded by N/S, +660 will be the best E/W result, with +650 not far behind. E/W +630 and +620 rate to be unsatisfying results.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

The East hand might seem like a straightforward 1♣ opening, but 1=4=3=5 hands with about 15-17 points will often lead to an awkward rebid when partner responds in opener's short suit as INT is an underbid and suggests a balanced hand, 2♣ on a broken five-card suit is a fair distance from the six-card it would like to advertize, and a 2♥ reverse would be a significant overbid. When the singleton is an honor (ideally a higher honor than the jack, of course), some strong notrumpers consider a INT opening the smallest acceptable lie. INT is likely to get E/W to 2NT when West invites game and East declines.

But most will open 1♣, of course, and choose between INT and 2♣ for their rebid, both of which will often end the auction. Some Wests in partnerships that do not go out of their way to raise a major-suit response with three-card support, might convert INT to 2♠, and some will convert 2♣ to 2♠ to try for a suitable number of 30-point tricks rather than pass what might be a strained rebid on an indifferent five-card suit.

With the ♠Q doubleton, hearts three-three, and N/S's diamonds four-three, anyone in notrump will take nine tricks – 10 if declarer cashes hearts and North carelessly discards a spade. E/W +180 will be superb, +150 very good.

In spades, declarer will normally take nine tricks also: South will cover the ♠J and after cashing high trumps, declarer can play on hearts to discard his club loser as North scores the master trump.

Clubs is the least successful (realistic) strain for E/W as declarer; on a diamond lead, will lose three diamonds and three trump tricks – although four rounds of diamonds allow North to "uppercut" with the ♣K, South will eventually be employed in trumps on any normal line of play.

Might E/W finish in hearts? Some Easts – not only those playing a canapé (longest suit second) system – will open 1♥ to prepare a rebid in clubs. West might raise 1♥ to 2♥, but will certainly give preference to hearts on the second round if they respond 1♠. Best defense against hearts is to lead a spade on the go, which will hold declarer to seven tricks, but a diamond lead and continuation will be only one trick worse for the defense if someone switches to spades no later than trick four; otherwise declarer will have time to draw trumps and take four tricks for a delightful +140.

At the tables where East elects to open 1♣ and reverse to 2♥, E/W might well reach 3NT and make it on the very fortuitous lie of the cards. If that happened to you as N/S, you can ask your tournament director if there is a sympathy prize for which you can apply.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

After 1♣-Pass-1♠, East will usually overcall 2♦ without pretending that he has a good hand for his action: the lead/obstruction combination is simply too attractive to justify a cautious pass. North will reopen with a competitive double, a mildly conservative 2NT or 3♣, or a mildly aggressive cue-bid or 3NT. When South takes out a double to 2♥, North will face the same sort of decision on this round that he faced at his previous turn, and final contracts will include 2NT, 3♣, 3NT, and 5♣. South might bid more than 2♥ over the double after limiting his hand by passing over 2♦, and at these tables, N/S will finish in 3NT or 5♣.

The best N/S can do when East overcalls 2♦ is double for penalty; here that requires North doubling to show general strength and South guessing to pass because of his prime defensive assets. South can lead the ♠A, and the defenders can arrange to take two spades, two spade ruffs, one club, the ♥A, a heart ruff and the ♦A for three down, +500.

To make 3NT, it's essential for declarer to get the clubs right, something he is more likely to do after

East's overall than against silent opponents – it's not the extra 2 points in clubs that would appeal to East but rather club shortness, and in addition to that, West is known to have more empty spaces to fill with clubs than East.

To make 5♣, just guessing clubs is not enough – passing the jack or ten on the first round is critical – but declarer must time the play accurately to take his major-suit ruffs in the right order.

N/S pairs who bid and make a game will score very well for +400, but as there will be many pairs going minus, +150 in notrump or club partials should be reasonable scores as well.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

North has the sort of hand that some would consider a routine opening while others would not stop to give it the time of day, planning later action that would get both suits into the mix.

Whether North passes or opens 1♦, East will bid 1♥. Where North has passed, South will usually pass, but 1♠ will have a following of sorts. West should raise to 2♥ while the price is right, and most of the Norths who passed initially will risk a two-suited 2NT despite the adverse vulnerability. As N/S can make 3♣, the best that E/W can do in this situation is compete to 3♥, down 50 or 100 depending on South's willingness to double for penalty.

After: Pass-1♦-1♥-1♠ (or double); 2♥, North's hand is not strong enough to compete freely in clubs, but some North players whose partnerships separate their full-value 3♣ bids from the more optimistic kind by employing a conventional 2NT will risk a second bid. If North passes, South might reopen with a double and guess to pass 3♣, but that would require a couple of good views. Selling out to 2♥ will work poorly for N/S, as declarer will be able to negotiate a club ruff in dummy for +110.

It's difficult to see N/S competing to the four level, but if they do, E/W might not have to double to score well, but +200 will be quite a bit better than +100.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

Where North opens INT, East will show his hearts and South will find some way to check on a spade fit, find it (where North admits to holding four spades and does not make a strong statement about notrump), and get his side to 4♣, most often from the North side.

Where North opens 1♣ (natural or otherwise) South might bid spades with his strong four-card suit rather than make a negative double, but if he doubles North might try hard to steer his side to notrump because of his strong hearts and moderate spades.

Thanks to the ridiculous lie of the diamond suit, N/S can take 10 tricks in notrump - East has time to switch to diamonds (if he leads hearts) to deprive declarer of an eleventh trick – for a completely undeserved superb score.

If the defense arranges an early heart ruff against 4♣, declarer wins the diamond return, draws trumps, discards South's diamond loser on a heart winner and eventually loses the club finesse for 10 tricks; N/S +620 will be by far the most common result.

If N/S are clever enough to defend a heart contract, they can hold declarer to four or five tricks. A 500-point penalty would be inadequate but plus 800 deeply satisfying.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

With nearly all the E/W honor cards lying in the East hand (and probably marked there by the opening bid) N/S can take a significant number of tricks in any of four imaginable strains, but they might not get into the auction over East's strong notrump opening – not that such reticence must turn out badly for them as they might set INT three tricks for +150 and a fine score.

Apart from a currently rare natural 2♣ overcall, South might have available: (1) 2♣ = clubs and another suit; (2) 2♣ = clubs and a major; (3) 2♣ or 2♦ = an unspecified one-suited hand that would bring clubs into the mix but bury the spades at least temporarily; (4) 2♦ = spades and a minor' (5) 2♦ = spades and another; (6) 2♠ = spades and a minor; (7) double = some four-card major and some longer minor.

Some of those approaches will get North to 2♠ and it's barely possible that North will declare 2♥, but a conventional double will create the opportunity for North to pass for penalty, and East, with no place to go, will probably sit for it. A few Wests might try to avoid that situation by bidding over South's double – perhaps a natural 2♦, or a Stayman 2♣ intending to pass any reply, or a conventional redouble forcing 2♣ to sign off in a minor. N/S could double 2♦ and set it two tricks; the 300-point set would be the best E/W could do once N/S were in full doubling mode.

It's best for N/S to work on the majors optimally regardless of which side declares notrump, holding E/W to four tricks, but if South clears clubs E/W will manage a diamond trick eventually for a fifth winner.

If N/S find an unsatisfactory place to play and misjudge the play, E/W will score very well for any plus, but going only -100 in INT or 2♦ will be nearly as good.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

With the ♥K outside and the spades coming in, N/S can take 12 tricks in spades (or clubs) and the bidding might be over quickly if South opens

4♣, as no one has the assets to merit participation in the auction.

If South opens 1♠, North will respond 2♦, and South will choose the number of spades for his rebid that does not overstate his strength in his partnership style. If the number is two, North will bid 2NT (where that is forcing), 3NT or 3♣, the latter creating the possibility that the partnership will move towards slam should South elect to support clubs. It might seem that 6♣ is better than 6♠, but if the defense leads and continues diamonds, declarer will need the entire spade suit, so it's not the sort of slam you'd want to reach at single dummy.

Where South jump rebids 3♣ or 4♣ over 2♦, North might expect a bit more, but the partnership should stop in 4♣ or 5♣ and soon discover that they would have made their odds-against slam had they chosen to bid it.

There will be a few +1430s and +1370s and a scattering of +630s in 3NT, but the popular score will be N/S +680.

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

Nearly every West will open 1♠ or a sound weak 2♠. After 1♠, East will respond 1NT, 2♦, or perhaps an invitational 3♦, all of which should silence South. After 1♠-1NT; 2♠, Norths who have a pre-balancing takeout double at their disposal (traditionally this double would be penalty) might avail themselves of this option to compete for the partscore. East might raise directly to 3♣ but is more likely to redouble or pass, intending 3♣ over 3♣ or 3♥ by the opponents. If North does not come in over the 2♠ rebid, East will pass or raise to 3♣, usually ending the auction. Where East responds 2♦ to 1♠, he might pass 2♠ if that's part of his repertoire, but many will have to choose from among 3♣, 3♦, and 2NT at their second turn. After: 1♠-3♦ (invitational), West should pass as 3♣ would normally be treated as either constructive or forcing.

Where West opens 2♠, there's a fine chance that

no one will disturb that, but East might well raise to 3♣ as a blocking move rather than leave South a potentially easy double, 2NT or three-level action. Unfortunately for E/W, that is likely to turn a plus into a small minus.

Unless N/S release their ♦A before establishing their club trick, they should take five tricks against a spade contract, ideally higher than 2♠. Minus 110 will be a poor result, +100 a solid score, despite the fact that they could take 10 tricks in clubs: it's not easy to see how they would enter the auction.

N/S can arrange a spade ruff to hold an E/W diamond contract (undoubtedly 3♦) to seven tricks, but the most normal lead of a high club by South will relinquish that opportunity, so 3♦ is likely to go the same one down as 3♣, sparing E/W the disappointment of -200 and a matchpoint disaster.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

If North opens a weak 2♥, East really doesn't have enough for a 2♠ overcall, but many will reason that as they would have bid 1♠ over 1♥, why not go for the gusto when North has less strength than a one-bid? If East passes 2♥, South will consider passing, but many will either move toward game with a forcing 2NT inquiry (responses vary), take a shot at 3NT or 4♥ (where North's suit is known to be internally substantial) or perhaps force with a natural 3♦. As North has a near-maximum, any move by South will get his side to game. Where East risks a 2♠ overcall, South can secure a big score for his side by doubling for penalty (think in terms of an 800-point set), but some will instead follow the same strategy as if East had passed.

If North passes as dealer, many Easts will open 1♠. South will overcall 2♦ or perhaps 1NT. The latter will lead to 4♥ or 3NT, depending on whether North offers a choice of games. North will respond 2♥ to a 2♦ overcall, giving South a tricky rebid as he has a good hand with no fit but

only one spade stopper and only five cards in his main suit: he will choose from among 2NT, 3NT and 3♣, the latter leading to 3♥-3NT most often.

Where both North and East pass originally, East will overcall 1♠ after 1♦-Pass-1♥, and South will try 2♣. North should be content with 2♥, but will raise South's 2NT to 3NT, a contract that figures to produce 11 tricks on two rounds of spades or a spade to the queen and king, declarer crossing to North twice in clubs for diamond finesses to take two spades, five diamonds, and four clubs.

Might South pass 2♥? Indeed he might. Should North try 3♥ over South's 2♣, it's far from clear that there will be enough tricks in 3NT if there is only one spade stopper, and a raise to 4♥ might deal better with the spade threat if North's suit handles for only two losers; passing 3♥ is also a possibility, but could too easily miss a normal game contract. The declarers in hearts will have a chance to demonstrate their technique in the trump suit for +170 or +420 rather than +140 or -50.

North can take 10 tricks in hearts by making the best play in the trump suit: low to the king, then low from hand. The three-three breaks don't matter and low to the ten doesn't really help if West started with queen-fourth or queen-and-one. If the king holds, however, leading the ten next doesn't gain if either opponent started with ace-fourth. That's interesting stuff, although it's not likely that N/S will play in hearts all that often. N/S pairs who bid and make a game will score well as there will be pairs who miss game or go down in 4♥ or settle for a modest plus on defense.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

South might open in any of four strains at the one level after a pass on his right, and where West can make a natural overcall in clubs he will do so. The bidding might well end there where South has opened in a suit, but if South started with 1NT, North might compete to 2♠, perhaps

via a transfer. If West can compete with 2NT to indicate secondary diamonds, he will do that and E/W will reach their best strain at a manageable (with accurate play) level. If N/S compete to 3♣ they will have to avoid a double and do well in the play to avoid -200 and a dreadful score.

West will not always have a natural 2♣ available after a 1NT or 1♣ opening and might pass, intending to bid clubs later. Or West might double a weak (or medium) notrump, in which case N/S will get together in spades.

N/S can make both 2♠ and 1NT by playing West for the ♦A and singleton ♠K and might find a winning line once East shows up with the ♥K.

E/W can't quite make 2♣ even with a good view in diamonds as the defense can promote North's six of trumps with a third round of hearts, and there will be a number of pairs in 3♣ at the tables where South opens 1NT and his side reaches 2♠.

On a partscore deal where the maximum for each side in its best strain is +110 achieving that result figures to be good, although there might be enough E/W +200s and N/S +300s (3♣ doubled) to skew the matchpoint scores a bit.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

The bidding will often begin 1♦-Pass-1♠, and East will choose from among a takeout double, a systemic two-suited overcall, and some number of hearts. The timing of East's bids will often determine whether South bids 5♦, a decision that will work badly as long as E/W get their club ruff for +800. It's not easy to see how N/S could reach 4♠, but a double followed by perfect defense would net the defense +1100 (East can get either a diamond ruff or three heart tricks depending on how he uses his trump holding).

If N/S do bid over 4♥, they might push East their opponents to 5♥, but unless N/S give up much earlier and give East a chance to make a couple of slam tries, it's hard to see how E/W could get to six without someone taking a shot at it. Not that slam is worth bidding at single dummy: it's not.

Some South players will open 3NT or a conventional three-level equivalent to show a long solid minor with no side ace or king. It's not obvious how the bidding will continue after that as some Norths will pass while others will bid 4♣ or 5♣ (pass or correct) or a like number of diamonds (counting on their ♣J) to ensure that South's suit is diamonds. East, with little room to maneuver, will most often settle for a minimum bid in hearts, but some will double and a few others will fight fire with fire by committing to slam via a cue bid, 5NT, or a hopeful 6♥.

With clubs three-three and an exceptional view in trumps, E/W can take all 13 tricks in hearts, but it's unlikely that they will reach slam, and most declarers will take 12 tricks, either by cashing the ♥A and later leading towards the queen (after ruffing a club) or by leading low to the queen on the first round (catering to doubleton king or tripleton king outside – without the jack). The safest play for at most one loser in hearts, without reference to the rest of the hand, is to cash the ace, then lead toward the honors if the jack or king has not appeared. Here, however, there are other considerations, as declarer does not know in advance that clubs are three-three and also has N/S's bidding to consider. Declarer could start clubs and delay his decision in trumps, but that line risks having someone with only two clubs score the singleton or doubleton eight or singleton jack of trumps. Cashing the ♥A first would lose a 13th trick with K86 in North and clubs three-three (where low to the queen would succeed, allowing a subsequent finesse of the ten) and would also lose when South started with J8 or J6 and two clubs, in which case the winning line for 12 tricks would be low to the queen, cash the ace, and only then start clubs, losing a club but no other trick. The intuitive line in 6♥, which is probably also the best line in 4♥ or 5♥, is to cash the ♥A. It will be interesting to see how the field addresses this issue.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

When both sides have a nine-card fit in a major and the points are divided nearly evenly there is bound to be a fiercely contested auction. As N/S can make 3♠ and E/W 4♥, par on this challenging deal is 4♠ doubled, down one, -200.

After 1♥ by West, North will overcall 1♠ or 2♠ and where some Easts will settle for a minimum heart raise others will consider their strong four-card support more appropriate for a jump raise (mixed or even limit). Whether North has overcalled 1♠ or 2♠ it's not clear that South will compete any higher than 3♠, although his hand will improve if he learns that East has four-card support, evidence that will be available only when East offers a jump-raise.

West doesn't have enough to try for game after a single raise, but where East shows four-card support and roughly an average hand, West might credit N/S for most of the honors in their spade suit and divine that East's limited assets will mesh well with his own. While West's distribution improves his hand enough to at least consider accepting a game invitation, East's heart raise will not be of that ilk, and it would not be surprising to learn that at a plurality of the tables in play, N/S bought the contract at 3♠, not doubled, +140.

Of course, West might bid 4♥ with the hope that N/S might bid 4♠ some of the time when 4♥ would fail or that 4♥ would slip by not doubled and down only one when 3♠ would make.

Of such fine-line decisions are winning or losing sessions made.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

E/W will often bid uncontested: 1♠-1NT; 2♥-Pass, and although hearts is not their optimum strain (clubs offers the chance for 10 tricks and +130), 2♥ is a fine place to play.

Some Wests will pass 1♠, and North figures to

do the same. The play in 1♠ will be complex and declarer can prevail, but an overtrick would be a significant achievement. Only a ferocious and reckless North would protect with INT or a takeout double, and in both unlikely scenarios East will probably get his side to 2♥ (INT would be touch-and-go), a better spot than 1♠. South might consider 3♦ but the vulnerability should dissuade him.

Might E/W get higher than 2♥? Perhaps in Italy, where the Gazzilli convention is popular (opener's 2♣ rebid after a INT response to a major-suit opening is either natural or the first move on most 17(16)-point hands. This is at first glance a poor combination for Gazzilli as over East's 2♣ rebid, West's systemic continuation is 2NT, which denies 9(8) points, two spades or five hearts. East would have no idea whether to pass, bid 3♥, or bid 3♣, but at least the possibility of reaching the magical 3♣ is there.

To hold a heart contract to eight tricks against perfect declarer play, South must lead a trump. If South leads a club, gets his third-round ruff after declarer concedes a diamond, and exits with his remaining trump, declarer can still get home with nine tricks if he plays for the actual spade position by leading the ♠Q on the third round to smother North's remaining honor (although, when North plays the jack or ten on the second round he is more likely to have K108 than J108 because with the latter holding he could play his honors in random order). When dummy passes opener's second suit he is often short in his first suit and might well have only three-card support, so a trump lead is most often a good idea, especially with a decent holding in the first suit. Although K742 is not strong evidence that preventing ruffs in the short hand will be the best defense it's not as if the ♦A or a random doubleton club will strike gold; both appear to be decent starts for the defense, and needn't work badly. As is often the case on low-level partscore deals, both sides will have the opportunity to make an important play at some point, regardless of the opening lead.

E/W +140 will be wonderful, +130 just about as good (perhaps after: Pass-1♠-2♦(!)-Pass; 3♦-Double-Pass-4♣ /), and +110 the most common result. E/W +80 and -50 will be much better for N/S.

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

When the biggest score on offense available to either side is +90 (for N/S in INT) it's likely that there will be several different contracts with many different developments in the play.

Passing the disgusting South hand in second seat will not appeal to most if its holders, the vulnerability helping to tip the balance in favor of opening. North has a better hand than South, and if that means he would open the bidding himself he will get his side to game, which will not be blessed with a favorable lie of the cards. After: 1♥-2♣; 2NT-3NT, N/S will not be doubled, but the contract will usually go down two – even on a club lead, as long as East switches to his singleton heart at trick two.

South might rebid 2♥ rather than 2NT, leading to North declaring 3NT when he jumps to game or forces with 2NT (in two-over-one systems). Of course, North might not be so keen to force to game in a partnership that opens a lot of cheesy balanced hands, in which case he will follow an invitational sequence to 2NT, which South will be relieved to pass, almost always leading to -50.

Where South opens INT, West might feel he should enter the auction despite his partner's initial pass and the adverse vulnerability, which will get his side to 2♣, 2♥ or 2♠, depending on the partnership's defensive scheme, all of which will be doubled by North where that option is available. Although E/W don't have much to work with and neither of West's main suits lie very well, it's not easy for N/S to prevent declarer from scrambling seven tricks in hearts or clubs, and only a club lead will hold 2♠ to six winners.

Where South does not open, West might try 1♥ in third seat, and North will risk a takeout double unless he promises four spades when not full value. If East passes, South might do so also, leaving West to choose between a hopeful pass (with the trump stack on his right) and an escape from the frying pan into an unknown fire. Despite

their best efforts, N/S won't be able to defeat 1♥, so we can expect to see +160 on the frequency sheet. If West moves out of 1♥ doubled, it's not clear he will allow East to play in 1♠ doubled (which might well make), and 2♣ (which will not make) will certainly be doubled after that start.

Any plus score of 100 or more will be a good result. Even in these depreciated times, it's a good idea to have something for your bidding.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

If West has a weak 2♦ opening in his arsenal, he will unleash the beast after a pass on his right. East, with the best hand at the table, good controls and a bit of fit, will certainly consider moving toward game, but will do best to pass as the cards are not lying well for him. If he tries 2♥, West will pass if he's not forced, but will choose between 3♦ and 3♥ otherwise, both too high, and East might not pass either of those bids.

Some Wests will open 3♦, and with less room to investigate, East will guess whether to bid 3NT, a forcing 3♥, or pass.

If West passes, East will open 1♥ in fourth seat and face an awkward rebid if West responds 1NT; even if West responds 2♦, it's not clear whether East should pass, try 2NT or 2♠, or make an effort to play in his chunky heart suit. E/W will finish in a wide variety of different of contracts after this start.

As 3NT needs only the ♦K aside singleton, doubleton or tripleton, it's a decent contract, although when it fails, it will probably be down a lot in 100-point increments. At matchpoints, it's a far less attractive proposition, and staying out of this type of 22-point game is the better strategy, but that's easier said than done and East's decision will be influenced in part by whether West could hold a useful side value for his preemptive opening.

N/S are entitled to two spades, two clubs and a trump against a diamond contract and will usually

get their tricks, but if South takes his club winners before establishing spade tricks, declarer can duck one spade and eventually take a heart finesse to discard a spade for nine tricks.

If South leads a low spade against 3NT, declarer might win and pass the ♦8. If North wins the trick and returns a spade, declarer will make his contract. North is more likely to duck the first diamond, however, and when declarer repeats the finesse (he has no reason to overtake the first diamond in dummy to take a heart finesse, although that line is not impossible) he will go down at least three and probably four. If South leads a club, North might not risk ducking the first diamond, and now the defense will have to be careful not to block the club suit to set 3NT.

Although there will be a few spectacular outliers on this deal, E/W pairs who go plus figure to do very well in the scoring.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

It takes three rounds of spades to defeat E/W in 5♣, and with North on lead looking at all the critical black-suit honors and that imposing dummy, finding the killing defense will be especially attractive.

Will E/W reach 5♣, though? If West opens 3♣, East should not concern himself with the viability of 3NT (which can be defeated on a diamond lead, or a spade lead and timely diamond switch while clubs are blocked), but might try for 4♥ rather than commit to 5♣. West should raise a forcing 3♥ to 4♥, but some will hate their hand enough to retreat to 4♣, which East will raise to five.

With clubs two-two and the ♦Q as a potential entry for the long clubs, the defense can't do anything to defeat 4♥, as neither a forcing defense nor two rounds of spades and a switch to either red suit will inconvenience declarer as long as he does not allow the defense to ruff away any of his minor-suit winners.

Where West passes as dealer, North might pass

also, though many will open in any of the five strains. Where North passes, East will open 1♥, 2NT, 2♣, 2♦ (where that is a strong opening), or a strong- or maybe-strong club variation. West might not keep 1♥ open for his partner, but North will probably protect with 1♠ or 1NT, after which East will show a powerful hand with length in diamonds. It's not clear that West will get his side to game after these early exchanges, but his red-suit holdings are excellent in context and he should show some sign of life to relieve the pressure on East, who could be facing a Yarborough with no eight-card fit available.

Where East opens 2NT or 2♣/2♦ and rebids 2NT, West might commit to 5♣ rather than gamble on clubs being viable for notrump. With South on lead at some of these tables the winning defense (three rounds of spades) will not be as clear; a case could be made for an opening lead in each suit.

E/W pairs who bid and make 4♥ will score exceptionally well, but those permitted to make 5♣ or 3NT also will fare well.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Typical N/S auctions will include: (1) 1♦-1♠; 1NT-2♥; Pass, (2) 1♦-1♠; 1NT-2♣*; 2♦*-2♥; Pass (or 2NT-Pass), where 2♣ forces 2♦ and the 2♥ continuation is invitational, or the fancier modern equivalent: (3) 1♦-2♥*; Pass, where the 2♥ response shows five spades and (at least) four hearts and moderate values, and (4) 1NT-2♣; 2♦-2♠; Pass (or 2NT-Pass), or (5) 1NT-2♣; 2♦-2♥; Pass, where South's 2♥ shows length in both majors and no real game interest.

The popular contracts will be 2♠ and 2♥, both of which can produce nine tricks if declarer judges the play optimally. In hearts, after two rounds of clubs, optimists could ruff out diamonds and draw trumps ending in dummy, conceding the last three tricks; others, who start on spades, will ruff the third club in hand and continue spades and

be able to counter any move by West, including a fourth round of clubs (discarding from dummy would be essential). One particularly elegant variation involves a spade ruff in dummy, drawing trumps, cashing the ♦K, and endplaying East with the fourth round of spades to lead into dummy's diamond tenace at trick 12.

In spades it looks as if declarer must lose four trumps and a club, but if he plays West for two trump honors doubleton, and establishes diamonds, he can reach a position where he can score the ♠J *en passant* in the endgame regardless of whether West cashes his second high trump after winning the first. If West has kept a high spade, declarer exits dummy with a trump through East's K108 at trick 11; although declarer's ♠J is unprotected at this point, West must play a club and East's K10 of trumps are neutralized. If West cashes the ♠A before exiting with a third club, declarer ruffs out diamonds and plays three high hearts ending in dummy to lead a diamond through East's K10 to ensure a trick for his blank jack.

N/S will finish in 2NT less often (usually by North), and to challenge this contract East must lead a black suit and threaten to run clubs, which would force declarer to run the ♦J to succeed (he would come to 10 tricks if he gets diamonds right). As there is no reason to play East for the ♦Q, we can expect most of those declarers to go minus. Red-suit leads would work badly, however, and although it might seem that no one would lead a diamond, that might be an option where North's opening bid was 1NT or 1♣ or a two-plus-cards 1♦ and South showed both majors.

There will be a handful of N/S +180s and +150s and maybe even a couple of +600s or +630s (overbidding is not always punished), but most will be in 2♥ or 2♠, scoring +140 or +110.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

The most common start will be: 1♠-Pass-1NT-2♣; 2♠, at which point South would like to do

something to nudge E/W out of their not-unlikely comfort zone. Raising to 3♣ is a possibility, and for some a double here would be competitive rather than for penalty, although more typically with at least four cards in both red suits. With neither of those actions a stand-out and the live possibility of conceding a 200-point penalty for a misjudgment or some bad luck, South will often elect to go quietly, and 2♠ will be passed out.

The play in spades could take a few interesting turns on the popular lead of the ♣10, low from dummy. If North wins and plays a second club declarer can make three only by winning the king and continuing with the jack, over-ruffing if South puts in the ♠5, and continuing trumps. That denies South the opportunity to promote a trick for his ♠10. But what if South instead discards – say the ♦Q? Now the only way declarer can come to nine tricks is to lead the ♠9 and pass it when South follows low, an unusual version of the surrounding play that in effect plays for the actual trump position; if instead, declarer leads a trump honor from hand, North has several ways to build a trick for the ♠10, including leading a low diamond or a fourth round of clubs.

Perhaps the easiest way for the defense to secure a fifth trick is for North to duck the first club to declarer, whose best chance is to play a second club. This time North must not play another club, but can prevail by (a) switching to the ♠8 (cashing the ♦A first is fine), on which declarer can neither play an honor (South discards on the club continuation) nor the nine (South covers) to his advantage -- South will eventually score the ♠10; or (b) switching to a heart, which South must not win if declarer plays the jack – the position will eventually segue into a variation of (a) or one in which South can effectively ruff in with the ♠5; here if declarer were to divine that elegant surrounding play of passing the ♠9, North can win, put South in with the ♥A, and uppercut with the ♠8 on a third round of hearts. There would be great beauty in that sequence of plays!

It pays N/S to compete to 3♣ if no one doubles, or if they push E/W (well, West) to 3♣ and defend effectively, and it's not so clear to double 3♣ – E/W have no aces, after all, and if West has not supported spades East has no idea that he has equity of at least +110 to protect by trying for +200 while risking -670 when 3♣ proves to be a normal (and cold) contract.

There's room for both sides to show some enterprise in the bidding to improve their score, and at some table the fate of the deal will boil

down to who makes the last winning decision.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

N/S will have nothing to do in the bidding, but might be in a position to help themselves by avoiding a helpful opening lead against their opponents' notrump contract. Whether that contract is 3NT, 4NT or even a filthy 6NT will turn on E/W's agreements about West's maximum for his bidding and East's inclination to look for at best a 32-point slam with no long suit and no eight-card fit.

The range for a 2NT opening has slipped a bit in recent years to the point where some believe 19-21 is an effective choice. Realistically, it's only where West might have 20-21 that East might go past 3NT in search of a small slam. The most common auctions will see West open 1♦ and rebid 2NT, with East investigating a five-three heart fit before settling in 3NT, but in some countries (notably France), West will rebid 1♠, creating a problem for East if his fourth-suit 2♣ is a game force: there will be votes for 3♦, 2♠, 3♠, 2♥, INT, 2NT as well as 2♣ (whether forcing to game, for one round, or a puppet to 2♦). At some of these tables and some where East's response to a strong club happens to be an artificial INT, East might be declarer and perhaps benefit from a "legible" high-spade lead. A low-spade lead would leave open the possibility of North putting in the eight or nine and scoring his queen when declarer takes a third-round finesse against South's putative queen-fourth. That would be truly revolting for E/W!

On a neutral lead declarer will have to decide whether to play on hearts (where the best case scenarios are a three-three break and/or the queen-jack onside) or try for three-three diamonds and play spades for four tricks (guess the doubleton or tripleton queen) at a point where the opponents don't have a minor-suit trick or two to cash after a misguess. A bit of care is required too as declarer does not want to have

the ♠Q cover the jack or ten and so must retain a fluid entry position while the defense will often kill communications in clubs and testing diamonds early (declarer would like to cater to doubleton jack-ten and either North or South can help to paint that picture by playing high on the first round of diamonds) will do the same for internal communications in that suit. As starting on hearts is a favorite to lose an early trick in the suit with some ensuing risk, it's likely that looking for the ♠Q with communications intact will be the most promising line and the most popular choice.

Declarers who take 12 tricks will score very well – bidding slam is not really a factor – and those who manage only 11 will need to have a significant number of their colleagues find a line which results in only 10.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

The auction will usually begin: 1♣-1♦-1♠-2♦; 3♣-3♦. Although East has no aces or kings and the most modest strength for his initial action, his diamond void and honor-third of his partner's freely rebid suit merits further action; whether that action should be 4♣ or 5♣ (3♣ would suggest greater strength or a better suit and would not suggest East's suitability for a club contract) might turn on whether the partnership treats 4♣ as forcing or merely competitive. West, facing marked diamond shortness, will raise himself to 5♣ if East raises to four, not without concern that he might be missing a good slam.

The vulnerability should convince North not to bid 5♦ over 5♣, but that will happen several times, with N/S conceding 500 or 800 points, depending on whether E/W get two ruffs and/or whether they break up an impending major-suit squeeze on East by leading hearts twice when West does not underlead his club honors after ruffing a spade on the go.

To defeat 5♣ legitimately, North must lead his singleton trump, South must play low on the first spade lead from dummy, and the defense must

avoid error afterwards. E/W will be +400 or +550 much more often than -50 or -100. That will be good news for N/S pairs who buy the contract in diamonds and take enough tricks for -100, 200 or 300 – the -500s, however, will require a lot of 550s to score tolerably.

Without a club lead, declarer ruffs three diamonds in dummy. If North leads the ♥A and switches to his trump, declarer ruffs two spades in hand and two diamonds in dummy, and leads a spade equal through South, who must cover; declarer ruffs, draws the last trump, cashes the ♦A, and leads the ♥Q – when South wins he must give dummy a heart or spade trick to take care of declarer's losing diamond.

Where East jumps to 2♠ (weak) after 1♣-1♦, South will probably pass and West will try 3♣, an action that is commonly treated as constructive. North will double to get his hearts into the picture and again, East will bid 4♣ or 5♣. South might bid 4♦ or even 5♦ over 4♣, and but might double 5♣ a bit more often. In the last of those scenarios, North might reasonably find the killing trump lead as South's double implies that dummy's spades will not be a viable source of tricks.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

If N/S could see everyone's cards they would bid their hands to 4♥, cold despite the losing club finesse because the E/W hearts are four-three and everything else breaks reasonably.

But virtually everyone will be in 3NT or 5♣. The former can be held to nine tricks on a spade lead, the latter to 10 tricks on two rounds of spades. Some will gamble on 6♣ once they go past 3NT – they won't make that even if E/W do not cash their spades; others will stop at 4NT - they will make that if E/W do not lead spades on the go.

Where North starts with 1♣, South will respond 1♦, 2♣, 3♣, or an artificial raise of some kind, depending on system. Those who can force with 2♣ should be able to determine that North has a minimum balanced hand with strength in hearts

and that South has no short suit but extra values. Whether they can use that information to reach 3NT rather than 5♣ may depend on North's willingness to bid notrump without a full stopper in spades. As most auctions that do not end at 3NT will pinpoint the weakness in spades, the chances of making 5♣ diminish greatly.

Where North opens 1NT, South will often raise to 3NT rather than investigate for a safer minor-suit contract. With East on lead, there will be votes for a low spade, the ♥10, and both the ♦J and a low diamond. When East does not lead a spade, West will have to switch to spades when he wins the ♣K to hold declarer to 10 tricks; else declarer will take 11 or 12 (where East led the ♦J or declarer put in the nine on a low diamond lead) tricks.

Is it possible to reach 4♥ comprehensibly? Say that North's system opening is 1♥; the bidding might proceed: 1♥-2♣; 3♣-3♦; 3♣-4♥; Pass, where 3♣ is a last-minute try for 3NT and South feels that he needs three spades himself to bid 3NT and tries 4♥ on the way to 5♣. To make 4♥ on three rounds of spades declarer must play on clubs while South retains a low trump to deal with a fourth round of spades. Anyone who reaches 4♥ and fails to make it will hate himself in the morning.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

After East opens 1♣ South will overcall 1♥ or employ a two-suited treatment to show his red suits (2NT being the most common vehicle).

Over 1♥, West will double, bid 1♠, or – much less often – raise to 2♣. When North passes, East will bid 1♠ or 2♣ in reply to the negative double according to style and will raise 1♠ to two or three in keeping with partnership strategy. South will bid 2♦ when legal and usually risk 3♦ otherwise, but a jump-raise to 3♠ might silence him.

Where South's initial action is an Unusual 2NT, West might raise to 3♣ but will probably pass

instead where 1♣ is the system opening with minimum balanced hands and two or three clubs. North might buy the contract in 3♦, but many will jump to 4♦ with four-card support and an ace, and that will end the auction unless South raises to 5♦.

Although 5♦ is not the worst game ever reached, N/S must lose a club, a heart and a trump so this time it will be better to stop in a partial and record +130.

If West declares a spade contract, North can (and will) lead a heart, and perfect defense thereafter will hold declarer to eight tricks: say that declarer plays the ♥Q and South wins; he must continue hearts (before or after cashing the ♦A) around to dummy's major tenace; North must duck two rounds of trumps, South the first club; eventually, after a third heart from South (North pitching a club as declarer ruffs), declarer will not be able to reach dummy to draw North's last trump without conceding a club ruff or forcing dummy with a diamond ruff. Where East declares, however, the defense can't get around to hearts early enough to stop nine tricks.

Scores will include: N/S +130, +210 (4♦ doubled), -50 -100; E/W +140, +530 (3♠ doubled), -50, -100. Plus scores should be reasonable matchpoint results.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

At most tables East will pass over the 1♣ response rather than venture 2♦ or 3♦ (E/W can take five tricks in diamonds but virtually no one will stop to double them, and 3♦ might give N/S some trouble sorting out their strain and level), and South will rebid 2♣; North will stall with a fourth-suit 2♦ and South will choose among 2♥, 3♥ and 3♣. Over 2♥, North will force with 2♠, but over 3♥, he might try 3NT, as 3♣ could easily make it impossible for South to bid 3NT when that was the right contract; over 3♠, North might raise to 4♣ but 3♠ and 3NT will have plenty of support across the field. Where North supports

clubs, South will have to decide whether to make a final attempt to play in 4♥ or move towards slam, which in turn will create a decision for North, who has strong clubs but no diamond control, and probably will not be able to offer spades as an alternative. The bidding can be quite complex, and final contracts will include 3NT, 4♥, 4♠, 5♠, 6♠, 7♠, and perhaps a few less reasonable six-level propositions. The popular opening lead against most contracts will be a diamond, although some Easts will lead the singleton heart, and some Wests the ♥A or perhaps a cunning low heart against a black-suit contract. Whether declarer in 3NT attacks hearts or spades first, he should have the time and communication required to lose no more than a diamond, a heart and a spade for +630.

It might seem that 4♠ should make five, but on a diamond lead declarer's position is perilous: he can't play on trumps lest East win, cash the ♦K and give West a diamond ruff, an especially realistic layout if East has bid, but one that declarer might not cater to otherwise. He might win the ♦A and try the ♥K while there is still a trump in dummy to control diamonds; if West covers, declarer will ruff, ruff a diamond and try to cash hearts to discard diamonds. Alas, East will ruff the second round of hearts, cash the ♦K and play another diamond, allowing West to discard two clubs; now, when East comes in with the ♠K he can give West a club ruff for down one, -100. Declarer can make 4♠ after ruffing out the ♥A by leading a diamond honor for a ruffing finesse: if East covers, declarer ruffs with dummy's trump and discards his penultimate diamond on a high heart as East ruffs. East can cash the ♦K but declarer will be able to clear trumps when he gains the lead and there is no uppercut or trump promotion; if East does not cover with the ♦K, declarer discards from dummy, then takes a diamond ruff, West over-ruffing to play a heart, but declarer discards his last diamond as East ruffs and loses only to the ♠K after that for +620. On any lead but a diamond, declarer has time to knock out the ♠K and build a heart trick to come to 12 tricks for +680 or perhaps +1430 (let's hope that didn't happen to you in the E/W seats).

4♥ can be made on any lead despite the unspeakable heart break, but to succeed, declarer must not play more than one round of trumps and must take the ruffing finesse in spades and cash a second spade while he can; in the end he will be down to QJ7 of trumps and two black winners and can force West twice and score two more trump tricks for +620.

Although 6♣ and even 7♣ can be made by playing on spades, declarer might go wrong in six by ruffing one heart and drawing trumps, planning to concede a heart with the suit no worse than four-three. The early appearance of the ♥10 might convince him to try something else, however.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

Although a case could be made for passing the West hand at unfavorable vulnerability, most will open 1♥ or 1NT before the non-vulnerable opponents might strike a telling first blow and make it too risky for West to compete later. North will overcall 1♥ with 1♠ and East will cue-bid to show a fit or use some specialized artificial mechanism to show a game-forcing heart raise. The most that South might do is double a spade cue bid, and E/W should have no trouble staying out of slam, although a few pairs might climb to 5♥ before giving up.

Where West opens 1NT, East might raise to 3NT, and incur a rare minus score as North will lead a spade and the defenders will come to four spades and the ♥K. The wisdom in using some form of Stayman is highlighted by this layout, but those who bid 1NT-3NT will probably do the same the next time they have this type of combination, and of course they might be right to do so the next time!

Where West passes as dealer, North will usually pass also and whether East opens 1NT, 1♣, or 1♥, E/W will nearly always finish in 4♥. Where North opens 1♠ in second seat, East will double or overcall 1NT and whether or not South raises to 2♠, E/W are heavy favorites to reach 4♥.

As declarer in 4♥ will start clubs by leading low towards the ace-jack and play spades by leading towards the king, it would seem that E/W +650 will be a universal result for those pairs. But "universal" is a big word: where North has not mentioned spades and the opening lead was in another suit, he might switch to a low spade when in with the ♥K, and declarer might err by

playing low from East to hold himself to 10 tricks. As North would not need to break spades from the queen, declarer should consider that enough evidence to play the king – the play he would have to make if forced to play spades himself – this is not a straight 50-50 guess.

Although this is likely to be very close to a flat board across the field, +650 will undoubtedly be a bit above average.

Board 33. Love All. Dealer North.

<p>♠ A 3 ♥ K Q 3 2 ♦ A J 9 2 ♣ A Q 4</p> <p>♠ 5 ♥ 10 9 8 5 ♦ 10 7 6 4 3 ♣ J 7 6</p> <p>♠ J 8 6 4 ♥ A J ♦ K Q 8 5 ♣ 8 5 3</p>	<p>♠ K Q 10 9 7 2 ♥ 7 6 4 ♦ — ♣ K 10 9 2</p>
--	--

As N/S can make their reasonable 6♦ slam even with the trumps five-nil and the ♣K offside, we might be tempted to consider slam a bit better than reasonable. However, it's *because* trumps are revealed to break so badly that slam offers an alternative line to the straight club finesse that is worth considering.

North's 2NT opening or its equivalent will not always convince South to look for a slam at pairs scoring that at best will be a 32-point effort with two balanced hands. Many of those will not bother with Stayman and raise 2NT to 3NT, trying for the extra 10 points even if there were a spade fit. East will surely lead a spade honor, after which declarer will lead towards the ♠J for an eleventh trick. At these tables, East will be squeezed in the black suits when declarer cashes diamonds after hearts, ending in South with the ♠8 and a club facing AQ of clubs with East down to a high spade and the now-blank ♣K. If East does not take his spade winner and allows declarer to score the ♠J, the position comes down to a three-card ending and East must blank the ♣K to have any chance – else declarer exits with a spade to collect the ♣AQ at the finish. It will be interesting to see whether declarer loses his ♠A (+430) or East loses his ♣K (+490).

Some East players will risk 3♣ over 2NT and will avoid -800 or -1100 at the tables where South's double would be negative rather than penalty. South will usually settle for 3NT in that scenario, but East's intervention may well convince declarer to get the clubs right in the endgame.

If South tries for slam with a direct or delayed (after Stayman and a 3H reply) invitational 4NT, North, if accepting – close, with three aces and two four-card suits but a high-card minimum and five points in quacks - should show his diamonds and South will raise.

East will lead a high spade against 6♦ and declarer will win the ace to start trumps (East should not discard a heart as he will want to follow to follow to the third round to leave declarer in doubt about who has the last outstanding heart). After cashing the ace-jack of hearts, declarer must decide whether to play West for four hearts or the ♣K and it will take some inspiration to do the right thing with no information about the spade layout and the location of the ♣K. Declarer can succeed only by crossing to the ♣A to cash both hearts, discarding clubs, after which he can arrange two club ruffs in South. The club finesse is the more promising play.

If you bid and made 6♦, you can buy the next round of drinks, making sure to offer your unlucky opponents a double.

Board 34. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

<p>♠ 10 4 ♥ 2 ♦ J 10 6 3 2 ♣ A 10 5 3 2</p> <p>♠ 6 5 3 ♥ A K Q 9 4 ♦ A 9 ♣ K 7 4</p>	<p>♠ A J 8 7 2 ♥ J 5 3 ♦ K 8 5 ♣ Q 6</p> <p>♠ K Q 9 ♥ 10 8 7 6 ♦ Q 7 4 ♣ J 9 8</p>
--	--

Although East has a marginal opening bid, the vulnerability will probably sway the undecided voters. When East opens, the trick for E/W will be to dampen West's enthusiasm early enough to prevent an unsuccessful pilgrimage to the five level, where there are two spades and the ♠A to lose.

After: 1♠-2♥; 3♥, West will be thinking of slam despite his weak holding in partner's suit, and will usually continue with 4♣, 4♦ or 3NT rather than 3♠. East will retreat to 4♥ and West should respect that opinion although his powerful trumps will lead him to wonder whether East's reticence is based on weak trumps rather than an overall poor hand for slam. It's issues like this that reflect badly on opening balanced 11-counts with one ace, a poor main suit and a collection of slow honors.

Where East opens 1NT, West will either raise to 3NT or show his hearts and more often than not reach 4♥.

This time, 3NT will normally be held to nine tricks unless South leads a high spade and does not find a club switch if declarer ducks.

Because of the outliers in 3NT or five of a major, the popular E/W +420s will be solid average-plus results.

Board 35. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

Left alone, E/W will reach 3NT or stop a trick short of game, after: Pass-1♣; 1♦ or 1♥-1♠; 2NT-3NT or Pass/, or INT-2♣; 2♥-3NT/, or 1♦-2♠; 3♣-3♠; 3NT-Pass.

But South might open a weak-majors two-bid, or North will open or overcall in diamonds, creating different scenarios.

Where West passes in second seat and North opens 1♦, East has no attractive action, but 1♠ will have its share of supporters. If East passes, South will respond 1♠ and North's 2♦ rates to end the auction, normally two down, -100.

Where South opens 2♦ or 2♥ to introduce his two-suiter, North's conversion to 2♥ might well steal the pot, one or two down, -50 or -100. North might pass an artificial 2♦ opening, which might not silence East although it's not obvious what he would bid – perhaps 2NT, which will be raised to three.

Because the club honors are divided, E/W can make 3NT regardless of whether North leads a diamond or either defender starts spades to best effect – declarer ducks the first spade to kill the suit for South. Declarer has time to develop clubs and untangle most of his winners – all of them if North leads a diamond (+630) but only nine of them on an optimal spade lead from either side.

E/W +630 will be wonderful, but because bidding 3NT is far from routine, +600 also should score well. N/S pairs who steal the contract for -100 or less will beat not only those E/W games but also

the E/W notrump partials.

Board 36. Game All. Dealer West.

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

With 28 combined HCP, all suits double stopped, and two aces missing, N/S will usually be able to stop in 3NT or 4NT rather than the potentially doomed 5♦, which is two down on a fairly normal heart lead from either side, and two ensuing heart ruffs.

After 1♦ by North, some Easts will overcall 1♥, hoping that competing for the partscore will be more important than directing the opening lead. South might stall with 2♣, but jumping to 3NT will be a more popular choice. Although E/W could be held to three tricks in 1♥, four in spades, and five in clubs, it's difficult to project an auction that would lead to one of those final (doubled) contracts.

Where East does not overcall, South will respond 1♥, 2♣, or a natural game-forcing 2NT. 1♥ will leave North with a tricky rebid as neither 2♥ nor 2♦ pays the other red suit and the overall strength the right degree of respect. Both those rebids will have plenty of supporters, but there will be some votes for a hopeful 3♥ and a fancy 1♠, hoping to paint a picture of short clubs and extra values by delaying voluntary heart support for a round. Only 2♦ figures to create the possibility of reaching 5♦, but that will be only a minor possibility.

N/S +660 will be by far the most common result. Some will make 5♦ when the defenders do not get their heart ruffs, but 5♦ will fail more often than it is made. 4♥ should be made with careful play despite the bad trump break, but +620 will be below average.

Thanks for playing. See you next June.



Eric Kokish married Beverly Kraft, his childhood sweetheart, in 1986.

Son Matthew, two dogs: Lady (Golden Retriever) and Jackie Robinson (Black

Labrador); Kitten - called Kitten!

Residence: Toronto

Eric learned bridge at High School and has been fascinated by the game ever since. He has made his mark on bridge in several areas. He served in administration, as president of Unit 151 (Montreal); as District 1 judiciary chairman in the Seventies and Eighties, as a Canadian Bridge Federation Board member and as a member of the ACBL Goodwill Committee.

Eric is a former editor of the Unit 151 newsletter, author of a weekly bridge column in the Montreal Gazette from 1977 to 1997, has been a principal contributor to most world championship books since 1979, directs the Master Solvers Club and Challenge the Champs for the Bridge World magazine, has been editor of the World Bridge News since 1994 and has contributed to bridge magazines and bulletins around the world as well as doing VuGraph commentary at many World and International events.

Kokish is also the author of several conventions, including the Kokish Relay and the Montreal Relay. In 1980, he won a Bols Brilliancy prize and the ROMEX award for the best bid hand of the year.

Although he has not played frequently of late, Kokish is still among the top all-time Canadian players. He has won two North American championships — the Vanderbilt Knockout Teams and the Men's Board-a-Match Teams. He has earned two silver medals in international play — in the World Open Pairs in 1978 and the Bermuda Bowl in 1995 and has finished third three times in the Rosenblum Cup.

As a coach, Kokish has earned a reputation as one of the best. His latest success was as coach of the Nick Nickell squad, which won the 2000 Bermuda Bowl in Bermuda and the 2003 Bermuda Bowl in Monaco. In the past year Eric has coached the Russian and Chinese teams and members of the Egyptian team and this year is coaching teams and pairs using the excellent play records from Bridge Base Online, which provide for a whole new and effective coaching environment.

In 1997, after several working visits to Indonesia, he was invited by the Indonesian government to coach the national teams in Jakarta, following which he and Beverly settled in Toronto.

Results can be found at:

www.ecatsbridge.com

and more information about future Simultaneous events and, of course, the World Championships are at:

www.worldbridge.org

Simultaneous Pairs Organiser & WBF Communications Manager

Anna Gudge

email: anna@ecats.co.uk