

# ACBL-wide Senior Pairs – Monday, Feb. 26, 2007

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

North is unlikely to open his mediocre 11 HCP with short spades. East, therefore, will open 1♣ and rebid 1NT after West's 1♠ response. West will end the auction with 2♠. If North leads a heart, declarer can call for the jack and return to his hand with the king, positioned to pitch a club on the ♥A. If the defenders allow declarer to ruff a diamond, he could emerge with ten tricks. Solving the trump suit for no losers — Reese advocated leading the jack initially in this situation — should leave declarer above average.

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

If North opens — both 1♣ and 1♠ would have advocates — the partnership may sniff slam, perhaps prodded by vigorous E-W competition in hearts. The excellent spade spot cards and the 2-2 division of the opponents' trumps will make 12 tricks available through establishment of South's diamonds. Declarer must avoid the fatal error of cashing the ♣A and ♣K prematurely (the fact that only one top diamond needs to be played prior to ruffing makes that suit more enticing as a source of tricks). Despite holding the ♠A, West may be reluctant to defend 6♠ given six-card support for the suit that East is likely to overcall. 7♥ doubled will be down five, a profitable sacrifice for E-W pairs facing the prospect of -1430 defending 6♠.

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

The accommodating division of the E-W major-suit cards results in N-S being cold for game in either diamonds or notrump. The game bonus will elude most pairs as the auction is likely to begin with West opening 1♣ in third chair. North will overcall 1♠ over which East, despite meager values, will show his hearts with a negative double. The vulnerability may prove too intimidating for North after West bids 2♥, although South may still keep his side in the hunt with a 3♦ balance. +600 will

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

If West does not take an optimistic view and open his sullen 11 HCP in third chair, North, with solid values and good major-suit support, will avoid the passout and open 1♣. The N-S cards are as forgiving as a newly inaugurated Gerald Ford — hearts 2-2 and both spade honors in North's lock — so the matchpoints will flow to the pairs that reach game. There are not likely to be many of them. E-W has half of the deck but must proceed with caution lest they push N-S or suffer a two-trick (or more) vulnerable set. One can imagine South cuebidding 2♦ in response to partner's takeout double and then raising partner's preference of 2♥, thus driving his side to a top score.

give N-S matchpoints like an Eisenhower landslide. If E-W don't start clubs early, North could easily find ten tricks in a spade partial for a good score. E-W pairs that can steal an undoubled contract will do well.

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

This is not the deal for East to demonstrate Barney Fife timidity after South opens 1♥ and North responds 1NT (or a preemptive 3♣). With only half of the HCP, E-W can take an easy ten tricks in spades. The prevailing vulnerability may entice N-S into serious competition. That will be a successful tactic if E-W double, and declarer escapes for -500 or less. Too much bidding may force E-W into a game they might miss otherwise. Most E-W pairs will reach 4♠, believing that, at his first turn, the strength of the hand will

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

A straightforward N-S auction — S-P; N-1NT; S-3NT — will get the partnership to a common contract. Many East players will choose to lead the ♣8 (who can argue with fourth best). A duck from dummy by declarer will have the unexpected benefit of severing the transportation to trick five for the defense. Note: Deep Finesse, a veteran of many duplicate wars, would lead either the ♣K or ♣J. Of course, declarer must attack diamonds into the jaws of seemingly certain defeat — East's card shows three presumed higher

weigh more heavily on the typical East player than the weakness of his suit. Certainly, the West cards call for a try for game if East can enter the auction at unfavorable vulnerability with (obviously) weak trumps.

and not necessarily any lower, after all — to establish his ninth trick. Pairs that sniff out the excellent 4♠ Moysian game should be congratulated and barred from future participation in the local duplicate game.

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

A possible auction for E-W to reach their top strain might be: W-1♠; N-P; E-1NT (forcing); S-P; W-2♣; N-P; E-2♥. If declarer both disposes of his second diamond, either by employing the ♠K or, more likely, by ruffing, and avoids having dummy's trump queen swallowed by North's singleton king, ten tricks will emerge with little difficulty. In practice, +140 will be a more common E-W result. N-S may discover their diamond fit, a dubious accomplishment, particularly if North is to declare allowing East to lead his singleton spade. -200 will certainly claim few match-

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

West is a trump short and many scattered honor cards too heavy for an undisciplined preempt. He also lacks the expected defense for a 1♣ opening, leaving pass as the sensible choice. East, with a powerful hand, will open 1♠ and find a forcing rebid after partner responds, depending on style and system restraints, 1NT, 2♣ or 3♣. Many pairs will reach 3NT, which should make 12 tricks unless a heart (in South's case, a high one) is led, since a high club honor from the West hand will develop an extra trick.

points for N-S. East may be content to play in clubs where Deep Finesse sees nine tricks. Ten may appear if N-S forget to enjoy their heart ruff.

4♠ is the winning ticket in this lottery, because successful ruffing finesses against North's club honors will allow declarer to take all of the tricks. 6♠ is the powerball.

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

With a reasonable hand and good controls, North is likely to accept partner's invitation to game after opening 1♠. South's good trumps will have the therapeutic value of SERUTAN (natures spelled backwards) for declarer when they appear. A heart lead from East will immediately develop a third trick for the defense. Any other parry will give declarer a chance to put the ♦Q on the table. East would have a Richard Nixon-like second chance to find a heart. If not, declarer will have parking places for his losers

and emerge with 11 tricks and a top score.

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

Even with his 98 lb. weakling suit, West may overcall 1♦ after South opens 1♣. North will either bid 1♥ or make a negative double to show both majors. East has excellent support for diamonds, and will, no doubt, compete vigorously in that suit. N-S must advance with caution, because 3♥ could get ugly if declarer calls small from dummy after East leads his singleton club. Vulnerable undertricks add up very quickly when the opponents can only make a partscore. An E-W declarer in diamonds will do well to

find ten tricks, most likely by delaying the drawing of trumps and by having South rise with his ♣A the first time that suit is led.

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

Four trumps are good but two jacks are bad, so North is likely to pass after South opens 1♥ and West overcalls 2♣. If East treats his spade suit as a five-bagger and advances with 2♠, the partnership may reach the enviable contract of 4♠. Stories of great achievement in evaluation will follow at the post-game discussion. A pedestrian raise to 3♣ will result in +130, unless North thinks it wise to now support hearts which will quickly position E-W to earn +300 with the display of a (bright) red double card.

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

South has a hand as spectacular as Elizabeth's coronation to support partner after North opens 1♦. That choice of opening bids might not be universally popular given the obvious disparity in suit strength between North's clubs and diamonds. Thirteen tricks are available without a finesse in either diamonds or notrump. North has a better chance of realizing that fact if he employs Roman Keycard Blackwood and discovers that South holds both the ace and king of trumps with diamond length. 5NT should allow South to show his king, enough knowledge for 7♦. The sixth diamond is the key to making 7NT, and it is unlikely that either partner can bid that with certainty.

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

East may try to be as disruptive as Khrushchev's shoe by bidding 2♠, or even 3♠, after North opens 1♥. With adequate support, his own good suit, and modest distributional features, South should happily support partner. North, with a robust hand, should accept an invitation, so most pairs will reach 4♥. If East attacks with his singleton diamond, declarer can draw trumps, ending in dummy, and toss two spades on the top diamonds to make five. More often, East will lead a top spade and declarer will face a crucial decision

after West overtakes, leads one back, and East continues with a third round. The play suggests that West is longer in hearts, so the winning line of ruffing with the queen and then taking a finesse against West's assumed jack should appeal to many. A 4♠ sacrifice will fail by three tricks if the defense does not lose its way — a disaster for E-W.

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

At equal vulnerability, a club preempt by East, with a poor suit and reasonable support for spades, will have the limited appeal of a pet rock. Ironically, if West correctly pictures his inability to use East's hand as dummy, a pass of 3♣ would claim most of the matchpoints. Instead, East and South will usually pass, allowing West to open 1♥. North may introduce his major, potentially unwise because he can easily be held to five tricks. Many Wests will climb too high with these 20 HCP, so any E-W plus should score well.

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

Twelve opposite 12 does not always produce game. Sometimes, game is not even close. The best N-S scores will go to the pairs that are as conservative as Goldwater fanatics. Most Souths will open 1♣ and raise partner's 1♥ response. Perhaps North, persuaded by his ordinary distribution and meager trump strength, will ignore the sirens' song of two tens, will be satisfied with a game try and abide by partner's retreat to 3♥. While that contract will fail, -50 is better than -100 (or -300 if

E-W find a bold double). If E-W find a way into the auction, they can exploit the friendly diamond position — an original diamond to the jack results in just one loser — to score +110 in 3♦.

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

Clearly, West will open 1♠, and East is likely to employ his partnership's method to give a limit raise with three-card support. Despite minimum strength, some players will accept the invitation based on the location of their honors and the singleton diamond. A number of those will either benefit from a red-suit lead from North or guess diamonds correctly for a club pitch to scramble home with ten tricks and a tremendous matchpoint reward. The pairs that stretch for this game and fail to fulfill the contract will be well under average.

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

West will face a dilemma after North opens 1♠, East overcalls 2♣, and South competes with 2♠. Partner may well have secondary support for hearts, but a retreat to clubs is the last thing West wants to hear (or to see, since bidding boxes are used everywhere). A responsive double, showing the other two suits, would be as spectacular as the production of Cleopatra. In diamonds, East could ruff the second spade, ruff a club, play a diamond to his ten, ruff another club, and lead the last trump to claim 11 tricks. To achieve any favorable score, E-W must not allow N-S to play 2♠ +140 is available in 3♥.

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

club finesse and drops South's doubleton queen. E-W scores ranging from +460 to -100 would be a surprise on this tricky deal.

E-W should have a straightforward auction to a common contract: E-1NT; W-2♣ (Stayman); E-2♦; W-3NT. South will have to guess which major to lead. Here the weaker will work much better. Declarer will then have to solve the diamond suit. Low to the queen, intending to later finesse against the jack, will establish two diamond tricks for the defense. Low to the eight, successful if South has the jack or either opponent holds both honors, will give declarer three tricks. He may well fall into an extra trick if he disdains the

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

North might interfere with 1♥ or double after East opens 1♣ and West responds 1♦. He should be ignored by both East, who will rebid 1♠, and West, who can settle matters with a leap to 3NT. Declarer must see the danger inherent in cashing his top diamonds. The unfortunate split will leave him unable to enjoy additional tricks in that suit. Nine tricks may still appear, but any overtricks, and the matchpoints associated with them, will be virtually impossible. The vulnerability should act as the Ovaltine decoder for N-S with the message to keep quiet. -500 at the three level would be a bottom board.

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

West will open 1NT in third seat, and, unless North tries to exploit the vulnerability with some systemic action, East will check for a spade fit with Stayman. Over West's 2♥ response, East will invite game with 2NT or, invigorated by his strong suit, will leap to game with 3NT. To win nine tricks declarer has a lot to do, including playing a low club from dummy if North leads that suit. The ♥10 is third and North has just one diamond to lead, but with all due respect to my friend, deep finesse, few declarers will emerge with nine tricks. The conservative view in the auction will be rewarded with a fine matchpoint score.

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

At most tables, North will open 1♥ in third seat, East will overcall 2♣ and South will raise partner to 2♥. A game try of 2♠ by North at his second turn could get N-S to their top "double dummy" contract of 3NT. North is more likely to insist on hearts — after all, he will declare in that strain — putting the pressure squarely on East's shoulders. An opening lead of the ♣A will allow E-W to enjoy a ruff and to defeat 4♥. Other choices will give declarer time to pitch clubs on South's high diamonds and to emerge with +450

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

Some Souths will open 1NT to get an accurate description of their strength onto the table. Others will choose 1♠, over which most Norths will respond 1NT rather than 2♣, with marginal values and a poor suit. An adventuresome 2♥ bid from East could lead to a major setback. Most will pass, however, leaving the task of climbing to 3NT to N-S. Unless declarer manages to lose two tricks in both hearts and clubs, ten tricks will usually emerge. A N-S bidding disaster that leaves them short of game will hand E-W an excellent score.

(after the ♠A opening lead, East still could find the club shift but the second spade trick will have disappeared).

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

With 18 HCP, North will open 1♣ and should jump to 2♠ after East overcalls 1♥ and partner makes a negative double. Dealt the trump king, an outside ace and a singleton in the opponent's suit, South should be as happy as Soupy Sales with a pie in his face to contract for game. Two heart ruffs in the dummy will position declarer to take the winning view in trumps for a relatively easy and, one would think, common +680.

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

No one is likely to act before South opens 1NT in fourth seat. The five-card suit makes the North hand worth a game invitation. South has mediocre honor location and dismal distribution but, perhaps, enough ego to accept. E-W will get in twice as declarer works to establish the long clubs in the North hand. They can do no better than to play West's ♠A, low to East's ♠K, and a third round of the suit. Declarer should play his jack, winning both when the ten appears or when the hand with three clubs also holds only three spades. +400 is the kind of result that makes big percentage games.

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

A weak 2♦ from East, regardless of North's decision of whether to treat his enticing 9 HCP as an opening hand, will make West's job easy on this deal. Yes, perfect cards may produce a slam, but the obvious 5♦ will probably be enough. That 2♦ bid is problematic, of course, at the prevailing vulnerability. West's task will be more difficult after he opens 1♦ and sees partner retreat to that suit after every forcing bid he makes. N-S may help with competition to a level that may convince East that his great support is just what partner needs on this deal.

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

It will not be uncommon for South to offer a limit raise after partner opens 1♥ in first seat. The spotlight will be on East's opening lead after North makes the obvious bid of 4♥. The ♣K will be a popular choice, met, no doubt, with much encouragement from partner. West will think that partner took lessons from Moe, Larry and Curly if East makes another choice, and declarer has the chance to play a spade to the jack, to cash the king, and, with great flourish, a spade to the nine so

that he can dispose of his club. A diamond looks worst, but the defense will always take a trick in that suit.

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

Optimistic evaluations by both North and South might vault them into a hopeless game on this deal. Usually South will open 1♦, North will respond 1♥ and South will rebid 1♠. The vulnerability should silence E-W. If North raises to 3♠, South may ignore his dearth of aces and anemic trump quality and gamble on game. Nine tricks are far from certain, so a more realistic 2♠ from North should allow the partnership to earn a plus. The E-W club fit is the table's best and will produce an

easy nine tricks, if for instance, West balances when 2♠ comes to him. If N-S take the push to 3♠, East may ignore his length in clubs and double, searching for the magical (at matchpoints) +200.

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

East will probably open 1NT and, rightly or wrongly, bid 3♣ after North balances with 2♠. It will not be easy for N-S to make the winning decision to compete to 3♠. South's hand has no surprises, and further action by North courts disaster (but not here). East's best defense against spades is to cash one high club and switch to the ♥Q. Declarer might win his ace and then duck from dummy when a second heart is played. E-W pairs that are allowed to play 3♣ will be as successful as the hostess of the block's first Tupperware party.

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

With his "bad" 22 HCP, South will open either 2NT or 2♣ with the intention of rebidding 2NT. In both cases, North has an easy raise to 3NT. West will probably lead his fourth-best heart. Things will go swimmingly for declarer until he needs to find a discard on the fifth diamond. A low spade could easily be a trick while a low club deprives him of a sure stopper in that suit, an important commodity if the spade finesse loses and West plays a club. Bridge is for the bold, of course, so those who retain the mighty ♠3 will

have an easy 11 tricks. Fate could be tested if a club is led before the second heart winner is cashed, but few will press their luck.

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

South, too strong for a modern 1NT, will open 1♣ and raise partner's 1♠ response to either 3♠ or 4♠. That decision will not prove crucial, because North is certain to go to game after the more conservative approach. East has an ugly hand from which to lead. A diamond is best. A heart will allow declarer to pitch a diamond from the South hand and to establish his 13th diamond with a ruff. The adverse trump division should be a minor setback — some Easts will win a spade trick, others will not. +650 will put N-S above average while +620 will be average minus.

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

The unpleasant vulnerability is likely to prevent South from acting (with an unusual 2NT) after West opens 1♠ and East responds 1NT. West will face a common dilemma — should he rebid his long major or introduce his heart suit? A spade contract faces two unavoidable trump losers, while a grand slam is possible in a well-timed heart contract. Declarer would have to cash the ♠A, ruff a spade high, draw two trumps ending in his hand, and take a ruffing finesse against North's ♠K. Depending on

the opening lead, he will have either the ♦K or a trump for a club to reenter his hand to draw North's remaining heart. Few pairs will reach slam, so simply taking 12 tricks in hearts should position E-W above average.

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

West will probably open 1♣ with his pedestrian 12 HCP. East will respond 1♥, and South, basking in the favorable vulnerability, may overcall 1♠. That might not stop West from a 1NT rebid, unless he is playing the newfangled support double which conveniently shows three-card heart support. In that case, East should explore for a better fit with 2♦, a contract that will make even though South threatens to receive two club ruffs. North will always bid to 2♠, against which E-W would be wise to play three rounds of trumps the

first time East obtains the lead. Eight tricks may appear — who could ever doubt Deep Finesse? — for an excellent N-S result.

Bd: 33 ♠ A J 8  
 Dir: North ♥ K J 6 3  
 Vul: None ♦ 10 9 8 2  
 ♣ 10 3

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

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

Like the survivors of the SS Minnow, E-W is likely to get overboard on this unfriendly deal. East will open 1♦ in second seat and will rebid 2♣ after partner responds 1♥. At his next turn, he will show delayed (three-card) support for West's hearts, enough impetus, one would think, for West to place the contract in 4♥. The dummy will be as disappointing as Elvis' going into the Army and, unless West plays both magically and in good fortune, 4♥ will fail by at least one trick. It's possible that some E-W pairs may subside in a club partial, thereby receiving, if not

truly deserving, a giant portion of the matchpoints. As always, 3NT is a possible resting spot for E-W, with little chance for success in the real world.

Bd: 35 ♠ J 10 6 2  
 Dir: South ♥ 8 5 3 2  
 Vul: E-W ♦ A J 7  
 ♣ K 4

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

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

If West chooses not to open his marginal hand, East, with three quick tricks and a six-card suit, will avoid the passout and open 1♣. N-S have little to compete with, so West will respond 1♠ and might well bid 2NT after partner's 2♣ rebid. East's suit needs too much help from partner, so 3♣ seems superior to pass. N-S always have a trump trick, so +110 should be the result unless South leads a heart at some point (West's two honors should warn against that play). Ironically, North needs to lead a heart to prevent -120 if West declares 2NT, because declarer will need an entry to establish his club winners and another to enjoy them.

Bd: 34 ♠ 9 3  
 Dir: East ♥ A 10  
 Vul: N-S ♦ K 10 5  
 ♣ A K J 8 7 5

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

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

The E-W major-suit cards are divided and located appealingly for any N-S declarer. South will open 1♠ in second seat and bid (and rebid) hearts over North's forcing calls. Some pairs will subside in 3NT, which will just make if declarer throws his lot with the club suit. An overtrick will appear if he plays on spades, a more attractive suit because of the ten. The real bonanza will befall those in 4♠. The hearts establish with one ruff and both the ♦A and trump queen are onside (the latter third) so 12 fairly easy tricks will develop. Any pair that bids the slam should investigate the midnight flights to Vegas.

Bd: 36 ♠ Q J 5  
 Dir: West ♥ Q 9 7 5  
 Vul: Both ♦ A Q 6  
 ♣ A 8 4

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

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

East would be well advised to remain silent after North opens 1NT. 2♥ is almost certain to fail by two vulnerable tricks, the kiss of death, since N-S can not come close, either in the auction or in the play, to game. Making 1NT might be a struggle, but West's singleton ♥J will be as beneficial as a Social Security check to North. Spades will be an interesting strain for E-W, although eight tricks appear to be out of the grasp of a declarer.

