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Deal Analyses 7M05

1987 Golden Anniversary Pairs

by Richard Pavlicek

The 36 deals in this collection were played September 15, 1987 in the Golden Anniversary Pairs, a continentwide event celebrating the 50th anniversary of the American Contract Bridge League, and sponsored by Royal Viking Cruise Lines. Scoring was by "Instant Matchpoints," which means players get their matchpoint score from a predetermined chart immediately after playing each deal. The analyses were written by Richard Pavlicek and originally published in a souvenir booklet given to each participant after the game.

Regardless of whether you played in this event, these analyses provide instructive reading with many tips on bidding and play. To benefit even further, prepare these deals in duplicate boards (or have someone else do it) and *play them*. Determine your matchpoint scores from the tables (top is 100) then compare your bidding and play with my write-up.

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North Deals **Board 1** None Vul

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



The Golden Anniversary Pairs begins with an exciting deal that should produce a myriad of results. After two passes South will set the tone with his opening bid—1♦, 3♦, 4♦, 5♦ or 3NT (Gambling) are possibilities. After a 1♦ opening (my choice) the bidding might proceed: 1♠, double (negative), 2♣, then 3♦ by South. If West raises clubs, South will compete to 4♦, which goes down one assuming a correct heart guess.

East-West fare all right in clubs (probably 10 tricks) and surprisingly well in spades. Although difficult to reach, 4♠ cannot be defeated if declarer takes the second-round club finesse after drawing trumps; and South must shift to a heart at trick two to prevent an overtrick.

North-South players in 3NT usually will fail (miserably, if East-West run the club suit), but a few may make it with poor defense such as the ♠ A lead and another spade.

East Deals **Board 2** N-S Vul

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



Good bidding will not be rewarded on this deal. The best matchpoint contract is 6NT, with 6♠ a close runner-up, but either is destined to fail with both major-suit finesses offside. The only slam that makes is 6♦ by East, provided declarer does not take a spade finesse at trick one. (Note that the spade suit provides two discards, so the heart finesse is unnecessary.) If West plays 6♦, the contract is scuttled by a heart opening lead.

Using the Jacoby transfer bid, I like this sequence:

West	North	East	South
		1 NT	Pass
2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♣	Pass	4♥	Pass
5 NT	Pass	6 NT	All Pass

Four clubs and 4♥ are control-bids; 5NT says “pick a slam,” and East chooses notrump because of his club-heart holdings and flat distribution. Too bad it doesn’t make.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 1

.....100	.....89	-50.....67	-250.....23	-500.....5
+550.....100	+150.....88	.....57	.....21	.....3
.....99	.....88	-100.....47	-300.....16	-590.....3
+500.....98	+130.....87	.....37	.....11	-600.....2
.....97	.....87	-130.....35	-400.....10	.....2
+430.....96	+110.....85	.....34	.....9	-1100.....2
.....96	+100.....80	-150.....33	-420.....8	.....1
+400.....93	.....77	.....31	.....7	-1700.....0
.....90	+50.....77	-200.....28	-450.....7	.....0
+300.....89	.....77	.....25	.....6	

North-South Matchpoints—Board 2

.....100	-430.....35	-920.....7
+200.....100	.....33	.....5
.....99	-450.....30	-940.....4
+100.....95	-460.....20	.....4
.....91	.....15	-980.....3
+50.....65	-480.....14	-990.....1
.....42	-490.....12	.....1
-140.....40	.....11	-1100.....0
-170.....38	-800.....11	.....0
-420.....37	.....10	

South Deals **Board 3** E-W Vul

♠ A Q 9 7 ♥ 9 6 4 ♦ A J ♣ K 7 4 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ J 8 6 3 2 ♥ K Q 3 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ 8 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ K 10 5 ♥ A 10 2 ♦ K 9 8 ♣ A Q 10 9		♠ 4 ♥ J 8 7 5 ♦ 7 5 4 3 2 ♣ J 5 3									

After a classical 1 NT opening by West, most North players will (wisely) stay out of the bidding. Using Jacoby transfers, East will respond 2♥, then rebid 2 NT to invite game in either notrump or spades. West should accept with his spade fit and well-textured hand, and my choice is to bid 3 NT—with no ruffing potential there is a good chance the same number of tricks can be won in notrump as in spades (which proves to be true). Without the Jacoby transfer East should respond 2♣ (Stayman) followed by 2♠ to show invitational strength with five spades. Then West will have a similar decision.

The play in notrump should please West. North cannot attack the hand, and the spade suit can be established for three tricks — finesse the 10, then lead the king and (when South shows out) finesse the eight. Nine tricks are routine, and many will win 10 tricks if North leads a club at any point.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 3

.....100	.....91	-170.....58	.....25
+800.....99	+100.....83	-180.....52	-620.....24
.....99	.....75	.....50	-630.....13
+500.....98	-110.....74	-300.....50	.....3
.....97	.....73	.....49	-660.....2
+300.....97	-140.....69	-500.....48	.....1
.....97	-150.....61	.....47	-800.....1
+200.....94	.....59	-600.....36	.....0

West Deals **Board 4** Both Vul

♠ J 9 8 2 ♥ K J 9 8 5 4 ♦ Q ♣ K 9	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K Q 4 ♥ A 3 ♦ 8 7 4 2 ♣ J 7 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ 5 3 ♥ 10 6 2 ♦ J 9 6 3 ♣ A 8 5 3		♠ 10 7 6 ♥ Q 7 ♦ A K 10 5 ♣ Q 10 6 2									

After a pass by West, North has the values for a weak two-bid. However, his side four-card spade suit should influence him to pass. Most East players will open 1♠, although diehard five-card majorites will bid 1♦. West may or may not keep the bidding open—I would pass 1♠ but raise 1♦ to 2♦. In any event North should bid 2♥, and this should buy the contract. If East-West bid any higher, they are in serious trouble; 3♦ should result in minus 200 even if South does not double.

The play in hearts is interesting. East should begin with four rounds of spades, which gives North a two-way guess for the ♥10. The percentages slightly favor playing West for that card (since he is shorter in spades), which leads to the winning play of ruffing with the queen. I would next lead a club, hoping to steal the king (then ditch my other club). But whatever happens, I would later lead the ♥7 for a finesse.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 4

.....100	.....89	+110.....59	-100.....25	-670.....0
+1100..100	+300.....87	+100.....48	.....8	.....0
.....99	.....85	.....46	-180.....7	
+800.....98	+200.....80	+80.....45	.....7	
.....97	.....76	.....45	-200.....4	
+500.....94	+140.....73	0.....44	.....2	
.....91	.....69	.....44	-300.....1	
+400.....90	+120.....69	-90.....43	.....1	

North Deals **Board 5** N-S Vul

<p>♠ K 6 ♥ A 7 6 4 ♦ A J 8 4 ♣ K 7 6</p> <p>♠ 5 2 ♥ K 9 2 ♦ 10 3 2 ♣ Q J 10 9 8</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A Q 8 7 ♥ — ♦ K Q 6 5 ♣ A 5 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ J 10 9 4 3 ♥ Q J 10 8 5 3 ♦ 9 7 ♣ —</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

After a 1 NT opening by North (assuming 15-17 or 15-18), East has a difficult problem. A lot depends on his systemic methods; but whether East-West use Landy, Astro, Brozel or whatever, it is not easy to uncover the tremendous club fit. Ironically, natural bidders may do better here with a 2 ♣ overcall. The club suit is disgusting, I agree, but you have to do something. South, with his freak distribution, should jump directly to 4 ♥ (or 4 ♦ if using the Texas transfer), after which West should bid 5 ♣ only if East has shown a real club suit.

Ten tricks can be won in hearts. This is routine except against a spade lead from West, who is able to ruff the third spade with the ♥ 9 to ensure a trump trick. Declarer can counter this by discarding a diamond, then later finessing in trumps and throwing the remaining diamonds on the spades.

Five clubs appears makable at first glance, but the lack of communication means down one—still a good sacrifice.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 5

.....100	.....81	.....60	-130.....37	-420.....16
+1050....98	+650.....77	+170.....59	.....36	.....16
.....98	.....72	.....57	-150.....34	-500.....12
+990.....96	+620.....68	+140.....56	.....33	.....7
.....94	.....64	.....55	-170.....33	-550.....5
+870.....93	+500.....63	+110.....54	.....32	.....2
.....92	.....63	+100.....51	-200.....27	-800.....1
+790.....88	+300.....62	.....47	.....22	.....0
.....85	.....61	-100.....43	-400.....20	
+730.....84	+200.....60	.....39	.....17	

East Deals **Board 6** E-W Vul

<p>♠ K Q J 4 2 ♥ 7 4 ♦ Q 7 6 2 ♣ J 4</p>	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 10 6 3 ♥ A 9 8 ♦ K J 3 ♣ A Q 9 6</p> <p>♠ A 9 8 5 ♥ 3 2 ♦ A 10 9 8 5 ♣ 8 5</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ K Q J 10 6 5 ♦ 4 ♣ K 10 7 3 2</p>
	N										
W		E									
	S										

After a pass by East, South has a choice—pass or bid some number of hearts. The lack of defensive strength makes a 1 ♥ bid undesirable; a weak two-bid with 6-5 shape is misdescriptive; and the hand is too rich in playing strength for a 3 ♥ preempt at favorable vulnerability. Rejecting a pass on general principles, my choice is to open 4 ♥. This is not a textbook example, to be sure, but the suit is self-sustaining, and preempts often goad the opponents into unsound actions.

Regardless of South's first call, it appears that all roads lead to 4 ♥. Since there is nothing to the play (11 tricks are routine), this should be one of the flattest boards in the set. A few overactive East-West pairs may bid up to 4 ♠, which goes down two or three tricks depending on the diamond guess—a top for North-South if they double.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 6

.....100	.....91	.....9
+940....100	+550.....91	+400.....8
.....99	.....91	.....7
+800.....99	+500.....89	+200.....5
.....99	+490.....88	.....3
+750.....98	+480.....87	+150.....3
.....98	.....86	.....3
+690.....97	+450.....48	-50.....1
.....96	.....9	.....0
+650.....94	+420.....9	

South Deals **Board 7** Both Vul

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

Though South can easily make 3 NT, that will not be the popular contract on this exciting deal. After a 1 ♣ opening by South, North might raise to 2 ♣ whether or not West overcalls 1 ♦ (seven-card trump support makes up for the lack of high cards). East will bid his spades, South should try 3 NT, and after that it is anybody's guess. North may retreat to 4 ♣ (very dubious); East may bid 4 ♥ (or 4 ♦ if West overcalled 1 ♦). South is likely to double any East-West contract, but North may get cold feet and bid 4 NT or 5 ♣ (either contract is down one with best defense).

The play in 4 ♠ is interesting. After a club lead (ruffed), say East leads the ♠ K to the ace and ruffs the club return. A heart is led to the queen, then the ♦ A and another diamond leaves the defense helpless (the ♠ 8 in dummy prevents a heart ruff). South, of course, can foil this or any other attempt by *refusing to win* the ♠ A on the first round.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 7

.....100	..... 92	+200..... 71	..... 38	..... 12
+950.....99	+660..... 92	..... 67	-100..... 34	-670..... 11
.....99	..... 91	+180..... 66	-110..... 29	..... 11
+910.....98	+630..... 87	..... 64	..... 28	-710..... 10
.....97	..... 83	+150..... 56	-130..... 25	..... 9
+800.....96	+600..... 80	..... 48	-140..... 22	-790..... 6
.....95	..... 77	+130..... 44	..... 21	..... 3
+750.....95	+500..... 77	..... 40	-200..... 17	-930..... 1
.....94	..... 76	+110..... 40	..... 14	..... 0
+710.....93	+210..... 75	+100..... 39	-620..... 13	

West Deals **Board 8** None Vul

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

North and South have balanced distribution and no major-suit fit, so it would be a bidding disaster not to reach 6 NT with 33 combined HCP. At IMP scoring a good pair might play 6 ♦ in case the suit provided an extra trick, but that is a losing proposition at match-points. Either of these auctions is likely:

North	South	North	South
1 NT	2 ♣	1 ♦	1 ♥
2 ♦	4 NT	2 NT	6 NT
6 NT			

The first sequence assumes 15-18 or 16-18 notrumps. Two clubs is Stayman, and 4 NT is quantitative; North accepts with his maximum. The second sequence assumes 15-17 notrumps. North's rebid shows 18-19, so South can place the contract.

Unless East finds the diabolical lead of a small club (ouch!), 6 NT will usually be made with the ♣ A onside; but a fine player might go down by taking a second-round heart finesse through West after discovering he held a singleton diamond.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 8

.....100	+430..... 13	..... 0
+990.....76	+420..... 12	
.....51	..... 12	
+920.....49	-50..... 8	
.....47	..... 5	
+490.....38	-100..... 4	
+480.....27	..... 3	
.....26	-150..... 2	
+460.....20	..... 1	
.....13	-200..... 1	

North Deals **Board 9** E-W Vul

♠ A K 10 5
 ♥ A J 8 6 4
 ♦ 8 4
 ♣ Q 9

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

 ♠ Q J 9 8 4 2
 ♥ K Q 7
 ♦ 5
 ♣ A 6 5

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



Beginning with North the bidding is likely to go: 1 ♥, 1 ♠, Pass, 2 ♦, Pass. East then has a problem whether to bid 2 NT, rebid his spade suit or make an anti-matchpoint pass. Two notrump seems too aggressive with a singleton diamond, so I would try 2 ♠, which should end the bidding.

Against 2 ♠ the defense should begin with the ♥ A and another heart, and then declarer starts cashing diamonds. When the third diamond is ruffed low and over-ruffed, declarer cannot avoid the loss of three spades, a club and heart ruff to go down one—a popular result.

Two notrump has a better chance (although if East bids 2 NT, West may raise to 3 NT). The ♥ 9 is ducked to the queen, West may raise to 3 NT). The ♥ 9 is ducked to the queen, and three top diamonds are cashed. North does best to discard a heart, after which perfect defense can prevail; but the situation is complicated and 2 NT may make in practice.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 9

.....100	.....84	.....12	-500.....2
+800.....99	+100.....62	-140.....9	.....1
.....97	.....40	-150.....6	-600.....1
+400.....97	-80.....36	.....5	.....1
.....97	-90.....32	-200.....5	-800.....0
+300.....96	-100.....31	.....4	.....0
.....96	-110.....23	-300.....3	
+200.....90	-120.....13	.....2	

East Deals **Board 10** Both Vul

♠ K Q 6 5 3
 ♥ K 9 3
 ♦ J 2
 ♣ A K 9

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

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

 ♠ 9 8 4
 ♥ A Q J 7 5
 ♦ Q 9 5
 ♣ 8 4



Three passes to North will elicit a 1 ♠ opening by most players and a 1 NT opening by some. The latter is less desirable because of the weak diamond holding. After 1 ♠ South has a close decision. I prefer a raise to 2 ♠ (assuming five-card majors), but 2 ♥ is reasonable as a passed hand. Unfortunately, 2 ♥ will propel the partnership to game; North should raise to 4 ♥. Even a raise to 2 ♠ will result in game if North elects to make a borderline game try, since South should accept.

Game in either major suit is a reasonable venture, essentially requiring a normal spade break with the ace onside. But the 4-1 spade division allows either contract to be defeated *two* tricks—4 ♥ simply by getting two spade ruffs, 4 ♠ by leading clubs at every opportunity; forcing dummy to ruff a club ensures three trump tricks for East.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 10

.....100	+600.....88	-100.....56
+990.....100	.....85	.....41
.....99	+170.....85	-200.....21
+650.....98	.....85	.....2
.....97	+140.....82	-300.....1
+630.....97	.....79	.....1
+620.....94	+110.....75	-500.....0
.....91	.....71	.....0

South Deals **Board 11** None Vul

♠ 3 ♥ K Q 7 5 ♦ 9 8 5 ♣ A J 10 9 6 ♠ K Q 8 5 4 ♥ 10 9 6 ♦ 7 6 ♣ 7 4 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A J 10 9 7 6 ♥ 4 2 ♦ A K Q ♣ K 3 ♠ 2 ♥ A J 8 3 ♦ J 10 4 3 2 ♣ Q 8 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										

After two passes, North will open 1 ♣ (some may prefer 1 ♥ as a tactical maneuver) and East will double since his hand is too strong for a 1 ♠ overcall. South will get his two-cents worth by bidding 1 ♦ or 1 ♥—most experts would prefer 1 ♥ because of the lead-directing value and the fact that South is unlikely to bid again. West should bid 1 ♠, North should raise to 2 ♥ if South has bid hearts, and East, after recovering from the shock of his partner's bid, should raise to 4 ♠. This contract is an early claimer with the ♣ A onside.

North may be tempted to sacrifice in 5 ♥, but this is against the odds because it requires two conditions to be successful. First, 4 ♠ must be makable; second, South must be able to win nine tricks to hold the loss to minus 300. As can be seen, the first condition comes through but not the second.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 11

.....100	..... 91	..... 3
+100.....100	-300..... 90	-590..... 2
.....99	..... 89	..... 0
+50.....98	-420..... 49	
.....97	..... 10	
-100.....97	-450..... 9	
.....97	..... 7	
-170.....94	-500..... 5	

West Deals **Board 12** N-S Vul

♠ K J 9 3 ♥ 8 4 2 ♦ A 7 6 3 ♣ 10 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 7 ♥ A 10 ♦ 8 4 2 ♣ Q 7 6 5 4 3 ♠ 10 8 4 2 ♥ K 9 7 3 ♦ J 10 9 ♣ A J ♠ Q 6 5 ♥ Q J 6 5 ♦ K Q 5 ♣ K 9 8
	N										
W		E									
	S										

The auction is likely to begin with three passes, although a few may open the East hand (1 ♥, I suppose) in third seat because of the favorable vulnerability. If South opens 1 ♣ in fourth seat, North has an interesting problem. A 3 ♣ response does not do justice to the hand, nor does 2 NT. After all, 3 NT will be makable opposite as little as ♣ A-K-x and a major-suit king, which is only 10 points; and South should have more than that for a fourth-seat opening (especially vulnerable). If there ever was a hand to respond 3 NT as a passed hand, this is it.

The success of notrump and club contracts by North-South will be varied, depending on the lead and who is declarer. In notrump nine tricks can be won by North with a heart lead, or by South with a spade lead; otherwise, the limit is eight tricks. In clubs the domain runs from eight to 10 tricks. The only sure thing is that this will not be a flat board.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 12

.....100	..... 84	+100..... 42	..... 11
+660.....100	+180..... 83	+90..... 39	-200..... 6
.....99	..... 83	..... 37	..... 2
+630.....99	+150..... 80	+50..... 35	-300..... 1
.....98	..... 77	0..... 32	..... 1
+600.....92	+130..... 71	..... 31	-400..... 0
.....87	+120..... 62	-100..... 22	..... 0
+300.....85	+110..... 51	-110..... 11	

North Deals **Board 13** Both Vul

♠ A Q 9
 ♥ K J 4
 ♦ A 8
 ♣ A J 5 3 2

 ♠ K 6 2
 ♥ 3 2
 ♦ K J 4
 ♣ K Q 9 7 6

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

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



North's hand is too strong for a 1 NT opening, and most will begin with 1 ♣ and jump to 2 NT over South's 1 ♥ response. South's distribution should induce him to bid again — probably 3 ♦, although some may rebid 3 ♥. This will lead to the excellent 4 ♥ contract when North indicates his heart support.

A few North players may consider the five-card suit worth an extra point (or two) and open 2 NT, which routinely results in 4 ♥ after South shows a five-card heart suit. Nonetheless, reaching 4 ♥ will be a good score because some pairs will stop below game or reach the inferior 3 NT (unmakable with best defense).

Straightforward play brings home 11 tricks in hearts. After a club lead, declarer should win the ace and immediately play the ♦ A and another diamond. The distribution is friendly. One ruff establishes the diamonds, and with trumps 3-2 and the spade finesse onside, only a diamond and a heart are lost.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 13

.....100	..... 58	..... 41	+130.....24	..... 4
+1100..100	+630..... 57	+210..... 40	+120..... 19	-200..... 4
..... 99	+620..... 50	+200..... 34	+110..... 14	..... 3
+800.....99	..... 44	..... 29	..... 14	-300..... 2
..... 98	+600..... 43	+180..... 28	+90..... 14	..... 1
+750.....98	..... 43	+170..... 27	..... 13	-400..... 0
..... 97	+500..... 42	..... 27	+70..... 12	..... 0
+660.....97	..... 41	+150..... 26	..... 11	..... 0
+650.....77	+300..... 41	..... 25	-100..... 7	..... 0

East Deals **Board 14** None Vul

♠ Q 9
 ♥ A 5 3 2
 ♦ Q 10 9 2
 ♣ K Q 3

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

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

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



After two passes, West may gain an advantage for his side by opening 1 ♣. This should silence North until East's 1 ♠ response is passed around, after which North should double and South should bid 1 NT. West will compete to 2 ♠ and is likely to buy the contract — routinely down one.

The deal actually belongs to North-South, who can win eight tricks in notrump. After the best defense of a spade lead, declarer drives out the ♣ A, allows the opponents their fun in spades, and then wins the rest with the aid of the diamond finesse.

North-South may do even better in a club contract, although that is difficult to reach after West's 1 ♣ opening. Nine tricks are the limit if the opponents attack hearts, but many will not. Declarer will then discard a heart on the fourth diamond to score plus 130, beating all the plus 120s.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 14

.....100	..... 89	+90..... 37	-140..... 0
+500.....100	+180..... 80	..... 35	..... 0
+490.....99	..... 71	+50..... 24	..... 0
..... 99	+150..... 69	..... 13	..... 0
+430.....98	+140..... 65	-50..... 12	..... 0
..... 97	+130..... 61	..... 11	..... 0
+300.....95	+120..... 54	-100..... 9	..... 0
..... 92	+110..... 48	-110..... 4	..... 0
+210.....90	+100..... 43	..... 1	..... 0

South Deals **Board 15** N-S Vul

♠ 10 6 5 ♥ 10 7 3 ♦ A 4 ♣ 8 7 6 3 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 7 ♥ 8 6 4 ♦ 9 8 7 5 3 2 ♣ Q 10 9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ A Q ♥ Q 9 5 2 ♦ Q 10 6 ♣ A K J 4		♠ K J 9 8 4 3 2 ♥ A K J ♦ K J ♣ 5									

After South's 1 ♠ opening, West should double. This is much better than 1 NT because of the potential for locating an excellent heart contract. North should pass (note the vulnerability), East will bid 2 ♦ and South will rebid spades; my choice is 3 ♠. This is a slight overbid with partner silent, but the best strategy in these situations is to bid as high as you intend to immediately rather than inch up slowly. Over 3 ♠ West may gamble 3 NT (sometimes partner will have a better diamond suit). This contract would go down three tricks, but North may raise to 4 ♠ (I would), which will be a popular contract—often doubled.

Careful defense is required to defeat 4 ♠. After a high club lead, West must shift to a diamond immediately. If clubs are continued, declarer ruffs and succeeds via ♦ K, ♦ A, club ruff and a spade exit. West now must establish the fifth club in dummy, else lead hearts or concede a ruff and discard.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 15

.....100	+730	.....79	.....57	.....33	.....2	
+10709977	+17054	-10031	-5001
.....98	+620	.....75	.....51	-110	.....27	.....1
+9309673	+1505125	-8000	
.....95	+50072	+14046	-130240	
+870	.....94	.....71	.....43	.....24		
.....94	+300	.....64	+100	.....41	-150	.....24
+790	.....88	.....58	.....40	.....23		
.....81	+250	.....57	+50	.....37	-200	.....13

West Deals **Board 16** E-W Vul

♠ A 8 5 ♥ A 10 3 2 ♦ A K ♣ Q 6 3 2	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 6 ♥ 9 8 6 5 4 ♦ 10 2 ♣ K 8 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ 9 7 ♥ 7 ♦ Q J 8 7 6 5 ♣ A J 9 5		♠ K J 4 3 2 ♥ K Q J ♦ 9 4 3 ♣ 10 4									

Those who play weak two-bids in diamonds may open the West hand, but most will pass, allowing North to open 1 NT. Using Jacoby transfers, South should respond 2 ♥ and then jump to 3 NT to offer a choice of games. North should choose 4 ♠. Standard bidders should reach the same contract (from the South side) after an immediate 3 ♠ response or a Stayman sequence. A few gamblers will ignore the spade fit to play 3 NT and be rewarded with 11 tricks — don't tell me you'd lead a club from the East hand.

The play in spades offers several options. With the likely heart lead declarer may: (1) Play routinely by drawing three rounds of trumps with a finesse; (2) play safe by cashing the top trumps, or (3) play all out by trying for a diamond ruff early. Line 1 brings home 11 tricks, and Line 2 only 10 assuming perfect defense. Line 3 may lead to disaster, depending on the sequence of plays.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 16

.....100	.....30	.....9		
+80099	+43027	-505
.....99	+420	.....18	.....1	
+500	.....98	.....11	-100	.....1
+490	.....97	+400	.....10	.....1
+480	.....96	.....10	-150	.....0
.....95	+200	.....10	.....0	
+460	.....81	.....9		
+450	.....48	+140	.....9	

North Deals **Board 17** None Vul

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



After two passes, South should consider his hand too strong for 1 ♠ and open 2 ♣, assuming that is the partnership's strong, forcing bid. To be sure, South cannot guarantee game, but with length in both majors the chance must be taken. Going down in game is more honorable than being passed out in 1 ♠ and seeing the dummy hit with ♥ K-x-x-x and out. The partnership bidding is likely to go:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	2 ♣
Pass	2 ♦	Pass	2 ♠
Pass	3 ♣	Pass	3 ♥
Pass	3 ♠	Pass	4 ♠

North's 3 ♣ bid is the popular *second negative* — a courtesy to keep the bidding open without promising any values. Any other rebid by North would show about 5-7 points.

Routine play in 4 ♠ will net 11 tricks. Declarer should cash one top trump, use the ♦ Q entry to take the heart finesse, then use the heart entry (or a diamond ruff) to take the spade finesse.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 17

.....100	..... 41	..... 1
+480.....100	+230..... 40	-100..... 0
..... 99	..... 39	..... 0
+450..... 76	+200..... 26	
..... 52	..... 13	
+430..... 51	+180..... 13	
+420..... 46	+170..... 9	
..... 42	..... 5	
+400..... 42	-50..... 3	

East Deals **Board 18** N-S Vul

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



This will be an action hand. At favorable vulnerability East should forgo a weak two-bid and open 3 ♥ (conservative) or 4 ♥ (my choice) to put more pressure on the opponents. After: pass, pass, double, South will start licking his chops. It may seem obvious to pass for penalty, but with 4 ♠ odds-on, South must achieve a four-trick set to get a good matchpoint score. East can win six tricks in hearts with best play all-around, so South will be right to pass 4 ♥ (OK, they got me) but not 3 ♥.

Four spades will be a common contract, sometimes doubled, and it should be made despite the horrible trump break. After a heart lead, declarer should force out the ♣ A, win the club or diamond return and cross to the ♠ A, discovering the bad news. Next he cashes all the minor-suit winners, ruffs a club and leads a heart. If West ruffs (best), declarer *discards* a diamond. If West discards, declarer ruffs small, then ruffs a diamond with the ♠ 10.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 18

..... 100	+730..... 78	..... 51	+100..... 35	-300..... 3
+1400.. 100	..... 77	+200..... 50	..... 26	..... 3
+1100... 99	+620..... 74	..... 49	+50..... 24	-470..... 2
+1070... 97	..... 71	+170..... 48	..... 21	..... 1
..... 96	+500..... 68	..... 47	-100..... 18	-800..... 1
+990..... 94	..... 65	+150..... 47	-110..... 13	..... 0
+800..... 87	+300..... 58	..... 46	..... 11	
+790..... 80	..... 51	+120..... 45	-200..... 7	
..... 79	+250..... 51	+110..... 44	..... 3	

South Deals **Board 19** E-W Vul

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



This time South has favorable vulnerability, and a preempt is in order, except for squeamish players. A weak two-bid is OK, but less effective than 3♦, which would be the choice of most expert members of the hyperactive school. Pair events are seldom won by playing down the middle on every hand. Opportunities must be sought to create problems for the opponents—if they founder a few times, a good game may be converted into a winning one.

Over 3♦ West should double and East should jump to 4♥. If South passes originally, the same 4♥ contract should be reached after a 1NT opening (15-17 or 15-18), even after some probable interference by North.

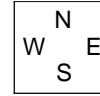
A club lead and subsequent ruff seal the fate of 4♥ because declarer has no way to avoid a diamond loser; but some Souths may lead the ♦K, giving declarer an easy route to 10 tricks. Some pairs will reach 3NT, which is (luckily) makable against any defense.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 19

.....100	.....93	-170.....67	-620.....33	.....0
+1100..100	+100....84	.....65	-630.....21	
.....99	.....75	-300.....61	.....16	
+470.....99	-100....74	.....56	-800.....12	
.....98	.....72	-500.....48	.....7	
+400.....98	-140....70	.....41	-1100....4	
.....97	-150....68	-600.....40	.....1	
+200.....95	.....68	.....39	-1400....0	

West Deals **Board 20** Both Vul

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



Accurate bidding should land North-South in 3NT. After a pass by West, North will open 1♦ and then jump to 3♦ after a 1♥ response. South, unless he is a wild gambler, should next bid 3♠ to indicate a stopper. Bidding a three-card spade suit may seem dangerous, but North won't be raising spades on this bidding—he cannot have four. If North happens to bid 4♥, South can correct to 5♦, which describes his hand well. Over 3♠ North has a comfortable 3NT bid with clubs under wrap.

The play in notrump should produce 10 tricks. After winning the likely spade lead and playing a club to the king, declarer cannot establish an additional trick in both clubs and hearts because of entry problems. Whether or not he runs the diamonds now, the best he can do is lead the ♥K, ensuring 10 tricks. However, some defenders will err (or lead clubs originally) to allow an additional overtrick.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 20

.....100	.....25	.....5
+950....100	+600....18	-100.....3
.....99	.....10	.....1
+690.....98	+500....10	-200.....1
.....97	.....9	.....0
+660.....87	+150....8	
.....76	.....6	
+630.....51	+130....6	

North Deals **Board 21** N-S Vul

♠ J 7 3
 ♥ Q 10 9
 ♦ J 9 7 2
 ♣ A 8 2

 ♠ 9 8 5
 ♥ K J 8 7 6 5
 ♦ —
 ♣ K J 6 5

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

After a pass by North, East will usually open 1 NT, although some traditionalists may reject this because of the worthless doubleton heart. A good case can be made for a 1 ♦ opening because East has a convenient 1 ♠ rebid over 1 ♥. However, my style is to open 1 NT and worry about it later.

After 1 NT it is easy to reach the best contract of 4 ♥ — West should just bid it (or use a Texas or Jacoby transfer sequence). But after 1 ♦ the road is a winding one: 1 ♦, 1 ♥; 1 ♠, 2 ♥; 2 NT ... and what should West do now? Maybe that's the reason I prefer to open 1 NT.

The play in 4 ♥ is routine for 10 tricks, except when West is declarer with a spade lead. He wins the ♠ A, takes the top diamonds, throwing two spades, and must beware! If declarer cashes the ♦ Q before leading a heart to the jack, he can be defeated by continued diamond leads—North gets a trump promotion. Of course, declarer can avoid this by not cashing the ♦ Q prematurely.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 21

.....100	-170	..... 80
+150	.....100	..... 79
.....99	-400	..... 79
+100	.....99	..... 79
.....98	-420	..... 41
+5090	-430 2
.....81	.....81	..... 1
-13081	-450 0
.....81	.....81	..... 0

East Deals **Board 22** E-W Vul

♠ A 8 7 3
 ♥ K J 3
 ♦ A J 10 8 2
 ♣ 9

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

The normal contract will be 4 ♥, but this may not be a particularly good score for North-South because some East-West pairs will be going for numbers. After a weak 2 ♥ bid by South in second seat, West may venture 3 ♦, which North will greet with a welcome-to-my-world double. (The ambiance of North's double might be a good test of the ACBL's "Active Ethics" policy—if it sounds like an ordinary takeout double, the policy is working; but if North's feet crash through the table....) Even if East rescues to 3 ♠, the least he can escape for is minus 500, which is too much.

Most declarers in hearts will win 11 tricks. After the ♦ K lead to the ace and a club from dummy, declarer's natural play is to finesse the jack because most East players would grab the ace if they held it. Then it is a simple matter to ruff two clubs. If South misguesses clubs, West must shift to a trump to limit declarer to 10 tricks.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 22

.....100	+730	..... 89	..... 80	+200	..... 19	.....1
+2300	..100 88	+450 65 14	-1001
.....99	+690	..... 87	..... 49	+170	..... 11	.....1
+140099 87	+420 38 8	-2000
.....99	+590	..... 86	..... 26	+140	..... 7	.....0
+1100	.....97	..... 85	+400	..... 26	..... 7	.....0
.....96	+550	..... 85	..... 25	+100	..... 6	.....0
+800	.....93	..... 85	+300	..... 24	..... 6	.....0
.....89	+500	..... 82	..... 23	-50	..... 4	.....0

South Deals **Board 23** Both Vul

♠ A 7 5 4 3 ♥ Q 9 3 ♦ J 8 5 ♣ A 6 ♠ Q 8 2 ♥ 8 7 4 ♦ K Q 10 9 2 ♣ 9 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K J 9 ♥ K 5 ♦ 7 ♣ K Q 10 8 5 4 2 ♠ 10 6 ♥ A J 10 6 2 ♦ A 6 4 3 ♣ J 7
	N										
W		E									
	S										

North probably will open the bidding 1 ♠ in third seat, after which East will bid 2 ♣ and South 2 ♥. This should be passed around to East, who cannot be faulted for competing to 3 ♣. This contract can be set two tricks with best defense (spade to the ace, heart shift, spade, etc.), which gives North-South plus 200 for a good score. Some South players will increase their profit with a close matchpoint double. If South passes 3 ♣, North is likely to compete to 3 ♥, a frequent contract.

The play in hearts can produce from eight to 10 tricks. The most productive line is to win the ♣ A, lead the ♥ Q, covered by the king and ace, then duck a spade. East will take his club trick and return a diamond to the ace. Declarer can establish the spades with a ruff and draw trumps ending in dummy (note the ♥ 9 is high). Simple, but it does require friendly breaks.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 23

.....100	.....94	.....79	-100.....18	.....1
+1400..100	+620....93	+170.....72	-110.....8	-710.....0
.....99	.....92	.....65	.....7	.....0
+930.....99	+500....90	+140.....52	-200.....5	
.....99	.....87	.....39	.....2	
+800.....97	+300....86	+110.....37	-500.....2	
.....95	.....85	+100.....31	.....1	
+730.....95	+200....82	.....26	-670.....1	

West Deals **Board 24** None Vul

♠ A 3 ♥ A 9 8 ♦ A 10 9 8 ♣ Q 8 4 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 10 7 6 5 4 ♥ 7 2 ♦ Q 6 ♣ A J 9 ♠ J 9 8 ♥ K 6 3 ♦ K J 3 2 ♣ 7 6 2 ♠ Q 2 ♥ Q J 10 5 4 ♦ 7 5 4 ♣ K 10 5
	N										
W		E									
	S										

The bidding usually will begin with 1 ♦ by West and 1 ♠ by North, but then the road contains many forks. Some East players will raise to 2 ♦, but my choice is to bid 1 NT. This will not always be successful, but with a semblance of a spade stopper and 4-3-3-3 shape, a diamond raise is nothing to be proud of either. After that, who knows? South might bid hearts; West might compete further; North might rebid his spades — no two auctions may be alike.

The final contracts should range from 1 NT to 3 ♦ (unless someone goes berserk). Depending on the opening lead and the diamond guess, East-West can win six to eight tricks in diamonds. The play in spades by North is cut and dried for seven tricks, and hearts by South probably scores the same. One thing is clear — your chances for a plus score are better if you defend.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 24

.....100	+110....93	-100.....29	-280.....3
+470.....99	+100....84	-110.....18	.....3
.....99	.....77	-120.....11	-300.....2
+300.....98	+50.....68	.....7	.....1
.....98	.....59	-150.....6	-500.....1
+150.....97	-50.....53	.....5	.....0
+140.....95	.....46	-180.....4	
.....94	-90....42	.....3	

North Deals **Board 25** E-W Vul

♠ A 4 3 2
 ♥ 2
 ♦ A 7 5 4
 ♣ A J 9 2

♠ J
 ♥ K 6 5 4
 ♦ K Q 10 8 2
 ♣ 6 5 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ 10 6
 ♥ A Q J 7 3
 ♦ J 6 3
 ♣ Q 8 7

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

North-South are on a finesse for slam despite holding only 21 HCP, but few pairs are likely to get beyond 4 ♠. After a 1 ♦ opening by North (some may open 1 ♠), 1 ♥ by East and 1 ♠ by South, West is likely to bid 3 ♥, a contract that can be ripped for 800. However, this kind of double materializes only in the postmortem. North should overbid slightly with 4 ♠ since his hand is rich in controls — he might compete with 3 ♠ on a bare minimum. This momentum may persuade South to make a slam try with 5 ♣ or 5 ♦ — at least that is the only conceivable way to get to slam.

Regardless of the level, South must guess the ♣ Q to get a good score. Before committing himself, South should ruff three diamonds in hand and two hearts in dummy to find out something about the distribution — assuming hearts are 5-4, he learns that East began with 2-5-3-3 shape. With clubs 3-3 there is little to go on, but I think I'd play the overcaller for the ♣ Q — I *know* I would, looking at all four hands.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 25

.....100	+480	66	0.....0
+1100....99	.....37	.....0	.....0
.....98	+450	24	.....0
+980.....98	.....11	.....0	.....0
.....97	+420	10	.....0
+800.....97	.....10	.....0	.....0
+790.....96	+230	8	.....0
.....95	.....6	.....0	.....0
+500.....95	+200	3	.....0
.....95	.....1	.....0	.....0

East Deals **Board 26** Both Vul

♠ K 5 4 2
 ♥ A Q 10 8
 ♦ K Q J 3
 ♣ 7

♠ Q 9 8 3
 ♥ 5 3 2
 ♦ 10 9 2
 ♣ K 4 3

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ A 6
 ♥ 6
 ♦ A 8 7 6 5 4
 ♣ A Q 9 5

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

North-South can make a game in hearts, but the enemy bidding and the vulnerability make this a difficult contract to reach. After a 1 ♦ opening by East and a 1 ♠ response, North has no convenient action and should pass. East should rebid 2 ♣, and West should give a preference to 2 ♦. North now might speculate with 2 ♥, anticipating a useful dummy; East will bid 3 ♦, and South should raise hearts (I like 4 ♥ but I can't quarrel with 3 ♥ — whether North would continue to game over 3 ♥ is moot). East, of course, must exercise restraint not to double 4 ♥.

The best defense against 4 ♥ is a trump lead, but declarer needs only to time the play properly to develop 10 tricks: Win the heart in North, lead the ♦ K to ruff out the ace and play the ♣ J. West wins the king (a good play) and returns a trump, won in South. Declarer rides the ♠ J to the ace, wins any return, cashes the diamonds and crossruffs (losing a trick at the end). Some pairs will make 5 ♥ against softer defense.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 26

.....100	.....94	+620.....60	+140.....31	.....7
+1400..100	+850.....94	.....53	.....29	-180.....7
.....99	.....93	+600.....53	+110.....29	.....7
+1130....99	+800.....90	.....53	+100.....24	-200.....4
.....99	+790.....84	+500.....50	.....19	.....1
+1100....98	.....82	.....47	-70.....19	-500.....1
.....97	+730.....82	+200.....43	.....19	.....1
+1030....96	.....81	.....39	-90.....17	-870.....0
.....96	+650.....74	+170.....35	-100.....13	.....0
+990.....95	.....67	.....32	-110.....8	.....0

South Deals **Board 27** None Vul

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



Most East-West pairs will reach the excellent spade slam on a straightforward sequence:

West	North	East	South
			Pass
1 ♠	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	3 ♠	Pass
4 NT	Pass	5 ♦	Pass
6 ♠	All Pass		

There are sure to be some fancier auctions, but it's hard to think of a better one than this. Even dedicated splinter bidders will realize the utility of that bid in describing the East hand—unless they have invented a *double splinter bid* that shows two singletons.

There is nothing to the play except that few pairs may receive a gift if North does not lead a heart. It's hard to see why North would lead anything else in view of his hand and the bidding, but some players go out of their way to be imaginative. Against one of them you may as well bid 7 NT.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 27

.....100	.....93	.....3
+1100.....100	-510.....90	-1100.....2
.....99	.....87	.....1
+200.....99	-920.....87	-1510.....1
.....99	.....86	.....0
+50.....98	-980.....57	
.....97	.....29	
-480.....95	-1010.....16	

West Deals **Board 28** N-S Vul

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



This misfit deal is likely to be opened 2 ♠ (weak) by West, although some may take advantage of the favorable vulnerability and open 3 ♠. Whatever the choice, no one else has the values to bid, and West should buy the contract. Any North-South pair who enter the bidding will probably regret it.

Two spades can be made on the button (too bad if you bid 3 ♠) provided declarer doesn't finesse the ♠ 9 on his one play from the dummy. The proper play in spades is almost a tossup, but there is slight edge in playing the king or jack—if North has the 10-8 doubleton, winning one honor then leading the other holds South to two tricks (note the spots). In contrast, if North has Q-8 or A-8 doubleton, finessing the nine does not help—three tricks must still be lost. Further, if North's opening lead is the ♦ K (or the ace from A-K), the chances are greater that South has the ♠ A—so put up the *king*.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 28

.....100	.....95	-110.....31	-300.....15	-1100.....1
+800.....99	+150.....91	.....21	.....14	.....0
.....99	.....88	-140.....20	-500.....12	
+500.....98	+100.....77	.....19	.....10	
.....98	.....65	-200.....18	-700.....9	
+300.....97	+50.....55	.....16	.....9	
.....97	.....44	-250.....16	-800.....6	
+200.....96	-100.....43	.....15	.....3	

North Deals **Board 29** Both Vul

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



This deal may be passed out at some tables since no one has a clear-cut opening bid. But I suspect that a few North players will open 1 ♦, or if not, many East players will open 1 ♠ (my choice); or failing that, some Souths will bid 1 ♣. (Bridge players like to get their entry fees' worth.) After the most probable 1 ♠ opening, West is too weak to respond 2 ♥ and must bid 1 NT. However, when East obligingly rebids 2 ♦, West can bid his hearts after all, resulting in the best contract.

The play in hearts is arduous, but declarer is aided because North is on lead. After, say, the ♦ A and another diamond, North is put back on lead with the ♥ K. Then what? A diamond allows declarer to finesse the eight to advantage; a club or heart blows a trick. Suppose North plays a spade, ducked to the king; club back (best) to the ace; the ♦ Q (South throwing a club, best); diamond ruff; ♠ Q to the ace; spade ruff; ♥ J, and West can make 2 ♥. (Don't bet on it.)

North-South Matchpoints — Board 29

.....100	.....82	-100.....37	.....3	.....0
+500.....97	+100.....68	-110.....27	-300.....3	
.....95	+90.....53	-120.....15	.....2	
+300.....94	.....52	.....13	-400.....2	
.....93	0.....47	-140.....9	.....1	
+200.....88	.....43	-150.....5	-500.....1	
.....84	-80.....42	.....5	.....1	
+120.....83	-90.....40	-200.....4	-730.....0	

East Deals **Board 30** None Vul

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



An interesting bidding deal for East-West. The contract will be 3 NT or 4 ♥ at many tables, but I like this auction:

West	North	East	South
1 ♥	Pass	1 ♦	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	3 NT	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
		6 ♦	All Pass

It may seem that West should repeat his hearts, but East denied three when he bid 3 NT. Furthermore, East could bid 4 ♥ over 4 ♦ with a doubleton. The 4 ♠ and 5 ♣ bids show controls.

Six diamonds is no cakewalk, but it should be made. The ♥ K opening lead makes it easy, so assume a spade lead. Discard a club and with the ♠ A; heart to the ace (South should *not* split his honors); then ruff a heart. If a heart honor fell on the second round, declarer would play ♦ A, ♦ Q, ♥ J. But no, so continue with a spade ruff and a heart. When North shows out, the hopes of establishing the heart suit are dead, but declarer ruffs, cashes two clubs and succeeds on a crossruff. Only an unlikely trump lead would defeat 6 ♦.

Four hearts should produce 11 tricks (losing two trumps), and 3 NT should result in 10 tricks against best defense.

North-South Matchpoints — Board 30

.....100	.....92	.....87	.....9
+200.....100	-130.....91	-400.....76	-500.....8
.....99	.....91	.....65	.....8
+150.....99	-170.....90	-420.....59	-650.....8
.....98	.....90	-430.....45	.....7
+100.....97	-200.....89	.....37	-920.....4
.....95	.....87	-450.....25	.....0
+50.....94	-300.....87	-460.....11	

South Deals **Board 31** N-S Vul

♠ 9 ♥ 9 4 3 ♦ Q J 3 ♣ K J 10 8 6 3	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ Q 10 8 ♥ J 8 7 6 5 ♦ K 7 6 4 2 ♣ —
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♠ A K J 4 3 ♥ 2 ♦ 10 9 5 ♣ A Q 5 4		♠ 7 6 5 2 ♥ A K Q 10 ♦ A 8 ♣ 9 7 2									

I consider myself a devout five-card majorite, but I still would open 1 ♥ with the South hand; something about 1 ♣ does not resemble bridge. West will overcall 1 ♠, and North will raise the opening bid (hearts, obligingly; clubs, gladly—North-South can make 4 ♣). East should raise to 2 ♠ (even over 2 ♥), and West should try for game, although some may gamble 4 ♠. It is hard to gauge the exact value of the East hand, but only a real pessimist would refuse a game invitation.

Four spades is doomed with routine defense, thanks to the 4-1 trump break. After a heart lead to the 10, South should shift to a trump in view of dummy, which rides to the 10. Declarer's best effort is a low diamond; eight, five (cute), which may cause South to misread the diamond position and continue trumps. If he does, declarer wins the ♠ A, ruffs a club and leads a low diamond—making 4 ♠. South, of course, must tap declarer by returning a heart.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 31

.....100	.....92	.....82	-110.....27	.....5
+1070.....99	+710.....91	+150.....80	-120.....24	-530.....4
.....99	.....88	.....77	.....23	.....3
+930.....98	+580.....88	+130.....77	-140.....20	-590.....3
.....97	.....87	.....77	.....16	.....2
+910.....97	+500.....87	+100.....66	-200.....14	-690.....2
.....97	.....86	.....55	.....11	.....1
+870.....96	+300.....85	+50.....42	-420.....9	-800.....1
+800.....95	.....83	.....30	.....7	.....0
+750.....93	+200.....83	-100.....30	-500.....6	

West Deals **Board 32** E-W Vul

♠ — ♥ 9 5 ♦ K Q 10 8 6 2 ♣ A Q J 9 4	<table border="1" style="margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K J 5 2 ♥ J 6 2 ♦ J 5 3 ♣ K 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ 10 8 6 4 ♥ A K 4 3 ♦ 9 4 ♣ 7 6 5									
		♠ Q 9 7 3 ♥ Q 10 8 7 ♦ A 7 ♣ 10 8 3									

This should be a competitive deal, with West usually buying the contract at four of a minor. A likely auction is:

West	North	East	South
1 ♦	1 ♠	Dbl	2 ♠
3 ♣	Pass	Pass	3 ♠
4 ♣	All Pass		

The double, of course, is negative, showing hearts. Some East players will bid 1 NT instead. Four clubs is made easily, declarer losing two hearts and a trump.

There are sure to be many variations. North-South may bid up to 4 ♠—down two doubled for minus 300 and a very poor score. East may play 3 NT—down three if he tries to make it, down one if he cashes out. Some East-West pairs will bid game in a minor, down one. Five clubs appears to be even money, requiring only the club finesse, but declarer also needs diamonds 3-2 (or a singleton jack) and clubs no worse than 4-1, which reduces it to about 35 percent.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 32

.....100	.....87	.....52	.....0
+800.....100	+140.....86	-130.....36	
.....99	.....85	.....19	
+530.....98	+110.....84	-300.....13	
.....97	+100.....75	.....7	
+400.....96	.....66	-500.....5	
.....96	-50.....63	.....4	
+300.....95	.....59	-600.....3	
.....93	-100.....56	.....3	
+200.....90	-110.....53	-710.....1	

North Deals **Board 33** None Vul

♠ Q 7 4 2
 ♥ A 3
 ♦ 6 4 3 2
 ♣ 10 8 3

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

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

 ♠ 9 5
 ♥ K 10 9 7 5 2
 ♦ J 9 5
 ♣ A J



After two passes, South will open a weak 2♥ bid (unless he is a suit-quality fanatic or plays a different system). Some West players may overcall 3♣, but it is better to double because of the lopsided nature of West's high cards. Change the clubs to A-K-9-x-x-x and the spades to K-x-x, and 3♣ probably would be the expert consensus. After the double, East should respond 2♠. West will do well to pass, although some will venture further with 3♣, which leads to 3NT by East—down two with the inevitable heart lead.

The play in spades is interesting. Say South leads a heart to the ace, and a heart back is ruffed. A club goes to the queen and ace. If South returns a trump, the play goes: ♣K; club ruff with the 10; spade to dummy; good club. North can win only his ♠Q no matter how hard he tries—making 10 tricks. If South returns a third heart, declarer is held to at most nine tricks.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 33

.....100	.....88	-110.....37	-300.....16	.....3
+500.....100	+100.....76	-120.....31	.....15	-500.....3
.....99	.....63	-130.....25	-400.....14	.....2
+300.....99	+50.....54	-140.....19	.....13	-800.....1
.....99	.....45	-150.....18	-420.....11	.....0
+200.....98	-50.....44	.....17	-430.....6	
.....97	.....44	-170.....17	.....4	
+150.....93	-100.....43	.....16	-460.....4	

East Deals **Board 34** N-S Vul

♠ 8 7
 ♥ A K Q 8
 ♦ K 8 7 5
 ♣ K 10 9

 ♠ A Q 9 2
 ♥ 4
 ♦ A J 4 2
 ♣ Q J 7 2

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

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



In third seat West will usually open 1♦. North has the option of a 1♥ overcall (my choice), an aggressive 1NT, or a pass (the puritanical choice). Everyone else has a borderline decision as well. East may scrounge up a 1♠ bid or a negative double; South may raise to 2♥; West may double hearts for takeout (if East passed).

Assuming East-West uncover their spade fit, they should buy the contract. However, they do better to defend if North-South push to 3♥, which is routinely set two tricks for the matchpoint goal of plus 200.

Straightforward play in spades produces nine tricks. After two rounds of hearts, ruffed, and the ♣Q, covered by the king and ace, declarer can crossruff hearts and clubs with impunity. It seems declarer might do better by exploiting the favorable diamond position (the ♦9 can be established), but my analysis shows that nine tricks is still the limit.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 34

.....100	+110.....86	-100.....62	-200.....11	-530.....2
+300.....100	+100.....84	-110.....52	.....8	.....1
.....99	+90.....79	-120.....46	-300.....7	-570.....1
+180.....99	+80.....74	-130.....46	.....7	.....1
.....99	.....74	-140.....32	-420.....6	-800.....0
+150.....98	+50.....71	.....18	.....6	.....0
.....98	.....67	-170.....16	-500.....4	
+120.....93	-90.....67	.....14	.....3	

South Deals **Board 35** E-W Vul

♠ 5
 ♥ 9 7 6
 ♦ A 3 2
 ♣ A J 10 9 8 3

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

 ♠ K Q 8 6 3
 ♥ A 3 2
 ♦ K 7 6
 ♣ 7 5

 ♠ A J 9 4
 ♥ K J 8 5
 ♦ Q 4
 ♣ K 6 2



After a 1 ♣ opening by South, North has the values to make a forcing raise (borderline perhaps). Traditional bidders will have the easiest sequence—3 ♣, then 3 NT by South. Limit raisers may temporize with 1 ♦, allowing East to interject a 1 ♠ overcall; but South will bid 1 NT, leading to the same contract.

Inverted raisers (my school) will respond 2 ♣ (forcing) and then raise 2 NT to 3 NT. The best North-South scores will go to those who catch a wayward East in 2 ♠ doubled (which nets an easy 500 or maybe 800), or better yet, 3 ♠ doubled!

Nine tricks are easy in 3 NT and some declarers will make more. After the ♠ 2 lead to the queen, ducked, East is likely to continue the suit to give declarer nine top tricks. Then a correct heart guess makes 10. If West leads the ♦ J to the king, East should shift to a low spade. Now declarer could win 11 tricks by finessing the jack, but the odds favor finessing the nine.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 35

.....100	+490.....92	.....36	.....28	.....1
+1100....99	.....91	+300.....35	+130.....19	-100.....0
.....98	+460.....87	.....35	.....10	.....0
+800.....97	.....83	+200.....35	+110.....10	
.....96	+430.....70	.....34	.....9	
+650.....95	+420.....57	+180.....33	+90.....8	
.....95	.....56	.....31	.....8	
+500.....93	+400.....46	+150.....29	-50.....4	

West Deals **Board 36** Both Vul

♠ K J
 ♥ 10 7 5
 ♦ J 8 7
 ♣ A Q 9 8 3

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

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

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



Unless North gets frisky, East will open in third seat with either 1 ♠ or 1 NT. I prefer the latter because the hand is notrump oriented, i.e., the spade suit is meager and the strength is scattered. In this case, however, either opening should lead to the same contract. One notrump will be passed out, and 1 ♠ will elicit a 1 NT response, also passed out. A diversion may occur with those who play 1 NT forcing over a major-suit opening, in which case East must rebid 2 ♦. This should please West (2 ♦ makes three), but some matchpoint fanatics will give a false preference to 2 ♠, down one for a dismal score.

One notrump should produce seven tricks with a spade or club lead regardless of who is declarer. Eight tricks will be made if East is declarer with a heart lead. The diamond suit is easily established by leading the king, then the 10, ducking to retain communication.

North-South Matchpoints—Board 36

.....100	.....89	-120.....16	.....0
+300....100	+100.....82	-130.....11	
.....99	+90.....72	.....11	
+200.....96	.....69	-150.....8	
.....93	-80.....69	.....4	
+150.....93	-90.....50	-180.....4	
.....92	-100.....30	.....3	
+120.....90	-110.....25	-200.....1	