

# Canada-Wide Olympiad Fund, March 11, 2013 • Set #94128

Board: 1 ♠ Q 10 9 7 4  
 Dealer: N ♥ J 10 7 4  
 Vul: None ♦ Q 10 2  
 ♣ 7

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

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

East must choose between opening 1♦ and rebidding in clubs, or (my choice) opening 1♣, planning to raise spades or rebid notrump over a response in hearts. If he opens 1♣, the auction figures to see South overcall in hearts, West bid 1NT, and North raise hearts. If North raises preemptively to 3♥ then West must double to protect his plus score (+100 will be a poor result, +300 an excellent one). If North raises to just 2♥, then East needs to compete in the minors. In 3♣, even on an unlikely spade lead, declarer can make 130 by playing on diamonds.

Board: 5 ♠ A K Q 3  
 Dealer: N ♥ J 10 5  
 Vul: N-S ♦ 10 9  
 ♣ Q 6 5 3

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

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

At most tables North will open 1♣, letting South respond 1♦. West will pass, biding his time, and now the paths may diverge. If North rebids 1♠ then South rates to raise to 2♣ rather than bid 1NT, and now West will consider pre-balancing with 2♥. If he does, N/S had better not bid on past 2♣. The bottom line is that 2♥ will make for E/W on a good club guess, while N/S can do no better than make seven tricks in 1NT. There figure to be a lot of contracts being defeated on this deal.

Board: 2 ♠ K Q 7 6 5 4 2  
 Dealer: E ♥ 10  
 Vul: N-S ♦ Q 6 2  
 ♣ K 3

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

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

How much do you trust your partner's two-suited actions? Imagine South opens 1♦ and North bids 1♠ (yes, an unsound call of 4♠ might work better). Now East bids 2NT; to what level will West sacrifice? If South passes over 2NT, West should bid 3♥ then balance with 5♣ over North's 4♠ call. East might now misjudge and bid on to 6♣ in competition, where careful play holds the losers to a diamond, a spade, and a trump. But even though 5♣ doesn't make, -300 may still produce a decent score against the likely 620 from 4♠.

Board: 6 ♠ A Q J 10 6 5 4  
 Dealer: E ♥ Q 10 7  
 Vul: E-W ♦ J  
 ♣ 7 3

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

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

After East's 1NT opening, South may have a way to show hearts and a minor. Whether South bids or not, West rates to jump to 3NT and North then has an intriguing problem. Since 3NT makes at least nine, and probably ten, tricks in notrumps today, N/S rate to have a good save somewhere; but where? If N/S declare 4♥, the defenders do best to cash their minor-suit winners and play a third club, but South can still escape for -300. By contrast, on repeated club leads 4♠ doubled will be set at least 500 and maybe 800.

Board: 3 ♠ Q 10 8 7  
 Dealer: S ♥ A K 6  
 Vul: E-W ♦ 10  
 ♣ K 10 7 5 4

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

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

Does West have a weak two or weak three bid here? A 2♦ opening will see North double and East raise to 3♣. South can make a responsive double to let North bid 3♠ and there the matter will rest (down at least one trick) unless West takes his life into his hands and bids again. E/W might also get to 4♦ if North doubles a 3♦ opening and East raises the ante. Now when South doubles — again responsive — North might opt to defend, hoping to go plus. Today 4♦ hinges on the trump guess, so there will be a few results of +710 for E/W, as well as the odd -200.

Board: 7 ♠ A 10 6 4  
 Dealer: S ♥ K 10  
 Vul: Both ♦ 3  
 ♣ K 8 7 4 3 2

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

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

When South opens 1♠ plenty of Wests will overcall 2♥, without realizing that he is a trump (or a king) short for the call. Probably no harm will come to him if he bids; N/S will surely bid on to 4♣ via a fit-jump, cuebid or splinter from North. Against 4♠ the defenders simply have their two aces, while 5♥ can be set somewhere between 500 and 1100. (Best is for South to win the diamond lead and shift to ♠Q, then subsequently switch to clubs. Now a losing trump finesse would see the defenders take a diamond ruff as well.)

Board: 4 ♠ 10 5 4  
 Dealer: W ♥ J 7 5  
 Vul: Both ♦ K 9 6 2  
 ♣ A 8 3

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

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

If E/W use the Kokish relay then West can open 2♣ and reach 2NT via a 2♥ rebid, to show a game-forcing balanced hand. If he does not play Kokish, he will have to try 3NT at his second turn. It will be easier for E/W to get to hearts in the former auction than in the latter — with 4♥ looking like the best game. Nonetheless, if declarer takes the normal line in clubs he comes to 12 tricks in both contracts. And a few pairs might actually bid the heart slam here I suppose.

Board: 8 ♠ K 7 5 4  
 Dealer: W ♥ K 9 3  
 Vul: None ♦ A 9 6  
 ♣ 8 7 3

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

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

South will open 1♣ in fourth seat, which Wests may double — risky, because their partner has refused to open in third seat. Whether West bids or passes, N/S should find their way to a spade contract. In a spade partscore on a heart lead declarer rates to win and cash both top clubs early. After that start, declarer is likely to tackle spades by playing to the king and back to the queen — in which case he will record +170. Anyone who takes a safety play in trumps will regret it.

Board: 9 ♠ Q 9 4 2  
 Dealer: N ♥ J 3 2  
 Vul: E-W ♦ 2  
 ♣ Q 9 8 6 2  
 ♠ 7 6 ♠ A J 10 8 5  
 ♥ 8 5 ♥ A 9  
 ♦ Q J 9 7 4 ♦ A K 10 5 3  
 ♣ A K 10 4 ♣ 3  
 ♠ K 3  
 ♥ K Q 10 7 6 4  
 ♦ 8 6  
 ♣ J 7 5

E/W may find it tough to reach the excellent 6♦ here. After East opens 1♠ and hears a 1NT response it would be rather aggressive to make a game-forcing jump to 3♦. He has the shape but not quite the high-cards; still, it might be less misleading than bidding 2♦ and hoping to catch up lost ground later. After the simple rebid of 2♦, West will raise to 3♦, and East might simply bid 5♦ now, although if he bids 3♥ and hears a 4♣ cuebid he may easily get excited. Frankly, though, I'm not sure how to bid 6♦ scientifically.

Board: 13 ♠ A 8 7 2  
 Dealer: N ♥ Q J 10 9 8 3  
 Vul: Both ♦ 9 4  
 ♣ Q  
 ♠ 10 9 4 ♠ K Q 6  
 ♥ K 6 5 2 ♥ A 7 4  
 ♦ A K 10 7 ♦ Q 3  
 ♣ A 5 ♣ J 10 9 8 3  
 ♠ J 5 3  
 ♥ —  
 ♦ J 8 6 5 2  
 ♣ K 7 6 4 2

When North opens a weak 2♥ (reasonable, despite the side four-card major) it will be passed round to West, who should stretch to balance with 2NT. If he makes that call, he gets to 3NT on a top heart lead. The right line appears to be to win in dummy and play ace and another club — this succeeds unless North has a guarded club honor and ♠A. A reasonable alternative is to aim to take two spades and four diamond tricks via the finesse. That line also succeeds — but the first line generates overtricks here.

Board: 10 ♠ 5 4  
 Dealer: E ♥ Q J 2  
 Vul: Both ♦ 5 2  
 ♣ K J 10 9 8 2  
 ♠ K Q ♠ A 9 8 7 6 3 2  
 ♥ K 10 7 6 ♥ 5  
 ♦ K 4 3 ♦ A 10 8 7  
 ♣ 7 6 5 4 ♣ 3  
 ♠ J 10  
 ♥ A 9 8 4 3  
 ♦ Q J 9 6  
 ♣ A Q

The East hand falls between a two-level and three-level preempt (yes, some might open with a wild call of 4♣). I vote for 3♣; if East takes that call, South can hardly bid 4♥ — though a double is not out of the question. In either event, West does not have a clear raise to 4♣. You could imagine E/W playing partscore or game in spades — declarer can always make 11 tricks by setting up hearts. Equally, N/S may declare either hearts or clubs — again in either partscore or game, and possibly doubled. +650 rates to be pretty good for E/W here.

Board: 14 ♠ K  
 Dealer: E ♥ K J 10 9 5  
 Vul: None ♦ 10 7 5 2  
 ♣ 8 6 4  
 ♠ Q 9 6 4 3 ♠ A J 10 8 7  
 ♥ Q 6 2 ♥ 4 3  
 ♦ J 9 6 ♦ K 3  
 ♣ 9 2 ♣ Q 10 7 5  
 ♠ 5 2  
 ♥ A 8 7  
 ♦ A Q 8 4  
 ♣ A K J 3

South will open a minor (we won't discuss which) not 1NT, and N/S should now find a way to bid to 4♥ rather than 3NT. This ought to be so even when E/W don't bid and South elects to rebid 2NT over 1♥ — I'm not sure I would. While 3NT by South can be set on a spade lead, 4♥ will make ten or eleven tricks, depending on whether declarer finds the trump queen, and can afford to take all the minor-suit finesses he needs. +450 rates to score well here, though some E/W pairs may save in 4♣ for -500.

Board: 11 ♠ K 10 9  
 Dealer: S ♥ A 4  
 Vul: None ♦ J 10 9 8  
 ♣ J 10 9 6  
 ♠ J 6 5 2 ♠ A 8 7 4  
 ♥ Q 8 6 ♥ K J 9 7  
 ♦ A K 7 ♦ 6 2  
 ♣ Q 8 4 ♣ K 7 3  
 ♠ Q 3  
 ♥ 10 5 3 2  
 ♦ Q 5 4 3  
 ♣ A 5 2

Some would pass the West cards in second seat if vulnerable, but not here. West must open 1♣, after which E/W will do well to stop in a notrump or spade partscore. If playing Two-way New Minor, some use the sequence: 1♣ - 1♥ - 1NT — 2♣ as 4-4 in the majors, invitational, and that might be very helpful today. Against 2♣ by East on a diamond lead, the defenders should collect two club tricks and one heart, in addition to their spade winners. In practice, +110 will be a great board for E/W and +120 or +140 close to a top.

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

Whatever you do, please, please, don't open 2NT with the West cards. Yes, one might still get to 4♣ (though one could easily end up in 2NT, down a trick). Equally, though, you might argue that opening 1♣ would lead to your playing there; not so today. North will overcall 1♦ and no matter how high South raises, West will double and drive East to 4♣. On repeated diamond leads, declarer should win and advance a low club from dummy. This sets up a discard and lets him reach his hand for the trump finesse, and +450.

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

The West cards look more like a 1♦ than a 2♦ opening bid here. After a 1♦ opening, E/W will play game — the majority of the field opting for 4♣ rather than 3NT. South has to fish out a trump against 4♣ to give his opponents a problem (on a heart or club lead, East will collect at least 11 tricks). But on repeated spade leads declarer may have to guess clubs or bring South under pressure in the minors to make even +420. And yes, 3NT looks rather easier in retrospect, doesn't it?

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

Aside that can make 3NT rarely fails to take a call, but you could easily imagine N/S bidding unopposed 1♣ - 1NT — 2♣ - All Pass for -100. Equally, at other tables West will take the reasonable if aggressive decision as a passed hand to double 1NT for take-out of spades. Now East might compete to 3♥ over 2♣ (or even double 2♣ for penalties I suppose). In 3♥ he can scramble +140 if he reads the position well. Conversely, West might pass over 1NT but balance with 2NT for the minors over 2♣. That gets East to the less appetizing and less rewarding contract of 3♣, unless he judges to pass!

Board: 17 ♠ K 7 4  
 Dealer: N ♥ 8 5  
 Vul: None ♦ 9 8 7 3 2  
 ♣ J 5 4  
 ♠ A J 8 6 5 3 ♠ Q 9  
 ♥ Q J 7 6 ♥ K 10 9 2  
 ♦ 6 ♦ Q J 4  
 ♣ 9 8 ♣ Q 10 7 6  
 ♠ 10 2  
 ♥ A 4 3  
 ♦ A K 10 5  
 ♣ A K 3 2

In third seat South should treat his hand as too strong for 1NT and open a minor, over which West will jump to 2♣. North does not have enough to think about bidding, so South will get to double for take-out, letting North bid 3♦. East's soft cards suggest he ought to pass now, not compete to 3♠ (if he did, it would cost his side 300 via the heart ruff). In 3♦ unless declarer is sufficiently inspired to finesse twice against East's two diamond honors, N/S will emerge with +110 — for a decent matchpoint result.

Board: 21 ♠ 10 7 4 2  
 Dealer: N ♥ J 6  
 Vul: N-S ♦ A Q J 9 2  
 ♣ 8 4  
 ♠ K J 9 6 3 ♠ Q 8  
 ♥ A 7 5 4 2 ♥ 10  
 ♦ — ♦ K 10 7 5 4 3  
 ♣ J 6 3 ♣ A 7 5 2  
 ♠ A 5  
 ♥ K Q 9 8 3  
 ♦ 8 6  
 ♣ K Q 10 9

East's classical 2♦ opening bid will see South overcall 2♥, and West will pass. Now North might well pass — judging his diamonds not to be pulling its full weight; if he does bid, the only sensible call would be 2NT, over which South also has a problem. With no great extras, is it right to bid 3♣, to pass, or to bid 3NT — I wish I knew! The final contract rates to be a heart partscore or 2NT — if N/S get to game they may be doubled by West. 2♥ is probably the last making spot on the deal.

Board: 18 ♠ J 7 6 5 2  
 Dealer: E ♥ 6  
 Vul: N-S ♦ 4 3 2  
 ♣ K 9 8 2  
 ♠ 8 ♠ K Q 10 3  
 ♥ K 8 4 2 ♥ A 10 9 5  
 ♦ Q J 9 7 5 ♦ 10 8  
 ♣ J 6 4 ♣ A 10 5  
 ♠ A 9 4  
 ♥ Q J 7 3  
 ♦ A K 6  
 ♣ Q 7 3

East will probably open 1♣, and South should overcall 1NT rather than double (though the latter might work better today, since South would struggle to make more than five tricks in notrump on a diamond lead). Depending on South's initial action, and whether E/W use artificial methods over the notrump overcall, you can imagine E/W finishing up in either red-suit, or N/S playing spades. Most of these contracts rate to be unsuccessful, so scores of 100 will be common in either direction, and +110 will be a great result for either side.

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

N/S should bid: 1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠ - 4♣ the last call being a club splinter in support of spades. Now Blackwood discloses the absence of the trump queen and South can settle for 6♠. On a diamond lead, declarer might well play the trump ace-king and then run clubs, ruffing out the suit if necessary. That line survives against 3-2 trumps plus 4-1 trumps with West having the length, and the clubs 3-3. On a heart lead, I'd guess to finesse; when it loses, I'd need to find the trump queen. I can't see anything better.

Board: 19 ♠ K Q 8 6 5 3 2  
 Dealer: S ♥ 8 6 3  
 Vul: E-W ♦ A Q  
 ♣ K  
 ♠ 10 9 4 ♠ A J 7  
 ♥ K J 9 7 5 ♥ —  
 ♦ 10 7 4 ♦ K J 5 2  
 ♣ 8 5 ♣ A Q J 9 3 2  
 ♠ —  
 ♥ A Q 10 4 2  
 ♦ 9 8 6 3  
 ♣ 10 7 6 4

Most Souths will pass, rather than deeming their hand worthy of a 2♥ preempt. So North will open 1♠ and hear a 2♣ overcall. It may look natural for South to make a negative double, but he would not like it when North jumps in spades. If South passes (a more sensible action, to my mind) I'd expect North to rebid in spades and E/W to compete to at least 3♣ — East may bid 2NT over 2♣ East may bid 2NT over 2♠ to show the minors. E/W can manage at least nine tricks in clubs, while North has a shot to make 2♠ on an unfortunate diamond lead from East.

Board: 23 ♠ Q 5 2  
 Dealer: S ♥ 9  
 Vul: Both ♦ A K J 10 9 3  
 ♣ A 9 4  
 ♠ J 8 4 ♠ 7  
 ♥ K Q 7 4 2 ♥ A J 10 8 5 3  
 ♦ 5 2 ♦ Q 8 7 4  
 ♣ Q 10 2 ♣ 6 5  
 ♠ A K 10 9 6 3  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ K J 8 7 3

After 1♠ - 2♦ - 3♣ - 3♠ - 4♣, North can use Blackwood and drive to 6♠. The defenders do best to cash their heart winner and lead a second heart. Declarer should ruff in hand, pitching a club from dummy, and play ♠A, ♦A, and ruff a diamond with ♠10. Then he can draw two more rounds of trump ending in dummy, and ruff out the diamonds. The ♣A then lets declarer run dummy's diamonds. Declarer can also succeed if he ruffs the second heart in dummy, but the play may well require some good guesswork.

Board: 20 ♠ A Q 5 4  
 Dealer: W ♥ J  
 Vul: Both ♦ J 6  
 ♣ 10 8 6 5 4 2  
 ♠ 9 7 ♠ 8 6  
 ♥ K 9 8 7 6 3 ♥ A Q 5 4  
 ♦ K 9 ♦ A 10 8 4 3 2  
 ♣ A J 7 ♣ K  
 ♠ K J 10 3 2  
 ♥ 10 2  
 ♦ Q 7 5  
 ♣ Q 9 3

West will open 1♥ here, after which E/W rate to bid unopposed to 4♥. East might bid diamonds, splinter in clubs, or show a game-forcing raise in hearts. But E/W should always be able to identify the lack of a spade control, or West should be able to show a minimum and let East stop safely. Of course with the spade honors the way they are, North does not have an easy spade lead. Indeed, unless the auction telegraphs the spade lead, West might make 13 tricks at either game or slam level. +710 ought to garner E/W an above average score...but you never know.

Board: 24 ♠ 9 5 3  
 Dealer: W ♥ 10 8 3  
 Vul: None ♦ 5 2  
 ♣ 10 9 6 4 3  
 ♠ K 8 7 6 2 ♠ 10 4  
 ♥ A K Q 4 2 ♥ 9 7 6  
 ♦ 8 ♦ A K 10 9 4  
 ♣ K 5 ♣ 8 7 2  
 ♠ A Q J  
 ♥ J 5  
 ♦ Q J 7 6 3  
 ♣ A Q J

When West opens 1♠ and East responds 1NT, should South overcall 2♦ or pass? It is right to pass rather than bid, despite all those high cards; and a double would be seriously misguided. West will rebid 2♥ now, and East may well give false preference to 2♠. If West makes a game-try of 3♥ to show his extras and 5-5 pattern, he is likely to end up in 4♥. On a diamond lead, declarer cashes the top diamonds to pitch a club, and takes the spade finesse. With spades and hearts lying so favorably, he ought to find a route to ten tricks now.

Board: 25  
Dealer: N  
Vul: E-W

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

After West opens 1♣ and East responds 1♦ South will overcall 1♠. West can double (either showing hearts or support) and now North has to choose between the simple raise to 2♠ or a preemptive raise to 3♠. A jump to 3♠ puts East under real pressure — East might bid 4♦ or pass, and West may raise 4♦ to game. But of course, whatever East does South might well bid game — hoping for a singleton club in dummy. Par on the deal is 4♠x down one by South — surely a common result on the board.

Board: 29  
Dealer: N  
Vul: Both

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

When East opens 1♥ and jump shifts to 3♣, West might temporize with the fourth suit and convert 3♥ to 3NT. Now should East go back to 4♥? Yes, if this route implies doubt about strain or level. It must be right for West to pass 4♥ — albeit reluctantly, but that contract appears to have four top losers if the defenders cash ♦A and shift to a spade. However, declarer can take dummy's winners and ruff a diamond, then take the two top clubs, and exit with ♥Q or ♥10! Anyone who finds this line deserves a brilliancy prize — but playing 3NT is an easier route to a great score.

Board: 26  
Dealer: E  
Vul: Both

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

The East hand is a 1♦ opening, not a weak-two, isn't it? This is both because of the playing strength and the aces — not to mention that useful ♦10. South can overcall 1♠, setting West an impossible choice between pass, double and 1NT. Nothing is easy to predict here, as E/W need to find their heart fit while N/S want to compete in clubs — but not too high. I'd guess that if West doesn't start with a negative double, E/W won't find it easy to reach hearts; even if they do, they surely won't get to game.

Board: 30  
Dealer: E  
Vul: None

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

After East opens 1♣ and West responds 1NT, South will want to balance back into the auction. Some play any balancing call shows that bid suit and a higher suit. If so, South could bid 2♥ and get North to 2♠, where he seems to have eight tricks. But the defenders can create an extra trump winner for themselves by repeated heart or club leads. 1NT by West is almost sure to go one down, and since nobody can make anything at the two level, a score of +100 one way or the other will be worth a bushel of matchpoints.

Board: 27  
Dealer: S  
Vul: None

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

Unless you believe you should always respond to a non-vulnerable opening, North will pass 1♠. East can balance with 2♠, Michaels, and now E/W are likely to reach 4♥. But 4♥ by West is immediately defeated on a top diamond lead by North, while if West uses a conventional 3♦ reply to Michaels as a constructive heart raise, East can declare the game. South does best to lead clubs: declarer wants to win and duck a trump to South. He can win the second trump, then play a spade to the king and ace, and run the clubs. There are some intriguing variations now, but East has the upper hand in all of them.

Board: 31  
Dealer: S  
Vul: N-S

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

South is surely not worth a weak-two bid at this vulnerability. When North opens 1♥, East will preempt to 3♣ (yes, ignore those spades!), and North rates to balance with 3♦. South can raise to 4♦ and North will bid game. On a top club lead declarer can survive the 4-1 trump break — in fact there are even lines where he might emerge with a 12th winner if the defenders aren't careful. Say North unblocks spades, ruffs a club and plays a diamond to hand. Then he ruffs a second club, cashes ♠K, and runs the hearts, and West just scores his ♦A.

Board: 28  
Dealer: W  
Vul: N-S

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

North has a straightforward 1♦ opening bid, and East an equally normal preemptive overcall — either of 3♣ or 4♣. Whichever call he makes, South has to choose between a negative double (planning to convert a heart response to diamonds?) or a simple diamond raise — which might lose the major fit, but avoids getting too high. Despite the 5-0 trump break, N/S can take nine tricks in diamonds when both major suits behave. Conversely, E/W have eight black winners in a club contract but no sensible play for a ninth. +110 will be a fine score for N/S here.

Board: 32  
Dealer: W  
Vul: E-W

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

West seems to have a 3♦ preempt — even at unfavorable vulnerability — unless you prefer to open 1♦. After a 1♦ opening, North will stretch to double, East can raise to 2♦, and South will cuebid to find a major-suit fit, then might well look for slam. Bizarrely, you can make 11 tricks in the trump suit that splits 4-0, but only nine in spades if North is declarer and East hits on a heart lead. Of course +450 is likely to be the most common result for N/S, though E/W have a save in 5♦x — albeit one at unfavorable vulnerability.