

Parkinson Charity Game

Board 1
North Deals
None Vul

♠ A 7
♥ K J 8 4 2
♦ 7 4 3
♣ A Q 2

♠ 5 4 3 2
♥ 10 6
♦ J 10 9
♣ K J 9 8

♠ K Q J 6
♥ A Q 9 5
♦ Q 8 5
♣ 6 3

♠ 10 9 8
♥ 7 3
♦ A K 6 2
♣ 10 7 5 4

When North opens 1♥, South will surely respond 1NT if East passes. Even if this is non-forcing, North might consider rebidding 2♣ (worried that his side will miss a game facing a balanced invitation). Now N/S will play 2♣ or 2♥, neither of which contract rates to succeed. Mind you, if East overcalls 1♠, E/W will play 2♠. It is almost impossible in real life to beat that contract (the defenders must never lead hearts and threaten trump promotions).

NS 1N; EW 1♠; NS 1♥; NS 1♦; NS 1♣

Board 2
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 10 6 3
♥ J 8
♦ Q J 9 8 7 6
♣ A K

♠ A Q J 9 7
♥ Q 10 5 3
♦ K 4 3
♣ 9

♠ K 8 4 2
♥ K 6 4 2
♦ A 10 5
♣ 7 6

♠ 5
♥ A 9 7
♦ 2
♣ Q J 10 8 5 4 3 2

I expect most Souths to preempt to 3♣. West will probably stretch to double, and that will let East cuebid 4♣, to let West play 4♠. The defenders will lead two rounds of clubs, and West ruffs, draws trumps, then exits with three rounds of diamonds to put North back on lead. If North is counting the hand properly he will give declarer a ruff and discard, leaving declarer to find the ♥J to make his game.

EW 4♠; EW 4♥; NS 3♣; EW 1♦

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A 9
♥ K 9 8 7 6 3
♦ K 10 4
♣ K J

♠ 6 2
♥ 10 2
♦ Q J 8 6 3 2
♣ A 5 3

♠ J 10 5 4
♥ Q J
♦ A 9 5
♣ Q 10 8 2

♠ K Q 8 7 3
♥ A 5 4
♦ 7
♣ 9 7 6 4

Whether West stretches to open a weak 2♦ or not, you'd expect N/S to play 4♥. If the defenders lead diamonds declarer has an easy 11 tricks by ruffing the diamond loser in dummy, then running trumps before testing spades. On a passive lead such as a trump the hand is far more difficult to handle. Some declarers will emerge with only 10 tricks (via a club misguess perhaps, or a trump promotion if declarer goes after spades before drawing trump).

NS 5♥; NS 4N; NS 3♠; NS 2♣; EW 1♦

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

♠ A K 10 5 4 3
♥ 5 4 3
♦ K 2
♣ K 8

♠ J
♥ A K 9 8 6 2
♦ 9 8 7 6
♣ J 7

♠ Q 9 6 2
♥ 10
♦ A Q J 5 4
♣ 6 5 2

♠ 8 7
♥ Q J 7
♦ 10 3
♣ A Q 10 9 4 3

On this deathtrap of a board, West will preempt to 2♥ and North can overcall 2♠. But now what? South is too good to pass. He might sensibly bid clubs or no-trump, but whatever he does will surely not allow him to stop in a makeable contract. The best practical shot is to play 3NT and hope West leads a heart not a diamond, letting declarer take the first nine winners. A greedy declarer in 3NT will win the heart lead, run clubs, then endplay East in spades to lead a diamond for an overtrick.

EW 3♥; EW 3♦; N 3♣; S 2♣; NS 1♠

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 7 6 3
♥ Q J 2
♦ J 5
♣ K J 10 5 2

♠ A J 10 8
♥ K 10 5
♦ 7 6 2
♣ 9 7 3

♠ 9 5 4
♥ A 9 7
♦ K Q 9 8
♣ A 8 6

♠ K Q 2
♥ 8 6 4 3
♦ A 10 4 3
♣ Q 4

On this quiet deal most Easts will open 1♦ and rebid 1NT over the 1♠ response (yes, some Norths will balance with 2♣, and do better than they deserve). In 1NT on a heart lead declarer will win in hand and lead a low spade to the ten, allowing him to run the nine at his next turn. The defenders do best to set up clubs, declarer will play on diamonds, and will struggle to find any legitimate play for an overtrick -- that is unless South ducks his ♦A and his partner then gets endplayed.

EW 1N; EW 1♠; EW 1♥; EW 1♦; NS 1♣

Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q 7 3
♥ J 10 3 2
♦ 9 3 2
♣ A 4 3

♠ 8 2
♥ K Q 7
♦ A K 5
♣ 9 8 7 5 2

♠ A K J 10 9 4
♥ 8 4
♦ 10 8
♣ K J 6

♠ 6 5
♥ A 9 6 5
♦ Q J 7 6 4
♣ Q 10

The field will be split between those playing spades, and those in no-trumps. With an eight-card major-suit fit, and each side-suit doubly guarded, you pay your money, you take your choice. Today, with ♥A and ♠Q outside you can take 11 tricks in either strain, so no-trump will fare better on a good club guess. But switch the defenders' hands, and 4♠ would fare much better. Of course you can't lose a club ruff in 3NT, I suppose!

EW 5N; EW 5♠; EW 4♣; EW 1♥; EW 1♦

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ A 9 6 2
♥ 6 4
♦ J 8 6
♣ Q J 7 2

♠ J 10 5
♥ K 10 5 2
♦ Q 10 9 4
♣ 10 9

♠ K Q 8
♥ A 9 3
♦ A K 3 2
♣ A 8 6

♠ 7 4 3
♥ Q J 8 7
♦ 7 5
♣ K 5 4 3

Almost the entire field will open 2NT and be raised via Stayman or the equivalent to 3NT. Any South who leads a club will hold East to nine tricks for considerably above average, while the unfortunate Souths who lead a top heart (better to lead a high honor from this holding against an RHO who has shown a strong no-trump or better) will concede the tenth trick. My guess is that the heart lead will not be uncommon -- I'm sure I'd find it!

EW 3N; EW 3♥; EW 4♦; EW 2♠; EW 1♣

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

♠ 7 6
♥ J 8 6 4 3
♦ 7
♣ A J 8 6 4

♠ 10 4 3
♥ A 10 9 5
♦ K 9 5
♣ 10 7 5

♠ A Q 9 8 5 2
♥ 2
♦ 8 6 3
♣ K 9 2

♠ K J
♥ K Q 7
♦ A Q J 10 4 2
♣ Q 3

Looking only at the N/S cards, you'd be happy to play in 4♥. But the bad trump break complicates things considerably. The defenders rate to take three tricks in the majors, so the question is whether North can find a way to set up the diamonds to get rid of all his clubs. Against best defense he cannot quite manage it, but it is not nearly as easy as it looks. And one can imagine East preempting to 2♦, then leading the wrong minor on an unrevealing auction thereafter.

NS 3♥; NS 3♣; NS 2♦; EW 1♠

Board 9
North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ 3
♥ K 3
♦ 10 9 8 6 5 4
♣ K 10 8 6

♠ A 9 6 2
♥ J 8
♦ Q 7
♣ Q J 7 5 3

♠ K Q 8 5 4
♥ A 7 6 4 2
♦ 3
♣ A 2

♠ J 10 7
♥ Q 10 9 5
♦ A K J 2
♣ 9 4

An ugly 2♦ preempt by North would get his side to 5♦ in double-quick time. Of course, left to their own devices, E/W will play 4♠, but alas for N/S, this contract is very much harder to make than it might appear. Declarer can't establish clubs or hearts easily, and if he draws trumps prematurely he will go down. Best is to duck a heart after one top trump, and now one can both establish hearts and take the club finesse. I'm guessing not many players will make game here.

EW 4♠; EW 3♥; NS 3♦; EW 1N; EW 2♣

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

♠ J 10 8 2
♥ Q J 6 3 2
♦ 4
♣ Q 10 8

♠ K 3
♥ 8 7 4
♦ J 9 7 6 5 3
♣ 7 3

♠ 9 7 6 4
♥ A K 5
♦ A Q 8
♣ K 9 5

♠ A Q 5
♥ 10 9
♦ K 10 2
♣ A J 6 4 2

After a strong no-trump from East, should West pass or transfer to diamonds? If he transfers, his side will take eight tricks in diamonds. If West passes, the defenders will surely lead clubs (assuming South can't see through the backs of the cards). After that start, with the ♠A outside, East will come to seven tricks, so long as he leads out diamonds from the top, as he should. Occasionally North may get his "powerful" major-two suiter into play; if he does, the hand will play surprisingly well in the 4-3 fit.

NS 3♠; NS 2♥; EW 2♦; NS 2♣

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Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

♠ A 4
♥ A K 10
♦ A J 10 5
♣ K 7 6 5

♠ Q 10 7 5
♥ 8 3
♦ Q 4 2
♣ A Q 9 8

♠ K 9 3
♥ J 9 7 5
♦ K 9 7 6
♣ J 3

North rates to declare 3NT on a spade lead. The spade lead should be won in hand, followed by cashing ♦A, and running the jack. When that holds, North should lead the ♦10 to the queen and king and advance the ♥Q – to tempt West to cover! If West ducks stoically, declarer should run his red-suit winners and must then guess who has the ♣A. If the ♣A is onside he must lead a club to the king, if he thinks it is wrong, he may try to endplay East in spades to lead a club at the death for a precious overtrick.

NS 3N; NS 5♦; NS 3♥; NS 3♣; NS 1♠

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A 10 8 7 5
♥ A K J 6
♦ 9 7 6
♣ 4

♠ K Q 3
♥ 10 9 8 7 3
♦ A 3 2
♣ 10 7

♠ J 4
♥ Q 5 2
♦ K Q 10 4
♣ 6 5 3 2

♠ 9 6 2
♥ 4
♦ J 8 5
♣ A K Q J 9 8

This is a tough bidding challenge hand. After North's 1♠ opening South should drive to game – easy enough playing 2/1, but will he be able to steer his side to 3NT instead of 4♠? If North had stronger spades the deal might play better in the suit game. But today 3NT is easy to make, while spades has at least five top losers if the defenders lead diamonds. That too may prove a challenge of course; any East who listens closely to the auction may work out to lead diamonds – but this is easier said than done.

NS 3N; NS 4♣; NS 2♠; NS 2♦

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

♠ K 7 5 2
♥ Q 3 2
♦ 2
♣ K Q 9 5 2

♠ 10 9 6
♥ 5
♦ K J 9 8 6
♣ J 10 7 4

♠ Q 8 4 3
♥ A 10 8 4
♦ Q 7
♣ 8 6 3

♠ A J
♥ K J 9 7 6
♦ A 10 5 4 3
♣ A

Most of our competitors will be using Drury – a passed-hand 2♣ response by North to show values and heart fit. It would be lazy for South to jump to game now; facing the actual North hand with a trump more, and a black card less, slam would be excellent. You might make 6♥ here – on a cross-ruff or by establishing clubs -- but the 4-1 trump break dooms you today. Any pair who conducts a scientific auction to slam may well consider themselves somewhat unlucky.

NS 5♥; NS 3N; NS 3♠; S 4♣; N 3♣; NS 2♦

Board 14
East Deals
None Vul

♠ K 10 2
♥ 6 5
♦ A Q 7 6 4
♣ Q 7 3

♠ 9 6
♥ A 9 4 2
♦ K 9 2
♣ J 9 8 6

♠ A Q 8
♥ K J 10 8 7
♦ 8 3
♣ A 10 5

♠ J 7 5 4 3
♥ Q 3
♦ J 10 5
♣ K 4 2

When West opens 1♥ most Norths will double, rather than introduce that moth-eaten diamond suit. Now East is too strong for a preempt, too weak for a limit-raise, and has a trump too many for a Bergen-style 2♣ call, which shows only three trump. Whatever he does, South rates to compete to 3♠ over 3♥, and neither West nor East will find it that easy to bid on to 4♥. This contract can be made with a good view in trumps, while 3♠ will probably struggle to escape for even two down.

EW 4♥; EW 4♣; EW 2N; W 1♠; S 1♦

Board 15
South Deals
N-S Vul

♠ 7 2
♥ 9 6 5 4
♦ 8 6
♣ A J 10 7 3

♠ 6 3
♥ A J 7 2
♦ K 10 7 4 2
♣ Q 8

♠ K J 8 5 4
♥ 10 8 3
♦ A 9 5
♣ K 4

♠ A Q 10 9
♥ K Q
♦ Q J 3
♣ 9 6 5 2

While N/S can (and should) find their way to clubs easily enough, it is more difficult for East to get both red-suits into play, unless he can conveniently double a club bid for take-out. Every card lies almost as conveniently as possible for E/W: they can make 110 in three different denominations. Of course, some players may misjudge how to declare the hand, and finish up with rather less. Accordingly any making partscore should score E/W well enough.

EW 2♠; EW 2♥; EW 3♦; EW 1N; NS 2♣

Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul

♠ J 10 5 2
♥ A Q 9 7 5
♦ K 9 7
♣ 6

♠ 8 6
♥ J 3
♦ Q J 8 3
♣ A K 10 9 5

♠ 7 4
♥ 10 8 6 2
♦ 10 5
♣ Q 7 4 3 2

♠ A K Q 9 3
♥ K 4
♦ A 6 4 2
♣ J 8

6♠ is a superb slam for N/S, and reaching it will surely earn them at least a 75% board. But a number of things might get in their way; to start with, West might open his hand – and E/W might preempt to 3♣ immediately, making their opponents' job very hard. Equally, even in an unopposed auction, unless North has a fit-jump to 3♥ available, or can splinter to 4♣ over a 1♠ opening bid, it may be hard for South to envisage 12 tricks available so easily.

NS 6♠; NS 5♥; NS 4♦; NS 2N; EW 1♣

Board 17
North Deals
None Vul

♠ 8 6 4
♥ J 9 7 4 2
♦ A 9 7 2
♣ 6

♠ —
♥ 8
♦ K Q J 6 4
♣ K 10 9 8 5 4 3

♠ K J 3 2
♥ A K Q 10 5
♦ 3
♣ J 7 2

♠ A Q 10 9 7 5
♥ 6 3
♦ 10 8 5
♣ A Q

The West hand is hard to evaluate facing a 1♥ opening bid, but when South bids spades, West will surely plan to bid clubs then compete in diamonds (or use an unusual no-trump call at a high level). In fact East rates to raise clubs in competition, allowing West to blast out game – or take a shot at slam if feeling frisky. The defenders rate to score only their minor-suit aces, although I suppose at some tables N/S may be doubled in a spade contract?

EW 5♣; NS 2♠; E 3♦; W 2♦

Board 18
East Deals
N-S Vul

♠ J 6
♥ A Q 5 4
♦ 8 7 5
♣ 10 8 7 3

♠ 10 7 5 2
♥ J 2
♦ A K 10 6 3
♣ A 2

♠ A Q 9 8
♥ K 9 8 3
♦ Q 4
♣ 9 5 4

♠ K 4 3
♥ 10 7 6
♦ J 9 2
♣ K Q J 6

E/W will surely find their spade fit in an unopposed sequence, after which East can surely do no less than invite game – in fact he might even drive to 4♠, hoping to buy a full opening bid opposite. With the spades and hearts lying favorably enough, and the ♦J falling in three rounds, the defenders cannot prevent West from making ten tricks. There will surely be a sizeable percentage of the field who stop in 3♠, but today fortune favors the brave.

EW 4♠; EW 4♦; EW 2N; EW 2♥

Board 19
South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q J
♥ A K Q 7 6
♦ J 5 3
♣ J 10 5

♠ K 9 6 4
♥ J 9 8
♦ K 8 7 4
♣ K 4

♠ 10 7 2
♥ 10 3 2
♦ Q 9 6 2
♣ 8 3 2

♠ A 8 5 3
♥ 5 4
♦ A 10
♣ A Q 9 7 6

N/S should have a fourth-suit auction, starting: 1♣ - 1♥ - 1♠ - 2; now South can rebid either 2NT or 3♣, depending on whether his rebid showed an unbalanced hand, or was consistent with 4-4 in the black suits. North should be able to arrange for South to declare 3NT, a contract that rates to attract the diamond lead which holds South to 11 tricks. Some Wests may lead spades, after which South will wrap up 12 tricks for a splendid score.

S 5N; NS 5♥; N 3N; NS 5♣; NS 3♠; S 2♦; N 1♦

Board 20
North Deals
Both Vul

♠ K Q 10 7 6
♥ Q 9
♦ 7 6
♣ A K 5 2

♠ J 9 5 4 3
♥ A 10 3
♦ Q J 9
♣ 10 3

♠ 8 2
♥ K 8 5 2
♦ A K 8 4 2
♣ Q 4

♠ A
♥ J 7 6 4
♦ 10 5 3
♣ J 9 8 7 6

On this complex deal North will open 1♠ -- that much is sure. But will East double -- crossing his fingers that he does not hear a 2♣ response? Will South aggressively respond 1NT in competition, and if he passes and West gets to 1NT first, how will the defenders unscramble their top winners? So many questions....As you can see, E/W won't find it easy to collect even seven of their eight top winners. In fact, 1NT may make as often as not, if declared by West. Par is for E/W to get to clubs and collect a painless +110, which you'd expect them to do on an uncontested auction.

NS 3♣; EW 2♦; NS 1♠; EW 1♥

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Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A Q J 10 6 2
♥ Q 6
♦ 8 5
♣ Q J 10

♠ 9 8
♥ J 9
♦ K Q J 10 4
♣ K 7 5 2

♠ 7 5 3
♥ 8 7 3 2
♦ 9 7 3
♣ 8 4 3

♠ K 4
♥ A K 10 5 4
♦ A 6 2
♣ A 9 6

NS 7N; NS 7♠; NS 7♥; NS 4♣; S 2♦; N 1♦

N/S would like to reach 7NT by South. Declarer can test hearts, then fall back on the clubs if necessary, making slam about a 75% chance. But how does South locate the ♥Q, which turns an iffy small slam into such an excellent grand slam? It is far from simple, even if North shows six spades and South can set spades as trump. Locating side-queens requires both sophisticated partnership agreement and a fair degree of trust. If North gets to cuebid a heart value, that may be enough for South to take a chance on 13 tricks.

Board 22
East Deals
E-W Vul

♠ Q
♥ A J 10 6 5
♦ 8
♣ 9 8 6 5 3 2

♠ 9 8 2
♥ 3 2
♦ K 10 9 4 3 2
♣ 7 4

♠ A K 7 6 5 4
♥ 9 7
♦ A Q 7 5
♣ J

♠ J 10 3
♥ K Q 8 4
♦ J 6
♣ A K Q 10

NS 5♥; NS 5♣; EW 3♠; EW 3♦

Should South overcall INT over 1♠, or risk a take-out double? Surely passing 1♠ is far too pessimistic. Whichever action South takes, it should get his side to 4♥, a contract which may not be too easy to defend accurately, unless West has raised spades, indicating length there. When East leads a top spade he may have to guess whether to cash his ♦A or play for spade ruffs. Should he get it wrong, he will rack up -480. and close to a tie for a bottom.

Board 23
South Deals
Both Vul

♠ K J 3 2
♥ Q 4 2
♦ K J 7 6
♣ A 5

♠ Q 5
♥ 3
♦ A 9 5 3 2
♣ J 10 7 6 3

♠ A 7 6 4
♥ 10 8 7
♦ Q 10 8 4
♣ Q 9

♠ 10 9 8
♥ A K J 9 6 5
♦ —
♣ K 8 4 2

NS 5♥; N 4N; NS 4♠; S 3N; EW 2♦; NS 2♣

A challenging deal in both the bidding and play. N/S ought to find their way to hearts rather than no-trumps, but at what level, and how many tricks should they make? The answer is that 11 tricks are the limit, even though the spade finesse works. Although South seems to have two club tricks, a club ruff high, three spades and six hearts, there is a blockage in the spades. The fact that East has only two clubs means that on repeated club leads the defenders can disrupt the entries to dummy and hold declarer to +650.

Board 24
West Deals
None Vul

♠ K 6 2
♥ Q 10 8 5 3
♦ 10 6 3
♣ A J

♠ A 7 4
♥ A K 9 7 6
♦ Q J
♣ 8 7 3

♠ Q J 10 5
♥ J
♦ K 9 7 5 2
♣ 9 5 4

♠ 9 8 3
♥ 4 2
♦ A 8 4
♣ K Q 10 6 2

NS 1N; EW 2♦; EW 1♠; NS 1♥; NS 1♣

On this messy partscore deal neither side is particularly likely to stop in a makeable contract. Personally, I'd probably end up in 2♠, by raising spades as West. The defenders should lead three rounds of clubs to allow North to pitch his diamond loser; then South must lead a fourth club for the ruff/sluff; not easy! If he does, seven tricks appear to be the limit for East. On most other lines of defense, West might be allowed to scramble an eighth trick by ruffing diamonds in dummy.

Board 25
North Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A 9 7 3
♥ J 7 3
♦ A 8 6
♣ K 10 7

♠ K 10 2
♥ Q 10 4 2
♦ Q 5 2
♣ 9 4 2

♠ 6 5
♥ A K 9 8
♦ K J 10 9 4
♣ A 6

♠ Q J 8 4
♥ 6 5
♦ 7 3
♣ Q J 8 5 3

EW 3♥; NS 2♠; EW 3♦; NS 2♣

After North opens 1♦, I'd expect the players to bid and raise diamonds and spades for a while – but where will the music stop? East will surely compete to 3♦, after which neither North nor South have any real extras in the way of shape or high-cards. But since 3♦ (or indeed 3♥) plays easily enough for nine tricks, N/S would do well to bid on to 3♠. It won't be especially easy for either defender to double them, and even if they do, -100 might still matchpoint quite well for N/S.

Board 26
East Deals
Both Vul

♠ A 6 5
♥ K 9 8 7
♦ —
♣ A K Q J 9 3

♠ Q J 8 4
♥ A Q 6
♦ 10 6 5 3 2
♣ 8

♠ K 10 3 2
♥ J 5 3
♦ A Q 8
♣ 10 5 4

♠ 9 7
♥ 10 4 2
♦ K J 9 7 4
♣ 7 6 2

NS 4♣; NS 2N; EW 2♠; NS 2♥; EW 1♦

A disciplined N/S auction might see North open 1♣ and rebid 1♥ over 1♦, to end the auction. North would doubtless be disappointed, but would find himself in a perfectly playable spot. With the sight of all four hands you might want to play clubs, for an easy +130, but at least you avoid playing a hopeless game with the N/S cards. I'm sure there will be quite a few Norths who won't stop short of game when their partner joins in the action.

Board 27
South Deals
None Vul

♠ K 7
♥ A 10 7 5 4
♦ 10 8 6 2
♣ A 4

♠ A 2
♥ K Q 3 2
♦ Q 5 3
♣ Q J 10 8

♠ 10 9 6 4 3
♥ 9 6
♦ J 9 4
♣ 7 3 2

♠ Q J 8 5
♥ J 8
♦ A K 7
♣ K 9 6 5

NS 4♥; NS 3N; S 4♦; NS 2♠; N 3♦; NS 2♣

When South opens 1♣ there will be quite a few hyperactive Wests who will stretch to overcall INT or bid 1♥ -- both of which bids would be just fine if the North and East hands were switched. Today if West bids he will go for a penalty of at least 500. If N/S play 3NT, on a top club lead from West, declarer must maneuver to set up a ninth trick without letting East in with a diamond winner (after West unblocks ♦Q). Otherwise East can set up clubs for the defense.

Board 28
West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ A Q 8 7
♥ 9 6
♦ 10 5 4 3
♣ 8 4 3

♠ 9 5 4 3
♥ A K Q 10
♦ A 6
♣ K J 10

♠ 10
♥ 7 4 2
♦ Q 9 8 7 2
♣ A 6 5 2

♠ K J 6 2
♥ J 8 5 3
♦ K J
♣ Q 9 7

EW 4♥; EW 4♦; EW 4♣; EW 2N; EW 1♠

West rates to open and close the auction with a call of INT. A spade lead works well enough, but at pairs the object is NOT to lead from a broken four-card suit and give up a trick unnecessarily. After a diamond lead to the jack and ace, declarer will probably return a diamond to dummy's seven and South's king. The defenders should now cash out their spades, but declarer will probably end up making 120 when South comes under pressure with his discard on the ♦Q.

Board 29
North Deals
Both Vul

♠ A Q 3
♥ A Q J 2
♦ J 4 2
♣ K Q J

♠ 8 6 4
♥ 7 5 3
♦ Q 9 6
♣ A 8 5 2

♠ K 5 2
♥ 10 9 8 6
♦ K 8 3
♣ 7 6 4

♠ J 10 9 7
♥ K 4
♦ A 10 7 5
♣ 10 9 3

NS 4N; NS 4♠; NS 4♥; NS 3♦; NS 3♣

On what appears to be the flattest board of the event, I'm going to predict an absolutely unanimous traveler. North will show a strong balanced hand, and be raised to 3NT. Declarer will set up the spades and allow the defenders to score three tricks. The defenders can hardly avoid scoring one diamond trick, one spade trick, and their ♣A.

Board 30
East Deals
None Vul

♠ A K J 8 2
♥ 8
♦ J 5
♣ A K 10 9 6

♠ 9 5
♥ 5 4 3
♦ K Q 8 7
♣ 8 7 3 2

♠ 10 6
♥ A Q 10 9 7 6 2
♦ 9 6 4 3
♣ —

♠ Q 7 4 3
♥ K J
♦ A 10 2
♣ Q J 5 4

NS 5N; N 5♠; S 4♠; NS 5♣; EW 3♥

Some Easts will open 3♥, some will make the full-blooded preempt of 4♥. Regardless, if South stretches to double either call, North will surely drive the hand to a black-suit slam. There are only 11 tricks in either strain (and if you play spades from the South seat you might run into a Lightner double to boot). As against that, if either defender leads a heart against a black-suit slam, it sets up the 12th winner for N/S. Scores therefore rate to be all over the place, and 450 may not be too bad a score for N/S here.

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Board 31

South Deals ♠ A 6
 N-S Vul ♥ 10
 ♦ K Q 10 8 7 6 5
 ♣ J 5 3

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

♠ Q 10 9 8
 ♥ 7 5 2
 ♦ A
 ♣ A K Q 7 4

N 3♠; NS 4♦; NS 4♣; S 2♠; EW 2♥

When South opens 1♣ West will jump to 3♥, forcing North to pass and hope for more action. However, since South has no real reason to re-open, West rates to become declarer in 3♥, where he will only make eight tricks if he guesses spades well (or North takes his ♠A prematurely). N/S might do better declaring the contract – but they cannot make any game, thanks to the bad diamond break. To defeat 5♣, however, West must lead a spade, or cash one top heart then shift to spades. That disrupts the late entry to dummy to cash the diamonds after drawing trump.

Board 32

West Deals ♠ 7 5
 E-W Vul ♥ Q J 10 5 4 3
 ♦ A 7 2
 ♣ 7 3

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

♠ A K 8 4
 ♥ 6 2
 ♦ 10 9 8 6 3
 ♣ 6 2

EW 3N; EW 3♠; EW 3♣; NS 1♥; EW 1♦

When West opens 1NT North should overcall to show hearts, but East can brush this aside, using Stayman or the equivalent to check for spade fit and/or a heart stopper. 3NT should be the final contract. On a heart lead, declarer should win and drive out the ♦A, (North doing best to duck – easier said than done) win the next heart and run the clubs. If South discards accurately, he can make it almost impossible for declarer to risk playing for overtricks by going after spades before cashing out diamonds. Overtricks will be few and far between.

Board 33

North Deals ♠ 9 2
 None Vul ♥ K 6 4
 ♦ A K 10 9 8 6
 ♣ Q 4

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

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

NS 3N; NS 3♥; NS 3♦; EW 1♠; NS 1♣

When North opens 1♦ East rates to preempt to 3♣ to shut out the majors. South should probably double now, planning to convert 3♦ to 3♥ to suggest precisely these values. Since this auction denies game-forcing values, North should pass 3♥, though it may be tempting to raise to game once the fit comes to light. The defense can easily take four tricks against 3♥ in a number of different ways, but it is hard to imagine many declarers finding a way to concede a fifth (and if you find one, please don't tell me about it!).

Board 34

East Deals ♠ A J
 N-S Vul ♥ K Q J 5 3 2
 ♦ —
 ♣ J 10 9 5 2

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

♠ Q 8 4 2
 ♥ A 7 6
 ♦ K Q 10 8
 ♣ 6 3

NS 3N; NS 3♥; EW 3♦; NS 2♣

North may well jump to 4♥ if he hears 1♠ to his left and a bid of 1NT to his right. No one will have any special reason to do any more bidding, although it could easily be correct for East to take a unilateral second call. To defend successfully to 4♥ requires East not to cash the ♣A, but to lead a low spade to the first trick. This forces declarer to draw trumps at once, leaving him with just too much work to do. The play is highly complex – let's just trust Deep Finesse this time!

Board 35

South Deals ♠ Q 10 7
 E-W Vul ♥ A 9 2
 ♦ A 8 7 2
 ♣ K J 8

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

♠ 5 3 2
 ♥ J 6 4 3
 ♦ 6 4
 ♣ A 9 7 2

W 2N; EW 2♠; E 1N; EW 2♦; NS 1♣

When West opens 1♦ North should discreetly pass throughout, leaving West to declare 1NT. It will be hard for North to find a reason to lead anything but a spade. West can win this cheaply in hand and clear the diamonds; North should duck the ace till he sees South discard a low spade. Maybe he will now be able to find the club shift rather than attacking hearts, a play which would let through at least nine tricks for declarer. I'd guess that holding West to 120 will matchpoint quite well for the defenders.

Board 36

West Deals ♠ A Q 9 7 2
 Both Vul ♥ 7 6
 ♦ 8 3
 ♣ K J 8 6

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

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

EW 5♥; EW 3♠; NS 3♣

West will open 1♥ here, North will overcall 1♠, and East has a somewhat heavy raise to 2♥. If South passes, then West will probably buy the contract in 4♥, making at least 11 tricks. Conversely, if South stretches to double, hoping to find a minor-suit fit, then there is an outside chance that N/S will find their paying sacrifice in 5♣. Few will be so aggressive both with the North and South cards; indeed, it is quite possible that simply finding the spade ruff will give N/S almost all the matchpoints.