

# ACBL-wide Charity Pairs Game #1

Tuesday Afternoon – March 25, 2025

Analysis by Mike Roberts



Mike Roberts' best claim to fame as a player is as a Junior on the Canadian team for four World Championships, the first time as the partner of Bronia Jenkins. He has a few scattered regional wins to his credit, although he is proudest of finishing average on the second day of the Reisinger. After finishing his Junior career, he switched to directing, and was a familiar face at NABCs over the last two decades. He now lives in Victoria, British Columbia, and still directs locally, both at tournaments and at clubs.

### Board 1

North Deals  
None Vul

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

  

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

North's hand has only 11 points, but with 5-4 and good suits, most will open it, using the Rule of 20 to decide. If they do, whether South responds 1♥ or 2♣, the auction will probably end in 3NT by South, which is a great spot looking at two hands, but has problems with the bad club split. A spade lead is best for the defense, but there's lots of room for error. It won't be uncommon to lead the ♥AKQ, setting up the 8, and there will be many 3NT making on the traveler. South needs to save his ♠K as an entry to the long clubs. Without a 1♦ opener, N/S might end up in a partscore.

### Board 2

East Deals  
N-S Vul

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

  

♠ K Q 9 7 4	
♥ Q 6	
♦ K 6	
♣ A J 7 4	

South will open 1♠ in second seat, although some might choose 1NT. North will respond 2♥, and South should rebid 3♣. North has a close choice between 3♦, 3♥ and 3NT, South can also choose between raising/supporting hearts or 3NT. Most tables will be in 4♥, with some in 3NT and some adventurers in slam. Hearts will probably take 11 tricks – it depends on the lead and declarer's ability to guess the minors. No trump should play a trick worse, as the ♠A will take a trick that it shouldn't in hearts.

### Board 3

South Deals  
E-W Vul

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

  

♠ 8	
♥ A Q J	
♦ A J 7 4	
♣ J 8 7 5 3	

If South opens 1♣, what would they rebid after 1♠ by partner? Both 1NT, with a singleton small spade, and 2♣, with a bad five card suit, are unappetizing choices. Many will prepare by opening 1♦, planning on rebidding 2♣. Either way, West has a poor suit, but enough extra strength to justify a 1♠ overcall. If South opened 1♣, after 1♠, North will bid 1NT. East will raise spades, and, barring some very adventurous action, the diamond fit will be lost. If South opened 1♦, whether North bids 1NT or 2♦ after 1♠, North-South should be able to compete to 3♦. Notrump plays very poorly on a low spade lead, likely 7 tricks. Diamonds is an easy nine tricks, losing one in each suit. In spades, perfect defense or imperfect declarer play will lead to seven tricks, but eight is certainly possible. If E/W compete to 3♠, they're in danger of going minus 200, doubled or not.

**Board 4**  
West Deals  
Both Vul

♠ —	♠ K Q J 8	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠ A 10 7 5 4
N							
W							
E							
S							
♥ K 8 4 3 2	♥ J 6 5	♥ 10 7					
♦ J 7 6 3	♦ 5 2	♦ A Q 9 8					
♣ 8 5 4 3	♣ K 10 9 2	♣ Q J					

After two passes, East will open 1♠. South might double, but shouldn't with minimum points and four cards in their suit. After pass, West hates 1♠. If they choose 1NT, that should freeze N/S out of the auction, and it will probably go 2♦ by East, all pass. That should come to eight tricks. If West decided to pass 1♠, North does best to pass, but 1NT is a possible call, especially since they have the protection of having passed earlier. South has way more points than expected, but should note North's original pass, and pass as well. Declarer might very well pick off clubs on this auction, and nine tricks won't be that uncommon.

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

♠ Q J	♠ A 10 9 4 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠ 8 6
N							
W							
E							
S							
♥ K J	♥ 8 7	♥ A Q 6 4 2					
♦ K Q 9 8 7	♦ 4 2	♦ J 10 5 3					
♣ J 6 5 2	♣ K Q 9 4	♣ A 7					

North passes, and this is another light opener hand. With a good suit, aces, and a bit of distribution, 1♥ is attractive. Here, it will probably propel West into game, with 13 HCP, but three turn out to be useless. 4♥ (or 4♦) might make if the defense doesn't get their club trick set up before the ♦A is knocked out. 3NT will be down a lot on a spade lead – 5 spades, 1 diamond and 1 club is normal, and the defense can even do better with a club through the jack. If East doesn't open, East-West could probably stop in 3♦ unopposed. (1♦-1♥; 2♣-3♦; Pass), but North-South can compete effectively in spades – it's called the boss suit for a reason. 3♠ makes if declarer can pick off both black jacks.

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

♠ J 9 7 2	♠ K Q	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠ 10 4
N							
W							
E							
S							
♥ 7 6 4	♥ K J 3	♥ A Q 5					
♦ A 10 8	♦ K 4 3 2	♦ Q J 7 6					
♣ 10 9 6	♣ K 8 3 2	♣ A Q 5 4					

East gets to open 1NT before North can. After two passes, while North does have equal values, some values are more equal than others. With all the points sitting over them, North shouldn't double. In 1NT, South will probably lead a spade. Even if they don't lead a heart, North can see there is no future in spades after winning the ♠Q, and shift to hearts. Declarer has one club, two hearts and three to start, and the defense is just going to run out of suits to cash even if declarer doesn't take the club finesse. 1NT making by East should be a common result.

**Board 7**  
South Deals  
Both Vul

♠ K Q 10 7 4 2	♠ J 6	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W	E	S	♠ A 9 8 5
N							
W							
E							
S							
♥ A Q	♥ 10 8 3	♥ K J 2					
♦ K 5 4	♦ A Q J 10	♦ 9 6 2					
♣ 9 8	♣ A K J 2	♣ 10 7 3					

West opens 1♠ – North could pass, double, or possibly overcall 1NT. East will raise spades, either through a simple raise to two, or a Bergen raise. West's hand is close to a game try, with the extra length in spades, but if North has acted, the red suit honors are probably not pulling their full weight. Getting to game with these two hands isn't outrageous, but any N/S bidding should tip them off that it's not going to play well. In the play, after a high club lead, North has to be careful not to avoid cashing the diamond ace; one of declarer's diamonds will be pitched on the hearts, but eventually declarer must lead to the king, and takes nine tricks.

**Board 8**  
West Deals  
None Vul

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

N
W     E
S

♠ 10 9 7 6
♥ 10 9
♦ Q 5 2
♣ 10 9 7 5

Again, another potential light opener – we’re down to 10 HCP, but more distribution. If West passes, North will open 1NT. If West opens 1♦, North will overcall 1NT, and East should be delighted to make a penalty double. 1NT by North should take five tricks, although if the defense is obstinate about diamonds declarer might get a third spade to come to 6. There are chances to get to a suit contract – South might have a runout available after 1♦-1NT-Dbl, or East-West might compete after Pass-1NT if they have two-suited bids, such as DONT, in their arsenal, or are very aggressive. Hearts by East-West should take nine tricks, but there’s scope for 10. Spades by North-South has seven tricks, but that’s unlikely to be the final contract.

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

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

N
W     E
S

♠ A 6
♥ Q 9
♦ Q J 10 7 5 2
♣ Q 9 5

North has one more point than West did on the previous hand, but with no aces and no long suit, will probably pass. East opens 1♥, and South has a choice. Since North had passed, South knows that they probably don’t have game, and might try to jam with 3♦. This might work very well if, after two passes, East reopens with a double, leading to bad East-West contracts. Failing that, most will bid 2♦ with the extra diamond, although a conservative pass could happen. North might very well bid 3NT over 2♦, despite the lack of a club stopper, but 2NT, 2♥ (a cuebid supporting diamonds) or even a heavy 3♦ are in the mix. North-South will end up in diamonds, taking nine tricks, or no trump, taking eight if the defense leads and continues clubs, nine otherwise.

**Board 10**  
East Deals  
Both Vul

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

N
W     E
S

♠ K Q 2
♥ A 9 7 5
♦ Q J 8 4
♣ 6 4

After East’s pass, South should open 1♦, and West has an easy 1♥ overcall. With standard negative doubles, North doubles to show four spades. Whether East raises to 2♥ (it’s close), or passes and South rebids 1NT, North has the key decision. If they force to game, and end up in 3NT, it won’t play well on a heart lead. If they go low, and make an invitational 3♦ call, that should end the auction – West should be too scared of going minus 200 to compete to 3♥. It’s tough to ruff everything, but diamonds should make at least 3. Spades plays very well for N/S; declarer can crossruff hearts and clubs merrily to come to +140. Any plus score N/S should score well.

**Board 11**  
South Deals  
None Vul

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

N
W     E
S

♠ 6 4 2
♥ K
♦ J 7 6 5
♣ K 8 6 5 3

West has five losers, and a suspect ♦Q, so shouldn’t think about opening 2♣. After 1♠, North will probably bid 2♦. South should raise that, West will bid 3♠, and that will probably end the auction. If N/S do play in diamonds, they should lose the obvious three spades and a club, but that should be it. In spades, the defense can actually hold it to seven tricks with perfect defense, but that involves underleading the ♥A early, or declarer misplay. Declarer should use the ♠9 to lead towards their heart honors; eight tricks should be fairly common. Any West who gambles on 4♠ will be disappointed.

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

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

Whether you open 1♦ or 1♠ with the West hand is a matter of style. For me, I'd like to be able to tell my partner my exact shape, so I'll open 1♦ and rebid spades twice - this will describe six diamonds and five spades, maybe overstating the points a little. Others will open 1♠ to find their major suit fit early. With either opening, East-West will find their spade fit, and while there might be slam aspirations, Blackwood should definitely keep you out of 6♠, and good judgment will keep you out of 5♠. Declarer should finesse against the ♠Q twice, and take 11 tricks.

**Board 13**North Deals  
Both Vul

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

A far more competitive hand. If North passes, East will open 1♣, shutting out the possibility of N/S competing in that suit. West will respond 1♥, which North might double, but either way East will raise to 2♥. Using Grant Baze's maxim - with 6-5 come alive - West has an easy 4♥ call, and should just lose one diamond and one spade.

If North stretches to open 1♣, it will become less clear. Even if East doesn't double, West will probably stretch to introduce hearts, and E/W should still reach 4♥. NS might sacrifice in 5♣; with the delicious diamond position, this will only be down two with best defense, and might be down one, either with the ♠K lead or a late endplay against East in spades.

**Board 14**East Deals  
None Vul

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

For what seems like the 10th time so far, there's a questionable light opener. Although it's only 11 HCP, and there might be rebid problems, the suits and honor location are good, and many will open the South hand 1♦. West will overcall 1♠, and North has a choice. They could choose to bid 2NT, or even 3NT, either of which should buy the contract. Double dummy defense can hold this to seven tricks, but that depends on attacking hearts early to disrupt communications, which isn't obvious. Eight tricks feels about right.

North might choose to go for penalties and pass 1♠. After East passes, South will reopen with a double, passed out by North. East might try to run to their six-card suit - indeed, some might have bid it last round. Clubs isn't easy to penalize, but good defense will beat it two, which is possibly what will happen in 1♠ doubled.

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

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

South will probably pass, and West will open 1♣ or 1♦. Either way, East will respond 1♥. South will enter the auction somehow - either 2♦ or double (if West opened 1♣), or even a chunky 1♠ overcall. West will make a support double if that's in the E/W toolbox, but it's unclear where E/W will end up. Every game makes - even with the 5-1 heart split, hearts plays well - but most will end up in 3NT. With spades blocked, the best the defense can do is cash three tricks in that suit, and declarer has 10 winners after that. If South does open, it's not as easy for E/W to get to game. East will make a takeout double, West should find a jump, and sheer point count might get them there. But it's possible that East might throw out his ♦K, downgrade, and miss the cold game.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

After two passes, East will open 1♦ in third seat. South will overcall 1♥, and West should show four spades with a negative double. This will almost certainly prevent N/S from finding their best spot in spades. North wants to bid, but hasn't got an easy option. 1NT is a decent compromise, but most will pass. 1♠ on the four-card suit is the winner, but unlikely. Absent 1♠ by North, after East bids 2♣, South will probably continue with 2♥, which will take eight or nine tricks; it's tough to get to dummy. E/W might compete to 3♣ or 3♦, but it's dangerous vulnerable in a partscore situation. Anyone who gets to spades N/S will be rewarded.

**Board 17**  
North Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

After two passes, South should open 1♥. If they open 1NT, and partner had five spades, they could be playing a 5-2 spade fit instead of a 5-3 heart fit. North has just enough to treat their hand as a limit raise, either directly with 3♥ or more likely with some form of Drury. East might pipe in with 2♠ over a Drury call, for the lead. Either way, South will drive to 4♥. West might consider 4♠ as a sacrifice if East has bid 2♠, and if they do, they'll be doubled, and declarer guessing the ♦J will be difference between a top and a bottom. Assuming declarer bangs down the top hearts in 4♥, on a spade lead, South will take 11 tricks after the ♠AK; on any other lead the spades go away on clubs to make six.

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

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

♠ A K 9 8  
♥ A 8 6 5 2  
♦ 5  
♣ Q 9 5

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

A similar discussion to Board 12 - does East open 1♦ or 1♣? I vote for 1♣ - there are so few losers that I'm treating this as a strong hand, suitable for a reverse. The pesky opponents might bid us high in a major, but we will usually have a 4NT bid as minors to cope with it. Either way, West will respond a heart. North should be annoyed they've bid his long suit, and might overcall 1♠, but most will pass. Either way, East rebids 2♦ and West raises, maybe via some Ingberman/Lebensohl treatment. East might investigate 3NT, but since neither side has a spade stopper, East will probably just shrug their shoulders and bid 5♦. Even without an overcall, the spade lead is marked on the auction, and after the two spades are cashed, declarer has 11 tricks after either drawing trumps and ruffing clubs (best), or taking the club finesse.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

South opens 1♦. West has five hearts, but with only 7 points and a bad suit, they shouldn't overcall, especially vulnerable. North will respond 1♠, East will overcall 2♥, and South will probably bid 2♠, although with a singleton and pure points, 3♠ isn't out of the question. West, knowing of 10+ hearts, might bid to 4♥, and certainly will over 3♠. If they only bid 3♥, South will probably still compete to 3♠. Both spades and hearts take nine tricks without too much problem or scope for error. Against 4♥, South might make an aggressive double at matchpoints, to protect the 140 they were getting in spades. Plus 200 will be a near top, plus 100 will be far below average.

**Board 20**  
West Deals  
Both Vul

♠ K J 8 3	♠ 6 5 4 2										
♥ 9 3	♥ K 10 8 2										
♦ K 6 4 2	♦ 3										
♣ K 9 2	♣ Q 10 6 4										
	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 10 9
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ A J 6 4									
		♦ A 9 7									
		♣ A 5 3									
	♠ Q 7										
	♥ Q 7 5										
	♦ Q J 10 8 5										
	♣ J 8 7										

After two passes, East will probably open a 15-17 1NT, West will just Stayman to check for a spade fit, then end in 3NT. East might upgrade with four aces, but even if they start with 1♣, East-West will still investigate spades, then end up in 3NT. South will start with the ♦Q, and declarer has seven top tricks. It might be right to just duck the diamond, but a club shift would be awkward. Once declarer wins, they have to guess who has the ♠Q. There's not much to go on, but it's a little easier on the entries to play South for it, not North. Once the ♠Q pops, there's nine tricks. If North has to make an early discard, they might very well pitch a heart, not a club, depending on the auction - this might cost a late overtrick.

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

♠ J 9 7 6 3	♠ A 10 8										
♥ A K 10 2	♥ 9 6 5										
♦ Q 9 4	♦ A J 10 6										
♣ 2	♣ A Q 6										
	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K 4
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ J 8 4									
		♦ K 8 5 3									
		♣ J 8 7 5									
	♠ Q 5 2										
	♥ Q 7 3										
	♦ 7 2										
	♣ K 10 9 4 3										

North opens 1NT, and East passes. South is close to an invite with the good five-card suit, but if they do, North shouldn't accept with 15 HCP and 4-3-3-3. Even with the club suit coming home for five tricks, 3NT isn't cold, although West is in a lot of pressure on the run of the clubs. If South does pass, and West has a method to show both majors, they very well might choose to do that. Now the result is unclear - both 2♥ and 2♠ are down one on best defense, but there is a lot of scope for error. South might back in with 2NT or 3♣, or maybe even a penalty double if they're really aggressive. 3♣ should be down one unless West bangs down the ♥AK. Any plus score for E/W should be very good; even minus 50 should be well over average.

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

♠ J 8 5 3 2	♠ 9 7 4										
♥ A J	♥ Q 5										
♦ Q 10 9 2	♦ 8 7 6 5 4										
♣ A 4	♣ 10 7 6										
	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A 6
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ K 9 7 6 3 2									
		♦ A J									
		♣ 9 5 3									
	♠ K Q 10										
	♥ 10 8 4										
	♦ K 3										
	♣ K Q J 8 2										

East opens 1♥, and most South players will overcall 2♣. West will bid 2♠, although they might treat the spades as a four-card suit, and make a negative double. 4♥ will end up as the likely contract, with West holding 12 points and two honors in their partner's suit. On the ♣K lead, there are a number of possible lines. Declarer should probably take a diamond finesse early to establish a spade pitch before going after trumps, but setting up a club ruff might be OK too. Playing diamonds works well for declarer - South will ruff, but with their natural trump trick. Ten tricks in hearts will be common. If East-West wander into 3NT, a club lead will sink it, and there's a chance declarer could go down more if they cross to the East hand to try taking the heart finesse.

**Board 23**  
South Deals  
Both Vul

♠ J 10 9 8 7 5 4	♠ —										
♥ 4	♥ K J 9 2										
♦ 8	♦ 10 7 6 3										
♣ A 10 6 3	♣ Q 9 7 5 4										
	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ A K 6 3 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♥ Q 10 7 6									
		♦ A 4 2									
		♣ 8									
	♠ Q										
	♥ A 8 5 3										
	♦ K Q J 9 5										
	♣ K J 2										

South could choose to open 1NT - legal with the singleton queen - to prevent the rebid problem after 1♦-Pass-1♠. After 1NT, hopefully West can show spades; if not they might get jammed out of finding their fit. 3♠ is an attractive call. East will fall out of their chair when they see that, and raise to 4♠. North-South might have the mechanism to compete intelligently, or North might very well take a flyer after 4♠, but East will probably continue to 5♠. It's tough to bid a slam when your opponents have opened a strong notrump. If South chose the more classic 1♦, West might bid 1♠, 3♠ or even 4♠. North-South have a better chance to compete in diamonds, but East-West will usually buy the contract. South might make a point-count double, only to learn that aces take tricks, not points.

**Board 24**West Deals  
None Vul

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

  

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

West might open 1♠ or 2♠, but I'll assume they pass. After North's pass, East will open 1 of a minor, planning on rebidding 2NT. South will interfere with 1♥, or maybe 2NT if East opened 1♦. East will get a chance for their 2NT jump bid after 1♣-1♥-1♠; West can check back for a 5-3 spade fit, then rest in 3NT. In 3NT, on either a low club or a heart lead, North is the dangerous opponent after trick 1. Whether declarer tests spades or not, ♦K and a diamond to the jack is only slightly anti-percentage in a vacuum, and keeps North off lead. That should lead to three spades, five diamonds and a club; depending on the lead declarer will probably now end up taking 10 or 11 tricks. I doubt that anyone will strive for 6♦, which only makes double-dummy, but they might bid 5♦; neither will score well at pairs. 4♠ is just on a diamond guess, and declarer will probably get it wrong once North shows up with the long spades.

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

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

  

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

North opens 1♠, and East has a 1NT overcall. South almost has enough to double, but probably won't, and the suit isn't really good enough for 2♦, though some might. North could pass, but many will rebid their lousy six-card suit. East has a horror of an opening lead problem against 2♠, and is going to be uncomfortable throughout the entire defense. They should end up being endplayed at least once. If everyone passes 1NT, and South leads their partner's suit, East ends up playing from their hand most of the time. Down two would be about right. If South gets creative on opening lead, declarer might get out for down one.

**Board 26**East Deals  
Both Vul

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

  

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

East is tip-top for a 1NT opener, but most will do that. If South passes, West will Stayman, and after 2♥ will probably just bid 4♥, but if they invite East will gladly accept. Against 4♥, South could lead their singleton, but with so many points in their hand, it's unlikely to get a ruff. Also, the J-x-x of trumps might be their side's trump trick, as it is here. On a club lead, declarer will probably start with the ♥AK, since they're worried about club ruffs. Then declarer must surrender the trump - if they don't, and just run clubs, South must carefully ruff the fourth round and switch to the diamond to hold it to four. A diamond lead holds it to four fairly easily. Notrump should take eight tricks on a diamond lead, nine or ten on other leads.

**Board 27**South Deals  
None Vul

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

  

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

If the ♦K was the ♠K, it is close to a 2♣ opener, but here South should just open 1♠, or a very flavorful 2NT. West will pass. North used to have an automatic pass, but it's fashionable to mess with the opposition by responding 1NT, with the spade fit as safety. Here, that might lead to 4♠. If North does pass, East will pass or reopen with 2♣. South shouldn't get too ambitious here, and North will end up playing a spade partscore. The defense has to be careful in order to take both their second club winner and a trump, but nine tricks will emerge at most tables with declarer ruffing hearts in dummy. If South did open 2NT, they will probably play it there, and find out that a stiff king isn't always a stopper.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

West will open 1♥, absent Flannery, and if East treats it a single raise values, should just raise to 2♥. At this vulnerability, this very well might end the auction, but if North balances with 3♣ it could work well if they aren't doubled - eight tricks seems about right. In hearts, barring an active J♠ lead, declarer should lose a trick in each suit, however they guess to play it. If East West do find spades the defense has to be a little more active to hold them to nine tricks; either a club lead or a heart ruff will do. On a passive defense, declarer can pitch a club from dummy on the long hearts. +140 will be a very common score.

**Board 29**North Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

North-South will have a free rein on this one. After 1NT, South will transfer (which some Wests will double), and then either bid 3NT or 3♦ as their next bid. Either way ends in 3NT by North. If West didn't double 2♥, East will probably lead a club; although barreling after spades works very well, most declarers will attack diamonds. Those that do will lose two diamonds, and unless the defense errs, a trick in the end. On a heart lead it's less clear, because the defense should have time to set up hearts before declarer can get slow diamond tricks. Most that do go after spades will take 11 tricks, those that go after diamonds will take nine or 10.

**Board 30**East Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

A free East-West auction. East might upgrade to 1NT, but most will bid 1♦, and rebid 1NT after West's 1♠. If West has methods to show a forcing 5-5 hand, East can cuebid 4♣, to drive to the excellent slam. If not, West has to just push on their own, and hope the ♣K is a working card. 6♥ will be a common contract; some might play 6NT. In hearts, declarer will go down if they don't get a spade lead, and try to ruff a spade in dummy. If they do get a spade lead, win the jack and play another spade, they might make it on a guard squeeze, but probably will still go down. 6NT will make if declarer attacks diamonds early after getting the bad news in hearts.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

♠ 10 3  
♥ Q 10 5 4  
♦ 10 9  
♣ K 9 6 5 2

After a pass, West will open 1♥. At any other vulnerability, 4♠ is the normal action, but some might be dissuaded by the colors, and just overcall 1♠. West will probably end up pushing to 3♥, and East, with a stiff spade and some value, could raise. North could choose to bid 4♠ by themselves - while some might make nine tricks, eight is somewhat likely, and minus 500 will be a kiss of death. In hearts, although double-dummy you can make five, at the table it's going to be tricky even to make game, especially if North hasn't been that active in the auction. Ruffing only one spade, taking a heart finesse and endplaying South works, but there's no real reason to find it. Ironically, in both hearts and spades a trump lead/shift is attractive, but fatal.



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

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

♠ A 4 3  
♥ A J 8 6 3  
♦ J 10 6  
♣ A 6

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 8 7 2  
♥ 9  
♦ Q 9 3  
♣ 10 9 7 4 3

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

North will open 1♥ in second seat, unless they upgrade and open 1NT. South will force to game in hearts, and although there are a lot of controls, there just aren't very many points. Some will go to slam, but most will be in game. Either way, East will lead a black suit. If it's a club, declarer should win, draw trumps, and take a first-round diamond finesse and end up with 12 tricks. If it's a spade, declarer should still win, but take the diamond finesse before going after trumps, while dummy can still ruff the third spade if it loses. Not many will bid slam, but it's pretty much just on the diamond finesse.

**Board 33**  
North Deals  
None Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

♠ Q 7  
♥ A J 3 2  
♦ A Q J  
♣ K J 8 3

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

The North hand is heavy for a 3♠ opener, and most will open 1♠. Whatever level of spades North chooses, East will make a takeout double. Over 3♠, South will raise to 4♠; over other bids, South will show a limit raise that North will probably accept. The defense has to lead a club to beat 4♠, otherwise declarer can knock out the ♥A for a pitch before the defense's club trick is set up. If they do lead clubs, and don't cash the ♦A, North South take nine tricks in spades. If not, they take 10. Hearts E/W have only three obvious losers, but South's four trumps and the awkward diamond situation mean they'll probably only make nine tricks.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

After three passes, North will open 1♦ in standard. East might double or bid 1♥, but most will pass. If South has a simple raise to 2♦ to show this hand, they will do that, but if they have to bid 3♦ to show a single raise, they might bid 1NT instead. If they have bid 2♦, East will probably balance with a double or 2♥, and no result after that is clear. In diamonds, with the ♣A and ♦K onside, declarer will take nine tricks if they take all the finesses. Notrump plays worse on a club lead; even if East-West block the clubs, the defense will take six tricks, and 110 is better than 90.

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

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

West opens 1♦, and North overcalls 1♠. East will bid 2♥, and West should just raise hearts, although protecting the ♠K by bidding notrump might cross some West's mind. East will probably downgrade the ♠Q and rest short of slam. A diamond lead beats 6♥ (and if East has bid it, North might very well double for that lead); on the ♠10 lead North might rise with the ace, which makes six. Even if they do duck, six is makeable; if declarer decides to play North for the ♦K they can ruff a club, draw six rounds of trumps and strip-squeeze North in spades and diamonds. There are other lines leading to 12 tricks.

**Board 36**  
West Deals  
Both Vul

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

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

	N	
W		E
	S	

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

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

Some players open weak 2♦ on a good five-card suit. That works out badly here, as 2♦ will probably continue with double, passed out, for a likely minus 200. If West does pass, North will open 1♣ (1NT is illegal with a small singleton), and East can choose between an off-shape double, 1♥ with a poor suit, a Michaels bid, or pass. With both South and West having potential bids, it's hard to gauge where the auction will end up, but it probably will be a partscore battle, and my best guess is 2NT by N/S. This is likely to be down one. If either side made a contract, they'll get a good board.