

# ACBL-Wide Charity Pairs, November 25, 2013 • Set #100077

Analysis by Deep Finesse

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

Few will upgrade the East cards into a strong no-trump; but whether East opens or rebids 1NT, he should surely end up declaring 3NT on a relatively uninformative auction. Now the spotlight switches to South, who has a plausible lead in any of the four suits. Three of the four options will be relatively passive, after which declarer can knock out the ♣A, then possibly take a heart finesse for +460. The fourth lead, a diamond, limits declarer to nine tricks, producing a very decent result for the defenders.

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

In third seat the occasional South will open 1♣ rather than a strong no-trump, but it is poor pairs strategy to reject opening bids at no-trump when you are in range. Those who open 1NT will find themselves in 3NT via Stayman and West might now know enough to lead clubs, not spades. Careful play by declarer will allow him to establish a heart trick for his ninth winner. But on a spade lead, some might even find a way to an overtrick if the defense is not careful (perhaps via the black-suit squeeze on West?).

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

At favorable vulnerability some will open the East hand 1♣ (or perhaps 1♦ if playing a strong club). Whether or not South opens 1♦, or overcalls in that suit, E/W should get to hearts. But will they play game or partscore? As it happens, 4♥ is very short of winners — even taking nine tricks in hearts might be a challenge, so any E/W going plus ought to score well enough. N/S will have an easier task taking nine tricks in diamonds.

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

There is a sting in the tail of this apparently simple deal. After East's 1NT opening, point-counters will plan to offer a choice of games via a transfer with the West cards. But if they discover partner has a spade-fit and a non-minimum, won't their fancy turn to thoughts of slam? Change East's minor-suit jacks and ♥Q into the ♦A, and 6♠ is a splendid contract. Here, though, the E/W cards mesh poorly. Slam needs both the heart finesse and a diamond guess, and the cards do not cooperate. With ten tricks the limit in no-trump, +650 may score surprisingly well for E/W.

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

West is in the worst possible seat, at the most dangerous vulnerability for a light preempt, and he has a poor suit to boot. So anyone who opens 2♣ is in line for a poor result — though whether or not they achieve one may be in the lap of the gods. Even though most Wests will pass, you would not expect many N/S pairs to achieve their best possible double-dummy result, which is to reach 3NT and take ten tricks. In practice, either East or West figure to play in their long major and regret it, and N/S can come to approximately +130 in diamonds.

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

The vulnerability may make both sides a little leery of competing, but in theory N/S want to bid up to 2♣ and sell out there, while E/W have a choice of possible trump suits at the two or three level. All yield +110, with diamonds or the seven-card spade fit looking the easiest of the strains to manage. However, since N/S have a nine-card club fit, they may well overreach to 3♣. On accurate defense E/W will not need to double to administer the proverbial kiss of death, a penalty of 200.

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

The normal auction will see West open 1♦ and North overcall 1♠ — his values look wrong for a weak or intermediate jump overcall. East has a clear negative double, West an equally clear jump to 3♦...and now the fun begins. East can hardly bid 3NT himself, so he will probe with 3♠, and West should surely eschew 3NT to bid 4♦. (Yes, the miraculous fall of the ♠J blocks the spade suit — but you will not get rich bidding these cards to 3NT on any day of the year except today.) Going +130, or -50 in 5♦, rate to be relatively common E/W results.

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

If the last board was a tricky one for N/S, this one is a different kettle of fish. Here the objective is to avoid slam (since the defenders have two hearts to take — in theory) or to bid in such a way to 6NT that the defenders opt for a passive lead. Once North opens, South may simply show both minors (using fourth suit then repeating clubs) and drive to 6NT in the face of non-cooperation from his aceless partner. I can't tell West why he should lead a heart — just that it will cost blood not to do so!

Board 9  
 Dir: N ♠ A Q 10 8 4 3 2  
 Vul: E-W ♥ 9 10  
 ♦ K 9 5 3  
 ♣ —

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

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

In first seat North has a perfectly reasonable 4♣ opening bid. When that is passed round to West he will have to decide whether to go quietly and pass, or stick his neck out and double. I'd go along with a double on those cards if the ♥K were the ace. As it is, it seems like you are supposed to sell out and try to get a small plus — or hope that defending 4♣ is your smallest minus score. Today, N/S can take 11 tricks in 4♣, while E/W could be set 800 on perfect defense in 5♥.

Board 13  
 Dir: N ♠ A K Q J 7  
 Vul: Both ♥ J 10 5  
 ♦ 8 4  
 ♣ Q 7 3

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

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

When North opens 1♠ many Souths will count their points and pass. Then E/W can find their diamond fit in peace and quiet, and the majority of them will play 5♦, though a few bold pairs might bid slam. On a trump lead declarer cannot crossruff for 13 tricks. Instead he must cash the ♥AK to pitch a club and then ruff out the clubs, and ruff two hearts in his hand: if he times it right, this line should work against most normal club and heart breaks, but it is by no means a lock. If South scrapes up a response of 1NT, it will be very hard for E/W to get to game, let alone slam.

Board 10  
 Dir: E ♠ 9 4  
 Vul: Both ♥ 9 8 6 3  
 ♦ K 6  
 ♣ J 7 5 4 3

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

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

In second seat almost every South playing a natural system will open 1♦, though whether he rebids 1♠, 2♣ or 2NT over a 1♥ response is entirely between his system and his conscience. Of course not every North will dredge up an initial action; facing a second-in-hand opening, there is less reason to respond light to keep the opponents out. Additionally, introducing a weak four-card major is not that likely to result in a better partscore or game. In fact, 1♦ is apparently already past N/S' last making contract, so a N/S play score here will be a rare bird.

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

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

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

East is rather too good in terms of controls for a weak-two bid, though some of the sounder bidders will select that route. If East opens 1♠ and rebids 2♣ over 1NT then he will probably play there. Unless the defense crash their diamond honors, or lose their trump winner, he should take only seven tricks. If North balances over 2♣ he will regret it; although his side can make 2NT, it is very hard to construct a sequence that might lead to N/S playing there. Thus any making contract here is surely going to score very well for either side.

Board 11  
 Dir: S ♠ 9 2  
 Vul: None ♥ A 8  
 ♦ K 8 5 4 2  
 ♣ K Q 8 2

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

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

Few players will do anything as South but open 2♣ (unless they open 3♣ instead). Over the preempt West should pass smoothly — what call can he possibly make? However, East has a perfectly plausible balancing double, perfect for shape if light on high cards. If he doubles, West might pass and try to take the money, in the hope that it exceeds 500, or that his side cannot make game. The 'money' today is just 100, but E/W are very unlikely to bring home 4♥ after a spade lead and a very good guess in trumps; thus +100 may still score decently for E/W.

Board 15  
 Dir: S ♠ A Q 9 7 4  
 Vul: N-S ♥ K 6  
 ♦ 8 7 6  
 ♣ J 9 4

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

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

Here is another unsuitable hand for a weak-two bid; lashings of defense and a very weak suit argue strongly for South passing initially. If South does open he will probably play 2♥, and even on a spade or trump lead he does not have time to come to more than seven tricks. Note: West does best to steer clear of the lead of an ace here. If, however, South passes initially, then E/W should find a minor-suit fit, where they can come to +110 (maybe more on the lead of ♥K from an obedient North if South passes and then overcalls)."

Board 12  
 Dir: W ♠ Q 10 4  
 Vul: N-S ♥ 8 7 5 4  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ K 10 8 6 2

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

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

When East opens 1♦ in third seat South will overcall 1♠, planning to come again in hearts. When West bids 1NT, then North may stretch to raise to 2♣ despite the vulnerability, after which everyone will be tempted to compete further. Now it is hard to predict just where the music will stop. Bottom line: East might make as much as +130 (or even the unlikely 3NT) with an inspired guess in the trump suit. Conversely, South can be held to eight tricks in spades, when the defenders force dummy to ruff.

Board 16  
 Dir: W ♠ Q 4  
 Vul: E-W ♥ J 9 8 4 2  
 ♦ 10 9 6 2  
 ♣ K 2

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

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

West has a marginal opening bid at unfavorable vulnerability. If he does open it will certainly facilitate E/W reaching one of the two games where they can collect 600, namely 3NT and 5♣. The former contract is much better from the East than the West seat, though the lie of the spades today does not make that critical. You would expect South to preempt in spades if he can, so if West does pass initially, reaching game may not be that easy for his side.

Board 17  
 Dir: N ♠ Q J 8 5  
 Vul: None ♥ A 9 3  
 ♦ J 9 5 4 3  
 ♣ 9

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

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

East has a classical strong no-trump, over which South should pass (though we all know people who would treat their cards as a diamond single-suiter). Either way, West rates to transfer into clubs, and at many tables East will end up declaring 3♣. Since N/S can take ten tricks in diamonds painlessly enough, the defenders will not collect many matchpoints by defending. They can get +100 on the lead of a spade, because N/S are now a step ahead in preventing declarer from building a heart discard for the spade loser.

Board 21  
 Dir: N ♠ J 5  
 Vul: N-S ♥ K Q J  
 ♦ J 3  
 ♣ A K Q 8 3 2

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

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

The first three calls of this auction should be predictable enough: North will open 1♣, East will overcall 1♦, and South will bid 1♠; but what of West? Preempting to 3♦ shows a weak hand and trump support — and he surely has both of those. North has no convenient call now, but whether he improvises with 3♥ or goes past 3NT with a call of 4♣, N/S might well find their way to 5♣. North is going to emerge with +600 easily enough there. 4♣ is perfectly playable — the contract can be set on club ruffs, but that is considerably easier said than done.

Board 18  
 Dir: E ♠ 10 9 8 6 4  
 Vul: N-S ♥ Q 10 9 7  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ K 6 5

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

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

(Yet another) unsuitable hand for a preempt for South. I feel confident most will pass here, letting West open 1♠ and doubtless reach either 4♠ or 3NT. At teams 3NT is Nirvana; nine top winners despite the bad spade break, and no need to do any hard work to record your game. At pairs 4♠ has only nine tricks on a heart lead, because declarer gets forced and cannot cash his diamond winners. Conversely, if the defenders attack diamonds, West ducks a club and forces the defenders to play for a force (too late) or for ruffs, when declarer retains control and can draw trumps.

Board 22  
 Dir: E ♠ 3  
 Vul: E-W ♥ 8 7  
 ♦ 6 4 3 2  
 ♣ K 10 8 7 4 2

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

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

After East opens 1♠ a few misguided souls will overcall 2♣ as South, buoyed by the vulnerability and ignoring their excess of defense compared to offense. If South passes then West will respond 1NT and East will either jump to 4♣ or bid 4♠ to show a self-agreeing splinter — a strong hand with long spades and short clubs. Now West might explore for slam (note that if East's ♠J were the ♠Q slam would be laydown, and even as it is, the contract is more than respectable). Today, though, the trump queen refuses to behave, and 11 tricks are the limit.

Board 19  
 Dir: S ♠ Q J 6 2  
 Vul: E-W ♥ Q 8 2  
 ♦ Q 7 5  
 ♣ A Q 7

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

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

North has a relatively normal opening of 1♣ in third seat (if he elects to open 1♠ — as some will — he may silence his opponents) and the deal rates to become a battle of the spades against the red suits. Since the points are evenly divided, the side with the spades rates to win out; and that is the case today. With the top two club honors onside, West can achieve +140 in spades with a little care, though not everyone will manage that. Equally, N/S can come to eight tricks in diamonds painlessly enough, and might manage nine.

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

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

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

Many Norths will deem their motley collection worthy of an opening bid in third seat — myself amongst them. No doubt after a call of 1♦ East will bid 1♠ rather than double, with such skewed major-suit holdings. Whether South now bids 2♣ or produces an atypical negative double, N/S risk finishing in a contract with insufficient trumps. On this occasion, since E/W can take at least seven tricks in every denomination (even without the benefit of the lead) one might expect N/S to be losing 200 at many tables.

Board 20  
 Dir: W ♠ J 6  
 Vul: Both ♥ 6 5 4 2  
 ♦ 8 4 2  
 ♣ A K J 7

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

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

No one will pass the West cards, will they? If West opens 1♣, East is likely to arrive in 2♠ by a direct or delayed auction and should find the play easy enough, but will he find the best route to the overtrick? The key to the deal is that when East leads trumps he ought to play low to the ten, not the king (though with ♠J onside he may get away with his imprecision). Still, if he does lead a trump to a top honor and South ducks smoothly, declarer might guess wrong as to what to do on the next round and now he might hold himself to eight tricks.

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

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

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

This board will surely be passed out at a sizeable minority of tables. Equally, a fair percentage of the field will open the North hand 1♦ non-vulnerable, after which N/S rate to bid unopposed either to 1NT or 2♦. 1NT on a heart lead makes seven or eight tricks, depending on declarer's guess in diamonds. A diamond partscore rates to take eight or nine tricks, so the MP difference between +90, +110 +120 and +130 will probably turn out to be critical — a typical pairs board!

Board 25  
 Dir: N ♠ Q J 8 6  
 Vul: E-W ♥ Q 8 5 2  
 ♦ J 3  
 ♣ K 9 5

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

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

In third seat at non-vulnerable some will open a tactical strong no-trump, but rather more will simply open 1♦ and rebid 1NT over 1♥ (or even raise to 2♥ if that is your style). The best strain for N/S is very hard to reach today: the chunky spade suit might handle for +110, while there is an extra trump loser in hearts, and repeated club leads should set 1NT. All things considered, going plus with the N/S cards rates to score nicely here.

Board 29  
 Dir: N ♠ A K J 3  
 Vul: Both ♥ Q J 5  
 ♦ 10 6 3  
 ♣ 10 9 7

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

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

Shades of board 25! South has a very similar hand, in the same position, but when vulnerable he should be even less tempted to open 1NT. Here the field will be split between those in 3NT and those in 1NT — when North takes a slightly pessimistic view not to explore for game after his partner shows fewer than 15 HCP. After a club lead from West, declarer would be in terrible shape in 3NT. Still, if he ducks a diamond from hand he will find a miraculously favorable diamond lie to allow him to come to nine tricks. Many will play for a different miracle and be disappointed.

Board 26  
 Dir: E ♠ 10  
 Vul: Both ♥ K 7 5  
 ♦ J 8 4 3 2  
 ♣ K J 9 7

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

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

East has an impeccable strong no-trump, over which I'd expect West to drive to game by transferring into spades then bidding hearts as many times as is necessary. Both major-suit games are perfectly respectable — especially from the East seat. With the club finesse working but an inevitable spade loser, it is hard to see East emerging with any number of tricks other than 10. However, no doubt someone will manage it — one way or the other.

Board 30  
 Dir: E ♠ K 4  
 Vul: None ♥ A  
 ♦ A 6 5 2  
 ♣ Q 9 7 6 5 4

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

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

North will open 1♣ and rebid 2♣ over his partner's response of 1♥ — there may be a few pairs fiends who prefer 1NT at their second turn, but that seems rather wild to me. The 1NT rebid might lead to a delicate partscore — one could imagine N/S finishing up in almost any of the five possible strains. 2♣ is the simplest contract — just four trumps and a diamond to lose if declarer plays up to South's diamond honors. And, for the record, diamonds by North fetches an unlikely +110 on a crossruff.

Board 27  
 Dir: S ♠ Q 9 6 5  
 Vul: None ♥ 9 4  
 ♦ A J 8 5 3  
 ♣ 9 4

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

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

Those who use Walsh-style responses to 1♣ will bypass diamonds, and that will lead to South declaring 1NT. Those who bid suits up the line may disclose more information and finish up with North as declarer. Regardless, 1NT is the probable end contract. When it is declared by South, West might well lead a helpful club (a top heart would work rather better). With the ♦Q singleton, there should be no way to misguess that suit, but there is no easy way to play the hand and results will be all over the place. +90 looks very healthy for N/S here.

Board 31  
 Dir: S ♠ K J  
 Vul: N-S ♥ Q 9  
 ♦ 9 8 4  
 ♣ A Q J 10 4 2

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

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

After South opens 1♦ (yes, some Souths will indeed open 1NT), West should preempt in hearts either to the two or three level. After a 2♥ call North will bid 3♣ and now South has an easy 3NT call. After a 3♥ preempt I suppose North might gamble out 3NT himself, but that is certainly not an easy call to find. As you can see, 3NT by South on a heart lead has 11 easy tricks, while on a spade lead the probable outcome is his taking nine tricks. Any E/W who save in 4♥ may find that -500 is a less good result than they might have hoped.

Board 28  
 Dir: W ♠ Q J 9 7 4  
 Vul: N-S ♥ J 10 3  
 ♦ 7 5  
 ♣ 10 7 2

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

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

After West opens 1♣ and East makes an inverted forcing raise to 2♣ West's best bet is the splinter-jump to 3♠, to show his singleton. That now puts East in a dilemma, because although he has extras, he now has a really bad spade holding for play in clubs. Many will bid 3NT, but today it would work much better to explore slam in clubs. With the minor suits behaving as they should, E/W have an easy +920, and probably a 75% board if they record that number.

Board 32  
 Dir: W ♠ Q 8 5 2  
 Vul: E-W ♥ J 2  
 ♦ A Q 9 6  
 ♣ 8 7 6

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

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

West finally has a classical preempt, and few will do anything but open 2♥. North and East obviously have nothing to say, but South has an awkward decision. Should he balance with 3♣, or sell out? If South passes, then North has no stand-out lead against 2♥. A spade should see declarer win and make the percentage play in trumps of running the ♥10. However, the defenders can then take two clubs, a diamond, a ruff and a trump for down one. Finessing the trump queen might result in +110 for West. If South balances with 3♣, the defenders have four major-suit winners and two ruffs, for two down.