


Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

<p>♠ K J 6 4 ♥ Q J 10 3 ♦ K ♣ Q 10 7 2</p>	<p>♠ 9 7 5 2 ♥ K 8 6 5 ♦ A 8 7 4 ♣ K</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>♠ A 10 8 ♥ 7 4 2 ♦ J ♣ A J 8 6 5 4</p>
	<p>♠ Q 3 ♥ A 9 ♦ Q 10 9 6 5 3 2 ♣ 9 3</p>		

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	3♦
Pass	4♦	All Pass	

East might open light with 1♣, but most tables will start with the two passes shown. Third-seat not vulnerable, 3♦ feels about right (the 7-2-2-2 shape isn't ideal, but the suit is OK enough). West could double, but the singleton ♦K is a dubious value, and partner is a passed hand. Whether or not West acts, North should further the preempt. Facing a third-seat preempt, it would be too much to go all the way to the five level, but a gentle raise to 4♦ might steal the contract as shown. If North passes 3♦, East might back in with a double or even 4♣. There is nothing to the play in diamonds, as declarer should take 10 tricks at every table (not that I've ever witnessed the same thing happening at every table). If E-W do get into the auction, they can take 9 or 10 tricks in a club contract. The defense can get a heart ruff, but even if they don't, declarer would have to guess well to take 10 tricks on his own.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 1	
.....	100
510.....	96
250.....	90
200.....	89
150.....	87
130.....	69
110.....	52
100.....	42
50.....	30
-50.....	27
-100.....	20
-110.....	17
-130.....	14
-140.....	10
-150.....	6
-170.....	4
-400.....	3
-420.....	1
.....	.0

Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ 9 4 3 ♥ Q 9 8 ♦ A K 7 6 ♣ K 10 2</p>	<p>♠ A 2 ♥ A J 4 ♦ 10 9 3 2 ♣ J 7 6 5</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div>	<p>♠ Q 10 8 6 5 ♥ K 10 ♦ Q 4 ♣ A 9 4 3</p> <p>♠ K J 7 ♥ 7 6 5 3 2 ♦ J 8 5 ♣ Q 8</p>
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West	North	East	South
1♦	Pass	1♠	Pass
Pass	Pass		

If East opens light, West would have to know his customer and keep the partnership out of game. Assuming East passes originally, he might buy it in 1♠ as shown (a passed hand shouldn't respond 2♠ to show a maximum pass). West could rebid 1NT, over which East would have a problem (aside from possibly not having discussed if new-minor forcing would apply by a passed hand). In a spade contract, declarer has the four obvious major-suit losers. There are many ways to avoid a fifth loser, but I suppose some declarers will find a way to take only eight tricks. If E-W play notrump, best for the defense is to lead hearts, but if West declares, that might not be so likely, and nine tricks could roll home.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 2	
.....	100
100.....	96
50.....	82
-90.....	71
-110.....	69
-120.....	64
-140.....	37
-150.....	14
-170.....	11
-400.....	7
-420.....	5
-450.....	3
-460.....	2
-500.....	1
.....	0

Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

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

West	North	East	South
			1♣
Dbf	1♠	Pass	2♣
2♦	3♣	Pass	Pass
Dbf	Pass	??	

South could pass or preempt. If he passes, West opens 1♦ and, after East's 1♥ response, South overcalls some number of clubs. This will make it hard for E-W to find their spade fit (as would an opening 3♣). Even after 1♣ and the start shown, it is difficult for E-W to find their eight-card major-suit fit. North's 1♠ bid picks off the opponents' 4♠ game! While the computer thinks that E-W can make 4♠, it is not an easy contract to handle. A diamond partscore is much simpler, with a trick to lose in spades, hearts and clubs and an average-plus for E-W.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 3	
.....	100
1100.....	99
500.....	98
300.....	97
200.....	92
110.....	87
100.....	76
90.....	66
-50.....	59
-100.....	51
-110.....	47
-130.....	37
-140.....	26
-150.....	22
-170.....	20
-200.....	18
-300.....	14
-500.....	9
-620.....	5
-650.....	1
.....	0

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

<p>♠ A Q 9 3 2 ♥ J 10 9 ♦ 6 3 ♣ A 6 2</p>	<p>♠ K J 10 7 6 ♥ A K 7 ♦ J 4 ♣ 9 4 3</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 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		<p>♠ — ♥ Q 4 ♦ A K Q 7 2 ♣ Q J 10 8 7 5</p> <p>♠ 8 5 4 ♥ 8 6 5 3 2 ♦ 10 9 8 5 ♣ K</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 4	
.....	100
200.....	98
100.....	88
-130.....	79
-150.....	71
-170.....	64
-600.....	39
-630.....	13
-660.....	7
-750.....	1
.....	0

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
3♣	Pass	3♦	Pass
??			

This is a real tough one to bid. First of all, it is another borderline opening bid problem. With a five-card suit headed by the ace-queen, a side ace and a J109, I show West opening. But, at many tables, he will pass and North will open 1♠. East would likely bid 2NT for the minors, resulting in 3♣ by West. This should produce 11 tricks when the ♣K is surprisingly onside. If West opens, the auction likely starts as above, although West might throw caution to the wind and rebid 2NT with no red-suit stoppers. At the point shown in the auction, West is stuck. 3NT is desirable, but nobody has hearts stopped on their own. E-Ws who manage to reach 3NT will get a near top.

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ K 10 ♥ K J 8 4 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ A Q 8 2</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 7 5 3 ♥ Q 6 5 3 2 ♦ — ♣ 10 9 3</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ Q J ♥ A 10 ♦ A 10 8 5 ♣ K 7 6 5 4</p> <p>♠ A 6 4 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ J 9 7 4 3 2 ♣ J</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
4NT	Pass	6NT	All Pass

With four diamonds and five clubs, sometimes I open 1♦ to avoid a rebid problem. Here, with chunky majors, I am fine with 1♣, intending to rebid 1NT (12-14 “balanced”) as shown. West is worth only 3½ NT, but is shown taking the high road (he has two four-card suits each with two honors), but still, it is borderline to invite opposite 12-14. With 14 HCP and a five-card suit, East accepts. If diamonds behave (they don’t), there are 12 easy tricks. Once the 6-0 diamond break is revealed, declarer should play a heart to the 10 (playing the player with 13 cards outside of diamonds for the missing ♥Q). On the other hand, if South leads a red suit (quite likely), that ends all suspense. Meanwhile, 6♣ is a near laydown contract, that (maybe with a Lightner double) can actually be set two tricks on a diamond lead and one trick after the ♠A and a diamond shift.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 5	
.....	100
100.....	96
50.....	84
-130.....	74
-170.....	73
-190.....	72
-400.....	71
-460.....	68
-490.....	59
-520.....	51
-920.....	47
-990.....	23
-1020.....	2
.....	0

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

<p>♠ A 9 8 6 2</p> <p>♥ K 5</p> <p>♦ K 2</p> <p>♣ Q J 8 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 3</p> <p>♥ A 7 6</p> <p>♦ A Q J 10 8</p> <p>♣ 9 5 4</p>	<p>♠ 7 5</p> <p>♥ J 8 2</p> <p>♦ 9 5 4 3</p> <p>♣ A K 10 6</p>	<p>♠ K J 10 4</p> <p>♥ Q 10 9 4 3</p> <p>♦ 7 6</p> <p>♣ 7 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1♠	2♦	All Pass	

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 6	
.....	100
400.....	99
300.....	95
200.....	84
180.....	76
170.....	74
150.....	73
140.....	69
130.....	62
110.....	52
100.....	44
90.....	30
-50.....	13
-100.....	8
-110.....	4
.....	0

North could double, but there are many reasons not to (poor spade holding, only three cards in hearts, not a great hand, excellent diamonds probably the main feature worth bidding). In the auction shown, East is a heart short for a negative double and no player really has anything to say. After the ♠7 lead to the ace, it is far from clear how West should defend. Should he return a spade for a possible ruff? Return a trump to stop club ruffs in dummy? I think a spade is best, because that will sever declarer's future communications in that suit. Declarer can win the spade return in dummy and play a trump to the queen and then lay down the ace to make his contract. However, he would probably play differently. Alas, a takeout double by North would work better; N-S have eight or nine tricks in hearts.

Board 7

South Deals
Both Vul

<p>♠ 8 5 ♥ K 10 9 3 2 ♦ K 10 3 ♣ Q 8 2</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 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		<p>♠ 10 4 ♥ A J 8 6 5 4 ♦ 8 ♣ A K 10 3</p> <p>♠ A Q 7 3 ♥ Q 7 ♦ A J 6 ♣ J 7 6 4</p> <p>♠ K J 9 6 2 ♥ — ♦ Q 9 7 5 4 2 ♣ 9 5</p>	
	N											
W		E										
	S											

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 7	
.....	100
670.....	97
200.....	93
110.....	87
100.....	80
90.....	78
-100.....	61
-120.....	44
-150.....	43
-200.....	27
-300.....	10
-500.....	6
-800.....	1
.....	0

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♥	Dbl	1♠
Pass	??		

Compare East's takeout double here to North's 2♦ on the previous board. This time, East has a fourth card in the other major, and the level is slightly lower (partner can take out to spades on the one level). Also, there is no five-card suit to overcall as an alternative. South could pass. Maybe the best reason to respond is fear of a leave-in. West has nothing to say (had South passed, he would have responded 1NT to the double). North has the age-old problem: repeat the six-card major or introduce the four-card minor? Neither one will thrill South. Perhaps a penalty double is in West's future.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

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

Even if playing weak jump-shift responses, East's hand is too strong. After 1♠, South could double, but it is probably best to get the clubs in. West, with eight playing tricks, jumps to 3♦. East's 3♠ is forcing. South has enough to bid again and then come some question marks. If E-W continue, they will end up minus for sure, quite possibly doubled. Best is to sell out to 4♣ which can be defeated by best defense (a singleton spade lead, a later spade ruff and after West holds up in hearts twice, a spade trick at the end).


MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 8	
.....	100
800.....	99
610.....	98
550.....	95
510.....	91
500.....	82
400.....	73
300.....	70
250.....	67
200.....	64
150.....	56
130.....	46
100.....	29
50.....	14
-50.....	11
-100.....	8
-200.....	3
-300.....	1
.....	0

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

<p>♠ 9 7 3 ♥ K 8 4 2 ♦ 3 2 ♣ 9 7 6 5</p>	<p>♠ A 10 8 6 4 2 ♥ 7 3 ♦ J 6 ♣ A Q 8</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>♠ K 5 ♥ Q J 10 9 6 ♦ K 9 8 5 4 ♣ 4</p> <p>♠ Q J ♥ A 5 ♦ A Q 10 7 ♣ K J 10 3 2</p>
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West	North	East	South
	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4NT
Pass	5♥	Pass	6♠
All Pass			

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 9	
.....	100
990.....	97
980.....	94
920.....	92
800.....	90
500.....	88
490.....	86
480.....	82
460.....	78
450.....	59
420.....	41
400.....	38
200.....	33
-50.....	15
.....	0

Many Easts will bid 2♠ (Michaels), but at this vulnerability, I prefer to have more to venture to the three level. On the auction shown, North's 2♠ rebid typically shows six or more, so South is shown raising with the excellent pair of honors (normally, I like to play that this raise guarantees three-card support). North's 4♣ control-bid might be an overbid and it propels South into RKC to reach a decent slam. With the normal (and killing) ♥Q lead, declarer has to decide which suit to work on. A winning spade finesse probably would lead to 13 tricks, so likely the ♠Q is played at trick two for down one. Taking a diamond finesse instead is more involved but would also eventually fail.

Board 10

East Deals
Both Vul

<p>♠ A K Q 5 3 ♥ 10 8 ♦ Q 8 6 4 ♣ 9 8</p>	<p>♠ J 9 7 6 4 2 ♥ A J 6 3 ♦ 7 ♣ 5 3</p>	<div style="text-align: center;"> <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> </div>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 10 ♥ K 9 5 2 ♦ K J 9 3 ♣ K J 10 7</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ 8 ♥ Q 7 4 ♦ A 10 5 2 ♣ A Q 6 4 2</p>											

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	1NT	All Pass

This is a strange layout in that East or South could open and with either minor. With only 11 HCP, East is shown passing. Many 11-point hands are opened, but here, anticipating a tough rebid problem over a likely 1♠ response, passing is probably best. South has too much to pass, but also faces a potential rebid problem after a 1♠ response. Many would open 1♣ (planning to repeat the five-card suit if necessary), but my preference has always been 1♦, followed by 2♣ (willing to take the chance that we reach the wrong minor, but getting to show both minors without “showing” 6+ clubs). All of this forethought proves to be for naught, as it is West who bids spades. North shouldn’t make a negative double (he is ill-prepared if his partner bids anything but hearts). The auction shown is one of dozens that will occur on this partscore deal.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 10	
.....	100
800.....	99
670.....	94
500.....	87
400.....	84
200.....	78
180.....	73
140.....	72
110.....	71
100.....	63
90.....	56
-90.....	53
-100.....	49
-110.....	47
-120.....	38
-130.....	30
-150.....	22
-200.....	10
-400.....	6
-500.....	4
-580.....	3
-600.....	1
.....	0

Board 11

South Deals

None Vul

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 11	
.....	100
1400.....	99
1100.....	98
800.....	93
690.....	88
590.....	78
500.....	65
450.....	59
420.....	32
300.....	5
200.....	3
170.....	2
100.....	1
.....	0

West North East South

1♠

Dbf 4♠ All Pass

West could use a Michaels bid (spades and a minor) or make a two-level overcall. To me, it looks more like a three-suited hand, thus the double in the diagram. Regardless of West's call, North is likely to bid 4♠, ending proceedings. This is probably the flattest deal of the set; West has three obvious tricks — no more, no less. Expect a slew of 420s to N-S. It is possible that West (after any initial action chosen) will double 4♠, but East has nowhere to go and 420 will become 590.

Board 12

West Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ K 8 5 ♥ K 5 2 ♦ K J 10 8 ♣ J 6 4</p>	<p>♠ Q J ♥ J 9 8 7 6 4 ♦ A 2 ♣ Q 9 8</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div>	<p>♠ 7 6 ♥ A Q ♦ 9 7 5 3 ♣ A K 7 3 2</p>	<p>♠ A 10 9 4 3 2 ♥ 10 3 ♦ Q 6 4 ♣ 10 5</p>
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West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♣	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

On Board 10, with a reasonable four-card diamond suit, I was willing to open 1♦ and then bid 2♣. Here, with the suit disparity, I've shown 1♣. Furthermore, on this hand, East can comfortably rebid 1NT after a major-suit response. Facing a third-seat nonvulnerable opening, 2NT would be a gamble with West's hand. I like the low-road 1NT as shown. North or South will often get in with a six-card major, but unfavorable vulnerability makes cowards of many of us. After the likely heart lead, notrump will play well for E-W. Even a spade lead does no real harm, since South lacks a side entry.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 12	
.....	100
400.....	99
150.....	98
110.....	97
100.....	92
50.....	84
PASS.....	80
-100.....	78
-120.....	76
-130.....	71
-150.....	57
-180.....	47
-200.....	43
-210.....	39
-300.....	37
-400.....	23
-430.....	10
-490.....	2
-500.....	1
.....	0

Board 13

North Deals
Both Vul

<p>♠ J</p> <p>♥ 5 3 2</p> <p>♦ K 8 7 5 4</p> <p>♣ K 7 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 4 3</p> <p>♥ K J 9 8 4</p> <p>♦ 3</p> <p>♣ A J 8 6 5</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A K 8</p> <p>♥ Q 10 6</p> <p>♦ Q 10 9 6 2</p> <p>♣ 10 9</p> <p>♠ Q 10 9 7 6 5 2</p> <p>♥ A 7</p> <p>♦ A J</p> <p>♣ Q 4</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 13	
.....	100
800.....	99
650.....	88
620.....	66
500.....	53
200.....	42
170.....	19
140.....	7
100.....	4
-100.....	1
.....	0


West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♠
All Pass			

With all those 10s, East could open, after which South (facing a passed partner) might try a 3♠ overcall and play it there. Even with East passing, South could try 3♠ in third seat (heavy, yes). With the great lie of the cards, 11 tricks are available and could be taken. After a diamond is ruffed in dummy and a low spade is led, East plays low and South's best chance is to put up the queen (he can't pick up AJx or KJx onside anyway). After guessing trumps, declarer's best play is ace-king and a heart ruff. If the queen didn't fall, he could resort to a club finesse.

Board 14

East Deals

None Vul

<p>♠ A Q 3 ♥ — ♦ Q J 5 4 3 ♣ Q J 10 9 3</p>	<p>♠ 10 6 2 ♥ Q J 9 8 6 ♦ A 6 ♣ 7 5 2</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>♠ K 9 7 5 4 ♥ K 4 3 ♦ K 10 9 ♣ 6 4</p>
	<p>♠ J 8 ♥ A 10 7 5 2 ♦ 8 7 2 ♣ A K 8</p>		

West	North	East	South
2NT	3♥	Pass	1♥
		All Pass	

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 14	
.....	100
300.....	98
140.....	89
100.....	76
50.....	66
-50.....	52
-100.....	41
-130.....	35
-170.....	28
-200.....	23
-300.....	22
-420.....	14
-450.....	5
-510.....	3
-590.....	1
.....	0

On Deal 11, I suggested West double, and perhaps the same can be said here. Still, with only three cards in the unbid major, 2NT for the minors is a strong possibility. North could bid 4♥, but the 5-3-3-2 shape is a warning. If West had doubled, East would be able to compete in spades. With West's 2NT call, it is possible the defense sells out to 3♥ for minus 140 and a terrible score. Perhaps West could double for takeout at his second turn, East might try 3♠ — a touch-and-go contract that isn't obvious to defeat.

Board 15

South Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ 10 2 ♥ A 9 2 ♦ 9 8 4 2 ♣ Q 7 6 5</p>	<p>♠ J 9 8 5 ♥ Q J 6 3 ♦ A 10 7 ♣ A 4</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ A K 6 ♥ 8 7 5 4 ♦ K J 3 ♣ 9 3 2</p> <p>♠ Q 7 4 3 ♥ K 10 ♦ Q 6 5 ♣ K J 10 8</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 15	
.....	100
620.....	97
600.....	94
500.....	92
200.....	90
180.....	89
170.....	79
150.....	68
140.....	47
120.....	26
110.....	19
-100.....	9
-200.....	1
.....	0

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3♠	All Pass	

Honestly, I would pass on round two with South's hand, but the two 10s persuaded me to show the optimistic invitational 2NT bid. North rejects but prefers to play in the known eight-card major-suit fit. The fate of 3♠ likely rests on guessing the ♠10. If declarer leads a spade to the jack and king, East has to be careful to duck smoothly if the next spade is led from dummy. West could easily lead a trump on this or a similar auction, removing the mystery of the ♠10. At some point, West might need to lead a diamond, or the defense could lose its trick in that suit.

Board 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

<p>♠ A 10 5 2 ♥ A K J 9 ♦ 2 ♣ K 8 7 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q 8 ♥ Q 7 6 ♦ A K 5 4 ♣ A J 3</p>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">S</div> </div>	<p>♠ 6 ♥ 8 5 3 ♦ Q 8 6 3 ♣ Q 10 9 6 5</p>
	<p>♠ J 9 7 4 3 ♥ 10 4 2 ♦ J 10 9 7 ♣ 4</p>		

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	3♣	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♠
??			

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 16	
.....	100
500.....	99
200.....	96
120.....	94
110.....	91
100.....	87
-50.....	79
-90.....	73
-100.....	64
-110.....	53
-130.....	42
-150.....	31
-200.....	25
-300.....	21
-500.....	13
-710.....	7
-800.....	2
.....	.0

North has too much to overcall 1NT, so starts with double. At unfavorable vulnerability, East's 3♣ is aggressive/dangerous - but with a singleton spade, I think it is the right tactic. North doubles again and over South's takeout to 3♠, West has a tough decision. If he does go to 4♣ (possibly doubled), he would have to guess well to make it. Meanwhile, any N-Ss who buy it on the three level or higher are likely to go minus.

Board 17

North Deals
None Vul

<p>♠ 5 ♥ Q J 10 8 7 ♦ 9 ♣ K Q 10 7 6 2</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">N</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">W</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">E</div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">S</div> </div>	<p>♠ Q J ♥ 9 2 ♦ A K J 10 8 7 6 4 ♣ 9</p>	<p>♠ A 9 6 2 ♥ 6 5 4 3 ♦ 3 2 ♣ A 5 3</p>
--	---	---	--

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1♠	2NT	3♦	3♥
??			

Possibly, East could open 4♦ (maybe even 5♦). If so, he might buy it right there. If he starts with 1♦ as shown, everyone will be able to get in on the fun. North's 2NT is unusual for the two unbid suits. Note: Don't try something fancy like 2♠ Michaels with North's hand (your partner might think it is natural!).

A spade ruff would defeat 5♦. The defense against a spade game is more complex. North would need to lead one of his singletons. After a diamond lead, South can win the ♠A and play another diamond to sever communications. After an unlikely spade lead, South can duck and declarer has no answer. To defeat a N-S 4♥ contract, East has to lead (or play at trick two) his singleton club. What a deal for leading singletons!

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 17	
.....	100
420.....	99
300.....	97
200.....	96
150.....	94
130.....	91
100.....	84
50.....	71
-50.....	66
-100.....	56
-130.....	48
-140.....	46
-150.....	43
-300.....	39
-400.....	30
-420.....	18
-430.....	11
-550.....	3
.....	0

Board 18

East Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ Q 10 6 2 ♥ K 6 5 3 2 ♦ Q 10 8 ♣ 2</p>	<p>♠ 9 8 ♥ A Q 7 4 ♦ 7 6 3 2 ♣ A K J</p>	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	<p>♠ A J 7 4 3 ♥ 9 8 ♦ K 5 4 ♣ Q 9 4</p> <p>♠ K 5 ♥ J 10 ♦ A J 9 ♣ 10 8 7 6 5 3</p>
--	--	---	---

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	Pass
3♠	??	Pass	??

At favorable vulnerability, West could open (very) light in third seat. Assuming he doesn't, North's 1♦ begets a light (but the colors are right) 1♠ overall. South could bid notrump, but it seems like a good idea to introduce the six-card suit. West competes preemptively (no fear of missing game facing a passed hand partner) to 3♠ and then N-S have a difficult decision. 4♣ can be made with best play and defense (the defenders find a diamond shift, but declarer plays hearts early). Since 3♠ is down only one, N-S need to get +130 (or at least double 3♠ for +100) to salvage a decent score. 3NT by South is actually a decent contract, but a spade lead and the unlucky club layout would spell defeat.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 18	
.....	100
600.....	98
300.....	95
210.....	93
200.....	91
150.....	88
130.....	78
120.....	67
110.....	64
100.....	58
50.....	40
-80.....	27
-100.....	18
-110.....	6
-200.....	2
.....	0

Board 19

South Deals

E-W Vul

<p>♠ A 9 ♥ A Q 9 8 3 ♦ J 9 6 4 2 ♣ 9</p>		<p>♠ — ♥ 7 5 ♦ K 7 5 ♣ A Q 10 8 7 4 3 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q J 7 6 5 ♥ J 10 6 2 ♦ Q 8 ♣ 6</p>
--	--	---	---

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	3♣	2♠
3NT	All Pass		Pass

Typically, with a side four-card major, I don't recommend opening with a preempt. Here, the spades are good and the hearts so-so, making 2♠ a standout choice — it is a good description of South's hand. East bids clubs and West could make a cuebid raise, but with spades stopped (albeit on the fifth round) a matchpoint 3NT is likely the field choice. Unfortunately, the defense can take four spades and then play the ♥J for down five! Maybe there is something wrong with my diagrammed auction! Why does the hand record say West can make 5♣? Not that I can find a way for West to be declarer, but if he were, two spade ruffs, trumps drawn and three rounds of diamonds would endplay North. In real-life, with 5♣ played by East, the same result can be achieved unless a heart is led. If South doesn't open, West starts with 1♠ and would likely receive a heart lead against 3NT for +660.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 19	
.....	100
1100.....	99
650.....	98
530.....	97
500.....	92
450.....	88
420.....	85
400.....	84
200.....	78
170.....	73
140.....	71
100.....	67
-50.....	59
-100.....	53
-130.....	50
-150.....	48
-200.....	46
-300.....	45
-600.....	37
-630.....	30
-660.....	25
-690.....	17
-720.....	13
-750.....	8
-800.....	4
-910.....	3
-950.....	2
-990.....	1
.....	0

Board 20

West Deals

Both Vul

<p>♠ A 10 9 7 ♥ 7 4 ♦ K 6 5 ♣ K J 8 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 8 6 ♥ K Q 8 2 ♦ A 9 4 2 ♣ 6 2</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 5 4 ♥ A 10 9 6 3 ♦ Q 10 7 ♣ 7 5 4</p> <p>♠ K J 3 2 ♥ J 5 ♦ J 8 3 ♣ A Q 10 9</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 20	
.....	100
200.....	99
180.....	97
150.....	94
120.....	84
110.....	74
100.....	68
90.....	61
PASS.....	59
-90.....	58
-100.....	39
-110.....	20
-180.....	19
-200.....	13
-300.....	5
-800.....	1
.....	0

Perhaps North, or slightly more likely, West, will open with their 11-count. Still, most tables will start as shown (in fourth seat, South should open because he has decent spades). North could easily bid 2NT at his second turn, and that will likely be too high. There are numerous possible variations in the play in notrump. If East leads a fourth-best heart, that costs the defense a trick. The hand record says N-S can make seven tricks in 1NT (or any of their seven-card fits). Most humans would have trouble confirming this.

Board 21

North Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ J 9 4 2 ♥ 9 ♦ A K 6 3 ♣ Q J 10 9</p>	<p>♠ 10 3 ♥ K 10 8 5 ♦ Q 10 9 7 2 ♣ A 7</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> N W E S </div> <div style="text-align: left;"> <p>♠ 6 5 ♥ A J 7 6 4 3 2 ♦ J 5 4 ♣ K</p> </div> </div>	<p>♠ A K Q 8 7 ♥ Q ♦ 8 ♣ 8 6 5 4 3 2</p>
---	---	---	--

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 21	
.....	100
300.....	98
150.....	94
100.....	83
50.....	72
-100.....	65
-200.....	52
-300.....	37
-400.....	26
-500.....	18
-800.....	8
-1100.....	1
.....	.0


West	North	East	South
	Pass	3♥	3♠
Pass	3NT	Pass	4♣
Dbf	4♠	Pass	Pass
Dbf	All Pass		

To overcall vulnerable on the three-level, opening-bid strength is required. If you count shape, I suppose South has it. Still, you can see that it is dangerous and indeed, the auction shown is not a happy one for N-S. I expect lots of numbers for E-W on this one. Sometimes preempts work out quite well. Those Souths who judge to stay out of the auction will be staying out of trouble and end up with a good matchpoint score. There are many ways for the defense to go against a spade contract; simplest is for East to play a trump when in with the ♥A.

Board 22

East Deals

E-W Vul

<p>♠ Q 10 7 6 5 ♥ A 8 ♦ 3 ♣ Q J 7 5 4</p>	<p>♠ A J ♥ 10 5 2 ♦ A Q 10 9 5 ♣ A 6 2</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>♠ 9 3 ♥ K 9 4 3 ♦ J 8 6 2 ♣ K 8 3</p>
	<p>♠ K 8 4 2 ♥ Q J 7 6 ♦ K 7 4 ♣ 10 9</p>		

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣
Pass	2♦	Pass	2NT
Pass	??		

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 22	
.....	100
630.....	99
590.....	98
570.....	97
430.....	95
400.....	84
200.....	74
170.....	71
150.....	69
140.....	67
130.....	63
120.....	57
110.....	43
90.....	33
-50.....	24
-100.....	8
-150.....	1
.....	.0

West could open light in third seat — many will. North could overcall 1NT and the auction would continue as shown. North has a minimum in HCP, but lots of aces, two 10s and a very good five-card suit. Accordingly, he might accept the invitation and forge on to 3NT. After a heart to the ace and a club switch (or heart continuation), declarer can make it, but likely won't. Unless he heard something in the bidding to guide him, he won't guess the diamonds. Looking at all four hands, the play is much easier; only a club lead legitimately sets 3NT. West could make the winning lead-directing double of 2♣, but with so-so clubs and the ability to stand the lead in three of the four suits, I wouldn't.

Board 23

South Deals

Both Vul

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	3♠	1♣
4♠	All Pass		Pass

South has a difficult rebid problem, so could conceivably open 1♦. I espouse 1♦ with 4=5 in the minors and a minimum, but with such a suit disparity, I've shown a 1♣ opening. In modern style, North (with less than a game force), bypasses the diamonds. East could chicken out (since vulnerable) and preempt only to 2♠. If he does bid 3♠, West would probably raise to 4♠ as shown. Nobody really has a double, and you would think nine tricks would be taken in every spade contract on the planet. Meanwhile, N-S have been preempted out of an easy minor-suit game.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 23	
.....	100
750.....	98
620.....	94
600.....	84
500.....	65
200.....	44
170.....	31
150.....	29
100.....	24
PASS.....	19
-100.....	15
-140.....	9
-200.....	6
-620.....	4
-730.....	2
-870.....	1
.....	0

Board 24

West Deals

None Vul

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

West	North	East	South
1♣	Dbl	Redbl	1♠
Pass	Pass	??	

With 4-4 in the minors, opening with either one is acceptable. The benefit of 1♦ is that partner will expect four cards. The benefit of 1♣ is that it keeps the bidding lower. Here, with such better high cards in clubs, I have chosen that suit. North doubles and East can either brush it off (responding 1♥) or redouble as shown. I've chosen the redouble, because it produces an interesting and difficult situation. After South's 1♠ (the free bid after the redouble doesn't promise any strength), note the question marks for East. This is such a tough one that I have submitted it to a bidding panel so that other experts can weigh in. Double would be penalty, so that's out. 1NT feels right on shape and strength, but without a spade stopper? How about raising clubs with only three? I'd guess the stopperless 1NT wins out (wrong-siding the contract). Maybe the redouble was a mistake to begin with.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 24	
.....	100
530.....	99
470.....	96
200.....	93
150.....	91
140.....	88
110.....	83
100.....	76
50.....	71
-50.....	66
-90.....	62
-100.....	58
-110.....	53
-130.....	49
-140.....	47
-150.....	37
-180.....	25
-210.....	21
-300.....	20
-400.....	15
-430.....	7
-460.....	2
-570.....	1
.....	0

Board 25

North Deals

E-W Vul

<p>♠ 10</p> <p>♥ 8 4 2</p> <p>♦ K 10 7 5 3</p> <p>♣ J 9 8 3</p>	<p>♠ 8 6 3</p> <p>♥ Q J 7 5</p> <p>♦ Q 6 4</p> <p>♣ A 6 4</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ K J 9 5 4</p> <p>♥ A K 9 3</p> <p>♦ —</p> <p>♣ Q 10 5 2</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ A Q 7 2</p> <p>♥ 10 6</p> <p>♦ A J 9 8 2</p> <p>♣ K 7</p>											

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1♠	2♦
Pass	3♦	Dbf	All Pass

I don't like to overcall on the two level with a so-so five-card suit, but South's hand is good enough (the alternatives of Pass or 1NT are less appealing to me). North has a normal raise (support with support) and East a reasonable takeout double (not many HCP, but great shape). West has an easy leave-in and that means that my recommended auction leads to a doubled partscore. After the spade lead, declarer will probably lead a low diamond towards the queen. West can win the king and get a signal for hearts. The defense takes two hearts, two ruffs and the ♦K for down one. West would actually do better to withhold the ♦K, which can lead to down two.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 25	
.....	100
500.....	99
490.....	98
470.....	97
400.....	95
200.....	92
180.....	89
150.....	85
120.....	84
100.....	81
-50.....	76
-80.....	69
-100.....	50
-110.....	35
-200.....	34
-300.....	22
-500.....	7
-600.....	2
.....	.0

Board 26

East Deals

Both Vul

<p>♠ K 9 3 2 ♥ Q 9 ♦ 9 ♣ A Q 5 4 3 2</p>	<p>♠ J 8 6 4 ♥ A K 6 3 ♦ A 5 4 3 ♣ 7</p>	<p>♠ A Q 10 ♥ J 7 5 ♦ K Q J 6 2 ♣ 10 6</p>	<p>♠ 7 5 ♥ 10 8 4 2 ♦ 10 8 7 ♣ K J 9 8</p>
--	--	--	--



West	North	East	South
		1♦	Pass
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 26	
.....	100
500.....	98
300.....	96
200.....	93
100.....	71
-110.....	51
-120.....	49
-140.....	45
-150.....	40
-180.....	39
-200.....	38
-300.....	37
-600.....	21
-630.....	3
.....	.0

Assuming 2/1 game force, West doesn't have enough to respond 2♣. North has the wrong shape for a takeout double. East has a choice between rebidding the five-card minor, 1NT or raising with three-card support. With such good spades and a worthless doubleton, I like the raise shown. West goes to game but will be extremely disappointed by the dummy — this is a case where the missing fourth trump is very costly. Still, game has play on a friendly layout, but this isn't one of them. Not wanting ruffs, North (who maybe has made a penalty double of 4♠) shouldn't lead the singleton. He should lead the top hearts and cash the ♦A. The rest of the play is complicated, but it is just a question of down how many. If East chooses a different rebid (like 1NT or 2♦), it likely will lead to a 3NT contract. The red-suit breaks are friendly, especially if declare realizes that the 1087 of diamonds falling allows the suit to run!

Board 27

South Deals

None Vul

<p>♠ 8 5 2 ♥ A Q 7 2 ♦ 7 ♣ A K 10 9 4</p>	<p>♠ A K 9 7 6 4 ♥ K J ♦ Q J 5 3 ♣ J</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> N </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> S </div> </div> <p>♠ 3 ♥ 10 8 6 5 3 ♦ K 10 9 6 4 ♣ 3 2</p> <p>♠ Q J 10 ♥ 9 4 ♦ A 8 2 ♣ Q 8 7 6 5</p>	<p>♠ 3 ♥ 10 8 6 5 3 ♦ K 10 9 6 4 ♣ 3 2</p>	
---	--	--	--

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 27	
.....	100
500.....	99
450.....	98
420.....	81
300.....	60
180.....	56
170.....	52
150.....	48
140.....	46
100.....	41
50.....	36
-50.....	19
-100.....	2
.....	.0

West North East South

			Pass
1♣	1♠	Pass	2♣
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

East doesn't have enough strength for a negative double. South does have enough (QJ10 in partner's suit is worth more than 3 points — especially with the opening bid in front of partner, in case a finesse is needed) for a cuebid raise. West might double (would your partnership know what that shows?) North has enough shape/strength to jump to game (I don't recommend formulas or point-count here). Opposite as little as the ♦K (♠xxx ♥xxxx ♦Kxx ♣xxx) game has play, so how can you not bid it? The play in 4♠ is extremely complex. Note dummy's club spots; in many variations of the play, the fifth club might be set up via multiple ruffing finesses. Double-dummy, it takes a major-suit lead (trumps must be led early by the defense before the clubs can be set up) to set 4♠. In real life, I expect it will make at more tables than not.

Board 28

West Deals

N-S Vul

<p>♠ K 9 6 5 4 ♥ A ♦ J 10 5 4 2 ♣ A J</p>	<p>♠ A ♥ J 8 7 6 4 3 ♦ K Q 6 ♣ K 7 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 7 3 2 ♥ K Q 10 9 5 2 ♦ 9 3 ♣ 5</p>	<p>♠ J 10 8 ♥ — ♦ A 8 7 ♣ Q 10 9 8 6 4 2</p>
---	--	---	--



MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 28	
.....	100
750.....	98
600.....	93
500.....	89
300.....	84
150.....	80
100.....	69
50.....	42
-140.....	18
-170.....	11
-200.....	7
-300.....	3
-420.....	2
.....	0

West North East South

1♠ 2♥ ??

North has a good enough hand and long enough suit to overcall on the two level. How many spades should East bid? It is hard to tell what East's hand is worth, given that the heart suit won't run. If East bids only 2♠, South might get the club suit in and reach the great club game. East could choose to bid 3♠ or 4♠, shutting South out. If E-W buy it in spades, it looks like game can make (losing only two top diamonds and a spade), but a heart ruff gives the defense the setting trick.

Board 29

North Deals
Both Vul

<p>♠ Q 8 6 5 3 ♥ A J 9 ♦ Q 4 ♣ 10 9 6</p>	<p>♠ J 10 2 ♥ 10 6 5 4 2 ♦ — ♣ A K Q 5 3</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> W N E S </div> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <p>♠ A K ♥ K 8 7 3 ♦ K J 10 8 7 6 ♣ 4</p> </div> </div> <p>♠ 9 7 4 ♥ Q ♦ A 9 5 3 2 ♣ J 8 7 2</p>
---	--

West	North	East	South
	1♥	2♦	Pass
2NT	Pass	3NT	Dbl
All Pass			

With 5-5, a void, and two 10s, I think most of today's experts would open the North hand as shown. West's 2NT is slightly aggressive as is East's raise, but I'd expect all of the calls shown to be normal in today's world of overbidding. As shown, with good diamonds and a 7-count, South expresses an opinion that E-W have made a mistake. And they certainly have! Here, North starts with the top clubs, but will the defense block the suit? Quite possibly—in which case 3NT will be down only 1. In fact, after 4 rounds of clubs (won by South's jack), South better not get cute and duck a diamond or declarer could wind up with nine tricks!

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 29	
.....	100
670.....	99
500.....	96
300.....	91
200.....	83
130.....	74
110.....	72
100.....	65
-100.....	56
-110.....	47
-130.....	30
-200.....	17
-300.....	13
-580.....	12
-630.....	10
-670.....	8
-710.....	7
-730.....	6
-750.....	5
-870.....	3
.....	0

Board 30

East Deals

None Vul

<p>♠ A 4</p> <p>♥ Q J 8 6 5 4</p> <p>♦ K</p> <p>♣ Q 9 5 3</p>	<p>♠ Q 10 9 7 5 3</p> <p>♥ A 10 9</p> <p>♦ J 8</p> <p>♣ 7 4</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ J 8 6</p> <p>♥ 3 2</p> <p>♦ A Q 7 6 5 2</p> <p>♣ K 6</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ K 2</p> <p>♥ K 7</p> <p>♦ 10 9 4 3</p> <p>♣ A J 10 8 2</p>											

West	North	East	South
		2♦	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♦	All Pass		

East's suit is a bit spotty — or more accurately, “spotless,” in the middle, but I think 2♦ is a good start. West could pass, but that makes it easier on the opponents. In fact, North would be happy to balance with 2♠. Over the forcing 2♥, North might stay out, and E-W could buy it for a partscore. They will go minus, but with many tables making a spade partial the other way, that won't be such a bad result.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 30	
.....	100
250.....	99
150.....	98
140.....	88
110.....	74
100.....	61
50.....	42
-50.....	22
-100.....	11
-110.....	7
-120.....	6
-140.....	4
-150.....	2
.....	0

Board 31

South Deals

N-S Vul

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass
Dbl	Pass	2NT	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

East could open in either minor (see board 24). South's overcall is risky, but the 5-5 shape makes entering the auction attractive. After the negative double, East has no obvious rebid. The jump to 2NT should show 18-19 balanced. I suppose East could say he had a diamond in with his hearts. West has two five-card suits, so enough to raise to game. A spade lead would help declarer, but depending on East's opening bid, he might get a diamond lead instead. Even with the 3-1 club split, with careful play, nine tricks are there.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 31	
.....	100
100.....	98
50.....	89
-130.....	80
-140.....	76
-150.....	71
-180.....	67
-300.....	64
-400.....	54
-430.....	29
-460.....	12
-500.....	8
-550.....	6
-650.....	4
-800.....	3
-1100.....	1
.....	0

Board 32

West Deals

E-w Vul

<p>♠ A 10 7 5 ♥ 10 3 ♦ K 10 6 ♣ A 10 4 3</p>	<p>♠ K Q 8 2 ♥ J 6 ♦ J 9 7 2 ♣ K 9 5</p>	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ 9 4 3 ♥ K 5 4 2 ♦ Q 8 4 ♣ Q 8 7</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											
	<p>♠ J 6 ♥ A Q 9 8 7 ♦ A 5 3 ♣ J 6 2</p>											

West	North	East	South
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1♠	Pass	1NT	All Pass

Open a balanced 11-count? Not normally, but all four 10s (three of them with higher honors) makes this hand worth much more than 11. Also, having points in aces and kings is worth an upgrade. K & R (a free software program that evaluates what hands are worth) shows the west hand as 12.75. East could pass 1♠ (it isn't forcing). Against 1NT, assuming a heart lead (even though it is declarer's suit), declarer can hold it to down one for a decent score.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 32	
.....	100
920.....	99
800.....	96
500.....	90
470.....	86
400.....	84
300.....	83
200.....	74
180.....	64
170.....	63
150.....	59
140.....	53
120.....	47
110.....	40
100.....	32
90.....	23
PASS.....	15
-50.....	9
-90.....	6
-100.....	4
-160.....	1
.....	0

Board 33

North Deals
None Vul

<p>♠ 9 8 5 2 ♥ A 10 7 ♦ J 8 6 3 ♣ 8 3</p>	<p>♠ A K Q 4 3 ♥ Q J 3 ♦ A Q 7 ♣ 10 2</p>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-right: 10px;"> <table style="border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="width: 150px;"> <p>♠ 10 7 6 ♥ 9 6 ♦ K 10 9 5 4 ♣ K Q J</p> </div> </div>		N		W		E		S		<p>♠ J ♥ K 8 5 4 2 ♦ 2 ♣ A 9 7 6 5 4</p>
	N											
W		E										
	S											

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 33	
.....	100
490.....	99
460.....	94
450.....	72
430.....	51
420.....	44
400.....	36
150.....	32
130.....	31
-50.....	18
-100.....	4
-150.....	1
.....	0

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2NT	Pass	??

South doesn't have enough to respond on the two level, so says 1NT (regardless of system). North's 2NT shows 18-19 balanced and South has a big problem. Is a new suit forcing? Signoff? Which suit should South choose? The only normal game that fails is the club game — but how N-S should bid this deal is far from clear. I know, I'm the expert analyst, but I'm at a loss on this one. At so much of a loss, that I am submitting South's hand for a future bidding panel discussion. Many experts use special methods (like transfers or "Wolff sign-off") after opener's 2NT rebid. Assuming plain old natural, I'd guess 3♣ by South, 3NT by North and then 4♥ by South. Maybe North guesses to pass and the winning contract is reached.

Board 34

East Deals

N-S Vul

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 34	
.....	100
800.....	99
660.....	94
630.....	89
600.....	76
500.....	62
300.....	59
130.....	57
-100.....	37
-200.....	12
-300.....	3
-400.....	1
.....	0

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♦	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

At favorable vulnerability in third seat it would be OK for West to open (either 1♠ or even 2♠). Still, pass is likely the majority action (assuming anyone actually gets to play Board 34). North is worth the upgrade to a 20-21 2NT (the five-card suit and four aces make it worth 21.45 K & R points). A Stayman auction leads to a touch-and-go 3NT contract. After a heart lead, declarer can go all out by laying down the ♦AK (having nine tricks if the queen falls) and falling back on 3-3 clubs onside. This might not be the best play at matchpoints, because if it fails, there are multiple undertricks. Declarer might cross to the ♣K for a simple diamond finesse and fail by a trick.

Board 35

South Deals

E-W Vul

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

West	North	East	South
1♣	1♥	Pass	2♥
4♠	All Pass		Pass

West's two-suiter is easier described by starting with 1♣ than 2♣. North might jump (facing a passed hand), but his hand is probably too strong. After South's normal raise, West should jump in spades. Perhaps 3♠ is enough, but West's hand fulfills the "balanced Yarborough test." That means that if you can picture game has a chance opposite ♠xxxx ♥xxx ♦xxx ♣xxx (as here), just bid it. In fact, on a great day, a slam would make opposite that 0-count (both black suits behave)! East should expect five spades, so might make the greedy matchpoint pass as shown. With the aid of a club finesse, declarer can take 12 tricks for a good score.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 35	
.....	100
100.....	99
- 50.....	97
-150.....	95
-170.....	92
-200.....	89
-230.....	88
-300.....	87
-500.....	83
-600.....	74
-620.....	55
-640.....	41
-650.....	38
-680.....	32
-800.....	24
-1100.....	20
-1370.....	11
-1390.....	2
-1430.....	1
.....	0

Board 36

West Deals

Both Vul

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

West	North	East	South
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥
All Pass			

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 36	
.....	100
620.....	98
600.....	96
400.....	93
300.....	88
210.....	82
200.....	77
180.....	69
170.....	61
150.....	51
140.....	37
130.....	26
120.....	21
110.....	18
100.....	16
-100.....	8
-200.....	1
.....	0

West is heavy for 2♠, but it is likely field action (though not much “field” will get to board 36). South is heavy for a balancing-seat 3♥ or 2NT, so doubles first. His 3♥ in this position (balancing with a double and then bidding again) is in normal range. North will probably pass as shown, but could easily scrounge up a raise to 4♥ (or maybe even try 3♠ which would lead to 3NT). Looking at all four hands, it is easy to make a game (just lay down the ♥A to start), but in real life, it is not clear how to play either game contract.