

ACBL Senior Pairs 12/08 BKWG

23rd February, 2009

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

West North East South
2♦ Pass 3♦
Dbl Pass 3♥ All Pass
 North's 2♦ is hardly a picture-perfect preempt (skippy suit and outside values), but at least it gets N-S into the auction and, abetted by South's 3♦ (preemptive also), it nudges E-W into a precarious 3♥.
The Play in 3♥: With the help of a correct Diamond guess (not too difficult!) and the 3-2 trumps, 9 tricks are made. It's true that the defense can organize a Club ruff, but that's

only at the expense of their natural trump trick.

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

West North East South
2♦ 2♠
Pass 3♠? All Pass
 Here it is East who opens 2♦ but this one is the real Tabasco. South's 2♠ is a bit hair-raising with such a rotten suit, and will get N-S too high if North invites game. Sure, North has 10 HCP, but (especially at matchpoints) perhaps she could be less ambitious. The ♦Q is no doubt wasted and the square shape is another minus factor.
The Play in 3♠: Declarer will be struggling to avoid down two for the

dreaded -200. If the defense avoids breaking open the Hearts, it will come down to a guess for the Queen. Declarer plays on trumps and Clubs first, and by the time the moment of truth arrives, there'll be a count on the hand. With West known to have four Hearts to East's two, and with no special reason to place those 2 HCP in either hand, Declarer will probably guess right for down one and -100. The good news for N-S is that their opponents can make 3♠ with careful play.

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

West North East South
Pass 1♦ Pass 1♥
Pass 2♦ All Pass
 North's splendid 14-count is on the cusp of a 2♦ and 3♦ rebid. The problem with bidding 2♦ holding such a good hand is that it might result in a missed game ... the problem with bidding 3♦ is that it becomes more difficult to find a 5-3 Heart game.
The Play in 2♦: If East goes after Heart ruffs it's 9 easy tricks ... Heart to West's Ace, Heart ruff, Spade to

the Ace, Heart ruff, ♠K shift. Dummy wins that, the ♦Q is cashed, and the Spade loser goes on the ♥Q (East is now out of trumps). An opening ♠K lead works no better for the defense.

The Play in 3NT/4♥: Both these games are makeable with inspired play and the lucky layout, but they are poor contracts!

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

West North East South
1♠ Pass 2♠
3♠ All Pass
 West knows that he will eventually compete to 3♠ and does so directly over the Double, all the better to crowd the opponents. 3♠ was not a game try; if that was West's objective he would have bid a new suit (or redoubled). As it happened, N-S had no safe haven at the 3-level, and the E-W 3♠ contract was also in jeopardy. A trump lead beats 3♠, but North is more likely to start out with a disastrous Heart. Now it's no fewer than 10 tricks when Declarer sets up the Hearts with the aid of a ruffing finesse.

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

West North East South
Pass 1♥ 2♣
3♣ Pass 4♥ All Pass
 Those of the Type A persuasion may open the East hand with a 4♥ preempt, in an effort to throw a wrench in the N-S works. Those with a scientific inclination will say "Too much stuff outside," and will satisfy themselves with 1♥. Each to his own, but on this deal it looks like the final contract will be 4♥ either way. The play is as straightforward as can be, it's 10 tricks for Declarer, and this

becomes our official nomination for The Flattest Board of the Week.

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

West North East South
1♣ 1♦ 1♠ 1NT
2♣ 3NT All Pass
 N-S will have done well to reach 3NT on this deal, though it's a rather dicey contract if West leads the ♠Q. That inconveniently knocks out an entry to the Diamonds, so that now the ♦J must come down in two rounds ... if it does, there are loads of tricks, but if not then Declarer will be down a bunch. Fortune favors Declarer and, after winning the ♠A at Trick One, as

she is rattling off those 8 Diamonds, she may notice that there is a strip-squeeze in West's future! In the 4-card ending West, who is pretty much known from the bidding to have the ♥A, ♥Q and ♠K, will have no good options. She'll probably come down to ♥AQ and ♠K10, after which Declarer cashes Dummy's ♠A and exits with the ♣J. West is end-played in Hearts and it's 11 scrumptious tricks!

The Play in 3♠: Deep Finesse says 9 tricks and we believe him.

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

West North East South
2♥ Pass 3♥ All Pass
 West's hand may pass the Rule of 20 but it really doesn't look like an opening bid, does it? The singleton ♠Q is a dubious asset and most players will no doubt prefer to open 2♥. Not that 2♥ is perfect either, not with such emaciated Hearts and so much outside stuff (see also Board 1). East's 3♥ furthered the preempt and kept N-S from their Spade fit.
The Play in 3♥: A trump lead (or

Spade and a trump shift) holds Declarer to one Club ruff and 9 tricks (he loses a trick in each suit). On lesser defenses it's two ruffs and 10 tricks.

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

West North East South
Pass Pass 1♦ 3♥
Dbl 4♥ 4♠ All Pass
 Against 4♠, South leads a Heart and when Dummy goes down Declarer harbors fond hopes for 12 tricks, all that is needed is for the Diamonds and Spades to oblige. The Diamonds do their part, but the trumps are less amenable. Dummy's ♥A wins the first trick, then a trump to Dummy's King breaks the bad news. Declarer can still scramble 10 tricks, though. At Trick Three he leads a Club to his

King, runs the ♦10, repeats the finesse, cashes ♠A, ruffs a Diamond high, and ruffs a Heart. At this point Declarer has 8 tricks, and with five cards left, Dummy has 10 6 in trumps, Declarer has A8, and North has J973. Declarer ruffs a Diamond with the Ten forcing North to overruff, after which Declarer's A8 over the 973 is worth two more tricks.

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

see how? Yes, Declarer wins the first trick with the *King*, and cashes her 8 black winners, putting East through the wringer. If East keeps ♠AK and only two Hearts then the 12th trick is in Hearts. So, East keeps three Hearts and one high Diamond. But to no avail! Declarer finesses the Heart and exits a Diamond, end-playing East in Hearts!

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

Spades Declarer has no answer. If she ruffs on the board she cannot get back to her hand (to draw trumps) without running into a Club ruff (West has pitched two Clubs on the Spades). And if she ruffs in hand and draws trumps, East will get in with the ♦A and cash the 5th Spade for the setting trick. Nice Club shift, Mr. East, and nice Heart duck, Mr. West!

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

one trick. Even better, E-W might be goaded into bidding 5♥!

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

suit tricks plus however many he can rustle up from the trump suit. With an opening Diamond lead Declarer ruffs two Diamonds on the board, makes all 5 Hearts in his hand (thanks to 2 Club ruffs), and that's 10 tricks. A trump opening lead works better for the defense, holding Declarer to 9 tricks: trump lead won in hand, ♣A, Club ruff, Spade finesse, Club ruff, ♠A, Club ruff. This nifty dummy reversal is worth 9 tricks, the best that Declarer can do with that opening trump lead.

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

vanishes into thin air). On a trump lead, Declarer is held to one Club ruff, on other leads the second Club ruff provides the 10th trick.

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

after which North has a Spade winner to cash when she gets in with the ♠K (or ♥Q). Just 9 tricks for Declarer, on other leads it will be 10.

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

that in hand, plays the ♥K at Trick Two, and again it's 11 tricks.

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

is singleton there's nothing to be done, there are always *three* Spade losers. If it's J10 doubleton then the play of the Queen will work for just one loser. So, should East play the Queen on the second round? Not necessarily! Perhaps South has J108, and her play of the Jack was a clever ploy, intended to deflect Declarer from the winning line! It's the so-called "obligatory false card", giving Declarer a losing option where none would exist otherwise. We wish we could report that South was dealt J108 and had made a fine play, but, as can be seen, that's not the case. North wins the second round of Spades and shoots back a Club. Should Declarer finesse in Clubs? Or should he hope that the ♥10 comes down in 3 rounds, allowing him to pitch his Club losers? It's far from clear that the ♣A (followed by the Hearts) is the percentage play, but that's the one that works.

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

All Pass
 As East, what is your lead against 3NT? The winner, of course, is the ♦K, scoring 5 fast tricks for the defense. But many Easts will lead a 4th best Heart with tragic results. Now Declarer has 11 easy tricks, with 2 Spades, 3 Hearts and 6 Clubs. But why settle for 11 easy tricks when 12 exotic tricks are available? Do you

West **North** **East** **South**
 1NT **Pass** 1♠ **Dbl**
Pass 2♥ **All Pass** **Dbl**

Against 2♥, East will cash 3 Spades after which the defense has only the two red Aces to come. Making 8 routine tricks. Surprisingly, though, a far from obvious Club shift at Trick Two will beat the contract. Dummy wins that and plays the ♥K which West must duck. West wins the second Heart and reverts to Spades. When East plays a 4th round of

West **North** **East** **South**
 1♥ **2♣** **3♣** **Pass**
 3♥ **Pass** **4♥** **All Pass**

East's 3♣ cue-bid showed Heart support and at least a game-invitational raise, and the resulting 4♥ contract scores 10 routine tricks and a universal +420. Well, maybe not! A more energetic South would have opened 2♠ or even 3♠. This probably wouldn't keep E-W out of the auction but it might inspire North to bid on to 4♠. That is a fine save, down only

The Play in 3♥: Declarer has 3 side-

West **North** **East** **South**
Pass **Pass** **Pass** **1♥**
Pass **2♥** **Pass** **3♥**

All Pass
 South has only 14 HCP but the hand has just 5 losers and is well worth a game-try. As for North, she has that lovely singleton, but, with only 3 trumps and with an astonishing lack of Aces and Kings, she declines.

The Play: As it happens, to beat 4♥ West must find a trump opening lead (somewhat dangerous, if East has Qx then the defense's natural trump trick

West **North** **East** **South**
 1♥ **Pass** 1♠ **Pass**
3NT **All Pass**

After East rebids 1♠ West goes straight to 3NT, seeing no reason to waste time with Fourth Suit Forcing. What should North lead? West's emphatic leap to 3NT indicates good Clubs, so perhaps North should try a lead through Dummy's second suit. Good choice ... Spade to the Ace, Spade return won in Dummy, ♠A is knocked out, then another Spade,

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

Against 4♠ North leads the ♥10, won by South's Ace, and Declarer can improve the entry situation by unblocking the ♥K from his hand. South shifts to a Diamond, won on the board, and runs the ♠9 around to North's King, after which there are various routes to 11 tricks. The unappealing opening lead of a Diamond is no better, Declarer wins

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

No doubt East would have preferred a chunkier suit for that 4♣ bid, but nonetheless it seems like the practical choice. Against 4♣ South leads a Diamond to Dummy's Ace. Declarer's best chance for just one Spade loser is to lead a Spade to the King, and then a low Spade, hoping to catch North with doubleton Ace. However, under the ♠K South plays the ♠J which changes everything. If the Jack

Bd: 17 ♠ Q J 6 West North East South
Dir: N ♥ Q 3♣ 3♦ Pass
Vul: None ♦ 8 6 **3NT** All Pass
 ♠ K J 9 7 6 5 3
 ♠ 9 7 5 ♠ K 3
 ♥ 10 6 2 ♥ A 9 3
 ♦ A J 9 ♦ K Q 10 5 4 3
 ♣ A 10 4 2 ♣ Q 8
 ♠ A 10 8 4 2
 ♥ K J 8 7 5 4
 ♦ 7 2
 ♣

No doubt North had great fun preempting with that mangy Club suit, but that's no reason to lead one against 3NT. We are rarely dogmatic about opening leads, but surely it would be a mistake to lead a Club from that hand after this auction. Not only does the Club lead look horrible but it also turns out to be horrible, presenting Declarer with his 9th trick. Of course, a Spade lead immediately puts Declarer out of his misery, and a Heart lead also beats 3NT. The fun line of play comes after a Diamond lead ... the 7 minor card winners are cashed and South is destined to get end-played. She'll either get thrown in with a Heart and forced to play on Spades, or else she'll bare the ♠A allowing Declarer to duck a Spade to establish the King.

Bd: 18 ♠ Q J 2 West North East South
Dir: E ♥ 10 6 1♥? 1♠
Vul: N-S ♦ 9 8 6 4 3 2♠ Pass 3♥ Pass
 ♣ 10 9 5 4♥ All Pass
 ♠ 8 6 5 ♠ K 3
 ♥ A K 9 7 2 ♥ Q 8 5 4 3
 ♦ K 7 5 2 ♦ A Q
 ♣ K ♣ 7 6 3 2
 ♠ A 10 9 7 4
 ♥ J
 ♦ J 10
 ♣ A Q J 8 4

East's hand passes the Rule of 20 but it's a miserable specimen, what with all those points in the short suits and the alarming absence of fillers. But opening 1♥ works well here, getting 4♥ played from the right side, with the ♠K protected from the opening lead. South will probably lead a Diamond, after which the safest sequence of plays for 11 tricks appears to be: win the ♦A, cash ♥Q, unblock ♦Q, cross to ♥A, and pitch a Spade on the ♦K.

Footnote: Some Souths will bid Michaels over 1♥, but our South in the auction above appears to belong to the school of thought which uses Michaels only with bad hands or good hands, preferring to bid the suits naturally with the middling hands.

Bd: 19 ♠ K 7 West North East South
Dir: S ♥ 6 3 1NT
Vul: E-W ♦ 10 8 4 Pass 3NT All Pass
 ♣ A K J 10 9 6
 ♠ 10 9 8 6 5 ♠ Q J 4 3
 ♥ A 10 7 2 ♥ J 9 5
 ♦ 6 2 ♦ K J 9 7
 ♣ Q 8 ♣ 7 5
 ♠ A 2
 ♥ K Q 8 4
 ♦ A Q 5 3
 ♣ 4 3 2

A simple auction for the 15-17 crowd, after which West will surely lead the ♠10. Declarer wins that in hand (keeping the ♠K as a Dummy entry in case the Clubs don't break). When Clubs are 2-2, Declarer has 9 top tricks, but it would be a mistake to run the Clubs immediately, better to set up a 10th trick first by leading a Heart to the King and West's Ace. Spades are continued, the ♥Q is cashed and Dummy's Clubs are rattled off. Will Declarer be brave enough to take the Diamond finesse in the end-game? Sure he will! That's 11 tricks.

Bd: 20 ♠ 7 West North East South
Dir: W ♥ A K J 10 2 3♣ 3♥ 5♣ 5♥
Vul: Both ♦ K Q J 5 4 3 All Pass
 ♣ 10
 ♠ Q 9 3 ♠ 10 6 5 2
 ♥ 9 5 4 ♥ 6
 ♦ 2 ♦ A 10 9 8 7
 ♣ A K Q 9 7 3 ♣ J 4 2
 ♠ A K J 8 4
 ♥ Q 8 7 3
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 8 6 5

Many will open the West hand with 1♣, but it is a hand that contains little defense and starting with 3♣ has much to recommend it. 3♣ certainly works well here when East bids 5♣ (down only two) and probably bounces N-S too high. Over 3♣ North reasonably bids her 5-card Hearts in preference to her 6-card Diamonds and South can hardly be blamed for pushing on to 5♥, indeed she might well have been wondering whether slam would make.

The Play in 5♥: This is a most unlucky contract! East leads a Club to West's Queen, then a Diamond to East's Ace and a Diamond return. Dummy must ruff high, but with trumps 3-1 it's not possible for Declarer to take care of the remaining Diamond losers. One goes on a Spade but there's no remedy for the other loser.

Bd: 21 ♠ 7 3 West North East South
Dir: N ♥ K 10 4 2 1♣ Pass 1♥
Vul: N-S ♦ A 2♦ 2♥ All Pass
 ♣ K Q 8 7 6 2
 ♠ A Q 2 ♠ J 9 8 6 5 4
 ♥ A 7 6 ♥ J 9
 ♦ K Q 7 4 2 ♦ J 8 3
 ♣ 10 9 ♣ J 5
 ♠ K 10
 ♥ Q 8 5 3
 ♦ 10 9 6 5
 ♣ A 4 3

With her moderate hand, South bypasses that so-called Diamond suit and goes straight to the major. Against 2♥, West leads the ♦K won in Dummy. In suit contracts, when Dummy has a singleton in the led suit, a common treatment is to give suit preference. So, East can play a low Diamond to say "Something in Clubs", a high Diamond to show a Spade card and a middling Diamond for neither. If that's the agreement then East plays the 8, hoping that West will figure out that it's middling. On to Trick Two. A low Heart from Dummy, East plays the Nine, covered by the Queen and Ace. What next for West? He won't be sure about East's ♦8 signal, it could be low from J1098 or high from 8653, but he will suspect that Declarer does not have a 5th Heart and both ♠K and ♣A, that would give her enough for a game invitation. After much hand-wringing he may well guess to play ♠A, after which it is 11 tricks if Declarer guesses the Heart situation, 10 otherwise.

Back to Trick Two! When a Heart was played to Declarer's Queen, West should duck! Now Declarer will surely finesse the ♥10, won by East, after which a Spade lead comes through at the speed of light for down one.

Bd: 22 ♠ Q 10 2 West North East South
Dir: E ♥ 7 1NT Pass
Vul: E-W ♦ A K 8 6 2 2♦ Dbl Pass Pass
 ♣ Q J 7 2 2♠ All Pass
 ♠ J 8 5 3 ♠ A K 7 4
 ♥ A K 9 6 3 ♥ J 5
 ♦ 10 5 3 ♦ Q J 7
 ♣ 6 ♣ A 9 8 4
 ♠ 9 6
 ♥ Q 10 8 4 2
 ♦ 9 4
 ♣ K 10 5 3

West's plan was to transfer to Hearts and then bid 2♠, a sequence which is commonly used to show 4-5 in the majors and invitational values. After North's lead-directing Double, East passes to show just two Hearts and West becomes Declarer in 2♠.

The Play: After ♦A, ♦K and a Diamond ruff, the defense knows that Declarer's distribution is virtually certain to be 4=5=3=1. So, South shifts to the ♠K (in case Declarer has the singleton Queen). The ♣A wins, then ♠A, ♠K, ♥A, ♥K. North ruffs the ♥K, but Declarer makes the rest of his trumps separately for 8 tricks.

Bd: 23 ♠ K 5 West North East South
Dir: S ♥ J 10 9 8 1♠
Vul: Both ♦ K 6 Pass 1NT Pass 2♦
 ♣ Q 10 8 7 2 Pass 2♠ All Pass
 ♠ Q J 10 ♠ 9 6 3
 ♥ 7 6 ♥ A 4 3 2
 ♦ A J 7 5 ♦ Q 9 8 2
 ♣ J 9 4 3 ♣ A 5
 ♠ A 8 7 4 2
 ♥ K Q 6
 ♦ 10 4 3
 ♣ K 6

We crave your indulgence on this one. Having gone a little overboard on Board 21, this one's a deal that is impossible to analyze thoroughly within the space remaining. We will say that the most likely contracts are 1NT and 2♠, both by N-S, and that 8 tricks can be made in both cases. But some good guessing will be involved, so don't be surprised if you see a sprinkling of E-W +100 scores dotted around the recap sheet.

Bd: 24 ♠ A 10 9 3 West North East South
Dir: W ♥ A Q 4 1♣ Pass 1♥
Vul: None ♦ 7 5 4 Pass 1♠ Pass 3♠
 ♣ Q 9 3 All Pass
 ♠ Q 7 2 ♠ 8 6
 ♥ 8 5 3 ♥ J 10 9
 ♦ A 10 6 ♦ Q J 9
 ♣ 8 7 5 2 ♣ A K J 6 4
 ♠ K J 5 4
 ♥ K 7 6 2
 ♦ K 8 3 2
 ♣ 10

Against 3♣ East leads the ♦Q and the defense takes its 3 tricks in the suit before shifting to a Heart. There is still a Club to be lost, so the success of the contract depends upon finding the ♠Q. Where is that card? Unfortunately for Declarer there are precious few clues. On such occasions it's not unheard of for Declarer to finesse against the opponent that she cares for least, thereby depriving him of the pleasure of taking the setting trick. That being the case, Declarer makes 9 tricks if West happens to be the ogre at the table.

Bd: 25 ♠ 10 8 3
Dir: N ♥ Q J 10 5 4 2
Vul: E-W ♦ Q 4 2
 ♣ 3
 ♠ A 9 5 ♠ Q 2
 ♥ A 8 ♥ 9 7 6
 ♦ K 9 6 3 ♦ A 8
 ♣ 9 8 5 4 ♣ A Q J 10 7 6
 ♠ K J 7 6 4
 ♥ K 3
 ♦ J 10 7 5
 ♣ K 2

West North East South
 2♥ 3♣ 3♥
3NT All Pass
 North has an easy 2♥ bid, and we even know of some Norths who would try 3♥ at this favorable vulnerability. Really! Anyway, over the mainstream 2♥, West ends up declaring 3NT and fascinating things might happen! North leads Hearts and Declarer wins the second round. The Club finesse loses and South would do well to send back a Spade (the Jack would be most devious!). It's hard to

imagine Declarer playing low on this trick, he'll pop the Ace and hold himself to 9 tricks. Next, suppose that South is less imaginative and returns the ♦J. Declarer lets this hold and South continues with a low Diamond to Dummy's Ace. Now, back to hand with a Club, cash ♦K, run the Clubs. Poor South is squeezed in Spades and Diamonds! 10 tricks.

Bd: 26 ♠ 6
Dir: E ♥ K Q 3
Vul: Both ♦ J 9 6 5 3 2
 ♣ 7 6 3
 ♠ 8 4 3 ♠ 10 7
 ♥ 8 6 ♥ J 10 9 7 5 2
 ♦ K 7 ♦ 10 8 4
 ♣ K Q 10 9 5 2 ♣ J 8
 ♠ A K Q J 9 5 2
 ♥ A 4
 ♦ A Q
 ♣ A 4

West North East South
 Pass 2♦ Pass 2♠
 Pass 4♥ Pass 3♣
 Pass 6NT
All Pass
 North's 2♦ was "waiting", 3♣ set the trump suit, after which North is expected to show controls. 4♥ shows the A♥ or K♥, and denies a control in Clubs or Diamonds. South goes for the max by bidding the No Trump slam, knowing it would require no more than the Diamond finesse. Against 6NT West leads the ♣K, and

when Dummy goes down Declarer is delighted to see the 12th trick in the shape of the ♥Q. Plus 1440! Actually, South was a tad lucky to have chosen 6NT on this one. If she had played in 6♣ she could win the opening lead, draw trumps, pitch a Club on the third Heart and then take a risk-free Diamond finesse. If the ♦K were onside that would be +1460.

Bd: 27 ♠ 8 5 3
Dir: S ♥ K 5 4 3
Vul: None ♦ A K 8 5
 ♣ 5 4
 ♠ K 7 ♠ J 6
 ♥ J 10 9 7 ♥ A 8 6 2
 ♦ 9 6 ♦ Q 10 7 4 3
 ♣ K J 10 8 2 ♣ Q 7
 ♠ A Q 10 9 4 2
 ♥ Q
 ♦ J 2
 ♣ A 9 6 3

West North East South
 Pass 1NT Pass 2♠
 Pass 3♣ Pass 4♠
All Pass
 With her 6-4 minimum, South simply rebids the Spades. But put those dubious red suit honors in with the Clubs, and the hand would be good enough to rebid 2♣, planning to raise a 2♠ preference to 3♠.

The Play in 4♠: West leads the ♥J putting his partner to the test at Trick One. Should he rise with the Ace

(fearing a singleton Queen) or should he play low, catering for Qx with Declarer? As it happens, it's 10 tricks either way, Declarer scoring 5 Spades in her hand, a Club ruff on the board and 4 side-suit tricks.

Bd: 28 ♠ A 5 4
Dir: W ♥ A 4
Vul: N-S ♦ J 9 8 7 2
 ♣ Q J 2
 ♠ 6 ♠ J 8 7 3
 ♥ K J 3 ♥ 10 9 8 7 5
 ♦ K 6 4 ♦ A
 ♣ K 9 8 7 5 4 ♣ 10 6 3
 ♠ K Q 10 9 2
 ♥ Q 6 2
 ♦ Q 10 5 3
 ♣ A

West North East South
 Pass 1♦ Pass 1♠
 2♣ Dbl Pass 4♠
All Pass
 North showed 3 Spades with a Support Double, and before very long West has the unpleasant job of leading against 4♠. Leading away from Kings when Partner is known to be weak is a dangerous business, and leading a singleton trump all too often mangles Partner's holding. The most hair-raising King underlead is from the long Clubs but that is the one

which causes Declarer most difficulty. Declarer wins the Ace, plays ♠K and ♠A, getting the trump news. East's remaining trumps are drawn, then a Diamond to East's Ace. Now, if East returns a Heart, Declarer must refrain from playing the Queen, and if East returns a Club Declarer must pitch a Heart. Either way, it's 10 tricks.

Bd: 29 ♠ Q 9 6 5 3
Dir: N ♥ K
Vul: Both ♦ Q 10 9 5
 ♣ 9 8 6
 ♠ 10 7 4 ♠ J 8
 ♥ Q 7 6 ♥ A J 9 4
 ♦ K 3 2 ♦ J 8 6 4
 ♣ 10 5 4 3 ♣ Q 7 2
 ♠ A K 2
 ♥ 10 8 5 3 2
 ♦ A 7
 ♣ A K J

West North East South
 Pass Pass Pass 1♥
 Pass 1♠ Pass 2NT
 Pass 3♣ Pass 3♠
 Pass 4♠ All Pass

After this New Minor Forcing auction, East will surely lead a minor suit, and a Diamond looks unattractive. So, East tries a low Club, won with Dummy's Ace. A Diamond ruff on the board is required, so Declarer plays the ♠A then a low Diamond towards her hand. If West has nerves of steel he might smoothly play low on this

trick, in which case Declarer will surely finesse the Ten, losing to East's Jack. Now East plays the ♥A and Declarer ruffs the continuation. No doubt convinced that East has the ♦K, Declarer confidently takes the ruffing finesse losing to West's King. Rats, that's only 10 tricks! Nice defense! If West had popped the ♦K there would be an easy overtrick.

Bd: 30 ♠ 10
Dir: E ♥ 6
Vul: None ♦ K J 9 4 3 2
 ♣ A 9 6 3 2
 ♠ K 5 4 2 ♠ A J 8 7 6
 ♥ Q J ♥ 9 8 5
 ♦ A Q 10 7 6 ♦
 ♣ J 7 ♣ Q 10 8 5 4
 ♠ Q 9 3
 ♥ A K 10 7 4 3 2
 ♦ 8 5
 ♣ K

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

If South had passed 2♦ there would have been 9 routine tricks ... *for the defense!* But that was never happening and eventually East becomes Declarer in 3♠. South plays ♥A, ♥K and a third Heart. On this trick Declarer pitches a Club from Dummy, and winds up down one when the Spades misbehave.

The Play in Hearts: If South is allowed to play in 3♥ how many tricks will she make? In real life it's likely to be 10. West leads a Spade, East wins and shifts to a trump, the rest of the trumps are drawn, ♣K is cashed, and a Diamond is led, and 10 tricks it is. If E-W are to beat 3♥ they will need to do some serious underleading of Aces. West starts with *low* Diamond (not the Ace) ruffed by East, then a *low* Spade back to West, another ruff, and a trump shift. Now it's just 8 tricks for Declarer. We're taking a survey. Hands up, please, all those E-W pairs who found that defense.

Bd: 31 ♠ K Q 7 5 3
Dir: S ♥ K 10 2
Vul: N-S ♦ K 9
 ♣ 9 7 2
 ♠ J 10 9 4 2 ♠
 ♥ Q 9 7 ♥ J 6 4
 ♦ Q 8 ♦ A J 7 6 5 4 3 2
 ♣ A Q 8 ♣ 5 4
 ♠ A 8 6
 ♥ A 8 5 3
 ♦ 10
 ♣ K J 10 6 3

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

Who knows how many Diamonds East is supposed to bid over 2NT? 3♦, 4♦, 5♦? It turns out that 4♦ is high enough and even that needs a couple of finesses in order to succeed. Those with an esoteric turn of mind will notice that a ridiculous 11 tricks are possible if Declarer perpetrates a backwards finesse in Hearts. He leads the Nine from the board and if North covers he can finesse the

Seven on the second round! Yeah, right! 10 tricks normally.

Bd: 32 ♠ K 5 4
Dir: W ♥ J 6 5 3
Vul: E-W ♦ J 8 5 2
 ♣ 5 4
 ♠ 8 ♠ 9 6 3 2
 ♥ A K 4 2 ♥ 9
 ♦ 10 9 4 ♦ K Q 7 6
 ♣ A K J 10 2 ♣ Q 9 8 6
 ♠ A Q J 10 7
 ♥ Q 10 8 7
 ♦ A 3
 ♣ 7 3

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

Not a particularly enterprising auction by E-W but let's imagine that there is another E-W pair somewhere in the room with the optimism to try 5♠. After a Club lead it's ♥A, ruff a Heart, back on a Club. With trumps drawn, Declarer plays a Diamond to the King and South wins the Ace. Later in the play Declarer has no choice but to finesse against the ♦J. Making 11 tricks, but you no doubt have noticed

that South goofed! Yes, of course, she should *duck* the first Diamond trick. Now Declarer has a choice of plays on the second round of Diamonds ... either lead to the Queen or finesse against the Jack. Declarer will probably guess wrong. Nice duck, down one!