



**IMG**

**SUMMER 2025**  
INSTANT MATCHPOINT GAME

A NEW SPIN ON A  
SPECIAL GAME

Wed., July 16 - [acbl.org/IMG](https://acbl.org/IMG)

Morning or Afternoon Games

Written analysis for the ACBL Instant Matchpoint  
Game by Frank Stewart.

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Frank Stewart, long-time Bridge Bulletin and syndicated columnist, analyzed this set of deals, directing his comments toward advancing players.



# BOARD 1

North Deals  
None Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 1	
.....	100
100 .....	99
50 .....	97
-50 .....	94
-100 .....	91
-110 .....	88
-120 .....	84
-130 .....	77
-140 .....	71
-150 .....	61
-170 .....	49
-180 .....	45
-200 .....	43
-210 .....	41
-300 .....	39
-350 .....	37
-400 .....	35
-420 .....	33
-430 .....	23
-450 .....	13
-460 .....	10
-490 .....	6
-500 .....	3
-520 .....	2
-610 .....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass

A taxing set of deals begins with an opening-bid dilemma for West, who will usually see three passes. Your analyst is no fan of off-shape 1NT openings; he harbors the quaint notion that a 1NT opening bid promises balanced pattern. Still, the West hand admits to no descriptive second bid if West opens 1♦ and sees a 1♠ response (unless he is willing to stretch mightily to “reverse” with 2♥ or invent a 2♣ rebid). ACBL rules permit a 1NT opening with a singleton high honor. Over 1NT, East will probably raise aggressively to 3NT, hoping his club suit will produce some winners. If West is declarer at 3NT, North may lead a heart or a low spade, giving declarer time to set up the clubs and take diamond finesses, ending with 11 tricks. If East is declarer, South will lead the ♠J: queen, ace. But East can win the spade return and win the same 11 tricks with double-dummy play. We predict East-West will need +460 for a strong matchpoint result.

# BOARD 2

East Deals  
N-S Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 2	
.....	100
1430 .....	99
800 .....	97
690 .....	96
680 .....	95
660 .....	88
650 .....	59
630 .....	32
620 .....	29
-100 .....	14
... ..	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥
Pass	3♠	Pass	3NT
Pass	?		

North has a sound 2NT opening, and South will often transfer to spades and bid 3NT next, offering a choice of games. North may prefer to play at spades since he has decent spade support and a possible ruffing feature in diamonds. Of course, many Souths will try for slam, and North may accept in spades. Indeed, if South's hand were:

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

6♠ would be a decent contract. Slam has a chance with the actual South hand, but the foul location of the missing club honors will spell failure. We wonder whether South should give North the option of playing at spades. When South has so many high-card points plus a running suit, it seems likely that North will take as many tricks at notrump as at spades. As it turns out, 11 tricks are available at either spades or notrump, and pairs who play at notrump (and avoid slam) will be +660 for most of the matchpoints.

South Deals  
E-W Vul

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

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

W N E S

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

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	1♠	All Pass	Pass

N-S Score	Match- points
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	24
25	25
26	26
27	27
28	28
29	29
30	30
31	31
32	32
33	33
34	34
35	35
36	36
37	37
38	38
39	39
40	40
41	41
42	42
43	43
44	44
45	45
46	46
47	47
48	48
49	49
50	50
51	51
52	52
53	53
54	54
55	55
56	56
57	57
58	58
59	59
60	60
61	61
62	62
63	63
64	64
65	65
66	66
67	67
68	68
69	69
70	70
71	71
72	72
73	73
74	74
75	75
76	76
77	77
78	78
79	79
80	80
81	81
82	82
83	83
84	84
85	85
86	86
87	87
88	88
89	89
90	90
91	91
92	92
93	93
94	94
95	95
96	96
97	97
98	98
99	99
100	100

Board 3	
.....	100
510.....	99
400 .....	97
300 .....	93
200 .....	87
150.....	82
140.....	81
130.....	79
110.....	76
100 .....	60
-50 .....	40
-90.....	31
-100 .....	24
-110 .....	13
-120.....	8
-150 .....	6
-500 .....	3
-600 .....	2
-630 .....	1
.....	0

The South hand doesn't look like a weak two-bid to us, with a flimsy suit and little in high cards. But some Souths will trade on the favorable vulnerability to open a lusty 2♥. If everybody passes, South will be distressed at the sight of dummy; he should go down at least two; North-South could do a bit better if North could respond 3♣, constructive but not forcing, but most pairs would treat 3♣ as forcing. Some Wests might double 2♥, though their shape and high-card strength are hardly ideal. East would probably respond 3♦ and play there, going down a couple. He could survive by bidding 2NT, making if he played there, but for many pairs a 2NT "advance" would be conventional. At tables where South passes as dealer, West will often open 1♣, and North will overcall 1♠, hoping the South hand will be short in clubs and will have spade support. Three passes are likely, and if North manages to win seven tricks for +80, North-South may get a fair matchpoint result.

# BOARD 4

West Deals  
Both Vul

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



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♦	All Pass	

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

### Board 4

.....	100
650 .....	98
620.....	84
500 .....	73
200 .....	72
180.....	71
170.....	67
150.....	61
140.....	57
130.....	45
120.....	33
110.....	25
100 .....	17
90 .....	12
70.....	6
-100.....	3
-200.....	1
.....	0

At most tables, North will open 1♦. At the “red” vulnerability, South may not respond for fear of getting too high, and West may judge his hand too weak to balance. If North plays at 1♦, he should manage 10 tricks, off two clubs and a heart. We hate to note that some Norths may borrow a point from another deck and open 2NT. We never strain to open 2NT, a space-consuming call that may impede constructive bidding, but 2NT openings seem to be getting lighter. Some Souths will pass 2NT, and if East leads a routine ♠J, North can make his contract with three spades, four diamonds and one heart, +120. Other Souths will risk a Stayman 3♣ response. When North bids 3♥ next, South might do well to pass and not push his luck. But if South blithely goes on to 4♥, North will benefit from a magic lie of the cards and should rack up +620 for almost all the matchpoints.

# BOARD 5

North Deals  
N-S Vul

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



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 5	
.....	100
600 .....	99
500 .....	96
300 .....	95
150 .....	90
140 .....	86
120 .....	80
110 .....	74
100 .....	63
90 .....	49
50 .....	36
-90 .....	22
-100 .....	11
-180 .....	6
-200 .....	3
.....	0

East will open 1♠, and after South passes, West must decide whether to dredge up a response on his junkpile. If he passes, North may judge not to balance, and the defense is likely to collect eight tricks for down two and +100. As it happens, North would do better to try 1NT. Everybody would pass, and North-South would probably win eight tricks again, but this time for +120. At some tables, West will respond 1NT to 1♠. Then East will pass if 1NT is forcing or semi-forcing; if it's forcing, East will grit his teeth and bid 2♦, passed out. In either case, the defense is likely to register down two again. We predict North-South will need to be at least +100 to avoid a poor matchpoint result.

# BOARD 6

East Deals  
E-W Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

### Board 6

.....	100
500 .....	99
200 .....	96
140 .....	93
110 .....	90
100 .....	80
90 .....	73
-50 .....	71
-90 .....	52
-100 .....	33
-110 .....	29
-120 .....	17
-150 .....	4
-380 .....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	1♣

1NT      All Pass

South has 13 high-card points plus three 10s and a pair of 9s; he will willingly open 1♣. We would be quite nervous about overcalling 1NT on the West cards. East is a passed hand, West is vulnerable, he has no obvious source of tricks, and his club stopper is primary and may be dislodged immediately. We expect that many Wests will try 1NT anyway and play there. It seems that no matter what lead North chooses, West will manage seven tricks, making his contract on the nose for +90; he will be obliged to play South for the doubleton ♦ A. West will make an overtrick only if something goes grievously wrong with the defense. At tables where West declines the 1NT overcall, some Norths will pass. South won't enjoy the play and may be held to five tricks, -100. Other Norths will issue a featherweight 1♥ response, and South will raise to 2♥. Then East-West will need to compete to avoid being -110 for a likely zero.

# BOARD 7

South Deals  
Both Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 7	
.....	100
140.....	98
110.....	89
100.....	77
-100.....	59
-110.....	38
-120.....	31
-130.....	30
-150.....	28
-200.....	21
-300.....	14
-500.....	12
-600.....	7
-630.....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	2♠	All Pass	1♠

Many Souths will take note of their 2½ defensive tricks and open a “lead-directing” 1♠. South’s hand would be more attractive if the long suit contained some honors, making the long cards easier to establish. North will probably raise to 2♠ – his side-suit void compensates for his lack of high cards. Then East can’t act safely, and West may sell out also. South will do well to go down only one. It’ll be a different story if South passes as dealer. After two more passes, East will usually open 1♦, and West might respond 2NT, inviting game. If East likes his five-card suit and decent high-card strength, he will raise to 3NT, and North-South will struggle in vain to beat that contract. East-West will surely get a good matchpoint result for +600. They may salvage some matchpoints if they beat 1♠ by South two tricks for +200.



# BOARD 8

West Deals  
None Vul

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



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Dbl	2♣	2♠	3♣
3♠	All Pass		

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

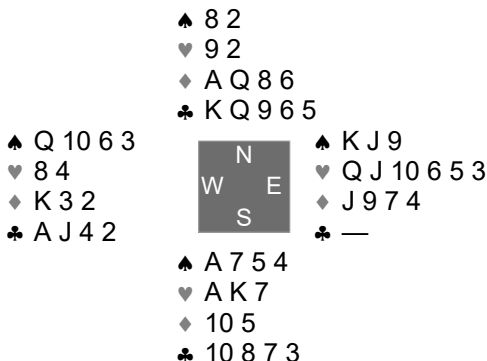
### Board 8

.....	100
470 .....	99
300 .....	98
150 .....	97
110 .....	96
100 .....	90
90 .....	85
50 .....	79
-50 .....	68
-90 .....	62
-100 .....	52
-110 .....	31
-130 .....	19
-140 .....	14
-280 .....	9
-300 .....	7
-470 .....	5
-500 .....	4
-530 .....	2
-590 .....	1
.....	0

If North opens 1♣ in second seat, some Souths will scrape up a 1♥ response, so as not to let East-West enter the auction with impunity. South is somewhat protected by the favorable vulnerability and his four-card club support. Then West has attractive shape and will probably enter with a double. Then if North gives up on playing at spades and rebids 2♣, East should bid 2♠, passed out. Even if South boldly supports with 3♣, East-West should compete to 3♠ and play there for +140. They could also score +110 at their eight-card diamond fit. Many Norths will continue with 1♠ over West's double, but East should double that, and East-West will have a chance to play at spades. At tables where South doesn't respond to 1♣, East-West will have an easier time finding their most lucrative contract. Woe to East-West pairs who too timidly fail to enter the auction and score only +50 or maybe even -90.

North Deals  
E-W Vul

North Deals  
E-W Vul



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

N-S Score	Match- points
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9
10	10
11	11
12	12
13	13
14	14
15	15
16	16
17	17
18	18
19	19
20	20
21	21
22	22
23	23
24	24
25	25
26	26
27	27
28	28
29	29
30	30
31	31
32	32
33	33
34	34
35	35
36	36
37	37
38	38
39	39
40	40
41	41
42	42
43	43
44	44
45	45
46	46
47	47
48	48
49	49
50	50
51	51
52	52
53	53
54	54
55	55
56	56
57	57
58	58
59	59
60	60
61	61
62	62
63	63
64	64
65	65
66	66
67	67
68	68
69	69
70	70
71	71
72	72
73	73
74	74
75	75
76	76
77	77
78	78
79	79
80	80
81	81
82	82
83	83
84	84
85	85
86	86
87	87
88	88
89	89
90	90
91	91
92	92
93	93
94	94
95	95
96	96
97	97
98	98
99	99
100	100

Board 9	
.....	100
800.....	99
570.....	96
510.....	92
500.....	91
400.....	83
300.....	75
200.....	71
150.....	67
130.....	45
120.....	21
110.....	16
100.....	14
0.....	12
-50.....	9
-100.....	4
-140.....	2
.....	0

North has adequate defensive strength to open, but we wouldn't. The long suits are minors, and if North opens, rebid problems loom. In particular, we wouldn't open 1♦, intending to bid 2♣ over a major-suit response. That sequence would distort the length of North's suits and fail to limit his strength – a bad idea with a minimum hand. Given that North passes, East has a decision. We think a weak 2♥ bid would be questionable at best, with a side-suit void and good support for two other suits. If East opened 2♥, he might play there when game at spades or diamonds (or hearts) would be a favorite. Given that North and East pass (which, we admit, may be unlikely), South will open 1♣, and North might raise to 3♣ or jump to 2♦, showing, by a passed hand, a big club fit. East can't act at the three level since he could be -500 at 3♥ doubled. If South plays at a club partial, he should be +130. North-South can do better if they somehow land at notrump and score +150.

# BOARD 10

East Deals  
Both Vul

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

♠ J 8 6

♥ 3 2

♦ 9 8 3 2

♣ A Q 5 2

N

W E

S

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	1♠	Pass	Pass
3♥	3♠	Dbl	2♠
		All Pass	

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 10	
.....	100
790.....	99
650.....	97
620.....	89
500.....	81
230.....	79
200.....	76
170.....	65
140.....	48
110.....	40
100.....	30
-100.....	17
-140.....	11
-200.....	7
-300.....	5
-620.....	3
-730.....	2
.....	0

With East-West vulnerable, East will reject any adventures such as a weak 2♥ opening. After South passes, West will feel like acting because he has two defensive tricks and length in both majors (the same as North in board 15). If he opens 1♦, North will overcall 1♠, East can make a negative double or stretch to bid 2♥, and South will raise to 2♠. Then West might compete boldly to 3♥, placing his partner with a spade singleton, but North will go on to 3♠, passed out. East may lead the ♣J instead of the ♥A, but the defense should still get the three tricks they are due. We predict +170 to North-South at most tables, but that result may not score well for North-South. A few pairs may double East-West at 4♥ for +200, and others will reach 4♠ and surprise themselves by making it for +620.

# BOARD 11

South Deals  
None Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 11	
.....	100
180.....	99
150.....	98
120.....	97
110.....	92
100.....	80
90.....	71
50.....	57
0.....	40
-50.....	31
-90.....	17
-100.....	7
-110.....	4
-120.....	2
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			Pass
1♣	Pass	1♥	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

East-West will have a hard time getting a plus score here. We think an opening bid is best based on some playing tricks, not just a barren assortment of high cards. Still, matchpoint players are loath to miss out on a thing and routinely open balanced 12-counts like the West hand. West does have enough defensive values to open. If he opens 1♣, East will respond 1♥ and pass West's 1NT rebid. North will lead the ♣K, ducked by declarer, and when South discourages, North will shift to a diamond. South can win and shift back to clubs, assuring seven tricks – four diamonds, two clubs and a heart – for the defense. East can do no better if he plays at 2♥; the defense can collect six tricks. North-South can make 2♦ (or 2♣, a tough contract to reach when West has opened 1♣). We think North-South must be plus to avoid a matchpoint disaster, but if West sagely doesn't open, the deal may be passed out.

# BOARD 12

West Deals  
N-S Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♠	2♥	Pass
Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♣
3♥	All Pass		

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 12	
.....	100
200 .....	98
150 .....	97
130 .....	96
110 .....	95
100 .....	79
80 .....	65
50 .....	48
-90 .....	33
-100 .....	29
-110 .....	25
-120 .....	24
-130 .....	22
-140 .....	16
-170 .....	10
-200 .....	8
-420 .....	4
-630 .....	2
-760 .....	1
.....	0

We expect North to open 1♠ and East to overcall 2♥. If West passes, North will reopen with a double. Then if East passes, South will bid 3♣, and West will compete with 3♥, passed out. If however, West is willing to raise to 3♥ at his second turn, East is likely to have a go at 4♥ no matter what North does. Capable defense will sink the contract swiftly: South leads his singleton ♦ J, and North takes the ace and returns the deuce. South ruffs and leads a club, respecting North's suit-preference signal, and North wins and deals South another diamond ruff for down one. North-South have a relatively safe haven at clubs; indeed, the par result is 4♣ doubled down one for +200 to East-West. But that is only because East-West can make the unlikely contract of 3NT. We predict, with no great amount of confidence, +140 to East-West at many tables.

# BOARD 13

North Deals  
Both Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 13	
.....	100
150.....	99
140.....	95
110.....	88
100.....	81
-80.....	79
-100.....	71
-110.....	49
-130.....	26
-150.....	16
-180.....	14
-200.....	9
-300.....	5
-600.....	2
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	1♦
Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠
Pass	Pass	2♣	Pass
Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass
3♣	All Pass		

South will hasten to open his lightweight hand with 1♦ in third position, especially since he has length in spades. North is worth a 1♥ response. If East is reluctant to overcall at the two level, vulnerable, some Souths will pass, and it's uncertain whether West will balance with a double when he holds only three cards in both unbid suits and a wasted ♥Q. At other tables, South will see it through by continuing with 1♠. If North raised to 2♠, North-South would buy the contract and surely score +110; but if North reasonably passes, East may well reopen with 2♣, and East-West may wind up playing at 3♣ and score +110 in their direction. It's a typical partscore battle at matchpoints where obtaining a plus score is essential to avoid a poor result. We would be surprised if any table produced the par result: +120 to East-West at 2NT.

# BOARD 14

East Deals  
None Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass
4♣	Dbl	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

After two passes, West is sure to bid some large number of clubs; since he has an eight-card suit, 4♣ will be a popular choice. North, who was no doubt hoping for a comfortable auction, will be annoyed. If he doubles, he risks a 4♠ advance by South, stranding North-South in an inferior trump suit – maybe even where East-West have a majority of the trumps. As it is, South has good spades, so 4♠ is playable, and if West leads his singleton ♦Q, South can win, draws trumps, lose to the ♥A and gallop home with 10 tricks. But if West leads a club, South will go down one, and a heart lead will beat 4♠ two. 4♥ would be a successful contract if North-South could invent a way to get there. We think it's questionable whether North's hand is worth acting at the four level. If North passes, West should go down one at 4♣, and North-South should win some matchpoints for getting a plus score.

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score      Match-points

### Board 14

.....	100
690 .....	99
510 .....	98
500 .....	97
450 .....	91
420 .....	81
300 .....	66
170 .....	58
140 .....	57
110 .....	55
100 .....	52
90 .....	49
50 .....	47
-50 .....	41
-100 .....	25
-130 .....	12
-150 .....	9
-400 .....	5
-500 .....	3
-550 .....	1
.....	0

# BOARD 15

South Deals  
N-S Vul

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



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♦	1♠	2♣
Pass	Pass	2♥	3♣
All Pass			

If South and West pass, North will feel like opening because he has decent defense and length in both majors. If, despite the vulnerability, he holds his nose and opens 1♦, East will overcall 1♠, and South will try 2♣. North will do well to pass that since he risked opening with a subminimum hand. Then if East competes with 2♥, South will try 3♣, and the auction will subside. Even if West leads the ♠J instead of the ♥K, the result should be down one. The only makeable contracts – 2♠ by East and 2NT by North – are unlikely to be reached, nor is the par contract of 3♠ doubled, down one for +100 to North-South. As in most partscore deals at matchpoints, pairs who achieve a plus score can expect a decent matchpoint result.

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score    Match-points

Board 15	
.....	100
600 .....	97
500 .....	93
300 .....	90
150 .....	88
120 .....	81
110 .....	72
100 .....	66
90 .....	62
50 .....	54
-90 .....	46
-100 .....	34
-110 .....	19
-140 .....	16
-200 .....	10
-300 .....	5
-400 .....	4
-470 .....	3
-500 .....	2
-800 .....	1
.....	0



# BOARD 16

West Deals

E-W Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	1♥	1♠	2♣
Pass	3♥	3♠	All Pass

Judgment calls at every turn make this deal difficult to predict. We think a hand like West's is best handled by passing and coming in later, and neither would we open 1♥ (or 2♥) as North. Then East would probably open 3♠ despite the threatening vulnerability, passed out. Best defense would hold East to nine tricks, +140, but he might well do better. At tables where West opens 1♣, North may overcall 1♥, East responds 1♠ and South can cuebid 2♣ to show a heart fit and at least a game-invitational hand. North could take nine tricks at hearts but would rarely buy the contract because East would surely compete in spades. We think the "par" result, 4♥ doubled by North, -100, will rarely be achieved. Any pair who emerges with a plus score should win some matchpoints. Tops will go to pairs, in either direction, who are allowed to make a game.

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score Match-points

Board 16	
.....	100
590.....	98
500.....	95
450.....	94
420.....	83
400.....	72
300.....	71
200.....	67
170.....	60
140.....	56
100.....	44
-50.....	31
-100.....	26
-130.....	21
-140.....	16
-150.....	12
-170.....	8
-200.....	5
-300.....	4
-500.....	2
-620.....	1
.....	0

# BOARD 17

North Deals  
None Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

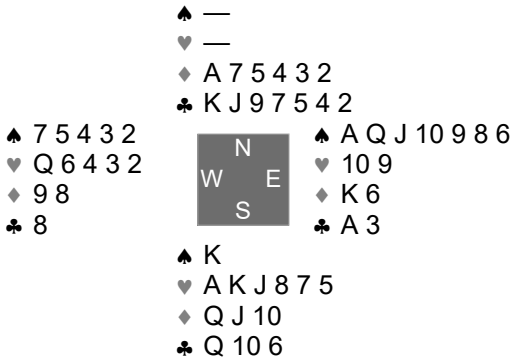
Board 17	
.....	100
150.....	97
110.....	94
100.....	84
50.....	64
-50.....	50
-90.....	31
-100.....	13
-110.....	11
-120.....	8
-150.....	5
-300.....	3
-400.....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1♦	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

If East opens 1♦ in second position, we expect West to respond 1NT, passed out. North will lead the ♠Q, and declarer will probably win in his hand and try a diamond finesse. South takes the king and fires back a spade, forcing dummy's ace. Then if declarer leads a heart, North can win and cash three spade tricks, and South's ♣A will hold West to his contract. We think +90 to East-West may be a common and about average result, but if West wins the opening lead in dummy and optimistically tries a club to his jack, he will be -50. We see no obvious way East-West can reach a club partial that might produce +110, much less the magical (and par) contract of 3♥ that would win nine tricks for +140. Some North-Souths might compete in spades, and if they escape a penalty double, they may do quite well in the matchpoint column.

BOARD 18

East Deals  
N-S Vul



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
4♠	4NT	1♠	2♥
Pass	Pass	5♠	Pass
Pass	6♣	Dbl	All Pass

Well, here's a mundane deal. We doubt that many players have ever encountered a hand like North's. In fact, the chance of holding some 7-6 hand are 0.000056%, and the chance of holding North's specific pattern are far less. East will open 1♠; his hand is too heavy for a preempt. When South overcalls 2♥, West may leap preemptively to 4♠. Then we expect North to bid 4NT, hoping South will take it as a request to choose a minor suit. If South interprets correctly (no sure thing), he will bid 5♣, and there may or may not be more bidding. Many Easts will go on to 5♠, doubled and down one. But if South plays at 6♣, he can make it on a non-diamond opening lead with a good guess; his heart spots are just high enough to obtain five(!) diamond pitches from dummy. The results on this remarkable deal will be all over the map. We predict that pairs who buy the contract will score well.

MATCHPOINT  
TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 18	
.....	100
1370 .....	97
950 .....	95
750 .....	94
620 .....	93
600 .....	90
300 .....	83
100 .....	67
50 .....	50
-100 .....	40
-170 .....	34
-200 .....	29
-300 .....	26
-420 .....	22
-450 .....	16
-500 .....	10
-590 .....	7
-600 .....	6
-650 .....	3
-1100 .....	1
.....	0

# BOARD 19

South Deals  
E-W Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	1♥	Pass	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

### Board 19

.....	100
300 .....	98
200 .....	94
180 .....	90
100 .....	84
90 .....	80
-50 .....	77
-90 .....	69
-100 .....	62
-110 .....	58
-120 .....	45
-130 .....	34
-140 .....	33
-150 .....	27
-180 .....	12
-300 .....	3
-630 .....	2
.....	0

We hope nobody will open 2NT on the West cards; West can expect to describe his hand after opening 1♦. We never go out of our way to open 2NT, a space-consuming action that may impede slam (or game) investigation. If West opens 1♦, North will overcall 1♥. After two passes, West has options: He can reopen with 1NT, showing a hand too strong for a 1NT opening; he can double, intending to bid again if East advances in clubs; or West can take a view and pass, accepting a probable plus score on defense. As it happens, 1♥ by North is likely to succeed despite West's powerhouse, and West's at 1NT will fail by a trick after North leads a low heart – unless the defense loses its way. East-West's who find a route to a diamond partscore will win the matchpoints: East can take nine tricks at diamonds, and West can take 10. They should get an icy top for +130.

# BOARD 20

West Deals  
Both Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 20	
.....	100
200 .....	93
100 .....	68
-110 .....	49
-120 .....	47
-140 .....	25
-150 .....	4
-600 .....	2
-620 .....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass
2♥	Pass	2NT	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

Playing a five-card-majors style, West will open 1♦ and raise East’s 1♥ response to 2♥. We’ve all been in worse contracts than 4♥, and East has 11 prime points, but the East hand is replete with losers, and settling for an invitation is best (not to mention that West may have raised with three-card heart support). If East tries with 3♣ or 2NT, West will sign off at 3♥, and East should pass. (Many pairs use artificial “Spiral” methods to try for game. We will say that we have seen many Spiral auctions; we can’t remember a single one that we thought gained over a natural bid to try for game.) Against 3♥, South will probably lead the ♠J. East must be careful in case of an unfriendly trump break. He can take the ♠Q and duck a trump (or duck a club and duck a trump later), keeping control, then cash the ♥A safely and win nine tricks. We think +140 to East-West should be a common and about average result.

# BOARD 21

North Deals  
N-S Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1NT	All Pass		

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

### Board 21

.....	100
670.....	99
250.....	98
200.....	96
180.....	95
150.....	93
140.....	90
130.....	89
110.....	86
100.....	80
90.....	75
50.....	68
-90.....	59
-100.....	47
-110.....	40
-120.....	25
-150.....	10
-180.....	9
-200.....	4
.....	0

West will usually open 1NT after three passes, after which silence will reign. No North will find your lead and mine, the ♣Q to pin South's jack. If North starts with the ♣10, West can win, lead a diamond to dummy and lead the ♠10 to his king. North wins and clears the clubs. Declarer will win, lead a second diamond to dummy and return the ♠9. At IMPs scoring, West would take his seven tricks and accept +90, but at matchpoints he has a tough guess. He looks as if the South hand is long in spades, and letting the ♠9 ride would often produce an overtrick. This time, West will be disgruntled when North produces the jack, and defense takes four clubs and three hearts for +300, handing East-West a near-zero. West might do well to duck the ♣J. Then if South shifted to the ♠7 – a high spot to suggest no strength in the suit, West might diagnose the spade situation and make 2NT for a matchpoint coup.

# BOARD 22

East Deals  
E-W Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 22	
.....	100
530.....	99
470.....	97
300.....	95
200.....	92
170.....	90
140.....	88
110.....	72
100.....	56
80.....	53
-50.....	39
-100.....	18
-110.....	9
-130.....	7
-300.....	4
-670.....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1NT	Pass	1♠
All Pass			2♥

South will open 1♠, and North will respond 1NT. When South rebids 2♥, North will retire, hoping his side is not too high already. If South plays at 2♥, West has an automatic trump lead: Dummy will be weak in high cards but will often have a singleton spade and heart tolerance; hence West's strategy should be to cut down dummy's ruffing power, its only likely source of tricks for declarer. West has possible spade tricks to protect. The trump lead should hold South to eight tricks. At a few tables, East will take his life in his hands and double when 2♥ comes around. Balancing into a possible misfit, and when South has not denied a good hand, is questionable at best, but East may survive here. West will bid 3♦, and if everyone passes, West may escape for down one. If East-West are -100, they may get a fair matchpoint result.

# BOARD 23

South Deals  
Both Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 23	
.....	100
120.....	96
100.....	86
90.....	70
-90.....	56
-100.....	48
-110.....	29
-140.....	10
-170.....	3
-200.....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1NT	All Pass	Pass

North's third-seat 1NT opening is likely to be passed out, and East will start with a normal ♥J. That lead looks ill-fated, but North would always be entitled to three heart tricks; if East's opening lead were, say, the ♠10, North would win and take the ♥A, dropping West's king, and lead a second heart, ducking East's jack or ten. As it is, North will take the ♥A, lead to the ♦K and finesse with the ♦10 next, losing to East's jack. Declarer can set up his fourth diamond but should end with only seven tricks in all. We expect +90 to North-South at many tables. Fortune indeed favors the bold here; intrepid Wests who enter the auction despite the "red" vulnerability and play at 2♠ may find themselves taking eight tricks for +110 and almost all the matchpoints.



# BOARD 24

West Deals  
None Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♠
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♣	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♣	Pass	4♦
All Pass			

So who dealt this mess? At least North has only 12 minor-suit cards this time, as opposed to 13 on Board 18. After West passes as dealer, no bid accurately describes the North hand. We know players and partnerships who would treat a 4NT opening bid as showing a huge minor two-suiter, but that call seems to us like a roll of the dice – and in fact would lead to a minus score after South gritted his teeth and bid 5♦. If South is in fourth seat after three passes, he might open 2♠, weak – just what North is aching to hear. South could actually make 2♠ if left to play there, but North is more likely to try three of a minor, and South will do quite well to pass instead of fighting against the misfit. North can make three of either minor. We think North-Souths who are disciplined enough to stop at a makeable contract and emerge with a plus score will be rewarded with a fine matchpoint result.

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 24	
.....	100
610.....	99
570.....	98
510.....	97
500.....	95
470.....	94
400.....	91
250.....	89
150.....	84
140.....	79
130.....	72
110.....	66
100.....	64
50.....	60
-50.....	49
-100.....	29
-140.....	18
-150.....	16
-200.....	14
-300.....	8
-500.....	2
-800.....	1
.....	0

# BOARD 25

North Deals  
E-W Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 25	
.....	100
200 .....	96
140 .....	90
130 .....	87
110 .....	84
100 .....	67
-50 .....	47
-100 .....	40
-110 .....	36
-140 .....	23
-150 .....	11
-170 .....	7
-300 .....	3
-730 .....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	1♦
1♠	Dbl	Pass	2♣
Pass	Pass	2♠	Pass
Pass	3♣	All Pass	

South will open in third seat with his 2 ½ quick tricks; his ♥J may be a winner when bolstered by the king. Which suit to open with 2-3-4-4 shape is a matter of expert contention. We believe a slight majority would open 1♦, but the quality of the suits would certainly matter. In any case, West will overcall 1♠. Then many Norths will make a negative double, and a few will trade on their passed-hand status to bid 2♥. At unfavorable vulnerability, East may be reluctant to bid 2♠. If he passes, South will bid the minor he didn't open. (If South has to bid 2♦, having opened 1♣, North should not treat that bid as a strength-showing "reverse" but simply as a preference. The situation argues for opening 1♦.) Then some Norths will go back to 3♣, but others will try 2♥, though they would prefer a longer or stronger suit. North-Souths who land at hearts one way or another may do well; they can take nine tricks for +140, a maximum result.

# BOARD 26

East Deals

Both Vul

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



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♦	Pass	1NT	All Pass

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 26	
.....	100
200 .....	99
140 .....	98
110 .....	97
100 .....	93
90 .....	89
-90 .....	63
-100 .....	36
-110 .....	30
-120 .....	20
-130 .....	14
-140 .....	12
-150 .....	10
-180 .....	7
-200 .....	3
-210 .....	2
-400 .....	1
.....	0

We expect 1♦ by West in third chair and a 1NT response by East, passed out. South will lead a low heart, and when dummy plays low, North may contribute the 10. He might do better to put up the king since East's holding might be J-x, and if East had A-x or A-x-x, he would play dummy's queen as the only chance to win a trick with it. When East wins a heart trick, he can cash five clubs and lead a high diamond, but he should be held to seven tricks in all. East-West could do better at a club or spade partial, scoring +110 in either case, but reaching such a contract is easier said than done. We expect +90 to East-West at most tables.

# BOARD 27

South Deals  
None Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	Pass	1NT	Pass
			All Pass

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 27	
.....	100
280.....	98
180.....	97
150.....	96
130.....	94
120.....	93
110.....	88
100.....	80
90.....	74
50.....	52
-50.....	26
-90.....	12
-100.....	6
-110.....	3
-150.....	1
.....	0

We don't foresee many fireworks here. We expect East's 1NT opening to end the auction at most tables, and South will lead a low heart: jack, queen, ace. Declarer will lead the ♠AK and a third spade, and South will win and set up his long hearts. Declarer will cash his winning spade, but unless the defenders contrive to present him with a minor-suit trick, the result will be down one. It would seem that East-West could do better at their 4-4 spade fit, but they have seven losers at a spade contract as well. We predict +50 to North-South. If East-West can find a way to produce a plus score, they should pick up most of the matchpoints.

# BOARD 28

West Deals  
N-S Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♣	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 28	
.....	100
630.....	99
600.....	89
580.....	80
500.....	79
180.....	78
150.....	68
120.....	50
110.....	41
100.....	38
90.....	33
50.....	32
-100.....	21
-200.....	7
-400.....	1
.....	0

West has plenty enough to open, and we feel strongly that he should start with 1♣; a 1♦ opening has flaws. (See Board 9.) North will overcall 1♠; the North hand is not strong enough to start with a takeout double and bid spades next. South has enough to try 1NT; North may have a good hand for a vulnerable overcall, and game is possible. Sure enough, North may raise to 2NT or even bid 3NT: When West is known to hold most of the missing high cards, North-South can bid aggressively since the play will be easier to judge. Pairs who do reach the notrump game may find a way to make it for +600. In fact, 3NT is always makeable but there may be twists and turns in the play, and some Souths will fail. The par result? At a glance you wouldn't guess that it's 4♠ doubled by East for +-500 to North-South.

# BOARD 29

North Deals

Both Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 29	
.....	100
100 .....	98
-650 .....	55
-660 .....	14
-680 .....	9
-1100.....	3
-1430.....	1
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♦	Pass	4♥	All Pass

If East opens 1NT – his hand is mighty good for a 15-to-17 range – West will often transfer to hearts, rejecting the possibility of playing at a 4-4 spade fit. If West transfers at the four level, East will play at 4♥. A few Wests will transfer at the two level, then raise East to 4♥. That sequence should show slam interest, and East may well go to 6♥ with his super-maximum. South leads a trump, and East can indeed make the slam with double-dummy play. It is no good playing for 3-3 diamonds and ruffing one to set up the suit; East needs four diamond tricks to avoid taking a spade finesse. He can draw trumps and lead a diamond to dummy's nine and later one to the jack. Easts who play at 4♥ may finesse in spades and settle for 11 tricks rather than risk winning only 10. We predict that East-West will score well even for +680, which argues against bidding a shaky slam.

# BOARD 30

East Deals  
None Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

Board 30	
.....	100
50 .....	99
-420 .....	98
-450 .....	73
-480 .....	36
-490 .....	21
-500 .....	16
-650 .....	12
-980 .....	6
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		1♣	1♥
1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass
4♠	All Pass		

When East opens 1♣, some Souths will pass, West will respond 1♠ and East will raise to 2♠. West will have thoughts of slam and might try 4♦ if East would treat it as shortness-showing. East won't be having any; his ♦K won't look useful. At most tables, West will simply bid 4♠, passed out. North's opening lead may be telling: If he leads the ♦A, West will have 12 tricks; if a trump or club, West can still make six but may draw trumps, take four clubs to discard his diamond, and rely on a double finesse in hearts for a 12th trick. (At double dummy, he could make six with a strip-squeeze and endplay against South.) At some tables, South may toss in a 1♥ overcall or an Unusual 2NT overcall to show the red suits. Competition will make it hard for East-West to consider slam, and North will lead a heart against 4♠, holding West to 11 tricks for sure. We think East-West will get a strong matchpoint result for +480.

# BOARD 31

South Deals  
N-S Vul

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



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
			1♥
Pass	2♥	Pass	Pass
Dbf	All Pass		

When South opens 1♥, some Norths will respond 1♠. We think a raise to 2♥ is a better call; North confirms a possible trump suit and limits his strength, while a 1♠ response would do neither. Moreover, the 2♥ raise prevents East from overcalling easily at the two level. (North could respond 1♠ and bid 2♥ next if South continue with a 2♣ or 2♦ rebid, but South would not be sure whether North had real heart support or only a tolerance.) After two passes, West should balance with a double. At the vulnerability. East will be inclined to pass for penalty, and indeed, unless West leads a diamond, the defense can beat the contract two tricks. A spade contract may look safer for North-South, but with best defense East-West can win seven tricks there as well. East-West should get a decent result for +200 and a top for +500. Nobody will get to 3NT, though East could actually make an overtrick at that contract.

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score    Match-points

Board 31	
.....	100
670.....	99
300.....	97
200.....	96
150.....	95
110.....	91
100.....	87
50.....	80
-100.....	68
-110.....	59
-120.....	54
-130.....	52
-150.....	48
-180.....	44
-200.....	37
-210.....	31
-300.....	26
-400.....	19
-430.....	13
-460.....	10
-470.....	9
-500.....	6
-590.....	3
-800.....	2
.....	0



# BOARD 32

West Deals

E-W Vul

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



WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	3♦	All Pass	

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S Score      Match-points

Board 32	
.....	100
470 .....	98
300 .....	96
200 .....	88
110 .....	67
100 .....	42
90 .....	30
-50 .....	20
-90 .....	10
-100 .....	8
-110 .....	5
-120 .....	3
-180 .....	2
-670 .....	1
.....	0

When West opens 1♠, most Easts will pass with an eye on the unfavorable vulnerability. South will balance with a double. West will probably rebid 2♠, and after two more passes, South can double again, saying he had a sound double and not the shaded reopening type. North would do best to pass the second double since the defense could nip 2♠ by a trick assuming North avoids a diamond lead, but instead North is likely to take out to 3♦. West will have to subside, and North should make his contract for +110. At other tables, East will respond 1NT to 1♠, though we can't think of any reason to act with that East hand. South will double, and West might redouble. North-South may still locate their diamond fit, but we think chances are good that West will bid too much and be socked for a substantial penalty, giving North-South a fine matchpoint result.

# BOARD 33

North Deals  
None Vul

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

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	2♣	2♥	2♠
3♥	All Pass		

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 33	
.....	100
150.....	99
140.....	98
110.....	96
100.....	91
50.....	79
-50.....	70
-100.....	67
-110.....	62
-140.....	43
-150.....	24
-170.....	17
-200.....	13
-400.....	12
-420.....	10
-500.....	8
-530.....	6
-570.....	4
-590.....	2
.....	0

Individual style and temperament will influence the outcome on this partscore deal. If West sees three passes, he will open 1♥. North may overcall 2♣ as a passed hand, East will raise to 2♥, and South will try 2♠ or 3♣. Then we expect West to compete with 3♥, and North-South will have to subside; they can't make much of anything. At some tables, North will open 1♣, or South may bid spades in third seat, but we think West will usually play at hearts in any case. With a likely spade opening lead, West can actually take 10(!) tricks if he guesses to play South for both the ♦Q and ♦10 and also guesses well in the endgame. The only lead to hold him to nine is a double-dummy low club, which will enable North-South to conduct an effective forcing defense. We think +140 to East-West will be a common and about average result.

# BOARD 34

East Deals  
N-S Vul

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

## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score      Match-  
                 points

Board 34	
.....	100
150.....	99
50.....	85
-110.....	71
-120.....	70
-140.....	64
-150.....	57
-170.....	50
-400.....	43
-420.....	21
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
		Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass

If West opens 1♥ after two passes, East will have to judge his hand's potential. The worth of his ♦K, ♠AQ and club honors is uncertain, and West has opened in third position and may have a lightish hand. If East were to settle for an invitational raise to 3♥, West might see no reason to go on. But we expect most Easts to commit to game, which happens to be a correct view, at least in theory. If North leads the ♦Q, declarer can take the king and lose a trump finesse. North will return a trump. West can draw the missing trump, discard a spade from dummy on the ♦A and lead the ♣Q. The defenders can't get out of their own way and will have to concede the 10th trick. We predict +420 to East-West at almost every table, but a few Wests will contrive to go down at 4♥, stranding East-West with a matchpoint zero.

# BOARD 35

South Deals

E-W Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

### Board 35

.....	100
650 .....	99
460 .....	97
450 .....	93
430 .....	81
420 .....	61
400 .....	33
150 .....	12
-50 .....	7
-100 .....	2
.....	0

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH

1♦

Pass 1♠ Pass 3♣

Pass 3♠ Pass 3NT

All Pass

After 1♦-1♠, South's hand is too heavy to jump to 3♦; South could reasonably choose that rebid if one of his diamonds were a heart, but with a good seven-card suit, he must find a stronger call. An improvised jump-shift to 3♣ is possible. North will rebid 3♠, South will try 3NT and North may pass. Over 1♠, some Souths may launch directly into 3NT, a call that would discourage North from correcting to spades on almost any hand. If West leads a heart, we think South might win in dummy and try a club to his jack. If the finesse lost, he could win a heart return and go to the ♣Q to lead a diamond to his jack – his percentage play. When the club finesse wins, South can take the ♦A K with a gratifying result and finish with 12 tricks if he diagnoses the ending; East can be “strip-squeezed” in the black suits. With North declarer, 6NT is cold. We think South will get a fine result for +460. North-Souths who play at spades will do poorly.

# BOARD 36

West Deals  
Both Vul

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



## MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S  
Score

Match-  
points

### Board 36

.....	100
660 .....	98
650 .....	64
630 .....	26
620 .....	16
600 .....	10
-100 .....	7
-200 .....	3
.....	0

WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH
Pass	1NT	Pass	3NT
All Pass			

If North opens 1NT, South must judge whether to use Stayman. Since he has 14 high-card points, a case exists for raising notrump. South has so many high-card values that North may be able to take as many tricks on power at notrump as at hearts even if North-South have a heart fit; North may not need the ruffing trick or tricks that a 4-4 heart fit may afford, and there is also the specter of an evil heart break. All that is true in practice as well as in theory since North-South can take 11 tricks at either hearts or notrump. Still, the play may be taxing. North may have an easy time at notrump if East leads a spade or a diamond, but if he finds a passive club lead, North must guess well. The play may be no less challenging at hearts, but in some variations East may succumb to a spade-diamond squeeze. We predict that East-West will need to make five of something to avoid a terrible matchpoint result.