

ACBL Charity Game

Analysis by Brian Gunnell

www.wednesdaygame.com

28th November, 2011 Set 82307

1

♠ Q 9 8 7 5 4 3	West	North	East	South
♥ A 7 2		1♠	Pass	1NT
♦ K Q	2♣	2♠	4♣	4♠
♣ 5	5♣	5♠	Pass	Pass

Dbl All Pass

The auction shown is 2/1 style with a Forcing NT. But, whatever the methods, it's a difficult deal for both sides to judge correctly, and we predict a few making doubled contracts on this board.

Who Makes What? North can be held to 9 tricks in Spades (West wins the opening Club lead and plays trumps). Playing in Clubs, West has 11 tricks (thanks to the outside ♥Q). And, playing in Hearts, East will probably make 11 tricks (but only 10 in the unlikely event that the defense gets a Club ruff).

2

♠ 7 6	West	North	East	South
♥ A 9 6 5		1♠	2♣	Pass
♦ 9 7		2♦	All Pass	Pass
♣ A K 7 6 3				

All Pass

That's not exactly a spirited auction, but then again it's not exactly a spirited deal, and 2♦ happens to be the highest making contract. The defense will no doubt start with two Clubs and a Club ruff, but now Declarer gets eight tricks (two rounds of trumps, plus two ruffs in each hand, the ♠A and, eventually, a Heart trick). If the defense is napping and never leads trumps then Declarer can come to nine tricks on a cross-ruff.

3

♠ 8 7 6 5	West	North	East	South
♥ 6 3		1♥	??	1♦
♦ K Q J 6 3				
♣ 6 5				

If North makes a Negative Double then East might bid 2♦ (ostensibly showing Heart support) or 1♠. Either way we would expect North to compete to 3♠, going down one.

If North preempts to 3♦ (more descriptive, don't you think?) then N-S are likely to do better. East now makes a Responsive Double and West guesses to bid 3♥ or 4♣, both of which can make but which are likely to be down one in practice. And it could be even worse for E-W, as the Diamond preempt may well bounce them into game.

Preemptor's Note: This set has seven boards (3, 4, 8, 14, 15, 18, 27) where there are opportunities for debatable preempts. They are debatable because of poor suits and/or outside values and/or 4-card major side-suits. As luck would have it, these preempts will work well on five or six occasions. A disturbing development to be sure, but maybe the boards in the next Charity Game will reward all of the sound preemptors out there. Or maybe not.

4

♠ A	West	North	East	South
♥ 9 6 3	Pass	1♦	1♥	Dbl
♦ K J T 4	Pass	2♣	Pass	Pass
♣ K 6 5 4 2	2♠	Pass	Pass	3♠

All Pass

Some Wests (but presumably not many) will throw in an off-beat Weak 2♠ opening, and that is likely to be passed out (making 8 tricks). At other tables, West and North will both pass initially, after which East opens 1♥ and N-S are likely to compete to 3♠, down one. Or, North will open 1♦ (or 1♠) and again N-S are likely to buy the contract in 3♠. So, E-W's route to a good board appears to be an unspeakable Weak Two by West ☹

5

♠ T 9 8 5 3	West	North	East	South
♥ J 7		Pass	1♣	Pass
♦ 8 3	1♦	Pass	??	
♣ Q 8 7 4				

East has a rebid problem. 3♣ here would be something of an underbid, and bidding No Trump with a singleton in an unbid suit is not a particularly great idea. That leaves a strong jump to 2♥, perhaps the least of evils. West will no doubt raise to 3♥ (forcing), at which point East has a terrific hand, aside from the tiny detail of having only three Hearts. So, East makes a positive noise, perhaps 4♦ and West might well go to slam now. We're not sure that West should, though, as that ♠K appears to be opposite shortness, and he has only modest help for East's Clubs. Anyway, 6♥ does indeed make (at least from the East side), thanks to a bit of luck in Hearts and in Clubs. The best slam is 6NT from the West side, that needs luck in Clubs only.

6

♠ 9 7 6 5 3	West	North	East	South
♥ 6 3		2NT	Pass	3NT
♦ A K 6		3NT	All Pass	
♣ Q 9 5				

If E-W play that 1♦-2♣ is game-forcing then West has little choice but to respond 2NT ... and if they don't then East will probably declare 3NT, maybe after 1♦, 2♣ 2♥, 3♠ 3NT.

If East declares 3NT then the unbid suit will be Spades, not an attractive choice of lead for South. She might try the ♥Q and Declarer will win with the Ace and fire back a Heart to set up his 9th trick. When South gets in with her Heart she must shift to a low Diamond (Declarer's first-bid suit) to beat the contract. Did you find that shift?

If West declares 3NT then Diamonds will be the only suit bid. North will no doubt start with a Spade, and Dummy's feeble Diamonds will be plain to see. Now, whether Declarer seeks his 9th trick in Hearts or in Clubs, the defense will no doubt find the Diamond shift when they get in.

7

♠ T 6 4	West	North	East	South
♥ T 9		1♥	Pass	3♥
♦ J 8 5 4		4♥	All Pass	Pass
♣ Q J 9 2				

4♥ will be the universal contract (though Bergenites will get there via a different route). North's ♠Q lead is won in Dummy, then a winning trump finesse. Declarer could overtake a Spade in Dummy to repeat the trump finesse (hoping that the ♠T comes down in three rounds), but the better line is to cash the ♥A, winning when trumps are 2-2 or when the hand with three Hearts also has three Spades (or four without the Ten). After the ♥A is cashed, Spades are unblocked, over to Dummy with a trump, pitch the Club loser on the Spade, making 12 tricks when the ♦J is onside.

8

♠ A K Q J 8 5	West	North	East	South
♥ J 9 6	3♦?	3♠	Pass	4♠
♦ A	All Pass			
♣ 9 4 3				

No, we're not too crazy about that 3♦ bid either, but some will make it. Not that it will stop North from declaring 4♠, but it might talk East into finding the wrong opening lead. Opposite a silent West, East would surely lead the ♠K, holding Declarer to 11 tricks. But after a Diamond bid some Easts might be deflected from the obvious and politely lead Partner's suit. That does not work well, allowing one of Declarer's Club losers to disappear. A well-deserved bad board for the 3♦ bidders and their polite partners?

9 ♠ K Q 9 8 3
♥ J
♦ 8 6 5
♣ 5 4 3 2

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

♠ T 6
♥ Q T 5 3
♦ A Q J 9 7 2
♣ T

Dlr North
E-W Vul

your pick, and if you chose 3♣ then let's hope that West did not get you too high. 4♥ makes only 10 tricks when trumps are 4-1, and it's easy to see some E-W pairs getting out of their depth on this deal.

10 ♠ A
♥ A Q T 7 4
♦ Q 6 4
♣ A T 8 3

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

♠ K T 3 2
♥ K J 9 8
♦ J 9 5
♣ 9 6

Dlr East
Both Vul

trick for Declarer. But if East miraculously avoids that Diamond lead, perhaps leading a trump, then Declarer (catering for the possibility of a 3-1 trump break), will cash the ♠A at Trick 2, and exit a Club, setting up two Club ruffs on the board. 10 tricks once more.

11 ♠ A K J T 8 3
♥
♦ A J 7 6 2
♣ 5 4

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

♠ Q 7
♥ K Q 5 4
♦ K T 4
♣ Q T 6 3

Dlr South
None Vul

need help, he'll plunk down a high Club regardless. When Dummy goes down, will East want to cash a second Club? Perhaps so, as Declarer might have ♥Ax and two Clubs for example. Will East know that a second Club is cashable and that Declarer does not have a singleton? Again, yes, at least if E-W have this useful carding agreement: *In suit contracts, when the opening lead is a high side-suit card, if Dummy goes down with the Queen in that suit, then this is a count situation.* So, East cashes a high Club, West gives count, and East confidently cashes a second Club. 11 tricks (assuming a correct Diamond guess), but 12 are possible if East, afraid of the second Club not cashing, shifts to a Diamond at Trick 2.

12 ♠ J T
♥ A K 9 2
♦ J T 5 4
♣ T 8 2

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

♠ K Q 9 6 4 2
♥ 4
♦ 2
♣ A Q 9 6 4

Dlr West
N-S Vul

when they do West had better find the courteous opening lead of Partner's suit, before Declarer's Diamond loser disappears on the Hearts. That lead holds Declarer to 10 tricks.

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

With 5-5 shape, 10 HCP, and nothing wasted, East has a Rule-of-20-inspired opening bid. But things get a bit sticky next time around when East is forced to choose between a rebid of 2♠ on that modest suit, or 3♣ (played by many as showing extras). 2♠ is the bid most likely to slow things down, but 3♣ better describes the overall character of the hand. Take

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

Whatever type of game-tries N-S are playing, South will accept most of them with alacrity (though perhaps a short-suit game-try in Spades might give South pause for thought). Against 4♥ East has the obvious opening lead of a top Diamond, and that makes 10 tricks an easy proposition as it sets up a Diamond

trick for Declarer. But if East miraculously avoids that Diamond lead, perhaps leading a trump, then Declarer (catering for the possibility of a 3-1 trump break), will cash the ♠A at Trick 2, and exit a Club, setting up two Club ruffs on the board. 10 tricks once more.

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

At this point in the auction there will be a few day-dreaming Norths who will visualize a slam-suitable South hand such as: ♠Qxx, ♥Qxx, ♦KQx, ♣Axxx. This might persuade them to get scientific and rebid 3♠, but we'd lean towards an uninformative 4♠ rebid (especially at matchpoints), giving East no help with his opening lead. As it happens, East does not

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass Pass 1♦ 1♠
Dbl 1NT Pass 2♣
Pass 2♠ Pass 3♠
Pass 4♠ All Pass

What would a Double of North's 1NT mean? If you play Support Doubles then are they still on when the opponents intervene with a natural 1NT? Different people play it different ways, so it is just as well that you and your Partner are on the same wavelength. Anyway, the N-S pairs will get to 4♠ on these cards, and

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

Despite being 5-4, East's hand is reasonably No Trumpish, but he'll be reluctant to pass 1NT as game is not out of the question, even opposite a passed hand. So he rebids 2♣ and that works splendidly on the actual deal, allowing West to bid his Diamonds. 2♦ plays remarkably well and might score a whopping 10 tricks, perhaps after the following line of

play: Dummy's ♠J wins the opening trick, cross to the ♥A, back to the ♠A, cash ♥K (pitching a Club), ruff a Heart, Diamond to the King and Ace, Heart ruff, cross to ♠K. Now Declarer leads a Diamond from the board and is but a trump guess away from +130. If East passes 1NT then things are less rosy for E-W, and West struggles just to scrape up seven tricks.

13 ♠ J 4
♥ A 8 5 3
♦ 5 3
♣ A T 8 7 6

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

♠ K 8 6 5
♥ Q T 9 6 2
♦ A Q J
♣ K

Dlr North
Both Vul

many play that it is. That's a useful treatment, as without it North must force to the three-level (by cue-bidding 2♠), a dangerous course of action opposite a third-seat opening. Anyway, North makes an encouraging noise of some sort and if South is of an optimistic disposition (or if she fails to notice that the ♠K is singleton and that the ♠K is under the Spade bidder), then she will go to game. It's not such a great game but it does squeak home with 10 tricks when the trump suit obliges for only one loser and when the Diamond finesse also works.

14 ♠ A 9 3
♥ T 5 4
♦ K 8 2
♣ A 6 5 3

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

♠ 8
♥ A 7 3
♦ A Q T 9 5
♣ J 9 8 2

Dlr East
None Vul

tricks. So, on this particular deal, we must score one up for the extremists. As we mentioned earlier, this happens to be a good set of boards for wild and woolly preempts!

15 ♠ Q T 4
♥ T 4 3
♦ A K T 5 3
♣ A 9

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

♠ 5 3
♥ K Q 7 5
♦ J 9 8 7
♣ K 8 5

Dlr South
N-S Vul

Spades, so he need not worry unduly about preempting Partner, and if North ends up as Declarer then a Spade lead would suit West very nicely. On the actual deal, an opening of 2♠ is likely to work out rather well, as it will probably buy the contract and get E-W a plus score.

16 ♠ Q T 8 7 6
♥ J T 9 3
♦ T 8
♣ A 2

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

♠ 9 5 4
♥ Q 8 7
♦ A Q 6
♣ Q J T 6

Dlr West
E-W Vul

play: Dummy's ♠J wins the opening trick, cross to the ♥A, back to the ♠A, cash ♥K (pitching a Club), ruff a Heart, Diamond to the King and Ace, Heart ruff, cross to ♠K. Now Declarer leads a Diamond from the board and is but a trump guess away from +130. If East passes 1NT then things are less rosy for E-W, and West struggles just to scrape up seven tricks.

West *North* *East* *South*
1♠ ??
First question: "Is the North hand worth a game-invitational raise?" With 4-card support, two Aces, and a couple of doubletons, we think that it is. However, South has opened in third seat and such bids cannot always be taken to the bank. That's why Drury was invented, of course, leading to the next question: "Is this a Drury situation?" By partnership agreement it certainly could be, and

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass 2NT All Pass

There is a (perhaps extreme) school of thought which says that, when holding a hand such as, or similar to, East's, one must open a Weak Two or 1♠, passing is simply not an option. That works really well on this deal ... if East opens a distinctly off-center 2♠ then E-W can compete to 3♠, down one ... but if East fastidiously passes then N-S will play in 2NT (perhaps after the auction above), making 8

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass 2NT All Pass

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

3♠ is down one (whether or not the defense gets its Club ruff) and West might feel quite pleased with himself after buying the contract for -50 when N-S can make 2♥ or 3♠. But in our opinion West got this one all wrong! At this vulnerability, don't you think that's it's tempting to open the West hand with 2♠? West has good playing strength despite having only five

Spades, so he need not worry unduly about preempting Partner, and if North ends up as Declarer then a Spade lead would suit West very nicely. On the actual deal, an opening of 2♠ is likely to work out rather well, as it will probably buy the contract and get E-W a plus score.

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

Despite being 5-4, East's hand is reasonably No Trumpish, but he'll be reluctant to pass 1NT as game is not out of the question, even opposite a passed hand. So he rebids 2♣ and that works splendidly on the actual deal, allowing West to bid his Diamonds. 2♦ plays remarkably well and might score a whopping 10 tricks, perhaps after the following line of

play: Dummy's ♠J wins the opening trick, cross to the ♥A, back to the ♠A, cash ♥K (pitching a Club), ruff a Heart, Diamond to the King and Ace, Heart ruff, cross to ♠K. Now Declarer leads a Diamond from the board and is but a trump guess away from +130. If East passes 1NT then things are less rosy for E-W, and West struggles just to scrape up seven tricks.

17 ♠ J 8 3 2
♥ T 7 6 4 3
♦ Q 9 5
♣ 3

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

♠ T 9
♥ 5 2
♦ A T 3 2
♣ Q 9 8 5 2

Dlr North
None Vul

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass Pass Pass Pass
2NT Pass 3♣ Pass
3♥ Pass ??

Let's disregard East's actual hand for a moment and ask "What does 4NT mean here?" It seems that it should be natural and slam-invitational, with four Spades and no Heart fit, otherwise there are some hands that are just unbidable. But if 4NT is natural then how is East supposed to invoke Roman Key Card? 4♣ is one possibility, but perhaps that is better

reserved for natural purposes. One solution to the problem is for 4NT and 4♣ both to be natural, and for the other major to be Roman Key Card (as in 2NT 3♣, 3♥ 3♣ or 2NT 3♣, 3♠ 4♥). With those methods in place, what is your bid after West's 3♥? The choice is between 3NT and 4♣, and our vote is for 4♣. The combined point-count is 31-32 and if slam is to be made it will likely require a Club fit from Partner. If East does bid 4♣ then West can cue-bid to show a fit, but with his actual hand he will bid 4NT (there's that bid again!), which he hopes East will take as natural and discouraging. If you are in the mood for more 4NT anguish then take a look at Board 19. P.S. With normal play 4NT is worth 10 tricks.

18 ♠ A J 5 2
♥ T 7 6 5
♦ 8
♣ A Q T 4

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

♠ 8 7 3
♥ Q
♦ A J 9 6 4 2
♣ K 7 6

Dlr East
N-S Vul

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass Pass Dbl Pass
2♥ All Pass

South would no doubt have preferred a better suit for her vulnerable 2♦, but she was obviously a believer that bidding something so often works out better than bidding nothing. How do you like East's balancing Double? It's a bold effort (and a better guess than balancing with 2♠) that is rewarded when the 4-4 Heart fit is found. South would have made 2♦ on the nose, so

when West scrambles seven tricks he escapes for -50 and a good board.

19 ♠ K 4
♥ A Q J 5
♦ A Q T
♣ A 7 6 4

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

♠ A 8 7 3
♥ K 9 3
♦ K 2
♣ Q T 3 2

Dlr South
E-W Vul

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass 1♥ Pass 1♠
Pass 2♦ Pass 2♥
Pass ??

2♦ was Fourth Suit Forcing, let's assume to game. After 2♥, what should North do? This deal has echoes of Board 17, and again the question is "What is 4NT here?" Seems like it should be natural and slam-invitational (with 3♥ necessary first if North wants to use Roman Key Card in Hearts), but are you sure that

Partner will be on the same wavelength? Anyway, maybe that's a red herring as 3♠ is surely a better bid than a natural 4NT. If North does bid 3♠ then South bids 3NT, and again we ask "What is 4NT here?" If you play Minorwood then 4♣ can be RKCB in Clubs and 4NT is natural. If not then things may be less clear.

The Play: Neither 6♠ nor 6NT are terrible contracts, but they are against the odds, both requiring the Club suit to play for one loser. That doesn't happen, and there will be lots of matchpoints for those who applied the brakes and stopped in 4NT (10 tricks with normal play).

20 ♠ J 9 8 4
♥ K J
♦ A J T 2
♣ T 6 2

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

♠ 7 3 2
♥ Q T 9 5 2
♦ Q 6
♣ K 4 3

Dlr West
Both Vul

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass Pass 1NT All Pass

Let us say that South leads the ♥T and that Declarer reasons that this could be from QT9xx and that he might block the suit (if North is napping) by rising with Dummy's Ace at Trick 1. Now the Club finesse is lost to South's King, then a Heart to North's King. Back comes the ♦J, won by Declarer's King, at which point Declarer has 8 tricks. But, of course, North must unblock at Trick 1, holding Declarer to just 7 tricks.

21 ♠ T 9 5
♥ K Q
♦ K T 8 3
♣ 9 7 3 2

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

♠ A 3 2
♥ T 7 5 2
♦ A 6 4
♣ T 8 5

Dlr North
N-S Vul

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

The auction shown here is 2/1 style, and a more "standard" auction would no doubt arrive at the same contract, perhaps via 1♥ 2♦, 2♠ 2NT. North will lead a Club or a Spade or a Diamond, partly depending on the auction, and we expect 8 tricks for Declarer, one way or another. There are three Spades, three Clubs and a Heart, and the 8th trick will be a Diamond or a

Heart, depending upon how the defense goes.

A Triumph for Flannery? Yes, East has a Flannery hand (4-5 in the majors, 11-15 HCP), and that may work out rather well. East opens his conventional 2♦ and now 2NT by West is not available naturally. So West guesses to bid either 2♥ or 2♠ and makes 9 tricks in the 7-card fit.

22 ♠ J 5 4
♥ 8 5
♦ A T 8 3 2
♣ A K T

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

♠ A T 9 7 2
♥ J 2
♦ Q J 9 5 4
♣ 9

Dlr East
E-W Vul

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

Not every West will choose to open 1♥, and with third-seat openings like that it pays to have Drury in your arsenal (see also Boards 13 and 25). As for East, he was in a bit of a bind over 2♠, as 2♥ doesn't seem quite enough, yet a 3♦ cue-bid seems a bit much. How about South's 3♠? As a passed hand, South's strength is limited, and it would be fair for North

to assume that South has a Diamond fit to back up that 3♠ bid.

Who Makes What? E-W have 9 tricks in Clubs but only 8 in Hearts (the defense gets a Club ruff). Playing in 3♠ Declarer loses two Hearts on the go and the defense does best if East wins the second Heart and shifts to a trump. Declarer ducks and West wins and shifts to a Club which is won in Dummy. We cannot see a good reason why Declarer should not finesse again in Spades and when that loses it all comes down to the Diamond guess. By now, East will be known to have started with ♥A and maybe ♠QJ. Is that all he has for his 3♦ bid? Probably not, so with admirable aplomb Declarer drops the stiff ♠K and scores 9 tricks.

23 ♠ A Q 7
♥ K 7 6
♦ A K 7 6
♣ T 3 2

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

♠ 8 4
♥ A J 4
♦ 5 4
♣ A K Q 9 8 5

Dlr South
Both Vul

West *North* *East* *South*
Pass 1♦ Pass 1♠
Pass 6NT All Pass 3♣

South is a tad short in points for that 3♣ bid but she does have what looks like seven tricks in her own hand, that is surely too good for a mere 2♠ rebid. The 3♣ rebid makes it easy for North to blast into 6NT, but will she make it? A successful Spade finesse or Heart finesse would be the 12th trick, but both of those finesses fail. So down one? Maybe not! Suppose that East,

avoiding the fatal (for the defense) Spade lead, starts with the Heart Nine. That should tell Declarer that the Heart finesse is losing, and she might be inspired to find this line of play: win the ♥K (low from Dummy), lose a Diamond, win the Diamond return, cash another Diamond, then the Clubs, cross to the ♠A. Poor West is squeezed in the red suits!

24 ♠ J 5 2
♥ J T 7
♦ Q J 8 7
♣ 7 5 2

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

♠ 6
♥ Q 6 5 4 3
♦ K T 6 4
♣ A Q 6

Dlr West
None Vul

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

West super-accepts somehow or other and has 11 easy tricks in 4♠. **Theoretical Note:** A current trend is to use super-accept methods which do not disclose undue information about the future declarer's hand. One such example is:
- 3♠ is a medium super-accept
- 2NT is a good super-accept
- 2♠ can be bid with 4-card support and a rotten hand. A simple method!

25

♠ A J 9 4
♥ T 7 6 4
♦ Q J 8 7
♣ 6

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

♠ Q 5
♥ A K 5 2
♦ 9 5 4 2
♣ 5 4 2

Dlr North
E-W Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	Pass	Pass	Pass?
1♣	Pass?	1♦	Pass?
2♣	Pass?	Pass	Pass

2♣ is a comfortable contract and, assuming that North finds a Heart lead (she may well do so for lack of a good alternative), the defense can take two Hearts, two Spades and a Spade ruff on the go. That leaves only eight tricks for Declarer.

The N-S Bidding: That's right, there wasn't any, but perhaps there should have been. South, emboldened by

her third-seatedness and by the enticingly favorable vulnerability, might have opened an ultra-light 1♥ in order to get North off to the right opening lead (hopefully N-S have Drury in their army if they bid like that). Failing that, South might have overcalled 1♥ next time around, with the same idea in mind. As for North (in the auction above), perhaps doubling the second time around is a bit much (though only a bit!), but surely the next time she could have doubled (East is a passed hand, West is limited, South must have values, but it is North who must do something, she has the doubling shape). If N-S do get in there, they'll make eight tricks in Hearts, unless E-W find the fiendish defense of ♦KA, Diamond ruff, low Club to the Queen, Diamond ruff!

26

♠ A J
♥ 6
♦ 8 6 3 2
♣ A J T 7 3 2

♠ T 4 2
♥ K Q T 7 2
♦ K Q J
♣ K 6

♠ K Q 9 3
♥ A J 5
♦ A T 9 4
♣ 9 8

♠ 8 7 6 5
♥ 9 8 4 3
♦ 7 5
♣ Q 5 4

Dlr East
Both Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♦	Pass
1♥	2♣	Dbl	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

East makes a Support Double, showing three-card Heart support, and West zips into game. Against 4♥, North does not have an attractive lead and, being allergic to singleton trump leads (which so often blow a trick) let's say that she finds the safe lead of a Diamond. Declarer wins and, as the bidding marks North with both missing Aces, it's a simple matter to play on Spades next, N-S scoring just those two Aces.

27

♠ K 3 2
♥ Q 5 3
♦ J
♣ A K Q T 8 6

♠ A T 6 5
♥ A K J
♦ 9 6 5 2
♣ 5 2

♠ 7 4
♥ T 9 8 7 6 4
♦ A
♣ J 9 7 4

♠ Q J 9 8
♥ 2
♦ K Q T 8 7 4 3
♣ 3

Dlr South
None Vul

We confess that we would open the South hand 3♠, notwithstanding those chunky Spades. It works well on this deal (passed out, 10 tricks), other times it won't. If that 3♠ bid is not to your taste then the auction might be:

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		Pass	Pass
1♦	2♣	Pass	Pass
Dbl	Rdbl	2♥	Pass
Pass	3♣	3♥	All Pass

South was stymied by West's 1♦ opening and it's not obvious how and when she could later get her

Diamonds into the auction. 3♥ is down one, but only on repeated trump leads by the defense (Declarer scores six Hearts, two Aces, no Club ruffs)

28

♠ A Q 6 4
♥ A K Q
♦ A Q J
♣ Q 4 2

♠ K T 8 5
♥ J 4 2
♦ T 4 2
♣ J T 9

♠ J
♥ 9 8 5
♦ 8 6 5 3
♣ A 7 6 5 3

♠ 9 7 3 2
♥ T 7 6 3
♦ K 9 7
♣ K 8

Dlr West
N-S Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦
Pass	2NT	Pass	3♣
Pass	3♣	Pass	4♣

All Pass

Preferences vary, and North's 2NT shows 22-23 or 22-24. But we'd rebid 2NT either way, that's a fairly poor 24 (you'll never hear a rubber bridge player say that). After 3♣, should North show her 4-card major, in light of her square hand? We think so, given the strong Spades and the alarming Club weakness.

The Play in 4♣: Suppose that East leads a Diamond. Dummy's King wins and the ♠Q is successfully finessed. Now Declarer plays on Clubs to ensure a ruff in Dummy, and the bad trump split holds her to 10 tricks.

The Play in 3NT: East leads a Club won by Dummy's King, the Spade finesse wins, the Hearts are 3-3 and Declarer scrambles 10 tricks and a good matchpoint score. The 3NT'ers should consider themselves lucky!

29

♠ Q 4
♥ T 8 6 2
♦ A K Q 9 6 5 3
♣

♠ 9 5 3 2
♥ 9 7 5
♦ T 7
♣ Q 5 4 2

♠ K 8
♥ A K Q 4
♦ 4 2
♣ A J 7 6 3

♠ A J T 7 6
♥ J 3
♦ J 8
♣ K T 9 8

Dlr North
Both Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
	1♦	2♣	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	??

This is a difficult hand for both East and North. Some Easts will prefer to double 1♦, relying on the extra strength to compensate for the doubleton Spade, but we suspect that a 2♣ overall will be the mainstream action. After East's 2♣, South ekes out 2♠ and North retreats to Diamonds. Should East try 3♥ now? It's risky and as it happens it will probably land E-W in 3♥ or 4♣

doubled (both -800). So let's say that East sensibly passes, now what should South do? More to the point, is South obliged to find another bid? Opinions differ but, even if this is not a forcing situation, perhaps South should try 3NT despite her minimum (that's a great Club holding, with two stoppers using up only three of her HCP). It's a skinny 21-point game but it rolls home when the Spade finesse works.

30

♠ A Q 2
♥ K Q J T 4
♦ K
♣ 9 8 5 2

♠ K J 9 8 7 5
♥ A 6
♦ 9 8 4 2
♣ J

♠ T 6 3
♥ 9 8 5
♦ A 5
♣ A K Q 4 3

♠ 4
♥ 7 3 2
♦ Q J T 7 6 3
♣ T 7 6

Dlr East
None Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
		1♣	Pass
1♠	2♥	Dbl	Pass
3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass

East makes a Support Double, West invites game, East accepts. Against 4♠ North leads the ♥K and one way for Declarer to bungle the contract would be: win the ♥A, overtake the ♣J and cash three Clubs (pitching a Heart and a Diamond), lose the Spade finesse. Now North draws three rounds of trumps and Declarer is saddled with two Diamond losers

(he cannot ruff one and he cannot pitch one). The winning line is, at Trick 2, to cash the ♣J, then cross to the ♦A, pitch a Heart and a Diamond on the ♠A and ♣K, and run the ♠T (cleverly unblocking the Seven from hand). North can draw trumps if she wishes, but Declarer will make sure that Dummy's Six wins the third round, providing an entry to the good Clubs. 11 tricks! North's best opening lead is the unlikely ♦K, after which Declarer scrambles 10 tricks by going after a Diamond ruff on the board.

31

♠ T 3
♥ K J T 7 3
♦ K Q T
♣ A 6 4

♠ A 4
♥ A 9 4 2
♦ 4 3 2
♣ Q J 9 7

♠ 9 8 6
♥ 8 5
♦ 9 7 6 5
♣ K T 3 2

♠ K Q J 7 5 2
♥ Q 6
♦ A J 8
♣ 8 5

Dlr South
N-S Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
			1♠
Dbl	2♥	Pass	2♠
Pass	3♦	Pass	3♥
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

West's Double was a bit flimsy, perhaps the vulnerability made him do it. As for N-S they conducted an exquisitely delicate auction which steered them away from 3NT on account of the Club weakness and landed them in the best contract of 4♠. The auction also pinpointed a Club opening lead for the defense,

but West would have found that anyway. Not that it matters, the defense will score three tricks regardless. So, 10 tricks for the 4♠ declarers, but only 8 for those N-S pairs who were indelicate enough to play in 3NT.

32

♠ 7 4 3
♥ Q 7
♦ J 9 8 3
♣ K 8 6 2

♠ 5 2
♥ A K 5 4
♦ A Q 7
♣ A J 5 4

♠ T 9 8 6
♥ J 6 2
♦ K T 6
♣ Q T 7

♠ A K Q J
♥ T 9 8 3
♦ 5 4 2
♣ 9 3

Dlr West
E-W Vul

<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>
1♣	Pass	1♠	Pass
2NT	All Pass		

Some Easts will respond 1NT, bypassing the 4-card major on account of the hand's disturbing squareness, but either way West is likely to rebid 2NT. If East takes a fancy to those tasty-looking Tens he might well give 3NT a shot. But this turns out not to be a good deal for the optimists. If South ends up on opening lead against a No Trump contract then she will cash Spades

and the defense will get a fifth trick when the Club finesse loses ... and if North is on lead then she will start with a Diamond we suppose, after which she won't have much trouble finding the Spade shift when in with the ♠K. Eight tricks either way.