

Monday 22 January 2024

Our January Charity Pairs, raises funds for UNICEF to help children in danger through the world.

They need so much help – the requirements for medicines, clean water, basic warm clothing – so much is required. Please help us raise as much money as we can – send your donations to us and we will gather them together and pass them on to UNICEF from bridge players all over the world.

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Help us to help these children who are in such need. Please.

Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

After South's third-seat 1♥ opening, North has a choice of responses: 1♠, 1NT, and 2♥, the former being most popular. East then overcalls 2♣, South raises to 2♠ and West competes to 3♣. Provided declarer plays the trumps correctly, 3♣ should make; leading the queen is right even with no clue to the opposing holding, so stands out if South is known to hold the majors. 3♠ by North goes two down if East leads a diamond. 3♥ is two down from either seat.

Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

The 4-card spade suit may deter East from opening 3♣, so South opens 1♥. For North, the doubleton queen suggests caution (i.e. a 3♥ limit raise) but the good trumps and intermediates favour aggression. With the diamond honours split and the spade layout sparing declarer any guess, 4♥ makes easily.

At the vulnerability East-West do better to sacrifice in 5♣ doubled, losing 300. Sadly for them, this will not be a great score, as many pairs will concede only 170.

Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

With the ♥K bare and the vulnerability as it is, West surely does not open. A 2♠ overcall after 1♥-2♥ seems fine, though. North will compete to 3♥ and East may do well to push on to 3♠. A 3♥ contract makes exactly, with declarer losing a trick in each suit. By a curious coincidence, 3♠ should also make exactly, with the defenders taking a trick in each suit: one just needs to take the precaution of ducking the ♣10 lead to avoid a trump promotion.

Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.

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

If West opens 3♦ and North doubles then East's raise to 5♦ may make it too hard for North-South to reach 7♠. They may get there if North prefers

4♠ and South freely advances to 5♠ or if West does not open. In 6♠, it looks right to ruff three diamonds in the North hand and combine the chance of ♥Q-x with a squeeze for the overtrick. It is a closer call in 7♠. At the risk of going two down, you might cash two hearts early with the club finesse as the fallback.

Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

If playing weak throughout, South opens INT in third seat and North probably transfers. Indeed passing INT would be a big mistake, as the defenders can take the first six tricks. East may pass over 2♦ but will protect with 2♠ when 2♥ comes back. South cannot really bid 3♥ even with these hearts and North does best to double, 2♠ doubled yielding 300 on good defence. A heart contract should produce 9 or 10 tricks depending on whether the ♥Q scores.

Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

After 1♠-Pass-3♠, how you play 3NT? If it shows any two suits, North bids it. If not, options include 4♥ and possibly 4♣ (hearts and a minor). East can make 4♠ despite the 5-0 trump break but only by guessing the diamonds. If North-South play in hearts, the defenders need to set up a club ruff to restrict declarer to 8 tricks. If they play in clubs instead, 8 tricks are also the limit and now the winning strategy is to force declarer by playing spades and diamonds.

Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.

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

Since a 2♣ response to 1♠ would lead an awkward rebid, West prefers to open 1♦. East then responds 1♥ and West has a choice. To show the hand type with INT is the normal style in the UK, leaving East to look for the spade fit with a 2♣ enquiry. If West rebids or opens 1♠, the spade fit will come to light more easily. 4♠ should play one or, if you draw two rounds of trumps to avoid an overruff on the fourth round of diamonds, two tricks better than 3NT.

Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.

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

Over West's 1♠, North's hand looks like a take-out double: the hearts are poor for 2♥ and passing with 6 losers at love all is cowardly. East bids 2♦, the same as without the double and West probably rebids 3♠ rather than 2NT or 3NT. Most play this as forcing despite the double and East raises. In a no-trump or spade contract, North is in danger of being squeezed or endplayed. To stop the 11th trick, North may need to lead a top club, a low diamond or, in 3NT, the ♠5.

Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

Do you gamble 3NT with the South hand after North pre-empt 3♦? Many will, and some may get away with it. If West leads a spade (a club clearly works better) then East will need to save the ♠K to deal with the ♠J and the ♥A to capture the ♥Q; a slip on either count may allow declarer to make 11 tricks. Cautious souls (North might have a poor suit at this vulnerability) may raise to 5♦. How well 400 from this will score depends on how many pairs beat 3NT.

Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.

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

West opens 1♣ in third seat and 4♥ seems practical for North facing a passed hand. Unless it suggests a 5-5 shape, West may reopen with 4♠ rather than a double and South faces a tough decision. The hearts say to bid on whilst the spades say to defend. 4♠ fails by two tricks if the defenders find their club ruff, but going on to 5♥ may turn out even better. The diamond position means that East-West need a ruff to beat 5♥, which they will not get if East leads a club.

Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.

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

Style and the range of a 2NT rebid may determine East's choice of opening in fourth seat. 1♣-1♦-2NT (if it shows 18-19) is fine; if 2NT would be 17-18 then you had better open 1♠. West seems a fraction light for a 2♦ response to 1♠, so may bid 1NT and get to play the hand. It may not matter since 10 tricks are cold in 3NT from either seat, and it would take any spade from North or the ♠K (unlikely) from South as an opening lead to prevent the 11th trick.

Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

With the ♣K bare, North does not have an opening bid nor, with these hearts, a good bid after 1♣-1♥. However, when East rebids 2♣ and West passes, a reopening double is fine. East should bid 2♦ (West might have length there and a singleton club), South bids 2♠ and West bids 3♣. North-South must give up now, as 3♠ goes two down on a heart ruff – too much even undoubled. 3♥, which is hard to reach, is only one off whilst East's 3♣ makes 10 tricks.

Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.

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

On Klinger's HLQT scale, North's two and a half quick tricks make the hand almost a 1♠ opening (South then raises to 3♠), but most will pass. If South opens INT, North will transfer to spades and invite game (South declining) but a 1♠ opening will be met by a 4♣ splinter. If South passes in third seat, West opens INT and South should bid only 2♠ if North shows spades and another. South might make 4♠ on a club lead but 4♠ by North stands little hope.

Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.

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

With the weak 5-card major, do you open it or prefer INT? The field will probably call 1♥, whereupon West makes the system bid to show a balanced raise to game (or temporises with 2♣ if not playing one). If East opens INT, West with no ruffing value simply raises to 3NT. Unless South is on lead and fishes out the ♠Q, 11 tricks can be made in either no-trumps or hearts. East might make 5NT even having finessed the ♦Q on the first round if North can be thrown in.

Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

After 1♣-1♦ (the honour location makes North's response clear cut) the modern style is for East to call 1♠ rather than double. South rebids 2♣, West raises competitively to 2♠ and North probably calls 3♣. East, with poor shape and the dubious ♣K, must not jump to game but merely invite it with 3♥. Making 3♠ may hinge on reading the trump layout and some will go down. The trump holding is similar in 3♣, but there declarer must take two finesses to make it!

Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

The cards lie poorly for East-West and any plus for them may score well. If East opens INT and South finds a spade lead, it should go two down because the defenders can kill dummy's spade entry; declarer can escape for one down on a club lead. Opening 1♥ works much better as West may respond INT and a spade lead from North lets that through. Opening 1♣ may also turn out well as West can make eight tricks with diamonds as trumps if North leads a major.

Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

East opens 1♦ and, facing a passed hand, South may overcall 4♠. West raises to 5♦ and it is tough for North to know to bid 5♠. East has good playing strength and may advance to 6♦ anyway. Sound advice is only to sacrifice against a slam if you think you can get out for less than the value of game. 6♠ doubled costs only 300 but, unless North has raised or South has shown strong hand (though then North will fear a phantom), this may be hard to work out.

Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

Playing Acol I cannot see an obvious route to the highest-scoring denomination. If the bidding starts 1♥-2♦-2♥, North can hardly risk a non-forcing 3♦. More likely, the auction starts 1♥-3♦-3♥-4♦, when the only hope is playing 4NT as a sign off. Any North-South pairs playing two-over-one game force may score a goal by bidding 1♥-2♦-2♥-3♦-3NT. Unless East helpfully leads a heart or the ♣J against a diamond contract, everyone should take 11 tricks.

Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

North opens 1♠ in third seat and, since South should not plan to bid again after a 2♠ rebid, 2♣ is the best response. North may make a 3♦ splinter over this, in which case South continues with 3♥. North would like to ask for aces but this will be a tricky if 4NT is the way to do so and the one-ace reply is 5♦ as you may reach 6♣ missing two aces. In practice, South's void and the friendly diamond position mean that 6♣ can be made. 9 tricks are the limit in no-trumps.

Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

Anna's computer seems determined to test whether competitors will open a vulnerable weak no-trump in third seat and this time East may succumb. South can overcall 2♥ and score a reasonably effortless 110 but doubling seems awfully tempting. A heart lead is the easy way to defeat 1NT doubled. The hard way is to cash a top club and switch to a spade. After a club lead and a red-suit switch, declarer can prevail. 2♦ and 2♠ by East-West can both go two down.

Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

West will most probably have the chance to open 1♥ in fourth seat and, after a simple raise, to jump to 4♥. The main variation is that North might double 1♥. In this case, as East's raise to 2♥ might be very weak, West will only make a make try of 3♣, when East will bid 4♥. A trump lead is best, in the absence of which declarer might get an overtrick by ruffing two clubs in dummy (and you need to finesse the ♥J on the first round if someone switches to trumps).

Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

Rarely do you see a contract of 1♣, but many tables will do so here. South is too flat for a take-out double (and too weak overall and in clubs to call INT) while North can hardly reopen with these values and only a doubleton spade. An undisciplined 1♠ response by West may backfire if, as is likely, East rebids 3♣. On sound defence, the limit East-West is seven tricks in a black suit or no-trumps. If declarer plays the trumps for one loser, the deal belongs to North-South in 2♥.

Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

After West opens 1♠ and North overcalls 2♣, East seems light for a 4♣ splinter and may just raise to 4♠. If East does bid 4♣, a double from South might inspire North to sacrifice in 5♣, in which case it may be vital for West to bid on to the laydown 5♠. Even on a heart lead to the ace and a diamond switch, 5♣ doubled should cost just 500, and some will escape for one down. In any case, if East shows a singleton club, West may ask for aces and reach 5♠ that way.

Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.

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

Many players use a weak no-trump and Asptro as a defence. If so, East opens 1NT and South overcalls 2♦. North will bid 2♠, showing spade support and South is worth a game try of 3♣. The North hand has a nice shape but pairs scoring does not always reward aggressive game bidding, so I think the majority will sign off in 3♠. However, the cards lie well and those who bid game do better this time. On any lead bar a diamond from North, East-West can make 3♥.

Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.

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

In third seat, most Souths will make a pre-emptive bid: 3♥ looks normal, but some will try 4♥. The more aggressive opening may score a goal, as West will not feel as happy about acting over 4♥ as at a level lower. Most East-Wests will get to the cold 4♠ and can North-South find a sacrifice? Unless South opened 1♥, they should manage it; then, unlike on 23 when 5♠ was on because there were singletons about, someone needs to double to collect 300.

Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.

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

Might we see a second deal played in one of a minor? It is possible, but East has more reason to respond this time. You stand a far better chance of improving the contract if you bid 1♥ over 1♦ than if you bid 1♠ over 1♣ since partner can bid a new suit without reversing. Here you will survive bidding 1♥ if West rebids a heavy 2♦, the highest making contract as the cards lie (even INT fails). North-South do well to stay silent, as they cannot make anything anywhere.

Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.

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

A weak no-trump will appeal to few Souths and over 1♥ West may decide against doubling, the 3-card spades being a key defect on a marginal hand. West will, however, reopen with a double when North's raise to 2♥ comes back. East bids 2♠ and neither North nor South has the hand to justify going to 3♥, but some will. The cards lie pretty well for East-West and, if East is declarer, they can make 3♠ or 4♣; any gamblers doubling 3♥ should score 300 and a top.

Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.

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

What do you call as East over North's 1♠ opening? A jump to 3♠, asking partner to bid 3NT with a spade stopper, has some merit but is risky with only seven fast tricks. A simple 2♣ hardly does justice to a 4-loser hand, so the alternative is double. Unless someone takes a flier, most auctions will end with East-West in a club partial, which clearly they can make. The vulnerable North-South do not want to bid very much, with diamond ruffs beating even 2♠.

Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.

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

Most tables will see East-West start 1♦-2♣-2♥. Now, whether West bids 2NT (best with this spade holding) or a nebulous 2♠, East rebids 3♣. Placing partner with a 1-4-5-3 shape and 16 points upwards, West knows the values and playing strength for a slam must be present. It should not be difficult to stay out of a grand slam with the ♣A missing, and most pairs should wind up in 6♣ or 6NT. The latter scores better, as whichever finesse declarer takes will work.

Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.

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

East opens 1♠ and say South passes. In this case, West raises to 2♠ and North scrapes up a double. East wants to bid 3♥ for the lead but cannot as this would be a game try, so calls 3♠. Then South bids 5♦. If South overcalls 2♦, again they reach 5♦. West leads the ♠A and East should play the ♠10. With the singleton on view in dummy, this must be a suit-preference signal for a hearts. Passive defence or a spade lead and an early heart switch beats 3NT.

Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.

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

North opens 1♦ in third seat and, after South's 2♣ response, has a choice. The fact South could not open (so reducing slam chances) and the pairs scoring both indicate 2NT. Moreover, the singleton in partner's suit means you might regard the hand as marginal for a reverse. As it turns out, you will surely reach 3NT anyway as South would bid 3♦ over 2♦ or 2♥. This should make. 5♦ fails on a trump lead but there is a squeeze to make it if East cashes a top spade first.

Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

The vulnerability may keep West quiet as dealer, allowing North to open 1♥. Even if a strong jump overcall is available, the spades are rather poor and East overcalls 1♠. South then bounces to 4♥ and this will most likely end the bidding. The diamond blockage means the only way to stop the overtrick is for East to cash the ♦A at trick one and switch to the ♣6 at trick two. If East-West buy the contract, they are likely to regret it, losing 500 on 4♠ doubled.