

Monday 23 January 2023

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**Help us to help these children who are in such need. Please. And please read the bit at the end of the commentary about future events.**

## Board 1. Love All. Dealer North.

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

Where South opens INT, most Wests will overcall, either to show the majors, or spades and another suit, and either way they will get their side to a partscore in spades. All rational lines of play result in +140, it would seem (even if E/W play hearts!). However, N/S might steal the board in 3♦, where North could emerge with as many as eight tricks if he guesses the clubs correctly – not so easy to do.

## Board 2. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

Those undisciplined Easts who open a weak 2♥ might find themselves in 4♥ doubled -- down 800 on repeated trump leads! More likely is that if East opens it will be to show a two-suited hand, and now West may not hang his partner. In fact, at most tables N/S will buy the contract and not enjoy the experience; 3NT by North is down at least one trick, though a club partscore yields nine tricks. I'd expect to see many more contracts fail than succeed here.

## Board 3. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

A rather difficult hand for N/S, who might start the bidding: 1♦-1♥-1♠-2♣-3♥. But then what? A simple raise to 4♥ by North is enough now, and South will have to pass. Even on a non-trump lead declarer cannot establish the clubs for his twelfth trick, so 11 tricks are the limit – except on a low spade lead, which declarer can run to his ♠J. +450 should score well enough for N/S, since some of the field will go overboard, some will fail to find hearts.

**Board 4. Game All. Dealer West.**

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

E/W can make 3♥, but most Easts will drive to game facing an opening bid, and might be able to find a way to make ten tricks, since the club loser goes away on the 13th diamond. Mind you, if East bounces to 4♥ directly over a 1♣ opening bid won't South try 4♠, and then you might hear West's double in the next county. Declarer can take no more than seven tricks, even if he reads the position well.

**Board 5. N/S Vul. Dealer North.**

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

At any table where South has the courage of his convictions he will open 3NT in third seat, and perhaps score a bigger goal than he might dream of. The point is that if E/W stay silent they will watch South wrap up nine tricks in comfort. However, if West has a way to come into the auction he will find that his side can make ten tricks in spades – quite a rewarding sacrifice! Results on the traveller will be all over the place here, I predict.

**Board 6. E/W Vul. Dealer East.**

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

A typical auction will see East open 1NT (yes, a few Easts will pass, but most will have the courage of their weak no-trump convictions) and then West will follow a fast or slow route to 4♠. Of course the 5-0 trump split puts the Kibosh on that contract, so the issue may be how many Norths will greedily double and risk tipping off their opponents to how to play trumps. The difference between 100 and 200 will be a vast number of matchpoints today.

**Board 7. Game All. Dealer South.**

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

After a weak no-trump from West and a double from North, East will want to escape to clubs; some will do it at the two-level, when N/S will want to try to settle in 2♦, where they can make eight tricks, rather than 2♠, where seven tricks appear to be the limit on inspired defence (though North can take +110 on the normal club lead). Even more rewarding for N/S is to defend a doubled club partscore, since they can hold East to seven tricks there, on a spade lead.

**Board 8. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

Playing a weak no-trump, some Easts will open 1♦, some 1♠. If the former, N/S should find a way to a no-trump partscore, where they can take either seven or eight tricks, depending on the accuracy of the defence (curiously, only a club lead by East holds North to seven tricks). After a 1♠ opening bid by East, South should not overcall -- if he does, N/S will surely reach game -- but maybe a club or heart partscore might produce 110 on careful declarer play.

**Board 9. E/W Vul. Dealer North.**

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

A weak no-trump by South in third seat will steal the pot at a sizeable number of tables. Best defence is to lead clubs, whereupon declarer cannot come to more than six tricks. By contrast, on a top heart lead declarer has the timing and entries to make seven tricks. Of course E/W do better to play clubs, where making +110 is little more than a formality; however even if South opens 1♦, it may not be so easy for E/W to get to a club partscore.

**Board 10. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

Strong 4-3-3-3 hands present a problem to Acoll. Today, 1♠ by East will get E/W to 2♠ quickly enough; N/S might do best to defend, and collect 200, for a fine board. If East opens 1♣ he may end up there -- and not enjoy that too much either! If N/S declare the hand they can register +110 in clubs, and maybe +140 in hearts. Equally, 3NT might come home. Best defence may see West needing to switch to a red-suit at some point to set up a fifth winner.

**Board 11. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

E/W have the minority of the high-cards, but they have a huge diamond fit, and can actually not be defeated in 5♦ -- though it is far from easy to see how to get there after a 1NT opening from North. Most Easts will act (a two-suited defence like Astro would work well here) but I do not see many E/W pairs getting to 5♦ with confidence. In fact, though, some N/S pairs will buy the hand in hearts (and regret it) or may stop off to double E/W prematurely.

**Board 12. N/S Vul. Dealer West.**

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

Another deal, another foul trump split for West. 4♥ is respectable, but with the diamond finesse losing and a 5-1 trump break, offside to boot, even nine tricks cannot be achieved on a black-suit lead. When West opens 1♥ and rebids the suit, East might pull in a notch and treat his hand as only worth an invitation, but stopping out of game may be the exception rather than the rule. Maybe some Wests will open a chunky weak 2♥ – a winning decision today.

**Board 13. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

At most tables North will open 1♥ and jump to 3♥ over his partner's response (some Souths may prefer to respond 2♦ rather than 1♠, but it should not matter). The problem for N/S is not to stay sensibly low – they do not really have the high-card values for slam. No, the problem at matchpoints is to play 3NT rather than to declare 4♥. 11 tricks in each denomination are very straightforward, but I suspect that 4♥ will be the normal resting place for N/S.

**Board 14. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

When South opens 1♠ those playing intermediate jump overcalls will bid 3♦, but I suspect weak jump overcalls are now the order of the day, and thus West will bid 2♦ instead. Now E/W have stops in all the suits and plenty of diamond tricks to run, but no more than seven tricks in no-trumps, if the defence can find a way to set up either the clubs or the hearts. Having said that, 3NT by East on the normal low spade lead will fetch nine tricks against any subsequent defence.

**Board 15. N/S Vul. Dealer South.**

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

Whatever your no-trump range this deal is hard to get right scientifically. When North opens 1♠ and hears his partner respond 1NT, should he pass? Or should he raise to 2NT, thereby getting his side dangerously high? Even if South passes, he will need something nice to happen in both red suits to come to even eight tricks. In practice many Souths will raise to 3NT, and on a club lead he will be struggling to escape for one down.

### Board 16. E/W Vul. Dealer West.

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

Does East have an opening bid in third seat? If East passes, emphatically the best move for South would be to pass as well. But if he is tempted into opening 3♦, East will balance with a take-out double. Now might West bounce to 4♠, and make 10 tricks on careful play? If N/S misjudge and sacrifice in 5♦, the club ruffs on defence produce a swingeing penalty of 800 points. The more you look at it, the more attractive passing out the deal becomes!

### Board 17. Love All. Dealer North.

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

A strong no-trump by East would buy it there (down one probably) but East will open either 1♥ or 1♣ at most tables. That allows South to overcall, and now the Law of Total Tricks might require both the weaker hands to compete to the three-level in support of their partners. To make 3♠ South will have to take the double finesse in diamonds, whereas to escape for one down in 3♥ East may need to endplay South in trumps to break diamonds for him.

### Board 18. N/S Vul. Dealer East.

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

When North overcalls in spades it should lead to his buying the hand in a makeable partscore, though I suppose at some tables E/W might declare a heart contract (eight tricks is the limit for them). 3♠ is the par contract, but to hold North to nine tricks requires a trump to the ♠A and another trump at tricks one and two. Otherwise North arranges to ruff a heart in South for his tenth winner. That defence is far from automatic.

### Board 19. E/W Vul. Dealer South.

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

If West opens INT, 4♠ seems a clear-cut bid for North (it might not make, but at the vulnerability do you want to leave E/W space to get together?). East will surely double now, since 5♥ is just too much of a gamble, and lead his bare ♣J. Declarer will win in dummy and lead a trump, then must guess right to bring home the game, with no real reason to do so. Since 5♥ by East is down at least a trick on a spade lead, more than half a top will ride on this decision.

### Board 20. Game All. Dealer West.

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

When East opens 1♠ in third seat West would be well-advised to pass and not dredge up a response. Even if North balances with a double, as he figures to do, E/W will buy the hand in a spade part-score, collecting +140 in relative peace and quiet when the heart finesse loses. If West does respond initially, E/W might get to game; we've all been in worse contracts than either 3NT or 4♠, but it is hard to see either game being let through today.

### Board 21. N/S Vul. Dealer North.

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

A 1♣ opening by East would probably silence N/S for the duration and let E/W buy the hand, perhaps in 4♠. That contract has some play on the ♥J lead to the ♥K and ♥A, and a heart continuation. Declarer can cash the ♠A then strip off clubs, but I can't quite see a way to find a tenth trick against best defence. By contrast, if East opens 1♠ South will double. Then N/S might sacrifice in 5♥, down one trick on all normal lines of defence.

### Board 22. E/W Vul. Dealer East.

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

South's most practical option is to open 1♦ then bid and rebid clubs. That might have the unfortunate result of making North believe he is facing a 6-5 shape not South's actual hand, in which case he might try 6♦. That contract runs into yet another bad break (not a friendly set is it?) and in fact even 5♦ is in serious difficulties. 3NT might come a lot closer to making, though – double dummy it cannot be set on any defence, though in practice one might well fail.

### Board 23. Game All. Dealer South.

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

North will open 1♥ in third seat, and East will overcall 1♠, setting up a competitive auction in which both North and East should judge to bid on to the three-level, but no further. With both sides having defensive tricks in their opponents' trump suit, 3♥ is too high for N/S – they can be set 200 on the club ruff. 3♠ should present no practical problems for East, though; he can shake a diamond loser on the clubs, and ruff a heart in West for his ninth trick.

**Board 24. Love All. Dealer West.**

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

North will be faced with a tough decision on his near-Yarborough at many tables. East will open 1♥, South will double, and West will bounce to 4♥, passed back to South who will double again – primarily for take-out. If North introduces his four-card spade suit (far from unreasonably) he will turn an easy +300 into –100 or so. Does that mean his decision is wrong? I just don't know; normally, removing your partner's take-out double is the right thing to do!

**Board 25. E/W Vul. Dealer North.**

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

Any E/W pair equipped with some delicate modern science will be able to determine that they have no eight-card fit in spades, and play 3NT from the East seat rather than 4♠ by West. Normal defence yields only 11 tricks not 12 in 3NT, since the entries are not really right for a squeeze on South. However the odd pair may mess up the defence by leading a heart and not shifting to a club, or by succumbing to a pseudo-squeeze, to let East emerge with +690.

**Board 26. Game All. Dealer East.**

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

In third chair West may elect to open 3♣ not 4♣; if so, South will re-open with a take-out double, and leave North a choice of fatal options. Bidding to a major-suit game is the least expensive (on diamond leads 4♥ is down one trick, 4♠ down two, though both contracts come close on a club lead). 3NT is down three on a diamond lead, while if North passes out 3♣ doubled he might concede 670, unless South overtakes the ♥K lead to play spades through.

**Board 27. Love All. Dealer South.**

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

When South opens 1♣ most Norths will respond 1♦, and now East will bid INT – if that shows a strong no-trump – or double if that call would be unusual. In INT on a low club lead East will probably be held to six tricks (yes, perfect defence might take another trick but it will rarely be found). 2♥ by West will fare no better; again it looks like either one or two down. There will be few making contracts here.

**Board 28. N/S Vul. Dealer West.**

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

When North opens INT South's chunky diamonds and outside controls make him worth a shot at 3NT, but on a heart lead declarer will do very well to guess the diamonds. In fact North's best chance might come if West opens an undisciplined 3♣ preempt; now the play of the hand in 3NT becomes much easier, after ducking the first club. All things considered, a diamond partscore for +130 will probably not matchpoint so badly for N/S.

**Board 29. Game All. Dealer North.**

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

South will open 1♠ in third seat, and only the brave or foolhardy Wests will treat their hands as a Michaels Cuebid (hearts and another suit). If West stays low, N/S will play 4♠, where ten tricks should be achieved one way or another. By contrast, a 5♥ save by E/W only has four top losers, but the 4-0 trump split looks highly inconvenient, and I would expect a penalty of 800 to be almost inevitable.

**Board 30. Love All. Dealer East.**

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

South will open 1♦, West will overcall 2♣ (not a thing of beauty but what else can one do?) North will double, and East should bounce to 4♣. Really, that should end the auction -- neither North nor South is close to having the values to bid again -- and 4♣ will quietly drift down one trick. If South gambles with 4♠ over 1♣, he will turn a plus score into a minus, losing four top tricks.

**Board 31. N/S Vul. Dealer South.**

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

When South opens INT West will overcall 2♠, and now East will have to decide whether to drive to game, and whether to play spades or no-trumps. On this occasion 3♠ is easy, losing just the four aces, while no-trumps is expensive and unpleasant. If South is left to play INT on a spade lead he can escape for -100 (and perhaps a reasonable Board) by leading either a low club or heart from hand, and subsequently guessing the position in that suit.



**Board 32. E/W Vul. Dealer West.**

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

1♠ by North should be passed round to West, who should bravely balance with 2♣. That should not stop N/S buying the hand in a spade part-score; in fact the only defence to 4♠ is for East to lead a trump and for West to duck the trick, to retain an entry to play two more rounds of trumps later on. I doubt if that defence will be found frequently; more E/W pairs might buy the Board in 4♣, down just a trick when the diamond ruff gets away.