

A promotional banner for the IMG Summer 2026 Instant Matchpoint Game. The background is dark blue with a pattern of red hearts and black spades. On the left, a large blue spade contains the letters 'IMG' in a stylized, outlined font. Below this, the text 'SUMMER 2026' is in large, bold, white and yellow letters, followed by 'INSTANT MATCHPOINT GAME' in smaller white letters. To the right, a spiral of red hearts and black spades leads towards the center. Further right, the text 'A NEW SPIN ON A SPECIAL GAME' is in white. Below this, a blue horizontal bar contains the text 'Wed., July 22 - acbl.org/IMG' in white. At the bottom right, the text 'Morning or Afternoon Games' is in white.

IMG

A NEW SPIN ON A SPECIAL GAME

SUMMER 2026
INSTANT MATCHPOINT GAME

Wed., July 22 - acbl.org/IMG

Morning or Afternoon Games

Written analysis for the ACBL Instant Matchpoint Game by Joe Grill.



Joe Grill is the owner of 13 Top Tricks Bridge Club in Bellevue WA, one of the largest clubs in District 19. An ACBL tournament director since 2015, he splits his time between directing, playing and finding new ways to grow the local bridge community. Joe is a longtime competitive player, but he's equally focused on making the game more accessible to newcomers. Before bridge took over, he earned a doctorate in organic chemistry from Texas A&M University — a background that still shows up in his structured (and occasionally obsessive) approach to the game.



Board 1

Dealer: North Vul: None

		♠ A 5 2	
		♥ Q 4 3 2	
		♦ A 9 4	
		♣ J 8 7	
♠ K Q J 10 7 3	N		♠ 9 4
♥ 10 9 7 5	W	♠ † E	♥ A K
♦ J 3	S		♦ K 10 8 2
♣ 6			♣ K Q 10 3 2
		♠ 8 6	
		♥ J 8 6	
		♦ Q 7 6 5	
		♣ A 9 5 4	

NS: ♣6/5 ♦5 ♥6 ♠3 NT6

EW: 1♣ 1♦ 1♥ 4♠ 1NT

LoTT: 16 - 15 = +1

Par: -420 4♠-EW

EW 4♠; EW 1N; EW 1♥; EW 1♦; EW 1♣; Par -420

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 1	
150 to 190	99
50	93
-140	84
-170	68
-200	56
-420	31
-450	3

I think many E/W pairs will be in 2♠ and this can happen through several routes. East may choose to open 1NT, 1♣ or 1♦. Getting to game is easy via a Texas transfer if East opens 1NT. If a minor suit is opened, will East ever raise to 3♠ after West bids spades twice? I think it's close, but pass is reasonable. If they do invite game, West will accept with good spades and nice shape. North will probably lead a fourth-best heart. There are six losers – one spade, two hearts, two diamonds and one club. We're glad we're not in game when we see the dummy. However, there are several ways to bring in 10 tricks when the cards cooperate. 1NT openers and aggressive bidders are rewarded on this board with 69% of the matchpoints. The matchpoint table certainly suggests that a fair number of pairs were in game and a fair number opted for the partscore.

Board 2

Dealer: East Vul: N-S

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

NS: 1♣ 1♦ 1NT ♥6 ♠6

EW: -/1♥ 1♠ ♣6 ♦5/6 ♥6/7 NT6

LoTT: 14 - 14 = 0

Par: +90 1NT-NS

NS 1N; EW 1♠; W 1♥; NS 1♦; NS 1♣; Par +90

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1NT	All Pass	

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 2	
300.....	99
150.....	97
120.....	88
110.....	80
100.....	77
90.....	59
80.....	44
70.....	43
50.....	37
-100.....	20
-110.....	7
-190.....	3
-200.....	2

North is in 1NT, and East is likely to lead a small diamond here although a major-suit lead may also be attractive. We have a lot of queens and jacks to set up here if we hope to make this one. We play small from dummy and, much to our surprise, the 7 wins. West should signal count here—even number of diamonds because it's clear they have no values in diamonds. We have one diamond, two hearts and two spades. We need two more tricks. If only we had played the ♦9 from dummy at trick 1 we could try a spade finesse. If we play a small diamond towards the queen, East takes their king. A major suit is likely going to be returned and seven tricks are probably ours.

Board 3

Dealer: South Vul: E-W

		♠ A J 9 2		
		♥ 4 2		
		♦ A 10 2		
		♣ A 10 5 2		
♠ 8 4		N	♠ K 7 3	
♥ A Q 7	W	+	♥ K 10 9 6 5	
♦ Q 6 5 4	E		♦ K J 8	
♣ 9 7 6 4	S		♣ 8 3	
		♠ Q 10 6 5		
		♥ J 8 3		
		♦ 9 7 3		
		♣ K Q J		

NS: 1♣ 2♠ ♦6 ♥4 NT6

EW: 1♦ 3♥ ♣5 ♠4 NT6

LoTT: 17 - 16 = +1

Par: -100 3♠*-NS-1

EW 3♥; NS 2♠; EW 1♦; NS 1♣; Par -100: NS

3♠x-1

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 3	
200.....	99
140.....	82
130.....	67
120.....	66
110.....	50
100.....	34
90.....	29
-50.....	19
-100.....	10
-140.....	5
-150.....	3
-660 to -160.....	2
-720 to -670.....	1

A competitive auction leads us to 3♥ on this deal. Some may sell out to 2♠, but this is rarely a winning matchpoint strategy. No defense will defeat this contract unless the declarer draws three rounds of trump before ruffing a spade in dummy. It is curious that 3♥ making for E/W wins them 95% of the matchpoints here. Perhaps the vulnerability dissuaded E/W from competing to the three level. Perhaps some N/S pairs went to 3♠. Since the spade holding of N/S is clear, this seems unwise. Should the defense falter against 3♠, N/S will get a good board.

Board 4

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: West Vul: Both

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

NS: 4♣ 1♦ 1♠ 2NT ♥6

EW: 1/-♥ ♣2 ♦6 ♥7/6 ♠5 NT3

LoTT: 17 - 17 = 0

Par: +130 4♣-NS

NS 4♣; NS 2N; NS 1♠; E 1♥; NS 1♦; Par +130

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	Pass	1♣
Pass	1♥	Pass	3♣
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

After South shows long clubs and extra values, North tries 3NT. They are somewhat afraid of a diamond lead, but we need to try for the game with 10 HCP. The likely spade lead gives declarer the tempo on the hand. We take the first spade and try to drop the ♣Q. This fails but now the declarer has six clubs, three spades, one diamond and 68% of the match-points. If somehow South ends up as the declarer, West would lead a diamond, and this contract will be defeated on careful defense.

Board 4	
690.....	100
660.....	92
630.....	68
600.....	48
500 to 590	44
210 to 490	43
160 to 200	42
150.....	39
140.....	36
130.....	35
-100	19
-200	3
-300	0

Board 5

Dealer: North Vul: N-S

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

NS: 2♦ 1NT ♣6 ♥5 ♠5

EW: 1♣ 2♥ 1♠ ♦5 NT5

LoTT: 16 - 15 = +1

Par: -110 2♥-EW

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 5	
780.....	100
600.....	98
180.....	91
150.....	80
140.....	74
130.....	73
120.....	65
110.....	55
100.....	49
50.....	40
-100.....	29
-110.....	18
-140.....	12
-200.....	9
-300 to -210.....	6
-460 to -310.....	5
-470.....	3
-500.....	0

EW 2♥; NS 1N; NS 2♦; EW 1♠; EW 1♣; Par -110

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

Some players may upgrade South's 14-count and open 1NT. This may cause them to get too high. The simple auction suggested leads us to 1NT. East will lead the ♠10. North will duck in the dummy and the jack takes a trick. North will play diamonds and despite having five to the ace, the defense is only entitled to one trick in the suit. Once they take the ace, they can't make a switch that hurts the declarer. If they return a spade, the declarer will score at least eight tricks. If the declarer figures out that West has the ♣A and no spades left, at least nine tricks will be had by the declarer. The chances for a good matchpoint result for E/W seem dismal.

Board 6

Dealer: East Vul: E-W

		♠ K 7 4	
		♥ A Q 8 5	
		♦ A	
		♣ A Q J 9 3	
♠ A Q 8 3 2	N		♠ 9 6
♥ K 10 9 4	W $\frac{+}{-}$ E		♥ J 7 3
♦ Q 4 3	S		♦ K 9 6
♣ 10			♣ K 8 6 4 2
		♠ J 10 5	
		♥ 6 2	
		♦ J 10 8 7 5 2	
		♣ 7 5	

NS: 1♣ 2♦ ♥6 ♠5/6 NT6

EW: 1♥ -/1♠ ♣5/6 ♦5 ♠5/7 NT6

LoTT: 15 - 14 = +1

Par: +90 2♦-NS

NS 2♦; W 1♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +90

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 6	
400.....	99
200 to 390	98
140 to 190	97
130.....	96
120.....	94
110.....	87
100.....	80
90.....	79
-50	66
-100	41
-150	15
-190 to -160.....	3
-290 to -200.....	2
-490 to -300.....	1

North has the best hand but must wait their turn. After West opens 1♠, North can only double intending to bid again to show strength. While East has a few cards, they have only two spades and might take a wait-and-see approach here. South shows their bad hand by bidding 2♦ and I think most North players will bid 2NT to show a “balanced” 20 count. 3♦ should end the auction. The ♣10 is a reasonable lead. This seems like a singleton based on the dummy. Most North players will play the ace and draw one round of trumps. On the lay of the cards, the defense is likely to score the ♣K, a club ruff, two more trumps and the ♠A for down one. This turns out to be another decent matchpoint result for N/S. The only way E/W score over 50% is if they double 3♦ or if North gets the auction up too high. A cautious North will win this board.

Board 7

Dealer: South Vul: Both

	♠ Q 10 4	
	♥ Q 10 9 7 4	
	♦ 10	
	♣ J 9 3 2	
♠ 5 2	N	♠ A K 8 7
♥ J	W $\frac{+}{-}$ E	♥ A 8 6
♦ 9 7 6 4 2	S	♦ 8 5 3
♣ K Q 6 5 4		♣ A 10 8
	♠ J 9 6 3	
	♥ K 5 3 2	
	♦ A K Q J	
	♣ 7	

NS: 2♥ ♣3 ♦4 ♠6 NT6/5

EW: 3♣ 3♦ ♥4 ♠6 NT6

LoTT: 17 - 17 = 0

Par: -110 3♣-EW/3♦-EW

NS 2♥; EW 3♦; EW 3♣; Par -110

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 7	
620.....	100
500.....	97
200.....	90
170.....	83
140.....	79
110.....	73
100.....	65
-100.....	41
-130.....	18
-200.....	12
-500.....	5
-660 to -510.....	2
-700 to -670.....	1

South opens 1♦ and holding just a 5-count with a five-card heart suit, North responds 1♥. This is a bidder's game, so it usually doesn't pay to be too timid. While not perfect, East makes a takeout double, but South jumps to 3♥. I don't think you'll find many North players willing to go on. If East starts with the ♠AK and gives partner a ruff, there should be five tricks for E/W for an above-average result. Should North raise to game with a singleton in partner's first suit and a 5-count, then they will be punished.

Board 8

Dealer: West Vul: None

♠ A 4
 ♥ K 9 7 3
 ♦ Q 8 4 2
 ♣ A K 10

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

N
 W —+— E
 S

♠ J 6 3
 ♥ Q
 ♦ K 9 7 6 3
 ♣ Q 6 5 4

♠ K Q 10 8 7 5 2
 ♥ J 8 6
 ♦ J 5
 ♣ 9

NS: 2♣ 4♦ 1♥ 4NT ♠5
 EW: 2♠ ♣5 ♦2 ♥6 NT3
 LoTT: 18 - 17 = +1
 Par: +430 4NT-NS

NS 4N; NS 4♦; EW 2♠; NS 2♣; NS 1♥; Par +430

West	North	East	South
Pass	1NT	3♠	All Pass

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 8	
530.....	100
500.....	97
430.....	94
400.....	88
310 to 390	83
190 to 300	82
180.....	81
150.....	77
140.....	74
130.....	71
120.....	68
110.....	67
100.....	59
50.....	43
-50	29
-100.....	23
-110	21
-140	15
-170 to -150.....	10
-290 to -180.....	9
-460 to -300.....	8
-490 to -470.....	7
-520 to -500.....	6
-530	3
-570	0

The result on this board will hinge on what action East takes over a strong 1NT by North. If they use a convention to show a single suit, N/S may find their game. If they bid a cowardly 2♠, N/S may find 3NT. If they make a plain old 3♠ preempt, then that will probably shut South out of the auction and buy the contract. If the singleton ♥Q is captured, it looks like just down one for E/W. Should N/S get the contract in 3NT, then there are paths to nine tricks and a nice result.

Board 9

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: North Vul: E-W

		♠ 8 5		
		♥ 7 5 2		
		♦ A J 10 5		
		♣ Q 9 8 2		
♠ A J 7 6 4		N	♠ 10 3	
♥ J 10 6 4	W	+	♥ A	
♦ 9	E		♦ K Q 7 6 4 3 2	
♣ 7 6 4	S		♣ A 10 5	
		♠ K Q 9 2		
		♥ K Q 9 8 3		
		♦ 8		
		♣ K J 3		

NS: 1♣ 2♥ 2/1NT ♦5 ♠6/5

EW: 2♦ 1♠ ♣5 ♥5 NT5

LoTT: 16 - 16 = 0

Par: +120 2NT-N

N 2N; NS 2♥; S 1N; EW 2♦; EW 1♠; NS 1♣; Par +120

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

Board 9	
800.....	99
530 to 790	97
510 to 520	96
500.....	92
300.....	88
200.....	79
140 to 190	70
120 to 130	69
110.....	67
100.....	59
-50	44
-90	31
-100	20
-110	11
-140 to -120	10
-170 to -150	9
-180	7
-300	3
-500	0

A split deck leads to a very competitive auction. Will South sell out and let E/W play 3♦ or will their singleton diamond compel them to compete to 3♥? It seems that both three-level contracts are doomed to down one as long as the defense doesn't fumble. Whichever side goes plus here wins the majority of the matchpoints.

Board 10

Dealer: East Vul: Both

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 10	
300.....	100
200.....	97
140.....	93
110.....	76
100.....	58
-100.....	51
-110.....	29
-120.....	11
-130.....	10
-140.....	8
-150.....	6
-180.....	2

NS: 2♦ 2♥ ♣4 ♠5 NT5

EW: 3♣ 2♠ 1NT ♦5 ♥5

LoTT: 17 - 17 = 0

Par: -110 2♠-EW/3♣-EW

EW 2♠; NS 2♥; EW 3♣; EW 1N; NS 2♦; Par -110

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

This board is also likely to be a competitive auction. West may consider several calls over the 1♥ opening by South. Double, 1NT and 2♣ are all possible depending on your style. I think many will lean towards 2♣. Both sides may swiftly find their fit under this scenario. East may decide to pass 2♣ but if they do, this is unlikely to be a good board for E/W. If E/W do manage to compete to 3♣ it looks like nine tricks are easy to obtain.

Board 11

Dealer: South Vul: None

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

NS: 3/4♣ -/1♦ 3♥ 2/3♠ 2/4NT ♦6/7

EW: ♣2 ♦6 ♥3/4 ♠3/4 NT3

LoTT: 16 - 16 = 0

Par: +430 4NT-S

S 4N; S 3♠; NS 3♥; S 4♣; N 2N; N 2♠; N 3♣; S 1♦;

Par +430

West	North	East	South
			1♥
1♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl
Pass	Pass	???	

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 11	
1000.....	99
800.....	97
610 to 790	95
510 to 600	94
500.....	88
460.....	81
430.....	70
300.....	60
230 to 290	58
210 to 220	57
200.....	51
170.....	42
160.....	40
150.....	39
140.....	28
130.....	17
120.....	15
110.....	13
100.....	9
-50.....	3
-100.....	0

Can E/W escape the trap? If North successfully trap passes and South reopens the auction with a double, can East help get his poor partner out of trouble? If redouble by East is SOS, will West choose 2♦? Will N/S bid on in this scenario? Will they double? The results on this one are going to be all over the place.

Board 12

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: West Vul: N-S

	♠ J 10 9 2	
	♥ Q 7 3	
	♦ A K 8 2	
	♣ J 5	
♠ Q 4	N	♠ A K 7 6 3
♥ J 6	W + E	♥ A 10 9 5
♦ Q 9 7 4	S	♦ J 3
♣ A 10 8 7 6		♣ K 9
	♠ 8 5	
	♥ K 8 4 2	
	♦ 10 6 5	
	♣ Q 4 3 2	

Board 12	
170.....	100
100.....	98
50.....	95
-110.....	87
-140.....	52
-150.....	21
-160.....	20
-170.....	15
-400.....	6
-420 to -410.....	3
-490 to -430.....	2
-1090 to -500.....	1

NS: ♣4 ♦4 ♥4 ♠4 NT4

EW: 3♣ 3♦ 3♥ 3♠ 3NT

LoTT: 13 - 14 = -1

Par: -400 3NT-EW

EW 3N; EW 3♠; EW 3♥; EW 3♦; EW 3♣; Par -400

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

I don't think many will get to 3NT on this hand. This will hinge on whether West upgrades their 9-count. Once they discover they have doubletons in both of partner's suits, I think they will just settle for 2♠. If they are aggressive and bid 2NT after partner's 2♥ call they will certainly get a raise to game. 3NT does come in, and on this hand, the aggressive pairs are rewarded.

Board 13

Dealer: North Vul: Both

		♠ K J 9 8 4		
		♥ Q 3		
		♦ K 7		
		♣ A K 7 3		
♠ Q 10 5		N	♠ A 6 2	
♥ J 6 2	W	+	♥ K 9	E
♦ Q 10 8 6 3		S	♦ A 9 5 4	
♣ 9 2			♣ Q J 10 5	
		♠ 7 3		
		♥ A 10 8 7 5 4		
		♦ J 2		
		♣ 8 6 4		

NS: 2♣ 2♥ 2♠ ♦5 NT6

EW: 1/2♦ ♣5 ♥3/4 ♠5 NT5/6

LoTT: 16 - 17 = -1

Par: +110 2♥-NS/2♠-NS

NS 2♠; NS 2♥; W 2♦; NS 2♣; E 1♦; Par +110

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 13	
870.....	99
300 to 860	98
210 to 290	97
200.....	96
170.....	94
140.....	82
130.....	72
120.....	71
110.....	56
80 to 100	41
-90 to 70	40
-100.....	28
-200.....	11
-300.....	5
-400.....	3
-600.....	0

After a spade opening by North, East doesn't have a call. South can bid 1NT forcing, and when partner rebids 2♣, South will try to signoff at 2♥. Should North give in to temptation and bid further, disaster awaits them. Making 2♥ will be slightly easier when West leads a diamond because West is unlikely to be underleading the ace. Making eight tricks in hearts is slightly above average.

Board 14

Dealer: East Vul: None

		♠ J 4 3 2	
		♥ K J 6 4	
		♦ 7 6 5 3	
		♣ A	
♠ A Q 9 5			♠ 7 6
♥ 7	N		♥ A 9 3
♦ 10 9	W $\frac{1}{2}$ E		♦ A K J 4
♣ J 10 8 6 4 2	S		♣ K Q 9 7
		♠ K 10 8	
		♥ Q 10 8 5 2	
		♦ Q 8 2	
		♣ 5 3	

NS: ♣1 ♦4 ♥6 ♠5 NT3

EW: 6♣ 3♦ 2♠ 2NT ♥6

LoTT: 18 - 19 = -1

Par: -920 6♣-EW

EW 6♣; EW 2N; EW 2♠; EW 3♦; Par -920

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 14	
200.....	100
50.....	82
-110.....	63
-120.....	57
-150.....	48
-160.....	47
-170.....	34
-180.....	20
-410.....	17
-420.....	11
-430.....	5
-920.....	2

After East opens 1NT, West will be right on the edge. West isn't good enough for Stayman here. If the E/W pair plays four-suit transfers and opener has a way to show good clubs after the transfer, the pair may wander into a hopeless 3NT. South's heart lead dooms 3NT and N/S get 82%. Could West override partner's 3NT and go to 5♣? Perhaps. However, if they're wrong, they're sure to get an earful during the post-mortem at the bar. Should E/W play it conservatively and play 3♣ they'll come in with 12 tricks and a good result. I think a few pairs might find 5♣ on this deal.

Board 15

Dealer: South Vul: N-S

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

NS: 3♣ 2♦ 3♥ 5♠ 3NT
 EW: ♣3 ♦5 ♥3 ♠2 NT2
 LoTT: 16 - 16 = 0
 Par: +650 5♠-NS

NS 5♠; NS 3N; NS 3♥; NS 3♣; NS 2♦; Par +650

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

The pairs that find their spade fit on this hand should easily come home with 11 tricks for 58% of the matchpoints. To get there, we just need new minor forcing or a similar convention to discover our fit. There's not much to the play here, just two losing trumps. 3NT is a much less friendly contract on a diamond lead and will only deliver nine tricks for a terrible result.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 15	
680.....	98
670.....	96
660.....	94
650.....	58
640.....	25
630.....	21
620.....	16
610.....	15
600.....	9
160 to 590	2
-190 to 150	1

Board 16

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: West Vul: E-W

	♠ K 10 9 8 7	
	♥ 5 4	
	♦ A 10 7	
	♣ 10 5 2	
♠ Q 5	N	♠ A 6
♥ K 9 7 6	W $\frac{+}{-}$ E	♥ A Q 10 8 3
♦ K J 5 3	S	♦ 9 8 6 4
♣ K 8 7		♣ Q 6
	♠ J 4 3 2	
	♥ J 2	
	♦ Q 2	
	♣ A J 9 4 3	

Board 16	
200.....	97
100.....	75
-100.....	53
-140.....	47
-190 to -150.....	44
-290 to -200.....	43
-300.....	38
-500.....	29
-620.....	18
-650.....	9
-800.....	3

NS: 2♣ 1♠ ♦3 ♥4 NT5

EW: 3♦ 3♥ 1/2NT ♣5 ♠5

LoTT: 16 - 18 = -2

Par: -140 3♥-EW

EW 3♥; W 2N; EW 3♦; E 1N; NS 2♣; NS 1S;

Par -140

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

A routine auction ends in routine disappointment for E/W. I think most pairs will swiftly arrive at a game in hearts. Unfortunately the declarer has one losing spade, one losing club and two losing diamonds. Turns out the ♦10 is REALLY key here. Down one is average. Should the defense falter, they'll give E/W a top.

Board 17

Dealer: North Vul: None

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

NS: ♣4 ♦6 ♥2 ♠5 NT5
 EW: 3♣ 1♦ 5♥ 2/1♠ 2NT
 LoTT: 17 - 16 = +1
 Par: -450 5♥-EW

EW 5♥; EW 2N; E 2♠; EW 3♣; W 1♠; EW 1♦;
 Par -450

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1♥	Pass	2♥	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 17	
100.....	97
50.....	92
-110 to 0.....	89
-150 to -120.....	88
-170 to -160.....	87
-200 to -180.....	86
-410 to -210.....	85
-420.....	53
-450.....	10
-500.....	0

After opening 1♥ and hearing 2♥ from partner, West raises to game. They don't need much from partner to bring this one home. I don't think many will find an overtrick.

Board 18

Dealer: East Vul: N-S

	♠ 10 9 6	
	♥ K 4	
	♦ 9 8 4 3 2	
	♣ K 7 4	
♠ Q 7 2	N	♠ A K 8 4
♥ A Q 5 2	W $\frac{+}{-}$ E	♥ 10 9 3
♦ 10	S	♦ J 7
♣ Q J 9 8 5		♣ A 10 6 2
	♠ J 5 3	
	♥ J 8 7 6	
	♦ A K Q 6 5	
	♣ 3	

NS: 2♦ ♣1 ♥3 ♠2 NT3
EW: 5♣ 3♥ 5♠ 2NT ♦5
LoTT: 19 - 19 = 0
Par: -450 5♠-EW

EW 5♠; EW 5♣; EW 3♥; EW 2N; NS 2♦; Par -450

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♦
1♥	3♦	Pass	Pass
4♣	All Pass		

MATCHPOINT
TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 18	
150.....	98
100.....	94
50.....	85
-90 to 0.....	80
-110 to -100.....	79
-120.....	77
-130.....	74
-140.....	69
-150.....	59
-160.....	50
-170.....	49
-180.....	47
-190.....	46
-200.....	41
-290 to -210.....	36
-390 to -300.....	35
-400.....	26
-410.....	18
-420.....	13
-430.....	7
-440.....	6
-450.....	4
-790 to -460.....	2
-1090 to -800.....	1

East will open this 12-count and the auction quickly becomes competitive. When North makes a preemptive raise to 3♦, East has nothing left to say. South knows to keep quiet. The real decision belongs to West. There's likely no heart fit, but we know we have clubs. Most players can't stomach letting the opponents play 3♦ here. Regardless of what decision West chooses, they are unlikely to hear another bid from their partner. 5♣ seems risky, but it looks like the only way to win the board. Perhaps some N/S pairs competed in diamonds to the four level and talked their opponents into the club game.

Board 19

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: South Vul: E-W

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

NS: 1♥ ♣4 ♦5 ♠5 NT5

EW: 2/1♣ 2♦ 2♠ 2/-NT ♥6/5 NT8/6

LoTT: 15 - 15 = 0

Par: -120 2NT-E

E 2N; EW 2♠; EW 2♦; E 2♣; NS 1♥; W 1♣; Par -120

Board 19	
500.....	100
400.....	98
300.....	94
200.....	83
150 to 190	75
120 to 140	74
110.....	73
100.....	63
80 to 90	53
-40 to 70	52
-50	46
-90	39
-100	34
-110	24
-120	17
-130	16
-140	13
-150	6
-200	2
-300	0

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

The auction on this hand can go a few different ways. Some South players may choose a 1NT opening, while others will choose 1♥. This is going to be a battle for a partscore. I think many pairs will land in 2♥. How will the defense start? I like to have an agreement that the lead of the king, followed by the ace shows A-K tight. I think many E/W defenders will find the club switch after that. The chances of making eight tricks now seem dim, as the declarer can't even get to dummy to attempt the winning heart finesse. Down one looks like about average for N/S.

Board 20

Dealer: West Vul: Both

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

NS: 2♣ 3♠ ♦4 ♥5/4 NT6

EW: 3♦ 2♥ 1NT ♣5 ♠3

LoTT: 18 - 18 = 0

Par: +140 3♠-NS

NS 3♠; EW 2♥; EW 3♦; EW 1N; NS 2♣; Par +140

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 20	
1400.....	100
1100.....	96
930 to 1090	92
800 to 920	91
790.....	88
500.....	82
410 to 490	79
310 to 400	78
300.....	74
200.....	66
180 to 190	61
150 to 170	60
140.....	59
100.....	54
-100	49
-110	46
-200	35
-500	15
-670	6
-790 to 680	4
-1090 to -800	3
-1100	2
-1600	0

East will certainly open this hand, and the auction becomes competitive. West will have a chance to show hearts with a negative double if South overcalls and they will likely end up in a disastrous heart game. If South leads a spade, East can discard a club. When they draw trumps, they get some bad news. The diamonds also are unfriendly, so 10 tricks are not coming in. Down two is not a good result for E/W. Should they not be so aggressive and end up at 3♥, an average result awaits them.

Board 21

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
 points

Dealer: North Vul: N-S

	♠ J 10 2	
	♥ K 9 7 5 2	
	♦ 6 5	
	♣ 9 6 3	
♠ Q 9 3	N	♠ 8 7 6 5 4
♥ A Q 6	W $\frac{+}{-}$ E	♥ J 4
♦ K Q 8	S	♦ 10 9 2
♣ A 5 4 2		♣ K J 7
	♠ A K	
	♥ 10 8 3	
	♦ A J 7 4 3	
	♣ Q 10 8	

NS: 2♥ ♣5 ♦6 ♠5 NT4

EW: 1♣ 1♦ 2♠ 1NT ♥5

LoTT: 16 - 16 = 0

Par: -110 2♠-EW

Board 21	
300.....	100
140.....	98
110.....	91
100.....	82
50.....	72
-90.....	61
-100.....	56
-110.....	40
-120.....	23
-130.....	21
-140.....	13
-150.....	4
-200 to -160.....	3
-490 to -210.....	2
-500.....	1

EW 2♠; NS 2♥; EW 1N; EW 1♦; EW 1♣; Par -110

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

I think almost every E/W pair is going to be in 2♠ on this hand. It looks like declarer will lose one diamond, one heart, one club and two spades.

Board 22

Dealer: East Vul: E-W

		♠ K 10	
		♥ 8 3	
		♦ K J 4	
		♣ A J 10 9 5 4	
♠ Q 9 7 5			♠ A 6 2
♥ K 4	N		♥ A J 9 6
♦ 9 8 6 5 3 2	W - + E		♦ Q 10 7
♣ Q	S		♣ 7 6 3
		♠ J 8 4 3	
		♥ Q 10 7 5 2	
		♦ A	
		♣ K 8 2	

NS: 4♣ 2♥ 1♠ 3NT ♦4

EW: 2/3♦ ♣3 ♥5 ♠6 NT4

LoTT: 19 - 18 = +1

Par: +200 4♦*-W-1

NS 3N; NS 4♣; NS 2♥; W 3♦; E 2♦; NS 1♠;

Par +200: W 4♦x-1

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
Pass	1♣	Pass	1♥
Pass	2♣	All Pass	

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 22	
1100.....	100
430.....	94
400.....	85
210 to 390	80
190 to 200	79
180.....	78
150.....	74
140.....	70
130.....	48
120.....	28
110.....	24
100.....	19
50 to 90	18
0.....	16
-50	12
-110	6
-200 to -120.....	5
-380 to -210.....	4
-660 to -390.....	3
-670	2
-870	0

After North opens 1♣ in fourth seat and then rebids clubs, South should quickly lose interest in going much higher. Some South players may raise clubs but North will likely pass and miss the magical 3NT contract. East is likely to lead a diamond which doesn't really help declarer much. Will the declarer pick up an important inference from the lead? East didn't lead the unbid major here because they hold the ace. Finessing the ♠10 will yield the overtrick for an average board. Finessing the king instead will fail, resulting in a dismal result for N/S.

Board 23

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: South Vul: Both

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

NS: 4♦ 2♥ 3♠ 1NT ♣5

EW: 1♣ ♦3 ♥5 ♠3 NT5

LoTT: 17 - 18 = -1

Par: +140 3♠-NS

Board 23	
670.....	99
660.....	98
630.....	95
620.....	91
610.....	87
600.....	85
240 to 590	82
170 to 230	81
150 to 160	80
140.....	79
130.....	76
120.....	72
110.....	68
-100	52
-200	30
-300	12
-400	2

NS 3♠; NS 4♦; NS 2♥; NS 1N; EW 1♣; Par +140

West	North	East	South
			Pass
Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT
Pass	3NT	All Pass	

Some South players may choose to open with an 11-count. If they do, game will be reached quickly. If South chooses to pass, I think N/S will still arrive at a game. South can bid a non-forcing 2♦ after North opens or make an invitational 2NT call. A forcing or semi-forcing 1NT is also possible depending on your methods. Either way, North will bid the game in notrump. An interesting quirk here: Should the North player end up as declarer, East will lead a devastating club which easily defeats the contract by two tricks so long as West doesn't block the club suit. However, should South end up as the declarer, a heart lead seems inevitable. The declarer now has eight tricks and a shot at nine if the defense doesn't figure out a club switch when they get in with the ♦A.

Board 24

Dealer: West Vul: None

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

NS: ♣3 ♦3 ♥4 ♠3 NT3
 EW: 4♣ 4♦ 2♥ 4♠ 2NT
 LoTT: 14 - 17 = -3
 Par: -420 4♠-EW

EW 4♠; EW 4♦; EW 4♣; EW 2N; EW 2♥; Par -420

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 24	
150.....	100
100.....	97
50.....	81
-80 to 0.....	67
-100 to -90.....	66
-110.....	65
-120.....	54
-130.....	40
-140.....	35
-150.....	31
-160.....	27
-170.....	24
-180.....	19
-190.....	16
-200.....	15
-390 to -210.....	14
-400.....	12
-410.....	10
-420.....	9
-430.....	6
-460.....	3
-500 to -470.....	2
-790 to -510.....	1

Most E/W pairs will arrive at some partscore here. The cards are very friendly for E/W with just about every finesse working. North will likely lead a heart against notrump. There are two hearts and one diamond for declarer. They will likely set up spades first for three tricks, then promote a club and finesse a diamond for eight tricks. Aggressive 3NT contracts will not be rewarded here. Should a diamond partscore be found, E/W will be rewarded. However, we generally don't seek minor-suit contracts unless there's a serious flaw with notrump.

Board 25

Dealer: North Vul: E-W

		♠ J 5			
		♥ AK 9 8 5			
		♦ A Q 10			
		♣ 10 9 5			
♠ K 9 8 6 4		N		♠ A 10 7	
♥ 7		W	+	♥ Q J 3 2	
♦ 9 6 3		—	E	♦ K J 7 5 4	
♣ Q 7 4 2		S		♣ J	
		♠ Q 3 2			
		♥ 10 6 4			
		♦ 8 2			
		♣ AK 8 6 3			

NS: 2♣ 2♥ 1/-NT ♦5/4 ♠5/4 NT7/6

EW: 2♦ 2♠ ♣5 ♥5 NT6

LoTT: 16 - 16 = 0

Par: -100 2NT*-N/3♣*-NS/3♥*-NS-1

EW 2♠; NS 2♥; N 1N; EW 2♦; NS 2♣; Par -100:

N 2Nx-1; NS 3♣x-1; NS 3♥x-1

West	North	East	South
	1♥	2♦	2♥

All Pass

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 25	
500.....	98
440 to 490	97
410 to 430	96
400.....	94
200 to 390	91
160 to 190	90
150.....	89
140.....	84
130.....	79
120.....	78
110.....	67
100.....	56
-50.....	44
-100	25
-150	12
-200	8
-290 to -210.....	7
-500 to -300.....	6
-600 to -510.....	5
-660 to -610.....	4
-720 to -670.....	3
-860 to -730.....	2
-870	1

N/S pairs quickly find their heart fit. Will West raise partner's diamond overcall? Probably not at these colors. While we hate to roll over and let the opponents play 2♥, the three level looks unattractive. Against a heart contract, most will lead the singleton club. Once in control, the declarer can set up a diamond ruff in the dummy. The finesse is unlikely to work, so we don't take it. We lose a diamond to set up the ruff in dummy. East is now in a tight spot. They don't want to play a trump or a diamond. A spade is equally unappealing. Most defenders will get two hearts, one diamond and two spades. Can E/W push their opponents up higher? Maybe ... and if they do, they'll get a majority of the matchpoints.

Board 26

Dealer: East Vul: Both

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

NS: 2♥ 3♠ ♣0 ♦1 NT1
 EW: 6♣ 4♦ 2NT ♥3 ♠3
 LoTT: 21 - 19 = +2
 Par: -800 6♠*-NS-3

EW 6♣; NS 3♠; EW 4♦; EW 2N; NS 2♥;
 Par -800: NS 6♠x-3

West	North	East	South
		1♣	1♥
2♣	Dbl	3♣	3♥
Pass?			

There is a lot of distribution on this hand which can lead to some very exciting auctions. The opening call is the only one that's 100% clear. Will South merely overcall at the one level? Probably. Will West raise clubs, double or pass? Will North get a chance to show spades? Will South support those spades or double down on their seven-card heart suit? As you can see from the matchpoint table, the spread of results obtained was quite varied. The only way I see E/W getting to a slam is if N/S talks them into it. Find the ♦Q, and 12 tricks are yours.

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 26	
990.....	100
850 to 980	99
800 to 840	98
790.....	97
650.....	92
620.....	86
170.....	82
140.....	79
-100	70
-150	60
-160	57
-170	56
-180	54
-190	51
-200	44
-300 to -210.....	40
-400 to -310.....	39
-490 to -410.....	38
-500	37
-600	32
-610	28
-620	27
-630	26
-640	23
-680 to -650.....	20
-740 to -690.....	19
-750	17
-800 to -760.....	15
-900 to -810.....	14
-910	13
-950 to -920.....	12
-1100 to -960.....	11
-1140 to -1110... ..	10
-1150	7
-1370 to -1160.....	4
-1390 to -1380.....	3
-1530 to -1400.....	2
-1730 to -1540.....	1

Board 27

Dealer: South Vul: None

	♠ 4 3 2		
	♥ 8 6 4		
	♦ A K 8 5		
	♣ J 7 2		
♠ A J 8	N	♠ K Q 7 6	
♥ K	W $\frac{1}{2}$ E	♥ A 10 7 5 2	
♦ 10 9 3 2	S	♦ Q 7 4	
♣ A Q 8 4 3		♣ K	
	♠ 10 9 5		
	♥ Q J 9 3		
	♦ J 6		
	♣ 10 9 6 5		

NS: ♣3 ♦3 ♥3 ♠2 NT3/2

EW: 4♣ 4♦ 3♥ 4♠ 4NT

LoTT: 13 - 14 = -1

Par: -430 4NT-EW

EW 4N; EW 4♠; EW 3♥; EW 4♦; EW 4♣; Par -430

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

West has a slight rebid problem if they open 1♣. If their partner happens to respond 1♠ what's their plan? I suppose I would bid 2♠ if that happened. Today, East responds 1♥, and West rebids a slightly uncomfortable 1NT. This is the perfect time for new minor forcing. With no majors to show and a max 1NT rebid, most will raise to 3NT. On a diamond lead, we have 10 tricks for sure. This result is only 43% for E/W. They will need to get one more overtrick for the top result. Sometimes matchpoint scoring seems unfair!

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 27	
300.....	100
-170.....	98
-400.....	95
-410.....	92
-420.....	90
-430.....	57
-460.....	14

Board 28

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: West Vul: N-S

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

NS: 1♦ 5♥ 6♠ 4NT ♣5

EW: 2♣ ♦6 ♥1 ♠1 NT1

LoTT: 20 - 19 = +1

Par: +1100 7♣*-EW-5

NS 6♠; NS 5♥; NS 4N; EW 2♣; NS 1♦;

Par +1100: EW 7♣x-5

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

Board 28	
1860.....	100
1460 to 1850	99
1440 to 1450	98
1430.....	97
1110 to 1420	95
850 to 1100	94
720 to 840	93
710.....	91
680.....	67
650.....	28
620 to 640	12
510 to 610	11
500.....	9
310 to 490	7
230 to 300	6
200 to 220	5
-90 to 190	4
-100	2

Based on the matchpoint table, very few players attempted a slam. I like making a strong takeout double with South's hand. You're in the balancing seat and have tremendous playing strength. West will probably rebid their diamonds, unaware of the potential disaster awaiting them. North can bid 2NT here to show diamonds stopped and some values. South can immediately go to 4♠ now. When the ♦K is led and a losing club is discarded, how do we fare? Will South realize that East is broke? Will they forgo both finesses and drop the stiff ♠K? Making 12 tricks is a decent result for N/S. Making only 11 tricks is a dismal result! If you bid 6♠ and dropped the ♠K, congratulations, you earned your top!

Board 29

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: North Vul: Both

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

NS: 4♠ 2NT ♣6 ♦6 ♥6

EW: 1♣ 1♦ ♥6 ♠3 NT5

LoTT: 17 - 17 = 0

Par: +620 4♠-NS

NS 4♠; NS 2N; EW 1♦; EW 1♣; Par +620

West	North	East	South
	1♣	Pass	1♠
Pass	1NT	Pass	4♠
All Pass			

Not a very exciting hand. With South's big spade suit, most will reach the spade game. Ten tricks is worth exactly 50% as long as you bid the game. If either side makes a serious error, the result will be catastrophic.

Board 29	
990.....	100
790.....	98
650.....	88
620.....	50
200.....	21
170.....	13
140.....	5
-100.....	3
-200.....	0

Board 30

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: East Vul: None

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

Board 30	
50.....	87
-170.....	71
-180 to -290.....	67
-390 to -300.....	66
-400.....	65
-410.....	64
-420.....	34
-440 to -430.....	3
-580 to -450.....	2
-660 to -590.....	1

NS: 3♣ 2♦ 2♠ ♥3 NT4

EW: 3♥ 2NT ♣4 ♦5 ♠4

LoTT: 18 - 18 = 0

Par: -100 3♠*-NS/4♣*-NS-1

EW 3♥; EW 2N; NS 2♠; NS 3♣; NS 2♦; Par -100: NS 3♠x-1; NS 4♣x-1

West	North	East	South
		1♣	Pass
1♥	Pass	1NT	Pass
4♥	All Pass		

With seven hearts, will West just raise to game? I think many will. Even a 3♥ invitation should be accepted by the opener. Can the defenders beat it? The opening lead will determine the result on this board. The declarer has one losing spade, one losing club and three losing diamonds. If a spade is led, there will be no spade for the defense. All that remains now is to set up a club for a discard of a losing diamond. If the defense breaks diamonds, that will also get rid of a diamond loser.

Board 31

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: South Vul: N-S

	♠ 5 4 3	
	♥ A K 7	
	♦ 10 7 4	
	♣ Q 9 5 3	
♠ J	N	♠ K 10 9
♥ J 9 8 4 2	W $\frac{+}{-}$ E	♥ Q 6 5 3
♦ A Q J 9	S	♦ K 8 3 2
♣ 10 8 2		♣ 7 6
	♠ A Q 8 7 6 2	
	♥ 10	
	♦ 6 5	
	♣ A K J 4	

NS: 4♣ 4♠ 2NT ♦5 ♥5

EW: 1♦ 2♥ ♣2 ♠2 NT5

LoTT: 18 - 18 = 0

Par: +500 5♥*-EW-3

NS 4♠; NS 4♣; NS 2N; EW 2♥; EW 1♦; Par +500: EW 5♥x-3

West	North	East	South
			1♠
Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠
Pass	4♠	All Pass	

4♠ is a very reasonable place to land here. Depending on the N/S methods, they should have a way to invite after 2♠. Many pairs will use a simple 3♠ call. Poor West – a diamond lead would hold it to 10 tricks but few will find that lead. Once South gets control, they can use a heart to ditch a losing diamond.

Board 32

Dealer: West Vul: E-W

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

NS: 1♦ ♣6 ♥5 ♠3 NT4

EW: 1♣ 2♥ 3♠ 3NT ♦5/6

LoTT: 16 - 16 = 0

Par: -500 4♦*-NS-3

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 32	
470.....	100
200.....	91
110.....	83
100.....	61
-100.....	36
-140.....	33
-190 to -150.....	31
-290 to -200.....	30
-300.....	29
-500.....	24
-600.....	20
-610.....	19
-620.....	12
-800.....	3
-1400.....	0

EW 3N; EW 3♠; EW 2♥; NS 1♦; EW 1♣; Par -500: NS 4♦x-3

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

A routine 1NT opening will lead to a routine 4♠ contract. After finding a spade fit, the East hand goes up in value because of their singleton diamond. A very unfortunate lay of the cards will doom the declarer. Unless the defense makes a serious error, it seems that they declarer will lose two hearts, one diamond and one club. Their disappointment will only last until they see the matchpoint table. Down one is worth 64% of the matchpoints for E/W.

Board 33

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
 points

Dealer: North Vul: None

	♠ 9 4 3		
	♥ A K 10 7		
	♦ J 9		
	♣ 9 7 4 2		
♠ A J 10 7	N	♠ K Q 8	
♥ 6 5 4 2	W $\frac{1}{2}$ E	♥ Q 8 3	
♦ Q 5	S	♦ K 4	
♣ A 6 3		♣ K Q J 10 5	
	♠ 6 5 2		
	♥ J 9		
	♦ A 10 8 7 6 3 2		
	♣ 8		

Board 33	
100.....	99
50.....	97
-100.....	92
-130.....	89
-140.....	88
-300 to -150.....	87
-400 to -310.....	86
-410.....	85
-420.....	84
-430.....	41
-460.....	0

NS: 2♦ ♣3 ♥4 ♠3 NT3

EW: 3♣ 2♥ 3♠ 4NT ♦5

LoTT: 17 - 17 = 0

Par: -430 4NT-EW

EW 4N; EW 3♠; EW 2♥; EW 3♣; NS 2♦; Par -430

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1NT	2♦
3♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass

East will open a routine 1NT. South's call will depend on their available methods, but I think most will want to get in the mix. If they overcall a natural 2♦, then West will use lebensohl and bid 3♦: This is Stayman with game-going values and no diamond stopper. East bids 3NT and hopes their K-x will be enough. Even without lebensohl, E/W should end up at 3NT without any difficulty. On a diamond lead, the declarer will take 10 tricks for 59% of the matchpoints. What happens if South bids 3♦ instead? Is a double by West takeout or penalty? This might be a matter of partnership agreement. If it's takeout, E/W will probably land in 3NT. If it's penalty, E/W will be disappointed when they see the result.

Board 34

Dealer: East Vul: N-S

	♠ A 5 4 3	
	♥ K 7	
	♦ A 9 6 5 2	
	♣ 10 8	
♠ J 2	N	♠ 7
♥ A J 8 4	W $\frac{+}{-}$ E	♥ 10 9 6 3
♦ 10 7	S	♦ K 8 4 3
♣ A Q 7 6 4		♣ K 9 3 2
	♠ K Q 10 9 8 6	
	♥ Q 5 2	
	♦ Q J	
	♣ J 5	

NS: 2♦ 3♠ 1NT ♣3 ♥3

EW: 4♣ 4♥ ♦5 ♠4 NT6

LoTT: 19 - 19 = 0

Par: -200 4♠*-NS-1

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 34	
790.....	100
650.....	98
620.....	93
310 to 610	89
200 to 300	88
170 to 190	87
150 to 160	86
140.....	81
100.....	66
-100.....	32
-130 to -110.....	9
-160 to -140.....	8
-190 to -170.....	7
-200.....	4
-420.....	1

EW 4♥; NS 3♠; EW 4♣; NS 1N; NS 2♦; Par -200: NS 4♠x-1

West	North	East	South
		Pass	1♠
2♣	3♣	Pass	3♠
All Pass			

After South opens 1♠ most West players will overcall 2♣. When North cuebids, I'm not sure many East players will find a 4♣ call. A handful might compete to 4♣ but I would be worried about talking N/S into a game. Too bad E/W will likely not find their heart fit on this auction. South should show a minimum hand after the cuebid and that may end the auction. If pressed by a 4♣ call, N/S may bid 4♠ but unless the defense makes an error this will not make. If N/S is allowed to play 3♠ it's a nice result for them. If they allow E/W to make 4♣, it's a nice result for E/W.

Board 35

Dealer: South Vul: E-W

	♠ 5	
	♥ Q 9 7 6 2	
	♦ Q J 5	
	♣ J 10 7 4	
♠ A K J 9 6 3	N	♠ Q 10 7
♥ J 4	W $\frac{1}{2}$ E	♥ A K 5 3
♦ A 10 8	S	♦ K 6 4 2
♣ 6 5		♣ 9 3
	♠ 8 4 2	
	♥ 10 8	
	♦ 9 7 3	
	♣ A K Q 8 2	

NS: 2♣ ♦3 ♥6 ♠2 NT3
 EW: 4♦ 1♥ 5♠ 2NT ♣5
 LoTT: 19 - 18 = +1
 Par: -650 5♠-EW

EW 5♠; EW 4♦; EW 2N; NS 2♣; EW 1♥; Par -650

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

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score

Match-
points

Board 35	
100.....	98
-90 to 90	97
-190 to -100.....	96
-290 to -200.....	95
-300	94
-450 to -310.....	93
-490 to -460.....	92
-500	91
-590 to -510.....	90
-610 to -600.....	89
-620	77
-650	35
-680	3

A simple auction gets us to 4♠. North has a few choices for a lead. I think many will choose a small heart. When the dummy comes down, we can see three losers: one diamond and two clubs. If that's all you get, it turns out to be a dismal matchpoint result. If we assume North leads from an honor, we may duck the heart in the dummy. This provides us with a discard and an overtrick. As it turns out, North is also squeezed in hearts and diamonds. After losing two clubs, West keeps playing spades, the North player needs to make five discards. They can safely discard their two clubs. If they discard any diamond, the suit comes in. If they discard three hearts, the queen falls and the lowly ♥5 sets up in dummy. It's a shame that this hand is late in the set. Very few clubs will actually use Board 35.

Board 36

MATCHPOINT TABLE

N-S
Score Match-
points

Dealer: West Vul: Both

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

NS: 6♣ 1♦ 2♥ 6♠ 5NT

EW: ♣0 ♦5 ♥4 ♠0 NT1

LoTT: 17 - 18 = -1

Par: +1430 6♠-NS

NS 6♠; NS 6♣; NS 5N; NS 2♥; NS 1♦; Par +1430

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

After finding their fantastic spade fit, South cuebids their heart control. Their partner is unimpressed. With three losing diamonds, they will probably signoff at game. As the cards lie, 12 tricks are inevitable. Will South be bold enough to bid 4NT instead of 4♥? Perhaps. If they do, they will arrive at the slam and be rewarded with 77% of the match-points only because the trumps break 2-2.

Board 36	
1460.....	97
1430.....	77
710.....	57
680.....	28
660 to 670	2
630 to 650	1
620.....	0