

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION♥♣



*First Interclub – Heat A*

*17<sup>th</sup> - 19<sup>th</sup> September 2017*

*Commentary by Ian Hamilton*

**1**

♠ K1072  
 ♥ Q  
 ♦ A54  
 ♣ J7652  
 ♠ 8  
 ♥ AJ9864  
 ♦ KJ73  
 ♣ K3  
 ♠ A94  
 ♥ 75  
 ♦ Q92  
 ♣ AQ1098

 Dealer: North  
 Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	-	-	2	1
S	4	-	-	2	1
E	-	1	3	-	-
W	-	1	3	-	-

We kick off with a competitive affair, south overcalling east's 1♥ with 2♣, conceivably doubling, though should really have four spades for this. Both suits will garner support. With two 10-card fits the Law of Total Tricks suggests that there are 20 Total Tricks (though in fact there are only actually 19) and that you can safely bid to the level of your fit, the 4-level, which is true here.

Certainly, E/W need to bid to 4♥, which is a good sacrifice, since N/S can make their 4♣ spot, the minor suit kings proving well situated. East could even make 4♥ occasionally when south starts with the club ace, if he guesses diamonds well. By contrast 5♣ requires serious misdefence to let it home.

I am expecting a fair spread of scores here, par being east defeated one trick in 4♥x.

**2**

♠ AQ105  
 ♥ 102  
 ♦ A53  
 ♣ A972  
 ♠ J  
 ♥ AQ874  
 ♦ Q976  
 ♣ J85  
 ♠ 8742  
 ♥ K95  
 ♦ 102  
 ♣ Q1063  
 ♠ K963  
 ♥ J63  
 ♦ KJ84  
 ♣ K4

 Dealer: East  
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	3	-	4	2
S	2	3	-	4	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

South has close to an opener, but vulnerable, pass looks wiser, north opening 1♣ or a weak NT. N/S now should find their spade fit, and south has enough to invite game, north accepting with his three ace maximum. It is maybe easier where south opens, west overcalls 1♥ and north makes a Sputnik double.

The defence do best to lead hearts, north ruffing the third round. When west drops the knave on the first round of trumps, declarer can get home by eschewing the diamond finesse, playing three rounds of the suit, then cross-ruffing the minors.

However, some will be seduced by the diamond knave, finesse in the suit, and are then beaten when either east ruffs the diamond king or they lose the fourth round of the suit to west having pulled trumps.

**3**

♠ 5  
 ♥ KQ9432  
 ♦ AK  
 ♣ AQ93  
 ♠ J6  
 ♥ 87  
 ♦ QJ7653  
 ♣ 852  
 ♠ KQ108432  
 ♥ AJ6  
 ♦ 92  
 ♣ 10  
 ♠ A97  
 ♥ 105  
 ♦ 1084  
 ♣ KJ764

 Dealer: South  
 E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	1	5	-	2
S	6	1	5	-	3
E	-	-	-	1	-
W	-	-	-	1	-

North has an old-fashioned Acol 2♥, though most open such hands 1♥ today. At adverse vulnerability opposite a passed partner east should content himself with at most 3♠, since even this can go for 500, if doubled. Any intervention makes it hard for south to soundly introduce clubs, where slam is available.

However, north is still there and will either double east's spades or bid clubs himself, so the fit should be found. However, slams will be few, and even game may not be bid all that often.

Declaring hearts north must lose two trumps, but in clubs the heart suit can be ruffed good for the extra trick. Sadly, 420 in clubs will still lose out to 450 in hearts, though it will beat the part-scores.

**4**

♠ 105  
 ♥ Q752  
 ♦ K9  
 ♣ KQJ104  
 ♠ 32  
 ♥ AK93  
 ♦ 86532  
 ♣ A8  
 ♠ A976  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ 107  
 ♣ 976532  
 ♠ KQJ84  
 ♥ 10864  
 ♦ AQJ4  
 ♣

 Dealer: West  
 Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	1	3	3	3
S	-	1	3	3	3
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

Either west or north could pass, open or in north's case overcall, both having borderline hands. East might respond 1♠ to a west 1♦, where north passes.

South will certainly bid his spades, unless east has done so, in which case he passes and maybe doubles west's 1NT or 2♦ rebid, E/W not enjoying either outcome.

There is some danger of N/S finding their heart fit, which does not play overly well. They are better if they can declare no trumps, though even this strain is hard to handle on a diamond lead, which disrupts entries.

In theory, N/S can make 150 (or 600) in no trumps, but could easily lose to the heart knave or a long diamond in addition to the four top losers. I would be happy to go plus N/S in this tricky play hand.

**5**

♠ 742  
♥ 10432  
♦ AK6  
♣ A86

♠ A653  
♥ Q876  
♦ 93  
♣ Q109

♠ J8  
♥ AK9  
♦ QJ52  
♣ K532

 Dealer: North  
N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	3	2	-	2
S	3	3	3	-	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

There is every chance of N/S getting to 3NT here, especially if north opens his prime 11HCP hand. In any case, north will surely raise south's weak NT, however reached, and with his maximum south will advance.

The defence are near certain to cash four spades. The cause looks hopeless, but if south plays four rounds of diamonds east just might pitch two clubs, allowing a late finesse of the 8. East really shouldn't misdefend, since north must discard a heart ahead of him, allowing him to also pitch one - but these things happen. The best theoretical chance is the failing double heart finesse.

I bet someone succeeds in this seemingly hopeless 25HCP game, but the best results are more likely to be attained by those that contrive not to bid it.

**6**

♠ AKQ83  
♥ AK9  
♦ K7642

♠ J8762  
♥ 42  
♦ QJ104  
♣ Q8

♠ AK1093  
♥ J10  
♦ 865  
♣ AJ3

♠ Q54  
♥ 9765  
♦ 732  
♣ 1095

 Dealer: East  
E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	4	-	2
S	3	-	4	-	2
E	-	-	-	2	-
W	-	1	-	2	-

East's 1♠ could get raised to game, though at adverse vulnerability, with a semi-balanced hand, west might be wiser restraining himself, since 4♠ can lose 500.

The game bid could easily have a successful outcome however, north trying 4NT (two places to play), rather than doubling, a call south would probably pass. Over the 4NT bid south is expected to bid the cheapest suit he is happy with, so 5♣ likely results, declarer losing at least a diamond and three trump tricks.

Where N/S manage to play 4♥ this can make, thanks to the rather fortunate club position, it possible to pick up the suit for two losers despite only one lead from south possible. I doubt if many will be there, or succeed.

**7**

♠ QJ3  
♥ 98653  
♦ 842  
♣ 95

♠ K6  
♥ AJ1072  
♦ 10  
♣ KJ1064

♠ A10875  
♥ K4  
♦ AKJ9  
♣ AQ

♠ 942  
♥ Q  
♦ Q7653  
♣ 8732

 Dealer: South  
Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	2	2	3	2
S	-	2	2	3	2
E	3	-	-	-	-
W	2	-	-	-	-

South is probably best to open 2NT, this getting his balanced range across immediately, and not precluding other spots.

North is best to pass, but could transfer to hearts and let south play there. This will not be a success. Some optimists will doubtless bid the no trump game with north's cards, maybe after a heart transfer.

Declaring no trumps declarer is helped to some extent by any west lead, a diamond likely selected, and could easily manage nine or conceivably ten tricks, using dummy's only entry in spades to finesse clubs or play a heart up. It takes a club or improbable heart lead to take five defensive tricks, so bidding them up could well prove the winning ploy.

**8**

♠ 76543  
♥ KQ86  
♦ J106  
♣ 3

♠ AK108  
♥ 1052  
♦ 9742  
♣ 96

♠ Q92  
♥ AJ943  
♦ K8  
♣ J75

♠ J  
♥ 7  
♦ AQ53  
♣ AKQ10842

 Dealer: West  
Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	4	3	-	1	2
S	4	3	-	1	2
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

I can see many simply punting 5♣ over east's thin 1♥ opener, though should east pass south can take it more slowly, and might manage to stay in part-score.

With an entryless dummy south should lose to the diamond king as well as the major suit aces, being held to ten tricks.

The defence could go wrong where west leads a heart, rather than a more credible top spade. East might return hearts, thinking west's 2 is singleton, or play a diamond, letting declarer escape without a loser in the suit.

Some souths could try 3♥ over east's 1♥, requesting a heart stop, duly forthcoming. East needs to find a black suit lead to beat the ensuing 3NT.

Few will be allowed to declare hearts cheaply as E/W.

9

♠ A875432  
♥ 4  
♦ 854  
♣ Q10

♠ K9  
♥ Q5  
♦ 92  
♣ J976532

♠ 106  
♥ A92  
♦ AK107  
♣ AK84

Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	3	-	5	1
S	3	3	-	6	1
E	-	-	2	-	-
W	-	-	2	-	-

North hasn't an ideal pre-empt, having defence, plus a poor suit, but few will resist 3♣ in first seat at favourable vulnerability, south raising to game.

Some could bid 3NT on the south cards. On a heart lead this should be beaten. Declarer wins the 3rd heart and plays ace and another spade. East needs to be awake on the first round, dropping the king, and ensuring a west entry. Declarer is lucky north hasn't KQJxxxx in spades and ought, where he would be held to six tricks.

However, even a making 3NT will score poorly against the 450 available in spades, 480 if a club isn't led. Nobody will try 5♥ with the west cards, will they? That costs at least 500, 800 if the defence lead trumps early and get three diamond tricks.

10

♠ 43  
♥ AJ105  
♦ AK83  
♣ KQ9

♠ AQ8752  
♥ 7  
♦ 10652  
♣ 105

♠ J96  
♥ Q843  
♦ 97  
♣ J843

Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	-	3	-	-
S	2	-	3	-	-
E	-	1	-	2	1
W	-	1	-	2	2

East's weak 2♣ doubtless runs to north, who doubles. N/S are fine if playing Lebensohl, where south's 2NT is not natural, simply promises less than 8 points and commands 3♣. South then passes or converts to his choice of suit. Traditional methods leave north to guess south's strength after his forced response, and a hopeless or missed game may ensue.

An east Multi may make it awkward, west responding 2♠ (promising hearts). N/S need to be sure of their methods here. If double promises spades the alternative 2NT will not fare well.

Where east passes west's weak NT is doubled, or a 1♣ opener doubled or overcalled 1NT. East may well have a shot at the making 2♣ either way, making it hard for N/S to find their 3 level spot, at worst a cheap sacrifice.

11

♠ 72  
♥ 62  
♦ AK6  
♣ QJ8752

♠ K1085  
♥ 9854  
♦ Q74  
♣ 106

♠ QJ63  
♥ AQ7  
♦ 98532  
♣ 3

♠ A94  
♥ KJ103  
♦ J10  
♣ AK94

Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	1	3	1	4
S	5	1	3	1	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

South's strong NT gets raised to game, and west must lead a spade to get a decent score. Many will only make nine tricks now, though ten are possible via a diamond finesse, risking defeat. At least ten tricks result on any other lead, maybe even twelve on a heart selection.

Acop opens 1♥ and rebids 2NT over north's 2♣, increasing the likelihood of the right lead being found against what looks like a universal 3NT.

12

♠ 97  
♥ J962  
♦ Q10543  
♣ AJ

♠ K3  
♥ Q  
♦ A8762  
♣ KQ842

♠ AJ1052  
♥ A753  
♦ J  
♣ 1053

♠ Q864  
♥ K1084  
♦ K9  
♣ 976

Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	1	-	2	2
W	4	1	-	2	2

East has an awkward bid after responding 1♠ to 1♦, and west has rebid 2♣. Many play 2♥ as Fourth Suit game forcing, so that is out, leaving the choice of 2♠, passing or conceivably raising what could be a 4 carder. Luckily today any of these work, E/W declaring their black suit part-score.

Some could get overboard into 3NT, though even that could be successful on a low heart lead from south, the opponents' diamonds being blocked and the club knave dropping. Declarer must anti-intuitively play clubs from the top first, rather than tackle spades.

Clubs play well, ten tricks possible by cashing winners and cross-ruffing, taking a ruffing spade finesse on the way. Declaring spades nine tricks may result. It takes a diamond lead from south to stop them via a force.

**13**

♠ K986  
 ♥ J9865  
 ♦ 87  
 ♣ J3  
 ♠ AJ542  
 ♥ K3  
 ♦ A9  
 ♣ AK85  
 ♠ Q10  
 ♥ Q102  
 ♦ J10642  
 ♣ 1097

 Dealer: North  
 Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	4	2	4	4
W	6	4	2	4	4

We could have slam bid here when east opens 1♠ and west responds 2♣. East will hardly stop short of 6♣ now. The slam is not that straightforward, declarer needing to duck a spade, then set the suit up with two ruffs. With south having the trump length he cannot profitably ruff in. No more than one round of trumps must be played, won by east.

Some will open east a thin 2NT and play 3NT. Eleven tricks likely result on a low diamond lead, ten otherwise, so this spot could collect a well above average board.

Where east declares spades he should be held to ten tricks, losing three trumps. It is nice to see the minor suit scoring as well as the major one for a change, indeed better should the slam is bid.

**14**

♠ A983  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ Q  
 ♣ AKQ10742  
 ♠ K754  
 ♥ AJ7654  
 ♦ K10  
 ♣ 5  
 ♠ QJ2  
 ♥ K10  
 ♦ AJ973  
 ♣ 983  
 ♠ 106  
 ♥ Q932  
 ♦ 86542  
 ♣ J6

 Dealer: East  
 Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	3	4	3	-
W	-	3	4	3	-

West could open 1♥ or respond same to a thin east 1♦. North makes a nuisance of himself by jumping in clubs, which could make it difficult to get to 4♥.

Where west does get to declare hearts north should lead a top club rather than his speculative diamond singleton or declarer's club loser can disappear on a diamond after declarer has played trumps. However, the lead may persuade declarer to cash both top trumps, rather than finessing south for the queen, so may not cost, south now getting two trump tricks.

Some could find themselves doubled in a club contract as north. It needs a trump lead from east to get the maximum from this spot, holding declarer to eight tricks and perhaps a decent penalty.

**15**

♠ J109754  
 ♥ 72  
 ♦ 73  
 ♣ J98  
 ♠ AK  
 ♥ 1054  
 ♦ QJ1084  
 ♣ 732  
 ♠ QJ963  
 ♥ AK65  
 ♦ K654  
 ♠ Q8632  
 ♥ AK8  
 ♦ 92  
 ♣ AQ10

 Dealer: South  
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	3	-
S	-	-	-	3	-
E	1	1	4	-	1
W	1	1	2	-	1

Acol souths open 1♠, and could well find themselves in game, maybe doubled for takeout by east, but with his trump holding, left in by west and beaten one trick.

Though in theory E/W's 4♥ contract is beaten if played by west, this needs a club to be improbably led. It is unbeatable by east, north unable to gain the lead to play clubs, and west having three pitches for east's losers in the suit.

Should west take a double out to 5♦ that cannot get home, even on the likely spade lead. I cannot see many beating it four tricks by starting with a heart, getting a ruff, then three clubs.

**16**

♠ Q7  
 ♥ J983  
 ♦ AQJ73  
 ♣ 76  
 ♠ AJ64  
 ♥ AQ107  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ K543  
 ♠ K10985  
 ♥ 62  
 ♦ K108  
 ♣ 1082  
 ♠ 32  
 ♥ K54  
 ♦ 9542  
 ♣ AQJ9

 Dealer: West  
 E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	2	1	1	4	2
W	2	1	1	4	2

E/W should find their spade fit, whether or not north overcalls in diamonds and gets supported. Some might get to game, west holding shortage in north's suit, unaware that there are wasted values opposite.

As it happens the cards lie very well for E/W and game is there so long as trumps are guessed correctly, both the club and heart finesses working.

So most should make ten tricks. The question is how many will bid game?

**17**

♠ K8  
 ♥ AK6  
 ♦ K7542  
 ♣ 1074  
 ♠ 106  
 ♥ Q10  
 ♦ AQ9  
 ♣ KQJ932  
 ♠ Q7542  
 ♥ J983  
 ♦ J8  
 ♣ 65  
 ♠ AJ93  
 ♥ 7542  
 ♦ 1063  
 ♣ A8

 Dealer: North  
 Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	1	1	1	3
W	3	1	1	1	3

North's weak NT could come a cropper here, east doubling with his nice suit and entries. A takeout to 2♠ fares better, but still loses 300. Some may not double with the east hand, and could pass the transfer to 2♠, only getting 100, west unlikely to protect.

Where north opens 1♦ east overcalls 2♣, playing there, unless west makes some forward going noise, such as 2♦. If he does west could raise east's 2NT to game. East's 3NT makes so long as declarer doesn't let a spade lead run to his 10, letting the defence potentially cash four hearts. He needs to take a diamond finesse whilst dummy has an entry.

On a dutiful diamond knave lead ten tricks result, declarer not pressed to get three diamonds, his clubs and the spade ace in either NT or his club partscore.

**18**

♠ J7653  
 ♥ AK43  
 ♣ 8654  
 ♠ 1094  
 ♥ 742  
 ♦ 8762  
 ♣ AQ3  
 ♠ AK  
 ♥ 9853  
 ♦ QJ95  
 ♣ K109  
 ♠ Q82  
 ♥ AKQJ106  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ J72

 Dealer: East  
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	1	2	-
S	-	-	1	2	-
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	2	-	-	-

South presumably shows his heart single suiter over east's weak NT, and 2♥ will buy it. In theory this is defeated, but it is not easy for the defence to take two spades and a ruff, plus their three clubs, so many will survive, maybe with an overtrick on a diamond lead.

Where east opens 1♦ south's 1♥ could see north bidding spades and being raised, in theory finding an unbeatable spot, though E/W can advance in diamonds, only losing 50-100 unless doubled.

Defending diamonds south can cash three hearts as north pitches clubs, then switch to spades. North now either gets a club ruff or gets playing four rounds of trumps, leaving declarer with a sixth loser.

**19**

♠ AK64  
 ♥ KQJ  
 ♦ KQ874  
 ♣ A  
 ♠ 7  
 ♥ A106542  
 ♦ J3  
 ♣ KQ106  
 ♠ QJ8  
 ♥ 73  
 ♦ 52  
 ♣ J97542  
 ♠ 109532  
 ♥ 98  
 ♦ A1096  
 ♣ 83

 Dealer: South  
 E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	5	-	5	2
S	-	5	-	5	2
E	2	-	1	-	-
W	2	-	1	-	-

North has a very awkward hand to open, there being a case for 1♦, 2NT or 2♣. Personally, I would open 2♣ and rebid 2NT, ostensibly showing 23-24 balanced.

This will find south transferring to spades and north making a slam try, which south should refuse, knowing of well short of 30HCP.

A few intrepid easts could overcall 1♦ or even 2♣ with hearts, but this may only help N/S find their fit.

There is essentially nothing to the play, there being two unavoidable losers in both a spade or diamond contract. However, will any overstretch to the slam, which essentially needs spades to play for no loser, about a 50:50 shot?

**20**

♠ 763  
 ♥ 863  
 ♦ KQ1064  
 ♣ 62  
 ♠ KQJ102  
 ♥ A7  
 ♦ 85  
 ♣ Q954  
 ♠ A54  
 ♥ KJ104  
 ♦ A93  
 ♣ 1087  
 ♠ 98  
 ♥ Q952  
 ♦ J72  
 ♣ AKJ3

 Dealer: West  
 Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	3	1	2	3	3
W	3	1	2	3	3

Many will get to 4♠ when west opens the suit, and east has an opener himself, with three card support. The diamond king lead stands out.

After winning the diamond ace declarer may try to ditch his diamond loser on a ruffing finesse of the 3rd round of hearts. South must cover, stranding the heart winner in dummy, declarer having to draw trumps ending in dummy to enjoy it. South later gets three clubs and a diamond as declarer gets forced. If the ruffing heart finesse is allowed to win, the 4th round of clubs is ruffed or over-ruffed in dummy, just three clubs lost.

Perhaps surprisingly, 3NT is the theoretical winner, if only double dummy, north's diamonds dead after two ducks. Declarer can pick up hearts or play to the club queen as he chooses. Will any manage this?

**21**

♠ K105  
 ♥ 108754  
 ♦ Q86  
 ♣ J2  
 ♠ Q7  
 ♥ QJ93  
 ♦ 1095  
 ♣ AK85  
 ♠ 8432  
 ♥ 62  
 ♦ KJ432  
 ♣ 106

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	2	4	4	5
W	6	2	4	4	5

Acol is unlikely to get to 6♣, east's weak NT simply raised to game, west knowing of no more than 32HCP on offer. Perhaps west could use Stayman, then bid 2♣ over east's 2♥ (4 spades, raise to 2NT+). When east bids 2NT west could try 3♣, probably confusing partner, but at least having a chance of getting the club fit into play.

5 card majors open east 1♣, and now there is every chance that west will drive to slam once he establishes that east has a real suit.

No trumps will make eleven tricks when a low diamond is led, ten otherwise, whereas declaring clubs twelve are always there, a diamond being pitched in west on a heart and the failing spade finesse taken for the thirteenth.

**22**

♠ 963  
 ♥ J432  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ AQJ83  
 ♠ K2  
 ♥ Q7  
 ♦ AJ1086  
 ♣ K542  
 ♠ Q854  
 ♥ K10965  
 ♦ Q92  
 ♣ 7

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	1	-	-
S	-	-	1	-	-
E	3	4	-	4	5
W	2	4	-	3	3

East opens 1♦ and south probably overcalls 1♥. West has enough to double and maybe double again when north raises hearts. However, it may not be clear that there is a double heart stop when declared by east. Thus the thin 24HCP 3NT may well go a-begging.

In any case, declarer will have to guess well to make nine tricks in no trump, even if given a heart present at trick one, so I doubt many will succeed.

More likely the no trump game will be eschewed, E/W declaring diamonds, conceivably in game. A club to the ace and the king ruffed away quickly holds declarer to only ten tricks. It needs a heart lead and the same good guessing as in 3NT to make 5♦, indeed an overtrick possible double dummy in some variations.

**23**

♠ 7  
 ♥ 32  
 ♦ KQ76  
 ♣ QJ10832  
 ♠ KJ943  
 ♥ 10  
 ♦ A932  
 ♣ AK9  
 ♠ AQ652  
 ♥ AK9854  
 ♦ J5  
 ♣  
 ♠ 108  
 ♥ QJ76  
 ♦ 1084  
 ♣ 7654

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	4	5	7	4
W	-	4	5	7	4

East will fall off his chair when pard innocently opens 1♠. If playing Exclusion Keycard Blackwood 5♣ asks partner for key cards ignoring clubs. West has all three outstanding, so east can bid the grand slam with fair confidence, only beaten where west has three hearts and the suit doesn't behave. However, this approach is not sound, east holding two losing diamonds.

Players may have various sophisticated methods, but with the all the aces held I would hope a fair few will manage to bid the grand, everyone the small slam.

Thirteen tricks are straightforward, simply by pulling trumps and ruffing the heart suit good. Even ignoring the club winners west's three losing diamonds can be pitched on hearts, so long as the suit breaks no worse than 4:2, east's diamond loser eventually ruffed in west.

**24**

♠ 872  
 ♥ 95  
 ♦ 87  
 ♣ AQJ953  
 ♠ J96543  
 ♥ KQ4  
 ♦ A963  
 ♣  
 ♠ AK  
 ♥ 108732  
 ♦ QJ102  
 ♣ K7  
 ♠ Q10  
 ♥ AJ6  
 ♦ K54  
 ♣ 108642

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	6	5	6	5
W	-	6	5	6	5

Another tricky auction here, whether west opens 1♠, a weak 2♠ or the Multi. The latter two have the best chance of playing in spades, though rarely in game.

East is helped by a north club overcall of 1♣, making a Sputnik double, otherwise has to bid 2♥, presumably raised, the spade fit now lost.

Double dummy twelve tricks can be made in spades, so long as care is exercised with entries and the heart 10 is run from dummy. Realistically, ten or eleven look more credible.

An overtrick is there in 4♥, declarer probably losing only a trump and a club, or two trumps. Some will find the diamond fit after the Sputnik double, where twelve tricks are easier, albeit for a worse score.

**25**

♠ J43  
♥ Q10  
♦ KJ105  
♣ Q1062

♠ AQ87652  
♥ 9754  
♦ A7  
♣ A7

♠ 10  
♥ KJ82  
♦ 97642  
♣ K53

♠ K9  
♥ A63  
♦ AQ83  
♣ J984

 Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	1	-	-	-
S	1	1	-	-	-
E	-	-	6	5	1
W	-	-	6	5	1

West overcalls south's weak NT with some number of spades, doubtless playing there, east unlikely to raise. A 5 card major South 1♦ will also be overcalled in spades, but now north can support as high as 3♦. West might give up, or keep bidding his suit. It is hard to see the spade game being reached, however.

West makes eleven tricks in spades, losing only a trump plus a heart, when the suit helpfully plays for one loser.

Where N/S declare diamonds a heart lead is best, setting up six defensive winners, but a smaller penalty than the 170+ available in spades, unless east has doubled. The supposed par for E/W is when they get to declare a heart contract, twelve tricks possible. This will be a decided rarity, nobody likely even to bid the suit.

**26**

♠ 2  
♥ KQJ985  
♦ K87  
♣ 975

♠ KJ8763  
♥ A763  
♦ 94  
♣ 6

♠ A5  
♥ 42  
♦ A63  
♣ AKQ842

♠ Q1094  
♥ 10  
♦ QJ1052  
♣ J103

 Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	5	1	2	5	5
W	5	1	2	5	5

East is too good for a strong NT so must open 1♣, west responding 1♠. If north overcalls his thin 2♥ this makes it awkward for east, since he is a bit good for an admittedly free bid of 3♣, which west would likely pass. Maybe 3♥, requesting a heart stop, is the answer. Where north passes east gets his values over with a jump to 3♣.

3NT is straightforward when the clubs divide 3:3. West could rebid his spades and 4♠ result. This also makes easily on the club break, and can actually make eleven tricks should declarer finesse spades then run clubs, three red loses going away as south ruffs the 4th round.

No trumps are the winner in theory, but only if declarer takes the spade finesse, which he may not risk, he then only making ten tricks.

**27**

♠ Q82  
♥ AK7  
♦ A6542  
♣ J10

♠ 103  
♥ J2  
♦ Q87  
♣ AQ8763

♠ K9754  
♥ 964  
♦ J1093  
♣ 9

♠ AJ6  
♥ Q10853  
♦ K  
♣ K542

 Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	3	4	2	4
S	2	3	4	2	4
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

N/S probably shrug off west's club intervention, declaring 4♥, alternatively could play 3NT. The latter makes in some comfort on a club lead, at least one overtrick guaranteed.

West is less likely to lead clubs against 4♥, the result being that declarer can lose three club tricks or equivalent, though on a non-trump lead a club can be ruffed high in dummy for the eleventh.

So in practice the 5:3 fit may be the winner, as it usually is, unless the second overtrick eventuates in 3NT, which it shouldn't.

**28**

♠ Q1076  
♥ 1073  
♦ 63  
♣ AJ76

♠ K98542  
♥ Q  
♦ AQJ  
♣ Q52

♠ A  
♥ 98542  
♦ 9852  
♣ K104

♠ J3  
♥ AKJ6  
♦ K1074  
♣ 983

 Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	-	1	1	3	1
W	1	1	1	3	1

This looks like 2♠ by west after he has opened the suit and rebid it over east's 1NT. North does best to lead a heart, declarer ruffing the second round.

It looks as if declarer might run out of trumps after finessing diamonds, then playing two more rounds of trumps. North extracts his penultimate, then forces out the last trump with a third heart.

However, south hasn't an entry for his winning heart. But declarer doesn't know this and may well simply be relieved to get to dummy with the club king for another diamond finesse. He needs to finesse the club 10 to make Deep Finesse's nine tricks.

So we finish with another hand where a lot tricks can be made if declarer takes every right view in sight.

Ave HCP	N 10.04	S 9.89	E 10.43	W 9.64	Balanced	N 10	S 17	E 19	W 9
Voids/singletons	N 2/10	S 1/6	E 2/11	W 3/9	7+ suit	N 2	S 1	E 2	W 2