

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



Second Interclub – Heat A

29th - 31st October 2017

Commentary by Ian Hamilton

1

♠ A1072
 ♥ A973
 ♦ A
 ♣ J862
 ♠ J85
 ♥ KQ106
 ♦ QJ1084
 ♣ 9
 ♠ KQ4
 ♥ 842
 ♦ 652
 ♣ Q1043

 Dealer: North
 Neither Vulnerable

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

We kick off with a part-score battle at love all, both sides striving to declare, hoping to either make or only lose a couple of 50s.

North's 1♣ is overcalled 1♦, both sides establishing their fits early, and N/S bidding to at least 3♣, which makes so long as declarer gets a diamond ruff in north, and handles trumps carefully.

The Law of Total Tricks, the sum of both sides' longest fits, suggest one can bid to the level of one's fit. So E/W should advance 3♦, beaten on a spade lead, let home on the normal dutiful club, a spade going away.

With the HCP split 20:20 it is surprising that the hand belongs to N/S with the shorter fit. However, in practice most E/Ws will go plus in 3♦, or get 50 from those in 4♣.

2

♠ 65
 ♥ Q6
 ♦ J43
 ♣ AQ9764
 ♠ 3
 ♥ 10953
 ♦ K1062
 ♣ K1085
 ♠ J109874
 ♥ AJ87
 ♦ A98
 ♣
 ♠ AKQ2
 ♥ K42
 ♦ Q75
 ♣ J32

 Dealer: East
 N-S Vulnerable

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

East could open 1♠, or a very heavy Weak 2 or Multi, south overcalling 1NT or 2NT as appropriate. N/S should find no trumps anyway, as even if east passes south has either a strong NT or 1♠ opener and north enough to advance.

Declaring 3NT declarer has enough entries to pick up clubs for no loser after starting with the knave. He may get home anyway, even if he loses a club, but now only makes nine tricks. Starting with the knave is not the percentage play in isolation, losing out when covered by the bare king, but succeeds today.

Some may miss game, declaring clubs, where the defence can get a spade ruff, then trap declarer in north to open up diamonds himself, losing three tricks in the suit, and only tallying eight in all, likely for a minus.

3

♠ A5
 ♥ AQ107
 ♦ A6
 ♣ AKQ74
 ♠ KJ4
 ♥ J9632
 ♦ K983
 ♣ 6
 ♠ Q963
 ♥ K85
 ♦ Q754
 ♣ 53
 ♠ 10872
 ♥ 4
 ♦ J102
 ♣ J10982

 Dealer: South
 E-W Vulnerable

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

North has a 2♣ opener, and may well rebid 2NT (23-24), rather than 3♣, over the 2♦ negative. The 2NT rebid will find north at the helm of 3NT, unless south feels his assets are insufficient, passing 2NT. East has an awkward lead, either red suit ceding the ninth trick, though 3NT is always there on a correct heart guess.

Those that rebid clubs are likely to declare game in the suit rather than 3NT. This should prove easy enough, three heart ruffs available in dummy.

So the minor suit game could be the winner, not all succeeding in 3NT, though there could be occasional overtricks in this spot after a losing lead and the defence forced to discard on five rounds of clubs.

4

♠ AQ
 ♥ 83
 ♦ K972
 ♣ AQ652
 ♠ J94
 ♥ QJ7652
 ♦ 63
 ♣ 43
 ♠ K1087
 ♥ AK104
 ♦ A4
 ♣ J98
 ♠ 6532
 ♥ 9
 ♦ QJ1085
 ♣ K107

 Dealer: West
 Both Vulnerable

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

Those opening another off-shape 1NT, this time the strong variety, with north's cards are defeated when east finds the top heart lead and continuation. Otherwise they may well succeed, certainly on a spade lead or switch.

The more orthodox 1♣ opener will likely see east doubling and E/W trying to declare hearts, N/S one of their minor suit fits.

E/W should succeed in 3♥, the spade suit being well situated, so N/S need to advance to the 4 level, where there appear to be an easy ten tricks. Over this E/W lose at least 100 should they bid on.

So this competitive affair should see N/S coming out on top, but this is not assured.

5

♠ 754
♥ 3
♦ AJ8432
♣ K53

♠ AKQ98632
♥ 1054
♦ 5
♣ 6

♠ J10
♥ AJ972
♦ 1076
♣ J82

♠ KQ86
♥ KQ9
♣ AQ10974

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

West will make a serious nuisance of himself by overcalling south's 1♣ with 4♠, doubtless passed to south, who doubles.

Some norths will leave this in, collecting only a paltry 100, or 300 where declarer ducks north's singleton heart lead. Even where North gets it right by removing to 5 of either minor, few souths will advance to the cold slam available in the relevant suit.

This hand is a classic example of the disruptive effect of pre-empts, it being very difficult for N/S to gauge their relative assets at the 5 level. South cannot be sure he isn't missing two aces and north that south is so strong with a spade void.

Well done to any N/S bidding a slam here.

6

♠ 8
♥ KJ965
♦ KJ3
♣ A862

♠ K932
♥ Q103
♦ A107
♣ Q73

♠ 105
♥ 874
♦ Q96542
♣ J5

♠ AQJ764
♥ A2
♦ 8
♣ K1094

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

After north's 2♥ response to 1♠ south's 2♠ or 3♣ rebids could see north declaring 3NT or 4♥, alternatively south 4♠. Where south rebids 3♣ game in that strain is a further possibility.

In 3NT east's diamonds are entry-less after a second round duck, but declarer needs to play on hearts, not spades to get the best score. An extra black suit trick can be then set up for the tenth trick. Those playing on spades lose four tricks and only score 400. One can hardly blame them, since if the heart finesse were to lose they would be light.

4♠ needs hearts to be set up for club pitches, as there are two trumps and the diamond ace to lose. In 4♥ 450 is possible by disposing of a diamond via a spade ruffing finesse, ceding a club, and guessing diamonds.

7

♠ J65
♥ Q542
♦ K1096
♣ Q9

♠ 8432
♥ K98
♦ Q7432
♣ 8

♠ A9
♥ J10763
♦ J
♣ K10543

♠ KQ107
♥ A
♦ A85
♣ AJ762

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

When north responds in a red suit to his 1♣ south could game force with 2♠ or rebid a more conservative 1♠, relying on north to bid again with anything more than a sub-minimum responding hand.

Either way it looks as if 3NT will be the spot at most tables, north probably at the wheel. East likely leads a heart. It is possible to knock out the spade ace, and make four diamond and three club tricks without losing the lead, thanks to the fortuitous fall of the club 8 and diamond knave. The best the defence can do is take their two major suit winners.

Will everyone manage to make 660 on this one, playing all the suits to advantage? Or will some prefer the Moysian 4♠, where only ten tricks are possible?

8

♠ A92
♥ Q10963
♦ 73
♣ QJ7

♠ Q74
♥ AK84
♦ K62
♣ K95

♠ J1063
♥ 72
♦ AQJ1085
♣ 6

♠ K85
♥ J5
♦ 94
♣ A108432

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

This could be a thin 3NT with east's trick source opposite west's strong NT, or 1♥ opener and strong no trump rebid. Others will be content with a diamond part-score, where there should only be 130, unless declarer slips past the club ace.

Where east declares 3NT on a club lead declarer must anti-intuitively rise with the king immediately, or the defence can defeat him by switching to hearts (though they may well not).

Where west declares a heart lead from north is awkward, declarer needing to play clubs himself after running diamonds, risking an extra undertrick.

Will any chicken out on this one and take their eight top tricks?

9

♠ 84
♥ A72
♦ QJ105
♣ AKQ7

♠ KJ3
♥ J1065
♦ K8
♣ J1085

♠ Q107652
♥ K9
♦ 642
♣ 42

♠ A9
♥ Q843
♦ A973
♣ 963

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

The strong no trumpers could come a cropper here, getting to 3NT when south's Stayman elicits a negative. East's spade lead results in a two trick defeat when the diamond finesse loses.

Acoul norths open 1♦, usually rebidding 1NT, and are in the same position. Some might take a conservative view and raise hearts, avoiding the doomed game.

Those crazy enough to overcall spades as east at adverse vulnerability may warn N/S off no trumps, they then declaring a making diamond or heart part-score. Even if they get to 4♥ it is only one light.

Where south deems his spade stop adequate he could declare 3NT, and survive on a normal low spade lead from west, east furnishing the queen, blocking the suit.

10

♠ K10642
♥ A5
♦ KJ7
♣ K62

♠ J875
♥ J932
♦ A6
♣ QJ5

♠ 93
♥ KQ
♦ Q10843
♣ 9843

♠ AQ
♥ 108764
♦ 952
♣ A107

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

A very heavy 1NT is perhaps south's best response to north's 1♠, anything else a worse distortion. Thus N/S could avoid the hopeless 3NT, which has little chance on any lead, unless south gets a present of the club 10 at some point.

Should south respond 2♥ north could get playing in his 2♠ rebid, which is N/S's highest scoring part-score. It looks like declarer should lose five tricks, and most will. However, declarer can use dummy's trump entries to ruff two hearts with the 10 then a low card before exiting with the third round of clubs, forcing the defence to give him a diamond for his ninth trick.

However, in practice, I can see some stretching to the thin 3NT and going light when both majors fail to divide.

11

♠ J93
♥ QJ864
♦ 753
♣ A2

♠ K86
♥ K92
♦ 864
♣ 7653

♠ Q74
♥ A5
♦ AQ2
♣ KQJ94

♠ A1052
♥ 1073
♦ KJ109
♣ 108

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

Again we have a 4th seat opener, east starting with 1♣. Whether or not south makes a thin passed hand double west is likely to find himself in 3NT. Sometimes it will be east declaring, after west raises clubs instead.

North's normal low heart lead must be won by east and clubs cleared, then the heart continuation ducked. Now the best diamond switch can be ducked, which south has to win and exit. East pitches his diamond queen on the heart king. Clubs now squeeze south between spades and hearts, declarer either making the diamond 8 or two spades when south has reduced to the doubleton ace.

In practice some will make on less than perfect defence, though I can see a fair few being defeated, as the double dummy play is far from obvious.

12

♠ 1087
♥ AQ3
♦ KQ4
♣ A632

♠ AKQ532
♥ 10875
♦ K108

♠ J964
♥ J10542
♦ 2
♣ J95

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

North may not act, vulnerable, over west's strong NT, but will surely overcall an Acoul 1♣ with 1♥, or could riskily try 2NT for the red suits. However, east will hardly stop short of 4♠, even if NS bid as high as 4♥.

East can be held to ten tricks in his 4♠, but could make eleven where south starts with his singleton and then ruffs a losing diamond with a winning trump. Declarer can now pull trumps, pitch a club on the heart ace, then ruff the suit good, the diamond top the late entry.

Without this defence two diamonds and a trump must be lost. How many will manage 450? Will any N/Ss lose 500 or more declaring hearts, which plays awkwardly when north is shortened early with spades?

13

♠ Q1096
♥ 84
♦ 65
♣ AK852

♠ 87432
♥ A9
♦ 1072
♣ Q73

♠ KJ5
♥ 10732
♦ AKJ8
♣ J10

♠ A
♥ KQJ65
♦ Q943
♣ 964

Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

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

West will usually transfer to spades over east's weak NT, east declaring 2♣, which has little chance even on an inspired trump view. Against 1NT south leads the heart king. When he gets in with the spade ace or diamond queen and continues hearts, setting up declarer's 10, he could allow east to scramble seven tricks. A club switch, ducked all round, works best.

South might show his hearts over east's weak NT or 1♦, and get playing the suit cheaply. 2♥ will usually make. To defeat it the defence need to lead clubs twice at the start, then trumps when east wins his second diamond.

N/S can also make 3♣, though it requires care, two hearts and a diamond needing to be set up without the defence being allowed to draw south's third trump, needed for ruffing a spade.

14

♠ A6
♥ Q109865
♦ A83
♣ 65

♠ 87
♥ AK2
♦ Q1092
♣ AKQ7

♠ J93
♥ 74
♦ KJ764
♣ 1098

♠ KQ10542
♥ J3
♦ 5
♣ J432

Dealer: East
Neither Vulnerable

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

Both sides could be in the auction here, west doubling south's weak 2♣ or Multi. Where south passes north will overcall west's 1♦ with 1♥.

E/W should find their diamond fit, certainly if west opens the suit. N/S can compete in either major, hearts being their better strain, where they could easily be allowed to make nine tricks. The defence need to take two clubs, cash one top trump, then play diamonds to take five tricks in defence.

E/W need to advance to 4♦ to get a good score, either racking up their easy 130, or getting a small penalty when they are outbid. A tough judgement call all round.

15

♠ Q85
♥ A95
♦ A1065
♣ K43

♠ AJ1072
♥ J108
♦ 72
♣ AQ8

♠ K96
♥ K32
♦ KJ94
♣ J97

♠ 43
♥ Q764
♦ Q83
♣ 10652

Dealer: South
N-S Vulnerable

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

West presumably opens 1♠ or a weak NT, and could easily find himself in 2NT or 3♠, where he will have to guess well to make his contract.

However, a club lead could put the defence on the back foot, and south not get on lead with one of his red queens early enough to return the suit.

I can see many minuses on this one, players unlikely to emulate Deep Finesse and guess both spades and diamonds correctly, in whatever contract they find themselves. Perhaps their best hope of a guaranteed plus is where north elects to intervene on his flat 13HCP at adverse vulnerability, subsequently ceding a penalty.

16

♠ A106
♥ 854
♦ 10754
♣ A83

♠ KQ842
♥ 763
♦ KQ
♣ KJ7

♠ J3
♥ J10
♦ 9863
♣ Q10542

♠ 975
♥ AKQ92
♦ AJ2
♣ 96

Dealer: West
E-W Vulnerable

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

West has another choice between 1♠ and a weak NT, east presumably passing either. Most souths will pass 1NT, hoping for vulnerable undertricks, and will be rewarded, certainly on the highly probable red suit lead, where declarer can be held to four tricks, losing 300.

Without a decent spade holding south is better bidding 2♥ over 1♠, rather than passing. He should now declare 2♥, possibly 3♥ if north gets excited with his two aces.

Nine tricks are available in hearts N/S, so long as west's diamond holding doesn't make two tricks, which it shouldn't. Indeed, some will make ten tricks when west crashes his partner's spade knave, setting up the 10.

This looks like a bad one for the weak no trump.

17

♠ 32
 ♥ KQ3
 ♦ QJ2
 ♣ K10764
 ♠ AK109
 ♥ A6
 ♦ K109
 ♣ AQ93
 ♠ Q876
 ♥ J1084
 ♦ 54
 ♣ J85

 Dealer: North
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Anyone opening a light weak NT with north's cards may regret it, being doubled and losing 500-800 somewhere. A 1♣ opener should escape, east doubling, then rebidding 2NT over west's 1♦ response, showing 18-20. This is likely to end it.

Where east gets to open 2NT he will usually finish up in game, perhaps after a failing Stayman enquiry.

On a heart lead declarer can duck a diamond, establishing the suit, but later must decide which black suit finesse to take. He could misguess and go light, particularly if the hearts get blocked on the knave lead, the spade finesse offering a possible overtrick, which the club finesse doesn't.

Will any south lead a spade, allowing an overtrick?

18

♠ 32
 ♥ 9432
 ♦ 102
 ♣ Q10972
 ♠ KJ106
 ♥ 865
 ♦ QJ8
 ♣ A53
 ♠ 95
 ♥ AKQJ10
 ♦ 753
 ♣ KJ8
 ♠ AQ874
 ♥ 7
 ♦ AK964
 ♣ 64

 Dealer: East
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Over east's 1♥ south could overcall 1♠, or a Michaels 2♥, showing spades and a minor. The former could escape punishment, west probably trying 2NT and being raised to game.

Where south uses Michaels, tries 2♠ or shows spades and a minor over east's alternative weak NT west will be interested in a penalty, now at the 2 or 3 level.

Neither diamonds nor spades play well. So long as the defence play early trumps both can be held to five tricks for a painful 800+ penalty.

Defending 3NT north needs to find the diamond lead to take four defensive tricks, or declarer can wrap up an overtrick.

19

♠ 107643
 ♥ 65
 ♦ A82
 ♣ K62
 ♠ 2
 ♥ KQJ3
 ♦ Q105
 ♣ AQJ93
 ♠ K85
 ♥ A742
 ♦ KJ6
 ♣ 874
 ♠ AQJ9
 ♥ 1098
 ♦ 9743
 ♣ 105

 Dealer: South
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Hopefully everyone should reach 4♥ here after west opens 1♣ and east responds 1♥. West could splinter with 3♣, but I think a raise to 3♥ is enough. In any event east will not be interested in advancing past game with his spade king opposite a singleton.

The play could be slightly awkward on a diamond lead, north winning and putting the spade 10 through the king, dummy ruffing the second round. If trumps are drawn a spade is lost when the club finesse loses.

If trumps aren't all drawn a smooth duck of the club king could see declarer repeating the finesse, suffering a ruff, and going light.

It will be interesting to see how many succeed in this tricky enough spot.

20

♠ Q64
 ♥ 74
 ♦ Q64
 ♣ KQ963
 ♠ 75
 ♥ A96
 ♦ KJ7532
 ♣ J4
 ♠ K982
 ♥ KQJ32
 ♦ A9
 ♣ A2
 ♠ AJ103
 ♥ 1085
 ♦ 108
 ♣ 10875

 Dealer: West
 Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	6	6	1	6
W	-	5	4	1	4

This looks like another play hand, east opening 1♥ and declaring game in the suit, maybe after reversing into spades over west's 1NT or thin 2♦ response.

Best is to win the club lead, pull two trumps in east, then play diamonds, ruffing the third high. Dummy is now accessed with the trump ace, and a spade led to the king for the possible twelfth trick, eleven assured.

Of course Deep Finesse finesses the heart 9 and runs the diamond knave, pinning the doubleton 108, and recording a slam. Few will manage to equal this unless south starts with dummy's suit himself, which just might happen occasionally, but is generally poor policy.

In all a rather lucky hand, since if either red suit were to break 4:1 even ten tricks could be a struggle.

21

♠ 874
♥ J10984
♦ J5
♣ 732

♠ A105
♥ Q7
♦ 10762
♣ KQJ10

♠ J932
♥ 3
♦ AQ984
♣ A95

♠ KQ6
♥ AK652
♦ K3
♣ 864

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

Most easts will open 1♦ and south overcall 1♥. West could try a sputnik double, or simply support diamonds. Thus either a spade contract or diamond part-score or maybe game could be declared E/W. Where south overcalls 1NT instead north removes to 2♥ over west's double. The opponents are unlikely to double this.

Ten tricks are straightforward in diamonds, but eleven near impossible. It looks as if 4♣ might be made, south only scoring a spade, diamond and heart. However, repeated heart leads ruin declarer's trump holdings, and he ends up losing control, nine tricks the limit.

Where south overcalls 1♥ I suppose some might preempt in hearts with north's 5 card support. Vulnerable, he hasn't enough shape or strength, any N/S heart contract being held to seven tricks and a nasty penalty.

22

♠ AK1042
♥ KQ4
♦ 3
♣ AQ65

♠ J
♥ 97
♦ K9765
♣ 108432

♠ Q9863
♥ A6
♦ AJ102
♣ K7

♠ 75
♥ J108532
♦ Q84
♣ J9

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

East's 1♠ is passed to north, whose best chance of a decent plus is to pass. The alternative is to double, then jump in no trumps, showing his 17-19 HCP, albeit with a singleton. This will result in south playing 3♥ or 4♥.

East's 1♠ gets close, but even if declarer gets diamonds right loses five trumps, a heart and club, north having to give declarer the club king at some point.

South's 4♥ has only three obvious losers, but should be beaten on a spade lead. Surprisingly, east has to duck the first heart, forcing declarer to try to ruff diamonds in dummy, alternatively set up a club via a low one to the knave. East has a counter to both, either pulling a second trump or furnishing west with a spade ruff.

Will many make ten tricks in hearts N/S, as the defence to beat it is far from obvious?

23

♠ AQJ10972
♥ 987
♦ Q
♣ 52

♠ 43
♥ 54
♦ 7643
♣ AQJ98

♠ 865
♥ KQ103
♦ 92
♣ K1043

♠ K
♥ AJ62
♦ AKJ1085
♣ 76

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

South might well reverse into 2♥ when north responds 1♠ to his 1♦. However, north will surely insist on declaring 4♠. The bidding should point east towards the club lead and two tricks in the suit. Any other lead allows declarer to twice overtake honours, running thirteen of his fourteen top tricks.

It will be interesting to see how many fail to take the bidding into account, leading the heart king. My guess is there could be a fair few.

24

♠ 653
♥ 1073
♦ A8
♣ AQJ95

♠ 98
♥ AKQ64
♦ QJ2
♣ 632

♠ J42
♥ J98
♦ K1063
♣ 1087

♠ AKQ107
♥ 52
♦ 9754
♣ K4

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

When north overcalls west's 1♥ with 2♣ south should advance with 2♠, whether or not east makes a thin heart raise. This is best played as forcing, otherwise it is impossible to bid hands like south's, which has a fitting honour in partner's suit, plus a good 5 card major of its own. South should declare the cold 4♠, which has eleven top tricks.

Some may have methods where an advance is not forcing, and could end up languishing in part-score, though even then they really shouldn't, north having 3 card support, and being far from minimum for his overcall, should raise.

25

♠ 62
♥ 9652
♦ 98643
♣ 108

♠ K953 ♠ QJ84
♥ AK10 ♥ J7
♦ QJ107 ♦ AK
♣ 64 ♣ AK975

♠ A107
♥ Q843
♦ 52
♣ QJ32

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	4	5	3	6	6
W	4	5	3	6	6

E/W should find their spade fit after east opens 1♣, though either side could declare, some wests electing to respond 1♠ rather than 1♦. Some may even manage to get to the slam, which only depends on trumps playing for one loser, west's losing heart ruffed in east.

A few could find themselves declaring no trumps. Again, twelve tricks are there when the heart finesse succeeds.

Thin slams are a borderline proposition at Pairs scoring, and it may be difficult to establish that this one is well odds-on. Thus, I reckon there will be few on the traveller, though most should make twelve tricks. Certainly the no trump slam should be avoided, being well under a 50% shot.

26

♠ J763
♥ J93
♦ Q76
♣ Q83

♠ A54 ♠ 982
♥ AK106 ♥ Q872
♦ 32 ♦ J105
♣ AJ95 ♣ K64

♠ KQ10
♥ 54
♦ AK984
♣ 1072

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

South's weak NT will get doubled, and doesn't fare well if left in. The defence can collect four hearts, then pick up the club suit, west starting with the knave - the result being an 800 penalty.

South does much better to rescue to diamonds, unlikely to be doubled. West passes, hoping east can double. Instead, he likely tries 2♥, which west would be wise to pass, since unless the same club play is made can be held to eight tricks. The same spot should be reached where south opens 1♦ and west doubles.

Usually it is easier to declare than defend, this being a rare example where the defence benefit from seeing dummy, and can take advantage. West does need to have read the books, however, and spot the "surround" play in clubs.

27

♠ AK7
♥ 1076
♦ 965
♣ QJ103

♠ Q9864 ♠ J53
♥ AJ953 ♥ KQ2
♦ J ♦ 107
♣ 72 ♣ K9865

♠ 102
♥ 84
♦ AKQ8432
♣ A4

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

This could be another competitive hand, south opening 1♦, and west either using Michaels for the majors or overcalling spades. North could make a competitive double, showing values, but east can raise either major.

I doubt many will reach 5♦, north having effectively all south's black losers covered when the club finesse works.

As is often the case, from E/W's perspective, it is their weaker fit which produces the most tricks. Declaring hearts there is a spade ruff available to the defence, no heart ruff possible with spades as trumps.

At love all E/W can be several light profitably, so long as undoubled, but do risk pushing N/S into their game if they overdo it.

28

♠ Q852
♥ KJ975
♦ 63
♣ 53

♠ 7 ♠ AJ10643
♥ 3 ♥ Q86
♦ KJ1097542 ♦ Q
♣ K108 ♣ 742

♠ K9
♥ A1042
♦ A8
♣ AQJ96

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

We have yet another long diamond hand, west starting off with 3♦, maybe even 4♦, assuming this isn't the quaintly named South African Texas, showing spades.

South will double either, and north obliges by not bidding spades, instead usually getting to 4♥. It seems declarer might lose a diamond, club, spade and a spade ruff but the defence cannot have it all, south's diamond loser going on the spade queen if the defence get a ruff in the suit. It is easier where east leads diamonds, so long as a winning trump view is taken.

After pre-empting it is usually best to let the opponents play their spot, which could be the wrong one. Here, E/W are actually better sacrificing, losing only 300.

This is another hand with highly variable likely outcome, rather a theme on the set, hopefully enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 9.86	S 10.07	E 10.18	W 9.89	Balanced	N 14	S 13	E 14	W 16
Voids/singletons	N 1/5	S 1/9	E 2/5	W 0/11	7+ suit	N 1	S 1	E 0	W 2