

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



*Second Interclub – Heat B*

*1<sup>st</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> November 2017*

*Commentary by Ian Hamilton*

**1**

♠ K632  
♥ AK1064  
♦ J6  
♣ 92

♠ A85  
♥ J8753  
♦ K83  
♣ K6

♠ QJ94  
♥  
♦ A10975  
♣ AJ105

♠ 107  
♥ Q92  
♦ Q42  
♣ Q8743

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

A light 1♥ by north, doubled by east, then supported by south rather puts a spanner in E/W's auction. It is difficult for west to find a sensible bid, 2NT maybe being best. This could end it, or E/W find their diamond fit. It is much easier where north passes.

2NT can squeak home, the defence unable to get more than four hearts, plus either a diamond or a spade, but not both.

For once the minor suit spot should score more, eleven tricks possible in diamonds by ruffing out south's club queen, and losing only the spade king and a trump, the spade 10 helpfully dropping.

Some may get too high in hearts N/S, losing a penalty, though it is awkward for E/W to get more than five tricks.

**2**

♠ KJ96  
♥ 109872  
♦ 8  
♣ AJ10

♠ A10  
♥ AQJ3  
♦ J7643  
♣ K2

♠ 8542  
♥ 64  
♦ AKQ95  
♣ Q4

♠ Q73  
♥ K5  
♦ 102  
♣ 987653

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

This looks like it will end in 3NT, whether or not east opens his thin 1♦. I suppose some might get to 5♦.

Where west declares 3NT north probably leads spades. This seems to hold declarer to nine tricks. However, north has to find four discards on diamonds, and cannot keep his club ace, three spades and a heart guard, so ten tricks should eventuate.

Declaring diamonds declarer has a spade to lose, plus a club, unless he can slip past the ace, then ditch his second on a heart.

So we should see a lot of 400s and 430s on the card, few missing game with 11HCP opposite 15.

**3**

♠ KJ1093  
♥ A9  
♦ K1074  
♣ K10

♠ AQ8  
♥ 832  
♦ 92  
♣ AQ632

♠ 752  
♥ QJ1054  
♦ J6  
♣ J74

♠ 64  
♥ K76  
♦ AQ853  
♣ 985

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

North will presumably bid spades over a west 1♣ opener. Over a weak NT he could show spades or spades and a minor. South has a close decision whether to leave north in 2♣ or seek his minor, where relevant, possibly a 4:3 club fit.

So most will declare spades as north, or there might be some in diamonds - unless 1♠ comes round to west and he bids again, possibly losing a significant penalty.

The Great Shuffler is kind to N/S in this one, with all the finesses working, so most should not be pressed to rack up eleven tricks in either suit, as usual the major providing the better Pairs score.

However, I cannot see many getting to game in either denomination.

**4**

♠ K762  
♥ 7654  
♦ AQ  
♣ Q76

♠ J9  
♥ K10832  
♦ 107  
♣ A1083

♠ AQ843  
♥ AQ  
♦ 9832  
♣ 52

♠ 105  
♥ J9  
♦ KJ654  
♣ KJ94

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

Vulnerable, north is too thin to open, so we should see west responding 1NT to east's 1♠. Some will pass this, others try 2♦, west giving preference to spades.

In no trumps, with the heart knave/9 falling, diamonds blocked and the spade ten doubleton in south there are nine fast runners, though this may not be clear to declarer, who could fail to spot that he can overtake the heart queen.

In spades declarer can win the club lead, take three trumps, then overtake the heart queen to run the suit, north only able to ruff the last as three losers go away. On a diamond lead dummy ruffs the third round with the 9. North can only make one trump, now or later.

This hand provides a lesson in watching the pips.

5

♠ J3  
♥ KQ43  
♦ QJ104  
♣ 952

♠ 10985  
♥ 765  
♦ 9753  
♣ 103

♠ KQ7642  
♥ 108  
♦ K82  
♣ Q6

♠ A  
♥ AJ92  
♦ A6  
♣ AKJ874

Dealer: North  
N-S Vulnerable

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

This exhibit should see N/S finding either their club or heart fit, possibly after south has doubled east's 1♠ opener, heavy Weak 2♠ or Multi.

Left alone, south opens 2♣ and is likely to get his club suit supported rather than find the heart fit usually located after a south double.

Some may bid slams if given a free run, the club one needing either the club suit behaving or the diamond finesse, the heart slam only needing the club queen dropping, provided hearts are 3:2. As both succeed, all thirteen tricks available in either strain, or no trump.

So the east opener probably steers N/S into their better scoring strain, but keeps them out of slam, since north has no easy way of showing his useful extra values.

6

♠ KQ86  
♥ K  
♦ AK872  
♣ K63

♠ 1092  
♥ 965  
♦ QJ4  
♣ 9752

♠ AJ4  
♥ A1082  
♦ 1063  
♣ QJ8

♠ 753  
♥ QJ743  
♦ 95  
♣ A104

Dealer: East  
E-W Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT comes a real cropper here, and should go for at least 500 when doubled by north. The 5 card major 1♣ should escape, north doubling in 4th seat then bidding diamonds or no trumps over south's 1♥, usually finding 3NT. Where south overcalls a thin 1♥ it is easier.

Played by north 3NT cannot be beaten, east unable to attack south's club entry. Declarer makes four diamonds two clubs, a ducked heart, top spade and either a long spade or extra heart or club.

Where south rarely declares no trumps west's club lead puts the defence ahead, getting a club trick or cutting declarer off from his heart winners.

Well done anyone finding the spade game, where the diamonds can be ruffed good for the extra trick.

7

♠ 1076532  
♥ Q10  
♦ J9  
♣ J105

♠ 8  
♥ AKJ972  
♦ 8764  
♣ Q7

♠ AQ94  
♥ 865  
♦ 52  
♣ AK93

♠ KJ  
♥ 43  
♦ AKQ103  
♣ 8642

Dealer: South  
Both Vulnerable

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

When west overcalls south's 1♦ with 1♥ east has a great hand with 3 card support, best shown by cue-bidding 2♦. West is rock-bottom minimum for a vulnerable overcall so doubtless tries to sign off in 2♥.

A lot depends on partnership style here, and I can see the heart game being missed a few times, east believing west has overcalled on complete rubbish.

Ten tricks in hearts are straightforward, with six trumps, four black winners and a heart ruff in dummy. For those mathematicians out there this totals eleven tricks. It requires south to play three rounds of diamonds, promoting a trump in north, for the defence to get three winners. Indeed twelve tricks are there on a non-diamond lead, the spade king ruffing down and the club 9 growing up.

8

♠ J109  
♥ AK92  
♦ KJ8  
♣ Q108

♠ AQ86  
♥ 1075  
♦ A9  
♣ AK94

♠ K2  
♥ QJ64  
♦ Q74  
♣ J765

♠ 7543  
♥ 83  
♦ 106532  
♣ 32

Dealer: West  
Neither Vulnerable

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

North is unlikely to bid over west's strong NT, allowing a free run to 3NT, when west fails to have four hearts. The bidding should steer north away from the top heart lead, which makes recording ten tricks easy when the spade intermediates fall.

In practice, no lead prevents ten tricks by one means or other, the defence unable to get both the club queen and a diamond.

Where Acoll starts with 1♠ some norths could double, and east redouble. 3NT may still result, but a penalty is available, the best N/S can do being to lose 500 in 2♦x.

However, it looks like a pretty flat affair, few doing other than score 430 E/W - unless some declarers fail to spot that their spade 8 is good.

9

♠ Q107  
 ♥ Q106  
 ♦ QJ9  
 ♣ Q1074  
 ♠ K8432  
 ♥ AJ93  
 ♦ K7  
 ♣ J5  
 ♠ 95  
 ♥ K852  
 ♦ 862  
 ♣ A963  
 ♠ AJ6  
 ♥ 74  
 ♦ A10543  
 ♣ K82

Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

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

One would hope that E/W could get to 4♠ after east opens the suit. The 2♥ rebid over 2♦ will promise at least five spades, so west can bid the spade game.

Ten tricks are there by ruffing the diamond suit good, and avoiding tackling trumps until the side suit is established. Trumps are then played from the top, ending in dummy, and the diamonds run. Declarer can get home in other ways, but this is the easiest.

In practice I can see some going light when they fail to establish diamonds in time, go for heart ruffs, or play trumps too soon, in this awkward enough hand to handle. Certainly, overtricks will be a rarity.

10

♠ Q96432  
 ♥ J4  
 ♦ K72  
 ♣ AQ  
 ♠ 87  
 ♥ 97  
 ♦ J10653  
 ♣ K652  
 ♠ KJ10  
 ♥ 10532  
 ♦ Q  
 ♣ J10987  
 ♠ A5  
 ♥ AKQ86  
 ♦ A984  
 ♣ 43

Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

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

This hand presents an interesting challenge to E/W when west's 1♥ gets overcalled 1♠ by north and raised by south.

West is perhaps best to double, planning on converting a 3♣ bid to 3♦, with a bale-out to 3♥ available to east if need be. Thus E/W should get to their diamond fit, over which N/S can only go minus in spades.

E/W's diamond spot should be held to ten tricks, so long as a spade is led. E/W can actually score better in their 7 card heart fit. Declarer wins the spade lead, pulls three rounds of trumps and plays diamonds from the top. The defence only get a trick in each suit.

11

♠  
 ♥ 43  
 ♦ AKQ1082  
 ♣ AQJ103  
 ♠ A864  
 ♥ Q98765  
 ♦ 9  
 ♣ 76  
 ♠ K109532  
 ♥ K102  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ 942  
 ♠ QJ7  
 ♥ AJ  
 ♦ J7643  
 ♣ K85

Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

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

South's Weak 2 or Multi will be the last thing north wishes to hear, he probably best to try 3♦, assuming this is forcing, 2NT otherwise.

Many will end up in 3NT somehow or other if south opens. This spot looks hopeless, but the defence are forced to assist. At some point they must either let south in to pick up the club suit, or play the suit themselves. In practice not all will succeed.

There could be those in 3♣ when north opens 1♦, then bids and rebids this suit after south has responded in and rebid spades. This looks by far the easiest contract for north, the defence unable to prevent a diamond ruff in dummy and trumps being picked up, only a diamond and two hearts lost.

12

♠ J6  
 ♥ A743  
 ♦ K32  
 ♣ 10863  
 ♠ K10985  
 ♥ Q1052  
 ♦ Q10  
 ♣ AJ  
 ♠ A7432  
 ♥ KJ  
 ♦ AJ75  
 ♣ 52  
 ♠ Q  
 ♥ 986  
 ♦ 9864  
 ♣ KQ974

Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

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

This is a strange hand, N/S able to make one of everything, but no more. South can't sensibly bid over east's 1♠, but gets his chance when west passes and north protects with a passed hand double.

His best shot is 1NT, though he might have considered a pass were east vulnerable, and his trump pips stronger. In the event, even 1NT is no picnic.

South needs to duck the opening spade queen lead, otherwise the defence can make four spades and three clubs. North is also very short of entries, declarer unable to finesse the heart knave and get back to enjoy the ace.

However, as in #11, the defence have communication difficulties too, and cannot beat 1NT if declarer does everything right. Not all will, some E/Ws going plus.

**13**

♠ 1042  
♥ Q7  
♦ Q95  
♣ 97542

♠ QJ76  
♥ K1043  
♦ 102  
♣ AK10

♠ 9853  
♥ AJ865  
♦ 843  
♣ Q

♠ AK  
♥ 92  
♦ AKJ76  
♣ J863

Dealer: North  
Both Vulnerable

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

West has decent shape to double south's 1♦ opener. East is not quite strong enough to make a non-forcing jump to 2♥, though west probably passes this even if he does.

With both vulnerable N/S are unlikely to take any liberties, east declaring his heart contract no higher than the 2 level. 2♥ can be held where south cashes top spades then underleads his diamond tops, getting a spade ruff. Otherwise 140 results.

Although 2♣ will not be declared too often it can also be held, this time repeated diamond leads promoting a north trump.

This looks like a lot of 110s and 140s E/W.

**14**

♠ A765  
♥ J854  
♦ K8  
♣ KQ8

♠ J1083  
♥ 103  
♦ QJ106  
♣ A75

♠ Q42  
♥ AKQ2  
♦ A972  
♣ 96

♠ K9  
♥ 976  
♦ 543  
♣ J10432

Dealer: East  
Neither Vulnerable

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

The strong no trumps should survive here, west inviting game and east declining. On the club lead declarer needs to finesse diamonds rather than play on spades to record eight tricks in his 2NT contract.

West responds 1♠ to east's Acol 1♥. East could now raise rather than rebid his strong 1NT with its club flaw. Even the not unreasonable 1NT rebid could still find west trying 2♦ and this strain declared, alternatively preference given to spades.

So we could have some playing in the higher scoring part-scores of diamonds or spades, east's trumps stopping the opponents running clubs, this time the no trumps losing out.

Who will do well on this bidding challenge?

**15**

♠ 9  
♥ K1064  
♦ KJ974  
♣ AJ8

♠ J10643  
♥ A875  
♦ 532  
♣ 4

♠ KQ87  
♥ 9  
♦ AQ106  
♣ Q632

♠ A52  
♥ QJ32  
♦ 8  
♣ K10975

Dealer: South  
N-S Vulnerable

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

We have another interesting bidding hand here after north opens 1♦, over which east has no sound bid. Where south responds 1♥ north raises and east can now come to life with a belated double, clearly short in hearts, with some diamond length, and holding spades.

With 5 spades west will not sell out below 3♠. This spot gets home, despite a south diamond ruff, so long as the diamond 10 is finessed at trick 1.

Where south stretches to 2♣ north probably raises that, east now unlikely to act. Although N/S have missed their better scoring heart part-score, at least they get declaring, scoring 110 or 130.

So I am predicting part-scores both sides of the traveller here, with few failures.

**16**

♠ 542  
♥ K96  
♦ J65  
♣ K732

♠ KQJ10876  
♥ AQ104  
♦  
♣ 104

♠ A3  
♥ J73  
♦ K10973  
♣ A98

♠ 9  
♥ 852  
♦ AQ842  
♣ QJ65

Dealer: West  
E-W Vulnerable

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

West could open 4♠, alternatively take it more slowly, maybe best, since he holds the boss suit. It would be a mistake to open a Strong 2, if played, west way short of the high card values needed for this bid, despite his 8+ playing tricks. 1♠ will never get passed out, partner either bidding or the opponents doing so.

East's 2♦ will hardly excite west, who probably signs off in 4♠. It is hard to see many in other than this spot, unless some mistakenly start with the Strong 2 and get overboard to slam, it being hard to blame east with an opening hand himself.

Slam is a poor proposition, needing the diamond ace led, or the heart king onside, no more than twice guarded, a 25% shot at best. So poor bidding will not be rewarded today. Some days it is.

**17**

♠ Q97  
♥ 8543  
♦ J10743  
♣ 10

♠ J106532  
♥ Q2  
♦ Q  
♣ A832

♠ A4  
♥ AK76  
♦ 652  
♣ KQJ6

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

South's 1♥ presumably runs to east, who protects with 1♠, south probably doubling. West may well let the opponents play 2♥ now, unaware of the 8 card spade fit. The spade king lead lets this spot home. East will buy it in 2♣ where he bids this after a south strong NT.

Some will Multi or open a Weak 2 in spades with east's cards. South can double the latter, but could try 2NT over the Multi, unless playing Dixon, where south can overcall 2♥, a takeout double of spades. Playing this one passes then bids one's major if single-suited.

The effect of the Multi/Weak 2 is almost certainly to get both sides overboard, E/W unable to make 2♠, should they get playing there, nor N/S anything at the 3 level, the consequence likely being penalties both sides to go with the 110s where N/S make 2♥.

**18**

♠ KQJ1086  
♥ 986  
♦ A932

♠ A74  
♥ Q43  
♦ J109  
♣ KQJ8

♠ 92  
♥ 1075  
♦ AKQ8753  
♣ 4

♠ 53  
♥ AKJ2  
♦ 642  
♣ 10765

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT could well be raised to game by west, south presumably leading a top heart. Now south needs to find a switch. A spade is won and diamonds run, but then declarer must concede. A club forces north to win and return hearts, otherwise overtricks result.

The 1♣ openers will see west responding 1♦ and north trying 1♠, east either passing or trying 1NT. Now we could again see 3NT declared, more likely a diamond part-score.

Unfortunately, even the apparently safer suit contract suffers from five losers on a spade lead, so there could be a lot of 50s in the N/S column, in theory a poor result as 140 is available to them declaring spades. Few N/Ss will bid that high, however.

**19**

♠ 8  
♥ AK109874  
♦ K108  
♣ A4

♠ Q73  
♥ Q65  
♦ Q74  
♣ K1083

♠ AJ964  
♥ J96  
♦ J96  
♣ Q7652

♠ K1052  
♥ J32  
♦ A532  
♣ J9

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

I expect a lot of norths to be declaring 4♥ here, having rebid 3♥ over their partner's 1♠ reply to 1♥, and been raised. East does best to lead a club, won by declarer.

When west shows out on trumps an easy contract now looks shaky. Best is to get out in clubs. East's only safe play is a spade to west, who is now the one in lead trouble, being obliged to open up diamonds - a spade sets up the king and a club cedes a ruff and discard.

The only winning exit is the diamond knave, a classic book play, north otherwise playing the 8 to a low card, forcing east's queen, and allowing a later 10 finesse.

Will many manage to beat this one? Anything but a club opening lead allows a diamond to be ducked and a club eventually pitched.

**20**

♠ J3  
♥ 9864  
♦ A106  
♣ KJ86

♠ A74  
♥ K32  
♦ J32  
♣ Q1072

♠ K952  
♥ AJ107  
♦ 9754  
♣ A

♠ Q1086  
♥ Q5  
♦ KQ8  
♣ 9543

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

Despite 22HCP E/W can only make 1NT, even that depending on an unlikely guess in hearts. This is only likely to be reached via an east weak off-shape variety being passed out, or by west responding 1NT with his flat 10HCP to Acol's 1♥ or a 5 card major 1♦.

2♠ is possible on reverse dummy lines, and 2♦ similarly, the defence only preventing the latter by pulling trumps, allowing a long diamond winner, too slow in 1NT.

Any west responding 2♣ to east's opener will almost certainly find the partnership in 2♥, 2NT or worse, and a near certain minus, the makeable contracts not easily reached in normal methods.

Well done any E/W getting a plus here. There won't be many as few will drop the doubleton heart queen.

**21**

♠ K54  
♥ 98754  
♦ 976  
♣ A2

♠ QJ  
♥ Q32  
♦ KQ1032  
♣ J53

♠ 1098732  
♥ 85  
♦ KQ1097  
♣ A6  
♥ AKJ106  
♦ AJ4  
♣ 864

 Dealer: North  
N-S Vulnerable

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

South opens 1♥, or possibly a strong NT, though is arguably rather good for this. West might overcall 2♦, though is decidedly thin to do so.

Many norths will pre-empt to 4♥. The same spot may well result after the strong NT, north transferring and south breaking the transfer with his own 5 card support.

Again we have Qxx trumps off-side, but rather less hope this time, unless west falls from grace at trick 2, continuing diamonds after south ducks the king - the Bath Coup.

Where west switches to a black suit east eventually gets the lead in clubs and needs to return diamonds. Otherwise, the black suits can be eliminated and west endplayed with his trump queen.

**22**

♠ A6  
♥ 97632  
♦ Q4  
♣ QJ54

♠ Q10972  
♥ A  
♦ 2  
♣ K109876

♠ KJ4  
♥ KQJ104  
♦ 9865  
♣ A

♠ 853  
♥ 85  
♦ AKJ1073  
♣ 32

 Dealer: East  
E-W Vulnerable

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

If south overcalls east's 1♥ with 2♦ or a weak 3♦ west should not make a Sputnik double, best reserved for less shapely hands. He is better to stretch to introduce his spades, which he will otherwise get bidding cheaply should south pass.

The overcall actually helps E/W, because over intervention the spade calls promises at least a 5 card suit, in contrast to a 1♠ response to 1♥, which doesn't. Indeed, after 1♥, 1♠, 2♦ west is a bit stuck, 3♣ being fourth suit forcing, and a preference undesirable with a singleton. 2♠ is probably best.

I would hope most pairs will locate the 5:3 spade fit and declare game. This might work badly were trumps 4:1, diamonds forcing west, but today, taking care with entries, only a diamond and a trump need be lost.

**23**

♠ J105  
♥ AQ5  
♦ K94  
♣ A832

♠ KQ8  
♥ J109  
♦ 86532  
♣ 64

♠ A97  
♥ 74  
♦ Q7  
♣ KQJ1075

♠ 6432  
♥ K8632  
♦ AJ10  
♣ 9

 Dealer: South  
Both Vulnerable

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

Playing Acol N/S look likely to declare a heart part-score after north's weak NT, south either transferring or using Stayman, then converting the 2♦ response to 2♥.

5 card majors open 1♣ and north likely rebids 1NT over the 1♥ response, rather than raising. South has no sensible advance over this, so the best spot is missed.

Ten tricks are possible in hearts, declarer pulling trumps on a club lead, playing spades, then guessing diamonds correctly. East has only one entry and cannot continue the club force. In practice many will only score 110/140.

1NT could score as well or better, there being eight top tricks. Since the defence have a lot of winners diamonds are liable to be cashed from the top, rather than a finesse taken. The queen falling sees 150 on the card.

**24**

♠ K6  
♥ 64  
♦ 1096432  
♣ J86

♠ Q98752  
♥ AQ73  
♦ Q  
♣ A10

♠ 4  
♥ K1085  
♦ J5  
♣ KQ9752

♠ AJ103  
♥ J92  
♦ AK87  
♣ 43

 Dealer: West  
Neither Vulnerable

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

The nice 4:4 heart fit should come to light whether east responds 1NT or a thin 2♣ to west's 1♠. I suppose some may rebid 2♠ with west's hand, languishing there. Where 2♥ is selected east will raise, and west has enough to bid game.

Declaring hearts there are an easy eleven tricks when both hearts and clubs divide kindly. Those playing in spades do poorly, losing four trumps and a diamond.

This hand demonstrates the desirability of rebidding one's second suit, even when 6:4, unless the long suit is strong, and the 4 carder weak in a minimum hand, 450 comparing favourably with 110 in this example.

25

♠ Q  
♥ 10862  
♦ AKJ75  
♣ 954

♠ 982  
♥ A954  
♦ 102  
♣ Q862

♠ A743  
♥ K7  
♦ 943  
♣ J1073

♠ KJ1065  
♥ QJ3  
♦ Q86  
♣ AK

Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

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

This one looks like south at the helm of 3NT, after either his strong NT, alternatively 1♠ and 2NT rebid over north's 2♦ response. Occasionally, north might respond 1NT instead and declare.

A little care is needed on a club lead, not running diamonds, instead playing a spade to the queen, which the defence do best to duck. So long as the diamond queen remains south has a re-entry to knock out the spade ace and claim ten tricks. Indeed the defence will go to bed with one of their top hearts if they continue clubs, rather than cashing out.

A lesson in entry management.

26

♠ 109865  
♥ J1054  
♦ Q9  
♣ A4

♠ A42  
♥ K732  
♦ K76  
♣ 632

♠ 3  
♥ AQ9  
♦ J10842  
♣ KJ75

♠ KQJ7  
♥ 86  
♦ A53  
♣ Q1098

Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

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

This could get passed out, east certainly too weak to open. South has a decent enough weak NT, so most will open it, or the alternative 5 card major 1♣, north responding 1♠. North has a similar hand to south in #23, either using Garbage Stayman or transferring to spades over 1NT. One way or other 2♣ should result, unless south breaks a transfer and ends up at the 3 level.

Declaring spades the defence need to find an early diamond lead or switch from east or nine tricks could result, the club queen providing a diamond pitch from north. In practice, with trumps 3:1, it is still hard to record more than eight.

In theory, even one light in 3♠, losing 100, is a decent result, 110 available to E/W in diamonds. In practice they will rarely get into the bidding.

27

♠ A85  
♥ KJ964  
♦ J85  
♣ Q9

♠ 32  
♥ A1075  
♦ KQ103  
♣ 654

♠ KJ109764  
♥ 3  
♦ 764  
♣ J3

♠ Q  
♥ Q82  
♦ A92  
♣ AK10872

Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

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

We could have a difficult bidding problem for south here after he has opened 1♣, north responded 1♥ and east has pre-empted with 3♠.

The winning action is to bid 4♥. Some will double and north pass. West turns up with a great dummy, and minus 530 results on a winning trump view, at best a one trick defeat recorded. Those that bid 4♣ get raised to game. With west on lead this is cold. Were east on lead a diamond start results in declarer losing a heart and two diamonds, or a diamond, heart and heart ruff.

Defending 4♥ most will lead the spade knave, the queen scoring, and trumps easily picked up when east shows out on the second round. Twelve tricks can also score on the spade king lead. East needs to lead a diamond, which declarer has to duck to salvage eleven tricks.

28

♠ 7  
♥ KJ95  
♦ Q2  
♣ AQ10532

♠ AKJ952  
♥ A2  
♦ A1095  
♣ 7

♠ Q10  
♥ Q1076  
♦ KJ84  
♣ J96

♠ 8643  
♥ 843  
♦ 763  
♣ K84

Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

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

We have another bidding challenge here, west opening 1♠ and east making a Sputnik double of north's 2♣ overcall. I am not sure you really want to declare 6♦ with an ace off and the trump queen absent. However, Deep Finesse has no problem with the play.

In practice most will end up in 4♠, and will have to find the diamond queen to score eleven tricks when the heart knave fails to drop under the queen.

This completes an interesting set with bidding, play and defensive problems, with declarers needing to keep an eye on the pips. It is hoped they proved enjoyable.

Ave HCP	N 10.04	S 9.89	E 10.04	W 10.03	Balanced	N 12	S 14	E 10	W 16
Voids/singletons	N 2/7	S 0/7	E 2/9	W 2/8	7+ suit	N 1	S 0	E 1	W 2