

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



Third Interclub – Heat A

14th - 20th January 2018

Commentary by Ian Hamilton

1

♠ 52
♥ 32
♦ AQJ652
♣ AJ7

♠ KJ1086
♥ AJ4
♦ 1097
♣ 86

♠ A93
♥ Q9876
♦ K
♣ K1094

♠ Q74
♥ K105
♦ 843
♣ Q532

 Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

At love all a fair bit of bidding is likely, east overcalling north's diamonds with hearts and both south and west having support for their partner's suits, though south might well try 1NT over east's 1♥ overcall first.

With E/W able to make eleven tricks in hearts by getting both majors right N/S do best to try and buy it in diamonds at the 3- or 4-level, and hope to be undoubled.

In practice not all easts will manage the maximum number of tricks, and I can see few in game, so no more than 200 E/W looks probable.

How many N/Ss will be allowed to declare diamonds is the question, and will they lose less than 200?

2

♠ AQ92
♥ J
♦ A32
♣ 108765

♠ J853
♥ A62
♦ QJ7
♣ AQ4

♠ K1076
♥ 9874
♦ K10654
♣

♠ 4
♥ KQ1053
♦ 98
♣ KJ932

 Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

Some west weak no-trumpers will play there, making an overtrick, unless east can use (Garbage) Stayman with a weak hand, getting to 2♣, though south could double Stayman, getting N/S's clubs into the game.

Where east passes 1NT south could compete with hearts, losing a penalty, alternatively show hearts and a minor if playing Pottage/Cappelletti, and conceivably going plus in 3♣.

5 card major wests open 1♣, making it very awkward for N/S to play in the suit, and have a chance of getting to spades, though west might support diamonds should south overcall hearts over east's 1♦ response. The defence need to find the spade ruff to beat 3♦.

As in #1, I cannot see many in an E/W major suit game, and many won't even play in the relevant strain.

3

♠ 852
♥ KQJ10972
♦ Q
♣ 63

♠ AJ1073
♥ A53
♦ K6
♣ KJ4

♠ 94
♥ 6
♦ J7542
♣ AQ1072

♠ KQ6
♥ 84
♦ A10983
♣ 985

 Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

North is liable to pre-empt 3♥ over either west's 1♠ or strong NT, and may well be doubled. South turns up with a very acceptable dummy, and the penalty should not be more than 100.

The vulnerable E/Ws do much better to advance, no trumps being their best spot. With north entryless nine or ten tricks should eventuate.

However, reaching any no trump spot after the intervention could prove tricky, E/W much more likely to finish in a black suit. Those that do should at least get a bigger plus than those defending hearts, unless they feel obliged to bid game, where they will surely go light.

4

♠ A953
♥ 75
♦ K2
♣ A10532

♠ 1042
♥ AK103
♦ A876
♣ KJ

♠ KQJ87
♥ QJ9862
♦
♣ Q8

♠ 6
♥ 4
♦ QJ109543
♣ 9764

 Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

Whether west opens an Acol 1♥ or a strong NT he should get to declare 4♥, assuming transfers are played.

North is unlikely to find the spade ace lead, followed by a ruff and club switch which holds the contract to ten tricks. By contrast where east rarely declares south could lead his singleton, though whether he should, holding a singleton trump, is another matter.

There could be some managing to slip the club knave past north, later getting a club pitch on the diamond ace, so anything between ten and twelve tricks are possible.

Despite the inferior fit 4♠ cannot sustain a ruff, and is theoretically the place to be, but it is difficult to see many in this strain.

5

♠ 874
 ♥
 ♦ Q1032
 ♣ AQJ1085
 ♠ AQ52
 ♥ Q72
 ♦ 94
 ♣ 7643
 ♠ K63
 ♥ A10953
 ♦ AK6
 ♣ K2
 ♠ J109
 ♥ KJ864
 ♦ J875
 ♣ 9

 Dealer: North
 N-S Vulnerable

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

North will double west's 2♣ Stayman bid for the lead where east opens a strong NT. The effect could be to keep E/W out of 3NT, where north's clubs are entryless, declarer able to make four spades, two hearts, two diamonds and his club king without the defence getting five tricks first.

E/W are now likely to find themselves in 4♥, also the likely spot where an Acol 1♥ is opened. Defending hearts south ruffs away declarer's club king and cannot be denied two more trump tricks. Maybe someone will manage to get home, but they will be few.

Normally playing the 5:3 major fit, with a dummy ruff available, is best. This hand is an exception, scuppered by the bad trump break, and a rather unlucky one for many E/Ws.

6

♠ A109832
 ♥ K63
 ♦ 7
 ♣ AQ2
 ♠ Q6
 ♥ Q
 ♦ AKQ98532
 ♣ J7
 ♠ AJ1092
 ♥ 104
 ♣ K109854
 ♠ KJ754
 ♥ 8754
 ♦ J6
 ♣ 63

 Dealer: East
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Some might try a gambling 3NT with west's cards, but east will retreat to 4♦/5♦, given a chance, since that has to be west's suit. Others will try opening 5♦, which looks to have a lot of losers at adverse vulnerability, but in practice hasn't.

Over either 3NT or 5♦ north could overcall spades, paving the way for a profitable sacrifice against E/W's 5♦ game, albeit not necessarily always bid.

Indeed, as the cards lie it is impossible to beat 6♦ so long as a few right views are taken, a trump lead being the only testing defence.

Will many get a decent number as E/W on this one, either getting to game or chalking up a penalty?

7

♠ 73
 ♥ 42
 ♦ KQ1042
 ♣ AK103
 ♠ A1085
 ♥ A7
 ♦ 95
 ♣ Q7652
 ♠ K642
 ♥ K9653
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 984
 ♠ QJ9
 ♥ QJ108
 ♦ AJ873
 ♣ J

 Dealer: South
 Both Vulnerable

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

South could get to play 3NT here after opening 1♦ and north responding 2♣. Playing a strong NT south can rebid 2♥ over 2♣, assuming this does not promise extra values, a good treatment as 1♦-2♣ is an awkward sequence for the system. The alternative is a 2NT rebid.

Acol has to rebid 2♦. North will raise this, and south could try 3NT, though many will pass, being minimum.

Defending no trumps the defence cannot stop at least one trick in the majors, and declarer can take the club finesse for his ninth trick.

So the bold should be rewarded here. However, there may not be that many in game since borderline affairs are best avoided at Pairs, in contrast to Teams, where the game bonus swings the odds in their favour.

8

♠ 84
 ♥ K532
 ♦ K98
 ♣ 8752
 ♠ Q10752
 ♥ A10
 ♦ A65
 ♣ KJ6
 ♠ A
 ♥ J9764
 ♦ QJ72
 ♣ A109
 ♠ KJ963
 ♥ Q8
 ♦ 1043
 ♣ Q43

 Dealer: West
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Despite 26HCP 3NT is no picnic E/W. West may declare after his weak NT and west's transfer to hearts. Alternatively, west may open 1♠ and rebid the suit, leaving east in the hot seat.

A minor suit lead makes things a bit easier, and declarer can get home by playing a heart to the 10, the queen subsequently dropping conveniently under the ace.

If everything is done perfectly as many as ten tricks are possible, but there will be those making fewer, and some conceivably going light in this awkward enough hand for entries.

9

♠ Q7
 ♥ AJ7
 ♦ K2
 ♣ A87542
 ♠ A
 ♥ Q86
 ♦ Q106
 ♣ KQJ1063
 ♠ K1065
 ♥ 9532
 ♦ AJ74
 ♣ 9

 Dealer: North
 E-W Vulnerable

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

North could open 1♣ or upgrade to a strong NT, either opening same or rebidding an ostensibly 15-16 over either south's 1♦ or 1♥ response. Both are likely to see the auction get too high, 2NT declared.

As the cards lie the conservative 2♣, selected by many, will fare little better, being passed out and foundering on the bad trump break.

Seeing through the back of the cards eight tricks could be made in no trumps after ducking hearts twice and guessing spades, though east can thwart this by playing top clubs to establish six tricks first.

It looks like there could be a lot of N/S minuses on this one, the 2♣ rebidders in particular counting themselves decidedly unlucky.

10

♠ 875
 ♥ 10652
 ♦ Q93
 ♣ QJ3
 ♠ A964
 ♥ AKJ93
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 652
 ♠ 32
 ♥ Q87
 ♦ K76
 ♣ A10874
 ♠ KQJ10
 ♥ 4
 ♦ AJ10842
 ♣ K9

 Dealer: East
 Both Vulnerable

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

West best shows his hand by overcalling south's 1♦ with 1♥, intending to double later if necessary, getting the other suits into the game. In the event east supports immediately.

We may well have a competitive auction, south trying to declare diamonds but west likely outbidding him with hearts.

N/S's diamonds can be held to eight tricks via a spade ruff, but if this is missed the defence can duck the club king, denying a dummy entry to pick up trumps, and at least managing four tricks in defence.

Declaring hearts, so long declarer leaves trumps, if the defence force in diamonds, spades are ruffed in dummy. If they play trumps clubs can be set up.

11

♠ Q1072
 ♥ K6
 ♦ KJ1032
 ♣ J6
 ♠ 854
 ♥ 109875
 ♦ A87
 ♣ 103
 ♠ AKJ3
 ♥ AQJ
 ♦
 ♣ KQ9872
 ♠ 96
 ♥ 432
 ♦ Q9654
 ♣ A54

 Dealer: South
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Presumably east's 1♣ gets passed to north, who is best to protect with 1♦, since a 1♥ response to a double would be hard to handle. South will support diamonds after east introduces his spades. There is now a fair chance of N/S buying it in 2/3♦ for a small minus.

I wouldn't personally advocate it but those who overbid, opening 2♣ on east's cards, are likely to do best, the only realistic way for the E/W heart fit to come to light. On another day this will backfire, getting the partnership overboard on a misfit.

Declaring hearts west is seriously short of entries, but may be able to avoid losing more than a club and a trump in this awkward, potentially competitive hand. They certainly should have no trouble making ten tricks for a decent board, even if short of game.

12

♠ KQ85
 ♥ KQJ83
 ♦ Q
 ♣ Q106
 ♠ A10
 ♥ 942
 ♦ K98764
 ♣ J7
 ♠ 9642
 ♥ 765
 ♦ J10
 ♣ 8532
 ♠ J73
 ♥ A10
 ♦ A532
 ♣ AK94

 Dealer: West
 N-S Vulnerable

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

North has another tricky hand to bid after south responds 2♣ to his 1♥ opener. With a likely wasted queen a 2♠ reverse looks excessive, though it may well pave the way to a successful slam, most likely in hearts. Where north rebids 2♥ south continues with 3♦, and one can see north's 3NT ending it.

There is no defence to 6♥ or 6♣, and little to the play, whereas the unlikely 6♠ requires double dummy play on a diamond lead, leading a spades twice towards north then, when forced in diamonds, playing hearts, nullifying east's trump holding.

3NT by north makes an easy twelve tricks, and a likely near joint top, unless east starts with a diamond, west winning and continuing the suit. Now the best declarer able to do is cash out for ten tricks.

13

♠ 86
♥ AK108642
♦ 98
♣ AQ

♠ 7
♥ K5432
♦ K865432
♣ K865432

♠ AQ1094
♥ QJ93
♦ A106
♣ 9

♠ KJ532
♥ 75
♦ QJ7
♣ J107

 Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

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

This auction could prove interesting, east overcalling north's 1♥ with 1♠, and south bidding 1NT. West is best to bide his time, passing but coming to life when north's 2♥ rebid comes round.

2NT for the minors works today, east bidding diamonds. However, west risks playing in the wrong suit when east is 2:1 or 3:2 in the minors. 3♣ is soundest with a two card disparity between his suits.

Assuming declarer takes the right view in clubs ten tricks are available in the suit, but eleven in diamonds, though it is hard to see any declaring game.

N/S are unlikely to go plus declaring, but could easily only lose 100, so those bidding on the west cards look likely to do best, with 110-150 available to them.

14

♠ KJ82
♥ 10764
♦ Q72
♣ 53

♠ AQ105
♥ 82
♦ A10843
♣ Q7

♠ 9643
♥ Q95
♦ 96
♣ AK86

♠ 7
♥ AKJ3
♦ KJ5
♣ J10942

 Dealer: East
Neither Vulnerable

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

It could be hard for E/W to find their spade fit here, west likely overcalling south's 1♣ with 1♦ and north making a thin Sputnik double. East may try 1NT, but south will be there with 2♥. It will take a brave west to essay 2♠ now when north is known to hold the suit.

Declaring hearts there are only four top losers, but declarer cannot establish clubs without sustaining a diamond ruff, so should be held to eight tricks.

Declaring spades, despite the poor trump lie, so long as trumps are not played too early, it is possible to hold losses to a diamond and two tricks in each major.

It will be interesting to see who finishes on top in this love all part-score battle.

15

♠ A974
♥ AQ
♦ AKJ8
♣ 1063

♠ 10832
♥ 92
♦ 1053
♣ AK85

♠ 5
♥ KJ874
♦ 42
♣ Q9742

♠ KQJ6
♥ 10653
♦ Q976
♣ J

 Dealer: South
N-S Vulnerable

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

Those E/Ws with Michaels or Ghestem in the locker could show their two-suiter over north's opening bid, either bidding 2♣ over Acol's 1♠ or 2NT over a 5 card Major 1♦. This could result in a successful sacrifice in clubs over the makeable N/S 4♠.

Acol is likely to get to the spade game, but 5 card Majors may not, as it looks more natural for south to support diamonds over east's 2NT rather than double, which is probably best played as penalty orientated, rather than Sputnik (showing spades and tolerance for diamonds).

So those losing 300 in clubs E/W may not necessarily get a great result, since 4♠ may be missed by some N/Ss, or they could go light in the diamond game.

16

♠ K92
♥ 84
♦ 1082
♣ Q9653

♠ J64
♥ K6532
♦ KJ3
♣ 87

♠ 8
♥ AJ97
♦ AQ954
♣ 1042

♠ AQ10753
♥ Q10
♦ 76
♣ AKJ

 Dealer: West
E-W Vulnerable

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

We have another double fit hand here. N/S easily get to their spade fit, but west may support east's 1♦ opener when it is overcalled 1♠ rather than decidedly speculatively introduce hearts.

N/S have just about enough to bid up to 3♠, which is unbeatable, and needs the defence to take their four tricks immediately or cede overtricks.

Where E/W declare a red suit there are only three top losers, and either nine or ten tricks there depending on declarer's play in the heart suit.

Those getting to hearts and making the percentage play in trumps should get an excellent board, though N/S can go to 4♠, losing only 100, even when doubled.

17

♠ Q76
♥ A1063
♦ 1062
♣ 764

♠ A
♥ QJ8742
♦ Q7
♣ QJ82

♠ K98542
♥ K95
♦ 983
♣ A

♠ J103
♥
♦ AKJ54
♣ K10953

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

Where east opens a Multi or Weak 2♠ he may succeed in pre-empting his partner rather than the opponents. West may not feel he has enough to introduce his hearts at the 3 level over south's 3♦, and where he does it is probably forcing and raised to game by east.

Where they get to declare hearts ten tricks look possible E/W, but the 4:0 trump break unfortunately means two trumps must be lost after clubs are ruffed, or a club if they aren't, in addition to the two top diamond losers.

East might open 1♠, likely overcalled 2NT for the minors by south, again making it hard for E/W to play a heart part-score. In fact they are just as well defending, neither of N/S's minor suit spots being in any danger of making. At least this gets E/W a plus - plus scores being all-important at Pairs.

18

♠ KJ864
♥ K1054
♦ KJ104
♣

♠ A9
♥ 32
♦ AQ975
♣ AJ63

♠ 753
♥ 987
♦ 86
♣ Q8752

♠ Q102
♥ AQJ6
♦ 32
♣ K1094

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

When west doubles south's weak NT north will be initially happy, but less so when east rescues to clubs. He may have difficulty getting his values across now, being likely to play a major suit part-score.

5 card majors open 1♣, probably overcalled 1♦ or 1NT. Now it is a bit easier for north as he can double to show values, and may well be able to locate either the heart or spade fit, and perhaps get to game.

With the diamond suit lying nicely many will be able to record the eleven tricks possible in either major. How many will be in game is the question? How often does one bid and make game when either your weak no trump is doubled, or one of the opponents shows a strong no trump?

19

♠ 97
♥ KQ932
♦ 105
♣ KJ64

♠ AKQ32
♥ 10
♦ AK732
♣ 32

♠ 104
♥ AJ64
♦ 964
♣ AQ87

♠ J865
♥ 875
♦ QJ8
♣ 1095

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

There is every chance of east being at the helm of 3NT here, after west has shown his two suiter and east his clubs. I suppose some could overcall 2♥ on north's meagre collection, maybe escaping for a 500 penalty.

Defending 3NT the defence may well lead the unbid suit, hearts. Those leading MUD (middle, up, down) could let east make the heart 6 and eleven tricks should the suit be continued after declarer clears diamonds.

A club lead is actually best for the defence, perhaps leading to four defensive tricks where declarer errs by playing on spades rather than diamonds initially.

I can't see many in 6♦, an odds against spot, but there when trumps and the black suits behave.

20

♠ Q108643
♥ 9
♦ AJ973
♣ 6

♠ 75
♥ K7654
♦ K4
♣ KQJ2

♠ A2
♥ J82
♦ 102
♣ A109753

♠ KJ9
♥ AQ103
♦ Q865
♣ 84

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

North could use Michaels or bid his spades over west's 1♥, his shape compensating for his lack of high cards. This may get N/S to game in spades, where eleven tricks are makeable when diamonds lie kindly.

E/W actually have the balance of high cards, but would be wise not to advance beyond the four level in either their club or heart fits, both in danger of being held to eight tricks and a penalty greater than N/S's game, if doubled.

This one could prove to be a difficult enough judgement call all round.

21

♠ 107652
♥ 9
♦ A543
♣ 872

♠ K8
♥ Q1052
♦ K72
♣ KJ103

♠ AQJ
♥ AK76
♦ J6
♣ A954

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT will get doubled, and west is best to stick this, though whether north should is moot. The defence can prevail so long as north switches to a spade when on lead in diamonds, and south then fells east's doubleton king. Where west takes out to a red suit they will surely be doubled and defeated.

Where south doubles an east 1♣ opener or north decides not to stick 1NT doubled N/S should get to declare spades, where a better score is available, ten tricks and 170 possible on cross-ruff lines.

South could alight in 1NT occasionally, south doubling 1♣ and rebidding his 18-19 1NT over north's 1♠ response. The same seven tricks are there as in defence. Whether N/S will always make the seven tricks possible in offence or defence is another question.

22

♠ 4
♥ KJ
♦ AKJ108
♣ KJ1032

♠ QJ1092
♥ 1072
♦ Q54
♣ 98

♠ 3
♥ AQ854
♦ 73
♣ AQ764

♠ AK8765
♥ 963
♦ 962
♣ 5

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

Should south try a weak 2♠ over east's 1♥ west and north are best to pass. East would be awkwardly placed were west to bid diamonds over a double so he could well pass this out. 2♠ might well be held to six tricks on a heart lead and trump switch, though seven are possible, declarer finessing in then running diamonds, a loser going away as west ruffs the fourth round.

Where south overcalls 1♠ north has more room, and could go plus by bidding his diamonds, and declaring same in part-score.

Some norths may punt 3NT over south's spade call, and many will succeed, east leading a club and subsequently getting end-played. Oddly, east must lead the suit known to be stopped, hearts. With the king being doubleton the defence can prevail.

23

♠ K
♥ Q732
♦ 10974
♣ 8763

♠ J8764
♥ 965
♦ Q2
♣ QJ10

♠ 53
♥ AK104
♦ J653
♣ AK2

♠ AQ1092
♥ J8
♦ AK8
♣ 954

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

Where south opens 1♠ this runs to east, who doubles. West is best to bid 1NT, rather than pass for penalties, though the latter is the winning action.

South could open a weak or a thin strong NT. East will double the former, and any rescue will be worse.

Brian Senior says that when declaring 1NT vulnerable at Pairs you have to make it. His point is that if you are one light you cede 100, whereas if the opponents declare it they only score 90. And two light is worse - 200 rather than 120.

Here the affair is closely balanced, though E/W should come out on top, able to score three clubs, three hearts and a diamond. Their score will depend on who declares, like #21 either side possibly doing so.

24

♠ Q74
♥ 85
♦ K8762
♣ K109

♠ Q72
♥ AQ943
♦ AQ542
♣ AQ542

♠ AJ863
♥ AJ1063
♦ 5
♣ J3

♠ K10952
♥ K94
♦ J10
♣ 876

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

This hand could result in a very tricky auction, as the only E/W fit is in the fourth suit, hearts. Some will feel they are not strong enough for a game forcing FSF 2♥ after west rebids 2♣ after 1♦-1♠. They may try 2NT instead, now guaranteed to lose the heart fit. Where east does bid 2♥ he has to try 3♥ over west's 3♣ to get the suit properly shown.

So we could well have most in 3NT, and only a few in 4♥, where declarer can get home with an overtrick, losing only to the club and trump kings. The vast majority will surely record at least ten.

In 3NT, doubtless many will survive, but the defence can lead a diamond then switch to spades, or improbably lead spades from the start, setting up five winners one way or other before declarer has nine.

25

♠ A104
♥ AQ1083
♦ Q65
♣ 96

♠ Q72
♥ 754
♦ KJ1097
♣ J5

♠ KJ6
♥ KJ6
♦ 3
♣ AQ8742

 Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

The weak no trump could come a cropper here unless N/S are using 5 card Stayman, south showing his clubs by whatever means and north declaring 3NT. The diamond knave lead quickly sees declarer vanquished.

Where 1♥ is opened or 5 card Stayman employed the partnership should not be pressed to get to 4♥, where the only losers should be a club and a diamond, declarer able to establish the club suit with one ruff.

It will be interesting to see how many manage the usually superior 5:3 major suit spot here. Unlike #5, where 4♥ was defeated by a 5:0 trump break, it is definitely the place to be this time.

26

♠ K8
♥ J108653
♦ 83
♣ KJ10

♠ QJ4
♥ A7
♦ KQ105
♣ 8432

♠ A10732
♥ K42
♦ J42
♣ Q6

 Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT is likely to be passed out. In theory this is beaten on a spade lead to the king, but only if north switches to hearts. Many will return partner's suit, allowing it home.

Where east opens 1♦ west could raise, now in serious danger of getting too high, though south could come to the rescue of a diamond contract by leading a heart.

There could be those deciding to get involved with north's cards. Today, they find south with good heart support, and can make 110, or even 140 on a successful trump guess. However, vulnerable, intervening on either the north or south cards looks ill-advised, even though it succeeds today.

27

♠ 10543
♥ Q76
♦ 7
♣ AKQ109

♠ J86
♥ AJ10953
♦ 32
♣ 52

♠ Q972
♥ 42
♦ 109854
♣ 64

♠ AK
♥ K8
♦ AKQJ6
♣ J873

 Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

South is best to open 2NT, despite his shape. North's hand is difficult to bid in most methods, with its strong minor, but weak 4 card major on the side. He could well try Stayman, then raise 3NT to 4NT, inviting slam with a maximum, south being happy to oblige.

Some may have minor suit Stayman available, which will locate the club fit. On this hand there are actually twelve tricks in no trumps without a ruff needed, so those declaring clubs will lose out on the scorer.

With only 32 HCP 6NT is usually at best a borderline proposition. However, here both north and south have good five carders which make up for the high card deficiency, and there aren't two cashers off the top.

28

♠ A752
♥ Q64
♦ A43
♣ 1098

♠ QJ93
♥ K853
♦ 1075
♣ 42

♠ K6
♥ A107
♦ J862
♣ AKJ3

♠ 1084
♥ J92
♦ KQ9
♣ Q765

 Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

This looks likely to end up in 1NT by east after either his strong NT, or 15-16 rebid following 1♦-1♥.

South's club lead won't paralyse declarer, he able to set up three spades when the 10 falls, to add to his other five top tricks. Indeed, if the defence decide to cash diamonds now 150 will end up on the card. Few will fail to make at least 90, even if south finds a passive lead.

So we end with a rather dull, probably flat affair, in contrast to most of the rest of the set, many of which provided challenges of one type or other. It is hope they were enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 9.82	S 10.32	E 10.04	W 9.82	Balanced	N 9	S 14	E 11	W 15
Voids/singletons	N 2/10	S 1/11	E 4/11	W 3/5	7+ suit	N 2	S 1	E 0	W 2