

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



*First Interclub – Heat A*

*19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> September 2022*

*Commentary by Ian Hamilton*

**1**

♠ 532  
♥ 8  
♦ Q9754  
♣ KJ85

♠ AK6  
♥ 72  
♦ AK8  
♣ Q9643

♠ 10874  
♥ AK96  
♦ 32  
♣ A107

♠ QJ9  
♥ QJ10543  
♦ J106  
♣ 2

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

South may open a weak two or Multi in hearts, alternatively make a weak jump in hearts over east's 1♣. Either way, N/S could obtain a 500 penalty, better than anything else on offer.

The rest will likely end in 3NT, the number of tricks scored depending on the play of the club suit, it looking as if nine or ten tricks recorded, so long as a long spade is set up early.

Nobody is likely to finish in 4♠, where 450 can be chalked up, maybe bettered by some in 3NT on imperfect defence.

**2**

♠ K10876  
♥ A973  
♦ 97  
♣ 93

♠ J43  
♥ K4  
♦ 5432  
♣ A875

♠ A  
♥ Q865  
♦ AKQ8  
♣ K1062

♠ Q952  
♥ J102  
♦ J106  
♣ QJ4

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

Five of a minor is a rarity at Pairs, but here is a winner, E/W's 3NT scuppered by a spade lead, likely found by either north or south.

Unfortunately, E/W could find the wrong strain, east opening diamonds, and declaring game in the suit, even should 3NT be avoided. This requires two ruffs in one hand, which either promotes a trump if east ruffs twice, or allows a cheap ruff in by south where west tries to ruff two hearts.

In 5♣ a heart can be ceded, top clubs cashed and eleven tricks made on a cross-ruff.

Sadly, I fear 3NT will prove to be a popular spot, few going plus.

**3**

♠ J10532  
♥ 2  
♦ Q63  
♣ A984

♠ 6  
♥ AK10854  
♦ A842  
♣ K6

♠ KQ9  
♥ 7  
♦ KJ95  
♣ Q10732

♠ A874  
♥ QJ963  
♦ 107  
♣ J5

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

Usually the 6:1 major fit is superior to 3NT, but today it isn't, defeated by the bad break. In contrast 3NT rolls in, maybe with an overtrick, thanks to the spade 9 having its day. Declarer should get this right, east declaring and south leading the suit.

Unusually, the minor suit game could prove a winner again, 5♦ unbeatable, the club suit ruffing good.

Will we have consecutive minor suit games bid and made? Or will many be light in 4♥, alternatively having the NT game on the card?

**4**

♠ AK764  
♥ J  
♦ KJ107542  
♣

♠ 95  
♥ AQ10632  
♦ 98  
♣ 972

♠ 83  
♥ K75  
♦ AQ6  
♣ KQJ106

♠ QJ102  
♥ 984  
♦ 3  
♣ A8543

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

North may have to contend with a Multi or Weak Two by west. Leaping Michaels works well today, 4♦ by north showing diamonds and either a major or the other major. Some will simply bid diamonds and spades naturally.

East may not take all this quietly, and might well double a N/S contract, or have a stab at 5♥. With spades 2:2, and it possible to ruff out east's diamond honours, N/S should manage eleven tricks in spades, whereas 5♥ should go light at least one, two if a club ruff can be engineered.

A wide range of scores predicted, few of them E/W's.

**5**

♠ K83  
 ♥ AK107  
 ♦ 843  
 ♣ 1094  
 ♠ AQJ97  
 ♥ QJ954  
 ♦ A2  
 ♣ 2  
 ♠ 1064  
 ♥ 83  
 ♦ KQ1097  
 ♣ AJ8  
 ♠ 52  
 ♥ 62  
 ♦ J65  
 ♣ KQ7653

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

West looks the opener in 4th seat, south unlikely to try 3♣ at adverse vulnerability.

Whether E/W can get to the makeable 4♠ is highly debatable, but some may, when west tries with 3♥ and east has fair values.

The E/W heart side suit is hard to set up, but the dummy diamond suit runs, so the best the defence can do is get three major suit winners. East has bigger trumps than south should the defence try three rounds of hearts.

Will many have 420 on the card?

**6**

♠ J53  
 ♥ K4  
 ♦ K72  
 ♣ Q9873  
 ♠ 986  
 ♥ AQ32  
 ♦ Q3  
 ♣ A654  
 ♠ Q2  
 ♥ J5  
 ♦ AJ1098654  
 ♣ J  
 ♠ AK1074  
 ♥ 109876  
 ♦  
 ♣ K102

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Despite an 8 card suit I think 3♦ is plenty by east with poor side suit controls. South might get involved with his shape, and indeed can go plus if not pushed too high.

Where south passes west could try 3NT, and will succeed unless north finds the spade lead. Even then the suit might block.

Par is for E/W to bid 4♦ and N/S to be defeated 100 doubled in four of a major or 5♣. In practice a fair few other scores are liable to appear on the traveller.

**7**

♠ A5  
 ♥ KJ876  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ 109765  
 ♠ 107643  
 ♥ 43  
 ♦ AK9762  
 ♣  
 ♠ KQ982  
 ♥ A952  
 ♦ QJ  
 ♣ K4  
 ♠ J  
 ♥ Q10  
 ♦ 10853  
 ♣ AQJ832

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

Again, 4th hand could be the opener unless a diamond Weak Two or weak two suiter opener is available. East's 1♠ will see west bid 4♠ whether or not south overcalls. West is arguably too good for this, but would be wise not to overdo it.

N/S could find the 5♣ "sacrifice", a make on a winning trump view, forcing E/W into a decision. West will surely advance to 5♠ even if east doubles.

Defending a spade contract N/S need to find a heart opening lead or twelve tricks eventuate, so west is certainly right to advance.

Will most get this one right? Indeed, N/S should bid the club slam and lose 200, or find the lead should N/S try the spade slam, though just losing 650 could be okay.

**8**

♠ 862  
 ♥ 732  
 ♦ Q82  
 ♣ Q983  
 ♠ 73  
 ♥ AKJ1065  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ KJ54  
 ♠ K954  
 ♥ Q94  
 ♦ A104  
 ♣ 762  
 ♠ AQJ10  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ KJ9653  
 ♣ A10

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

This could be another competitive affair, E/W bidding hearts and N/S finding their diamond fit.

It looks as if the heart suit will win out, N/S unlikely to advance to 4♦, a good sacrifice against the making 3♥. This is largely because north is near bust.

One of my favourite maxims is wrong here. When partner raises your six card suit, bid game. Today, 4♥ loses two clubs and two spades.

It often works because, even if the game contract fails, the opposition have a making contract worth more than the penalty.

Any wests that listen to me will have a minus score.

**9**

♠ 4  
♥ 109  
♦ AK1084  
♣ Q6542

♠ AK86  
♥ 7543  
♦ Q65  
♣ AK

♠ QJ932  
♥ K86  
♦ 2  
♣ J987

♠ 1075  
♥ AQJ2  
♦ J973  
♣ 103

Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

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

Whether west opens a strong NT or an Acol 1♥ (or 1♠) E/W should find their spade fit. North may intervene with the minors, and N/S compete with diamonds.

Today the Law of Total Tricks (the sum of both sides' longest fits) is perfect, predicting 18 total tricks, in this instance divided equally. Thus, N/S can safely bid to the level of their fit, the 3 level, and E/W can do likewise.

With E/W able to make 140 declaring spades N/S need to advance to 4♦ to reduce their minus. Will everyone judge this correctly? Or could the 2NT overcall of 1♥ result in the spade fit being missed, or hearts declared E/W for a minus?

**10**

♠ Q9  
♥ AQ7  
♦ AK8  
♣ AJ764

♠ A5  
♥ 109862  
♦ 10654  
♣ 103

♠ K874  
♥ 53  
♦ QJ93  
♣ Q52

♠ J10632  
♥ KJ4  
♦ 72  
♣ K98

Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

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

This looks like 3NT by north after opening 2NT and south transferring to spades. E/W do best to lead diamonds, and likely will.

Declarer is fortunate to have the spade 9/10, meaning that the ace and king can be dislodged, the defence only then able to cash two diamonds.

Some might play on clubs, and have ten tricks should the suit play for five tricks. It doesn't, except on the improbable play of running the knave, pinning the 10.

Will many go light going for the maximum, best if the diamonds were 5:3? Some might play in spades, and could make, certainly if the defensive heart ruff is missed. Indeed, eleven tricks can result with the winning club play. Won't happen!

**11**

♠ 9753  
♥ A87  
♦ 9763  
♣ A5

♠ J  
♥ 10532  
♦ KJ8  
♣ Q8743

♠ A62  
♥ KJ94  
♦ Q4  
♣ KJ102

♠ KQ1084  
♥ Q6  
♦ A1052  
♣ 96

Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S are likely to buy this in 3♠ after south opens the suit, whether or not E/W get bidding. With E/W cold for nine tricks in hearts or clubs this proves to be a useful sacrifice.

Some old-fashioned bidders might just raise to 2♠ on the north cards, and if this silences the opponents, should get a great board, there being little to the play in either polarity.

**12**

♠ A4  
♥ AK4  
♦ AK984  
♣ QJ10

♠ KQ93  
♥ Q85  
♦ 752  
♣ K87

♠ 76  
♥ 10632  
♦ Q103  
♣ 6532

♠ J10852  
♥ J97  
♦ J6  
♣ A94

Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

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

Like #10, north should declare 3NT after a south spade transfer. He might go home now, knowing he won't get many more decent hands.

North will surely make ten tricks on a heart lead with a winning guess, he best to play diamonds from the top, succeeding where the suit is 3:3 or an honour falls on the second round.

A spade lead is more interesting, it potentially setting up four defensive tricks. However, if east plays another spade upon winning his diamond west is now end-played, and later squeezed in three suits. On the alternative club switch by east the spade 9 never scores.

Will many be held to nine tricks?

**13**

♠ J3  
 ♥ 103  
 ♦ AK973  
 ♣ Q1053  
 ♠ A987  
 ♥ AJ6  
 ♦ 542  
 ♣ A92  
 ♠ Q105  
 ♥ Q9752  
 ♦ 8  
 ♣ KJ76  
 ♠ K642  
 ♥ K84  
 ♦ QJ106  
 ♣ 84

 Dealer: North  
 Both Vulnerable

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

Acol will probably play this in 1NT by east, the weak NT passed out. 5 card majors play in 2♠, east opening 1♣ and raising the 1♠ response, west best to bypass diamonds on a non-invitational hand.

Defending 1NT, south is best to lead clubs, but the 5 card suit looks normal, a heart trick given away. Declarer should now succeed by playing on spades, scraping home.

North presumably leads top diamonds against 2♠, south getting a ruff, but only with a trump winner, the suit now 2:2. Thus, an overtrick should result, a heart going away from east on the long diamond.

Looks like a good one for 5 card majors.

**14**

♠ 9  
 ♥ K1098632  
 ♦ AJ82  
 ♣ 6  
 ♠ Q65  
 ♥ A7  
 ♦ Q1054  
 ♣ Q753  
 ♠ K8  
 ♥ Q54  
 ♦ K73  
 ♣ AJ1082  
 ♠ AJ107432  
 ♥ J  
 ♦ 96  
 ♣ K94

 Dealer: East  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

South will bid spades over east's weak NT or 1♣, and may well elect for the 3 level. Unfortunately, this proves too high, unless west starts with the heart ace. Declarer can ruff a club, or use dummy's entry to play trumps, reducing losers in the suit. However, he can't do both, so should be held to eight tricks.

South's bidding could goad E/W into an indiscretion, bidding on rather than defending. This is fine if allowed to declare 3♣, but not if they contract for more tricks.

Looks like one to defend, but will the field at love all?

**15**

♠ 109  
 ♥ AQ54  
 ♦ A6  
 ♣ AKQ108  
 ♠ AJ873  
 ♥ KJ9  
 ♦ Q95  
 ♣ 92  
 ♠ KQ652  
 ♥ 1062  
 ♦ KJ8  
 ♣ J3  
 ♠ 4  
 ♥ 873  
 ♦ 107432  
 ♣ 7654

 Dealer: South  
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	5	3	3	5	6
S	5	2	3	4	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

North gets another big hand, opening 1♣, planning a reverse into hearts or 2NT over partner's 1♠. However, east overcalls 1♠. South is best to try 1NT or stretch to 2NT. Counting points north cannot do more than raise to 3NT.

West needs to select a heart to ensure two defensive tricks, and might do so. On a spade lead it is possible to make seven black suit tricks, plus three diamonds, later squeezing east in the majors for twelve tricks.

In practice, few will make the possible tricks available, but some might, especially if west selects a "safe" diamond for the opening lead, making sure declarer makes three diamond tricks.

**16**

♠ 9753  
 ♥ KQ1092  
 ♦ 8652  
 ♠ Q64  
 ♥ 876  
 ♦ J963  
 ♣ K43  
 ♠ K108  
 ♥ AJ5  
 ♦ 108754  
 ♣ 107  
 ♠ AJ2  
 ♥ 43  
 ♦ AKQ2  
 ♣ AQJ9

 Dealer: West  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

North has a few options over south's 2NT, and will probably transfer to hearts then bid spades. When south bids 3NT some will give up, but if north continues with 4♣, a handful might get to the club slam. Passing works out badly, north entryless after one heart is played.

6♣ plays like a dream, with all the cards lying nicely, and a heart contract is similar, twelve tricks available in either strain. Even 4♠ is better than 3NT, which should be defeated on a diamond lead.

Will many allow south to declarer the only losing contract?

**17**

♠ Q9853  
 ♥ J5  
 ♦ AK65  
 ♣ 86  
 ♠ K42  
 ♥ A1076  
 ♦ 742  
 ♣ 1095  
 ♠ AJ106  
 ♥ K4  
 ♦ J983  
 ♣ AQ4

 Dealer: North  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S should easily find their spade fit whether south opens a strong NT or Acol 1♠, and the major suit game should ensue.

With the diamond queen dropping, the heart ace onside and the trump finesse succeeding most should manage the obvious eleven tricks.

Where north declares I suppose someone might underlead the heart ace and take three defensive tricks. Otherwise, a pretty boring board.

**18**

♠ K1087  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ J98762  
 ♣ 63  
 ♠ J952  
 ♥ KQ73  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ A1072  
 ♠ AQ  
 ♥ AJ10  
 ♦ KQ4  
 ♣ KJ854  
 ♠ 643  
 ♥ 96542  
 ♦ A53  
 ♣ Q9

 Dealer: East  
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	-	-	-	-
S	-	-	-	-	-
E	6	1	5	4	6
W	6	1	5	3	6

East will be the pilot in 3NT after a failing major suit enquiry over 2NT.

This could be another flat board, south leading a heart and declarer dropping the club queen, finessing spades and only losing to the diamond ace.

Instead, south just might try an opening low diamond lead to the 10, knave and queen. Now declarer is in peril should north get on lead with the club queen. East can guarantee eleven tricks by finessing clubs into south, losing an unnecessary club trick as the cards lie.

Might happen.

**19**

♠ AQ64  
 ♥ J82  
 ♦ J963  
 ♣ 107  
 ♠ K105  
 ♥ 7  
 ♦ K10875  
 ♣ 8432  
 ♠ 9732  
 ♥ Q10643  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ J65  
 ♠ J8  
 ♥ AK95  
 ♦ AQ2  
 ♣ AKQ9

 Dealer: South  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

N/S should stop short of slam on this one, north's 8 HCP not quite enough opposite south's 2♣ opener/2NT rebid showing 23-24.

Of course, Deep Finesse only loses to the diamond king, double finessing east's heart holding, and chalking up twelve tricks.

Playing against a robot on lead this could happen, as they frequently lead singletons against NT contracts, making it easy for declarer.

Let us hope everyone is playing face to face by September, few making more than ten or eleven tricks, this defence improbable.

**20**

♠ Q1094  
 ♥ KQ10  
 ♦ AK542  
 ♣ 5  
 ♠ A3  
 ♥ J542  
 ♦ 1087  
 ♣ AJ43  
 ♠ KJ7  
 ♥ A98  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ KQ10976  
 ♠ 8652  
 ♥ 763  
 ♦ QJ93  
 ♣ 82

 Dealer: West  
 Both Vulnerable

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

Although north has a decent hand east has a nice 2♣ overcall and west enough to advance, cutting N/S out of the auction thereafter.

A few could get overboard to 5♣, which could make if north had a doubleton honour in hearts, declarer eliminating diamonds and spades, then playing ace and another in the suit. It still might succeed should north mis-discard.

However, I reckon few will take more than the cold ten tricks.

**21**

♠ AK1043  
 ♥ AKQ10  
 ♦ 98  
 ♣ K3

♠ 9865  
 ♥ 9542  
 ♦ A1053  
 ♣ 2

♠ Q2  
 ♥ 876  
 ♦ KJ64  
 ♣ A1065

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Most will end in 3NT (maybe 4NT) after north has opened 1♠ and rebid some number of hearts over south's response. South is likely to declare, and west lead a top club.

When the major suit knaves fall there are eleven top tricks. To make twelve declarer needs to guess diamonds correctly.

West might have give the show away with obvious discomfort on the run of the majors, suggesting holding the queen, but is discarding after south, so shouldn't go wrong.

Well done those getting this right and making a dozen.

**22**

♠ KQJ4  
 ♥ J1053  
 ♦ K109  
 ♣ K2

♠ 6532  
 ♥ Q4  
 ♦ Q7  
 ♣ Q9876

♠ 7  
 ♥ K87  
 ♦ AJ8653  
 ♣ A105

♠ A1098  
 ♥ A962  
 ♦ 42  
 ♣ J43

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

East might be left to play 2♦ after opening and re-bidding his suit. However, N/S might manage to protect and get to a major suit contract - playing in west's suit is actually better than 2♥, and can make.

This may have the effect of pushing E/W to 3♦, where a good guess in clubs is required to succeed, plus a heart ruff in dummy may be needed.

Will many manage 110 E/W, better than beating a N/S part-score one trick?

**23**

♠ J1082  
 ♥ KQJ542  
 ♦ 64  
 ♣ Q

♠ KQ643  
 ♥ 73  
 ♦ KJ3  
 ♣ A43

♠ A5  
 ♥ 106  
 ♦ A10982  
 ♣ 9872

♠ 97  
 ♥ A98  
 ♦ Q75  
 ♣ KJ1065

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

North might open a third seat Weak Two or Multi in hearts, or might let east kick off with 1♠. The former probably sees south competing to 3♥, where 100-200 may be lost, the difference critical. West needs to get over-ruffing a spade at some point to get six tricks in defence.

Undisturbed, west might be left in 1NT, succeeding even after the defence run six hearts, the diamond suit worth five tricks with a winning view, to add to two aces. E/W are better if west bids diamonds, the suit stopping the run of hearts, and ten tricks possible, 130 the score.

Even 2♠ proves better than 1NT, though it just staggers over the line.

**24**

♠ A1072  
 ♥ J974  
 ♦ 1042  
 ♣ 107

♠ J843  
 ♥ 108  
 ♦ K83  
 ♣ Q986

♠ 965  
 ♥ A63  
 ♦ 76  
 ♣ KJ532

♠ KQ  
 ♥ KQ52  
 ♦ AQJ95  
 ♣ A4

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

South does best to open an off-shape 2NT than risk being passed out in 1♦. Thus the 4:4 heart fit should be located, and game declared.

With trumps dividing evenly declarer needs only to lose a club, trump and the diamond king, and might even avoid the club loser if the suit isn't led early by the defence. The spade blockage means there is no early pitch possible without letting E/W on lead.

I bet there aren't just 420s on the traveller, the defence missed or the heart game not found.



**25**

♠ Q8  
 ♥ J9732  
 ♦ 98  
 ♣ 8654  
 ♠ A732  
 ♥ K  
 ♦ A2  
 ♣ AJ10972  
 ♠ KJ954  
 ♥ Q1084  
 ♦ K7  
 ♣ Q3  
 ♠ 106  
 ♥ A65  
 ♦ QJ106543  
 ♣ K

 Dealer: North  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

A pre-emptive 3♦ by south over east's 1♠ could make it difficult for E/W. However, with 4 card support for spades game surely should not be missed. Indeed, it might have the opposite effect, propelling the contract to the spade slam.

This spot is off an ace, needs the club finesse, plus requires trumps to be picked up without loss, itself a 50:50 proposition, so is not a sensible proposition on paper, 25% at best.

All is well today, however, the slam rolling in. Will many be in it?

**26**

♠ 1074  
 ♥ A85  
 ♦ AQ65  
 ♣ 954  
 ♠ AKQJ983  
 ♥ K93  
 ♦ J2  
 ♣ A  
 ♠ 65  
 ♥ J10764  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ QJ1076  
 ♠ 2  
 ♥ Q2  
 ♦ K109843  
 ♣ K832

 Dealer: East  
 Both Vulnerable

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

In third seat west might as well open 4♠, passed partner unlikely to have enough for slam. That is likely to end it.

North could easily lead a trump in the absence of attractive alternatives, and the lack of dummy entries means that declarer should lose four tricks in the red suits.

4♥ apparently makes E/W, but it is hard to see that spot ever being declared, and is far from a gimme.

There could be a lot of minus 100s E/W on the traveller.

**27**

♠ AK105  
 ♥ AK103  
 ♦ 763  
 ♣ K7  
 ♠ 7  
 ♥ Q942  
 ♦ A2  
 ♣ AJ10654  
 ♠ Q64  
 ♥ J86  
 ♦ Q109  
 ♣ Q983  
 ♠ J9832  
 ♥ 75  
 ♦ KJ854  
 ♣ 2

 Dealer: South  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

North has a nice double of west's 1♣, and east could bounce to 3♣ at love all if west could be relied upon to have proper clubs. South might well bid spades anyway and will certainly do so at the two level, if he can.

It could prove difficult for N/S to judge this one, and some could get overboard to game. Unfortunately, 4♠ has to lose two diamonds, a trump and a club, so should go light.

With the diamond suit unbid west just might start with the diamond ace, letting it home, but I can't see that happening too often.

**28**

♠ QJ986  
 ♥ 9872  
 ♦ 95  
 ♣ 74  
 ♠ A10  
 ♥ K3  
 ♦ AK43  
 ♣ KQJ63  
 ♠ 7432  
 ♥ AJ54  
 ♦ QJ7  
 ♣ 82  
 ♠ K5  
 ♥ Q106  
 ♦ 10862  
 ♣ A1095

 Dealer: West  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

West is best to open 2NT, and will declare the NT game when no heart fit is found.

Declarer needs to be careful to hold up the spade ace when the queen is led, south covering with the king. Now north is out of the game, and declarer can set up ten tricks, losing the lead in clubs a couple of times to south.

We finish with a classic hold-up play to ensure a contract. There were also a few tricky decisions in the bidding, play and defence in the set, hopefully enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 9.93	S 10.04	E 10.07	W 9.96	Balanced	N 11	S 14	E 17	W 10
Voids/singletons	N 2/10	S 1/9	E 0/9	W 1/11	7+ suit	N 2	S 2	E 1	W 1