

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION♥♣



First Interclub – Heat B

30th September - 1st October 2026

Commentary by Ian Hamilton

1

♠ K8643
 ♥ AJ105
 ♦ 42
 ♣ 97
 ♠ 752
 ♥ 4
 ♦ KQJ86
 ♣ A864
 ♠ QJ
 ♥ Q9872
 ♦ 95
 ♣ QJ53
 ♠ A109
 ♥ K63
 ♦ A1073
 ♣ K102

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S are likely to finish in a spade part-score after south opens 1♦ or a weak NT.

Today, the gods are good to declarer, the QJ of spades dropping doubleton. Declarer can also get his last heart away on the club 10 if east splits his honours, or declarer leads to the 10, only losing one club.

Any that declare no trumps do a bit worse, as diamonds can be led and declarer held to five spades, three hearts (with a good guess) and a diamond.

Not the most exciting of exhibits, but scope for various results. For example, some might play east for a bare spade honour or play a club to the king, making fewer tricks.

2

♠ KQ98
 ♥ K65
 ♦ QJ3
 ♣ AQ3
 ♠ 1054
 ♥ A83
 ♦ K9874
 ♣ J5
 ♠ AJ62
 ♥ J74
 ♦ A
 ♣ K8762
 ♠ 73
 ♥ Q1092
 ♦ 10652
 ♣ 1094

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

When east opens 1♣ and west responds 1♦ or 1NT it is tempting for north to intervene, despite the poor shape. However, with south near bust this could prove ill-advised. North is far better to keep schtum, and hope to go plus in defence.

It seems E/W can make seven tricks in three strains, but staying out of 1NT (the most likely contract) or anything higher will not prove easy.

It does require a spade lead to bust 1NT, which may not be found. This attacks east's entries to set up and enjoy the club suit.

Despite all this I think 1NT by E/W will prove hard to beat in practice.

3

♠ K10964
 ♥ J73
 ♦ 763
 ♣ A7
 ♠ AQ3
 ♥ AQ106
 ♦ AQ98
 ♣ 42
 ♠ 5
 ♥ K82
 ♦ K104
 ♣ KJ8653
 ♠ J872
 ♥ 954
 ♦ J52
 ♣ Q109

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

In real life E/W surely finish in 3NT by west, north probably having overcalled spades.

North may well have led spades, giving up a trick to the queen. Both red suits break, so declarer basically has a club suit guess for eleven tricks.

Of course, Deep Finesse plays in a red suit slam, guesses clubs correctly and ruffs the suit good for his contract.

I can't see that happening too often.

4

♠ AK8732
 ♥
 ♦ A643
 ♣ A63
 ♠ 5
 ♥ AKJ6
 ♦ KQ5
 ♣ 109542
 ♠ Q1064
 ♥ Q9732
 ♦ 1092
 ♣ J
 ♠ J9
 ♥ 10854
 ♦ J87
 ♣ KQ87

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

We could have a bidding battle between N/S's spades and E/W's hearts, though E/W might well not compete in the suit, east short on values. In any event spades will usually win out, being the higher ranking suit.

It looks as if north might make ten tricks in spades. However, heart leads force declarer repeatedly, the result being that even making nine tricks isn't a walk in the park.

Well done any with 140+ N/S. By contrast making 140 E/W is relatively straightforward, so long as trumps aren't drawn prematurely, and diamonds are played to advantage.

5

♠ 5
 ♥ Q94
 ♦ KQ954
 ♣ J854
 ♠ K109762
 ♥ 8
 ♦ 10832
 ♣ A7
 ♠ QJ4
 ♥ KJ1052
 ♦ 76
 ♣ KQ10
 ♠ A83
 ♥ A763
 ♦ AJ
 ♣ 9632

Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

E/W surely play a spade partscore, whether east opens 1♥ or a weak NT. South is unlikely to bid, nothing sound available, especially vulnerable vs not.

The defence can start with clubs. Declarer may then err by ditching his singleton heart, and try to ruff diamonds. However, south gets in twice to play three trumps, leaving west with three diamond losers.

The club lead is a bit of a Greek gift. Declarer is better to play a heart early, guessing to finesse the knave, and setting up a trick. Now either the hearts get set up or declarer gets a diamond ruff in dummy.

Easy to mis-play this one.

6

♠ Q3
 ♥ 65
 ♦ AQ1053
 ♣ K752
 ♠ AJ
 ♥ KQ10743
 ♦ KJ94
 ♣ 6
 ♠ 10862
 ♥ 82
 ♦ 762
 ♣ A1094
 ♠ K9754
 ♥ AJ9
 ♦ 8
 ♣ QJ83

Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

In theory, N/S should find their club fit after west has overcalled south's 1♠ with 2♥ and north has doubled. Playing Acol, south might simply re-bid 2♠, having only promised four with his opener.

West might bid again, but is liable to lose a meaningful penalty in either hearts or diamonds.

In 2♠ the defence can get a club ruff, but are in danger of conceding an overtrick if declarer later finesses the diamond queen for a heart pitch, the trump ace later "played on air".

Playing in clubs is more tricky. Declarer needs to play a spade after the top heart lead. West is a bit stuck when he wins the spade ace, best to win and return the suit. Declarer can prevail, but it isn't easy.

7

♠ K108643
 ♥ A95
 ♦ 54
 ♣ A10
 ♠ A9
 ♥ KJ4
 ♦ AKQJ98
 ♣ J9
 ♠ Q5
 ♥ Q732
 ♦ 1063
 ♣ K876
 ♠ J72
 ♥ 1086
 ♦ 72
 ♣ Q5432

Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

I'd be tempted to open 2NT with west's hand, though 1♦ is more normal. North is likely to bid spades over the latter, and east double, getting hearts into the game.

E/W do best to get to 3NT by west, east's spade queen providing an extra stop, and maybe trick. 4♥ is the alternative, or indeed the poorly scoring 5♦.

West makes a lot of tricks in any of these, as north is stymied from the start, declarer able to get the heart suit going when it divides 3:3, and only north's two aces scoring.

8

♠ KJ9764
 ♥ Q4
 ♦ A95
 ♣ 42
 ♠ 108
 ♥ 10873
 ♦ 832
 ♣ K1098
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ KJ2
 ♦ J74
 ♣ AQJ76
 ♠ A53
 ♥ A965
 ♦ KQ106
 ♣ 53

Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S might find this one difficult to judge when north's weak Two/Multi is overcalled 3♣ by east.

Today, there is a near perfect fit producing eleven tricks, and the best the defence can do is cash two clubs and hope declarer mis-guesses trumps.

In practice, not everyone plays Weak Twos or the Multi, so it may require a double of an east 1♣ opener to locate the fit - or north to open 1♠.

Will many get to 4♠ with only 23HCP between north and south?

9

♠ A10975
 ♥ Q107
 ♦ 3
 ♣ 9432
 ♠ KJ82
 ♥ K8653
 ♦ J1085
 ♣
 ♠ Q643
 ♥ 9
 ♦ A964
 ♣ KJ85
 ♠
 ♥ AJ42
 ♦ KQ72
 ♣ AQ1076

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

South is awkwardly placed when north replies 1♠ to his 1♣. Despite the void in partner's suit reversing into a red suit is probably best.

Some play 2NT now by north as Lebensohl, demanding 3♣, passable, and that looks ideal here. Otherwise, south is guessing what to do over a 3♣ preference.

Ideally, N/S should stop in 3♣, though I bet some try 3NT, which could make but is beaten by Deep Finesse, though it refused to say how, or even lead! I think a diamond or spade lead does it. East's club pips mean declarer needs three dummy entries to pick up the suit, and doesn't have them.

4♣ looks to be a more comfortable spot, with a diamond ruff allowing access to dummy.

10

♠ J843
 ♥ AQ86
 ♦ 5
 ♣ 7543
 ♠ K106
 ♥ K107
 ♦ A1072
 ♣ A86
 ♠ 52
 ♥ 952
 ♦ Q64
 ♣ KQ1092
 ♠ AQ97
 ♥ J43
 ♦ KJ983
 ♣ J

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

N/S should find 2♠ after south's 1♦ and north's 1♥ response. West has no sound bid over 1♦ and is pretty well frozen out thereafter. South is likely to declare.

It looks like declarer should only lose a trick in each suit, unless north (somehow) declares. Now east can lead a trump and repeated leads hold declarer to eight tricks.

Will many only pencil in 110 N/S?

11

♠ K8
 ♥ K1075
 ♦ J5432
 ♣ J8
 ♠ J1076
 ♥ QJ6
 ♦ AK10
 ♣ K97
 ♠ Q532
 ♥ A43
 ♦ 98
 ♣ 10532
 ♠ A94
 ♥ 982
 ♦ Q76
 ♣ AQ64

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

Love all usually means lots of bidding, though both south and west have poor shape. South could well simply be allowed to declare 1NT should the weak variety be opened.

A south 1♣ could see west doubling, and E/W get to their par 2♠ contract. Alternatively, north might introduce diamonds, declaring at the three level.

2♠ looks a straightforward assignment, losing just the top trumps, a heart and two clubs. 3♦ should lose two trumps, two hearts and a club, unless the defence misfires.

South's 1NT looks beaten on a spade lead, but could survive. A fun partscore battle.

12

♠ 843
 ♥ A82
 ♦ K52
 ♣ A532
 ♠ AK5
 ♥ QJ753
 ♦ J
 ♣ QJ108
 ♠ 76
 ♥ K10964
 ♦ Q1043
 ♣ 94
 ♠ QJ1092
 ♥
 ♦ A9876
 ♣ K76

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

East's pre-emptive bounce to 4♥ could buy it, though south has a shapely hand, with nothing wasted in hearts. Some will double or try 4♠.

The theoretical winning action is to double and north to pass - which is quite likely. 4♥ cannot credibly escape the loss of four tricks.

4♠ could make. It needs west to find the winning defence of leading and continuing to play hearts. West either makes his third spade by ruffing or causes south to lose control. Banging out top spades isn't good enough. Declarer can force east to split diamonds, losing only a diamond and the top spades.

Meanwhile, the 4♥ sacrifice has four top losers. Not easy to judge this one.

13

♠ A76
 ♥ J8
 ♦ 853
 ♣ AQ1062
 ♠ J985
 ♥ 52
 ♦ 9
 ♣ KJ9754
 ♠ Q42
 ♥ AQ109643
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ 3
 ♠ K103
 ♥ K7
 ♦ KJ107642
 ♣ 8

 Dealer: North
 Both Vulnerable

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

East will either open or overcall hearts, and south might well bid his diamonds. Today, aggression works well, 5♦ cold on the lie of the cards, though it needs a club finesse to succeed. In practice, few will be in game unless north opens, few Acol players doing so.

Conceivably, east will win the auction with hearts, where even one light in 4♥ could be a good board - and if south leads a diamond east might even chalk up ten tricks so long as trumps are played pronto.

14

♠ KJ1086
 ♥ J1072
 ♣ J1062
 ♠ AJ932
 ♥ Q75
 ♦ A5
 ♣ KQ4
 ♠ 1064
 ♥ A942
 ♦ K864
 ♣ 93
 ♠ KQ875
 ♥ 3
 ♦ Q93
 ♣ A875

 Dealer: East
 Neither Vulnerable

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

E/W's best fit is spades, but this will rarely see the light of day after south has opened the suit. North will usually reply 1NT to 1♠ and pass south's 2♣ rebid, very likely buying it.

Like #10, the defence are best to lead trumps by east, but north will rarely declare. West can lead a heart to east for a trump switch, but that only helps declarer's tempo so long as hearts are guessed.

Will most have 110 on the board N/S?

15

♠ KJ10
 ♥ Q10
 ♦ 96542
 ♣ AK4
 ♠ 87653
 ♥ KJ543
 ♦ 3
 ♣ 107
 ♠ A42
 ♥ A7
 ♦ AKQJ87
 ♣ Q2
 ♠ Q9
 ♥ 9862
 ♦ 10
 ♣ J98653

 Dealer: South
 N-S Vulnerable

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

North's weak NT presumably gets doubled (and could make if east leads and clears diamonds). South surely bales out into clubs, and east declares some number of diamonds - which will not excite west.

Where north opens 1♦ east may play 1NT, at least going plus.

E/W are actually better off declaring a major, preferably spades, where it may not even be necessary to fella the heart queen.

Results awaited with interest.

16

♠ 32
 ♥ K
 ♦ KQJ107
 ♣ AQ832
 ♠ AQ76
 ♥ 10972
 ♦ 83
 ♣ K74
 ♠ K1095
 ♥ 843
 ♦ A542
 ♣ 65
 ♠ J84
 ♥ AQJ65
 ♦ 96
 ♣ J109

 Dealer: West
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Many will fail to get to the best-scoring spot here, north opening 1♦, rebidding 2♣, and being given false preference to 2♦. 3♣ might eventuate if north shows his 5:5 distribution. Indeed, with 24 HCP there could be those in 3NT, which has four spade losers, plus the diamond ace, and really shouldn't be allowed to make.

The best spot at pairs is 2♥, which can make nine tricks, but breaks (David) Burn's Law - "when declaring a suit contract thou shalt have more trumps than the opponents". The "Law" is not infallible!

Clubs is next best, diamonds held to eight tricks on a spade force.

I expect a fair variety of contracts here.

17

♠ 853
 ♥ Q1063
 ♦ 9
 ♣ K10864
 ♠ AQJ9
 ♥ K94
 ♦ QJ3
 ♣ J72
 ♠ K7642
 ♥ AJ2
 ♦ AK1062
 ♣
 ♠ 10
 ♥ 875
 ♦ 8754
 ♣ AQ953

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	2	-	-	-	-
S	2	-	-	-	-
E	-	7	2	7	2
W	-	7	2	7	2

This could be an interesting bidding exercise, east opening 1♠, and west perhaps employing the Jacoby 2NT - game force including 4+ trumps.

However, the responses normally only show "shortage", usually a singleton, so east may struggle to show the void - maybe 4♣ over 2NT is best, but the original Jacoby has this as another 5 carder. I play it as a void, as knowing of ten cards in east doesn't help west know where east's shortage lies.

Of course, there is a perfect fit today, with little wastage in clubs, plus the diamond and trump fillers.

I think most will be more than happy to have 1010 on the board, content with their 28HCP slam. Will any manage 1510, bidding and making the cold Grand Slam?

18

♠ AQ
 ♥ 754
 ♦ AQ94
 ♣ KQ43
 ♠ 32
 ♥ KQ32
 ♦ J5
 ♣ J9872
 ♠ 964
 ♥ AJ10
 ♦ 863
 ♣ A1065
 ♠ KJ10875
 ♥ 986
 ♦ K1072
 ♣

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

North has enough to advance over south's 2♠ or Multi 2♦. Where north is the opener a strong NT should also reach the spade game. It could be more tricky where north opens 1♦, though the spade spot should still result.

Defending 4♠ (or a diamond part-score) the defence need to cash their hearts pronto, else a club ruffing finesse sees one dispatched.

Will may have 650 on the card?

19

♠ AQ864
 ♥ 102
 ♦ K1053
 ♣ 53
 ♠ K32
 ♥ Q8753
 ♦ 8642
 ♣ A
 ♠ J975
 ♥ K9
 ♦ A
 ♣ Q108742
 ♠ 10
 ♥ AJ64
 ♦ QJ97
 ♣ KJ96

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

3NT is theoretically the spot, but few will reach it, as there is largely a misfit, and N/S have only just over the balance of the points. Most will play a diamond part-score, though some might play 1NT.

In any event making nine tricks in no trumps involves a decidedly anti-percentage club view, so I can't see many doing so.

However, the nine tricks in diamonds is a much more straightforward assignment. Indeed, it takes a club lead and ruff to prevent ten tricks, most leads helping declarer in one way or other.

20

♠ AK64
 ♥ 54
 ♦ 9432
 ♣ A32
 ♠ 8732
 ♥ QJ982
 ♦
 ♣ 8654
 ♠ QJ9
 ♥ AK7
 ♦ AQ75
 ♣ QJ7
 ♠ 105
 ♥ 1063
 ♦ KJ1086
 ♣ K109

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

East could play in 1♦ should north pass as dealer, and pass out east's opener. This is not a happy spot, vulnerable. East doubles a north 1♦ opener, at least preventing that catastrophe. The main risk is getting too high declaring hearts, or playing 2NT, which should be beaten even on a diamond lead.

There are a variety of contracts possible here, diamonds possibly declared by either side and likewise no trumps, not ideal at both vulnerable.

No predictions on this one.

21

♠ 7
 ♥ KQ9
 ♦ J9832
 ♣ J876
 ♠ AQ106
 ♥ 432
 ♦ Q54
 ♣ 1032
 ♠ J5432
 ♥ A87
 ♦ K10
 ♣ 954
 ♠ K98
 ♥ J1065
 ♦ A76
 ♣ AKQ

 Dealer: North
 N-S Vulnerable

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

South has a nice strong NT or Acol 1♥. West might bid spades at favourable vulnerability over the latter, despite the decidedly rpy suit.

N/S have close to game values, but can't quite do it, beaten in 3NT on a spade lead. 4♥ should be beaten, but might make if the heart ace is taken early and declarer is careful with entries. Diamonds can be picked up for one loser via an "intra-finesse" - low towards the knave, allowing the 10 to be pinned if west rises with the king, it later falling if he doesn't.

In practice, I suspect no trumps will prove more popular than hearts and will rarely be allowed to make more than eight tricks.

22

♠ 83
 ♥ AKQJ1054
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ 103
 ♠ AJ974
 ♥ 3
 ♦ 109765
 ♣ 86
 ♠ 6
 ♥ 8762
 ♦ J832
 ♣ AQJ4
 ♠ KQ1052
 ♥ 9
 ♦ K4
 ♣ K9752

 Dealer: East
 E-W Vulnerable

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

North will almost always insist on declaring 4♥ after north opens, unless some fancy the gamble of making the same tricks in 3NT.

Today, both contracts do make ten tricks double dummy. 4♥ is held after a spade ruff, and 3NT only makes one overtrick after a diamond lead, there no tempo to set up a club.

However, not everyone will lead a spade and get a ruff against 4♥ - and declarer can falsecard the 8 on the first round, trying to persuade west the lead is from 62. Defending 3NT diamonds may not be led, allowing an extra overtrick.

Which stain proves better overall only time will tell.

23

♠ J87543
 ♥ A
 ♦ 543
 ♣ QJ3
 ♠ AK102
 ♥ Q
 ♦ AKJ92
 ♣ A109
 ♠ Q
 ♥ K9764
 ♦ 1087
 ♣ 7654
 ♠ 96
 ♥ J108532
 ♦ Q6
 ♣ K82

 Dealer: South
 Both Vulnerable

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

South isn't my idea of a heart Weak Two, and any that try it might find east doubling and west passing. The 800 possible beats any E/W making contract. The Multi might survive, unless east's double of north's 2♥ relay is takeout.

A north Weak Two in spades could meet the same fate, but a sensible pass probably results in east opening 2♣. E/W have enough combined values to get to 3NT.

This contract makes an overtrick if the diamond queen is felled, should make on the nose otherwise.

Will there be many E/W penalties chalked up, beating the 630 otherwise available?

24

♠ J10
 ♥ A1095
 ♦ A104
 ♣ 10832
 ♠ 7
 ♥ K863
 ♦ K932
 ♣ J964
 ♠ KQ53
 ♥ J742
 ♦ J76
 ♣ KQ
 ♠ A98642
 ♥ Q
 ♦ Q85
 ♣ A75

 Dealer: West
 Neither Vulnerable

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

An east weak NT can go two light on best defence, but might escape losing 50. Rather than defend south is maybe better to bid spades over 1NT or the alternative minor suit opener.

N/S are unlikely to get to the spade game but can score 170, an improvement on any penalty. However, this does entail ruffing out east's heart knave after the queen is covered, then putting east on lead with clubs. Declarer eventually picks up trumps and west gets squeezed in the minors to either cede a club or shorten the diamond king.

Well done any with ten tricks recorded.

25

♠ Q4
 ♥ AQ93
 ♦ QJ10
 ♣ AK32
 ♠ 97
 ♥ 102
 ♦ K74
 ♣ Q98754
 ♠ AKJ85
 ♥ K8
 ♦ 96532
 ♣ 10
 ♠ 10632
 ♥ J7654
 ♦ A8
 ♣ J6

 Dealer: North
 E-W Vulnerable

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

With a bit of shape east might overcall north's 1♥/1♣ with either a Michaels 2♥ or a simple 1♠. South can comfortably raise hearts, but may pass over 1♠ if north has opened 1♣. It could be left to north to re-open.

I can see some getting as high as 4♥, which is rather unlucky to fail, surely a make if either red king were happier placed.

N/S will usually win the auction here. Will many go plus, staying low enough?

26

♠ K9875
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ 842
 ♣ J5
 ♠ A
 ♥ J985
 ♦ AKQJ6
 ♣ 864
 ♠ QJ42
 ♥ 6432
 ♦ 95
 ♣ A72
 ♠ 1063
 ♥ A7
 ♦ 1073
 ♣ KQ1093

 Dealer: East
 Both Vulnerable

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

This time the heart fit shouldn't result in a partnership overboard. East has enough to bid hearts over west's 1♦, or might double a laughably unsound north 1♠ overcall - though 1NT is a viable alternative. Pass, awaiting a west re-opening double, is another option, netting 200.

E/W should make 140 declaring hearts, a losing club dispatched on west's diamonds, only three trumps and a club lost.

Will many get a penalty to better this?

27

♠ 109842
 ♥
 ♦ 1074
 ♣ AK932
 ♠ A765
 ♥ Q92
 ♦ QJ532
 ♣ Q
 ♠ J3
 ♥ KJ1083
 ♦ 86
 ♣ 10864
 ♠ KQ
 ♥ A7654
 ♦ AK9
 ♣ J75

 Dealer: South
 Neither Vulnerable

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

This could end in a variety of spots, probably 2NT the favourite after 1♥/1♠ and a 2NT rebid, passed out.

Today, the spade knave drops doubleton and the club queen singleton, so the sky's the limit. West might even try a small diamond against no trumps.

I doubt there will be many games bid, but a fair few tricks will be recorded by N/S.

28

♠ AQ43
 ♥ 763
 ♦ Q1073
 ♣ KQ
 ♠ KJ1065
 ♥ AJ8
 ♦ K5
 ♣ J86
 ♠ 97
 ♥ 9
 ♦ AJ82
 ♣ A97432
 ♠ 82
 ♥ KQ10542
 ♦ 964
 ♣ 105

 Dealer: West
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Few will likely play this exhibit, where E/W have the cards, and probably reach a club part-score.

Optimists might get to 3NT, which is there because both hearts are inside the AJ, clubs divide evenly, and the diamond finesse works.

It is hoped everyone enjoyed the set, typified by the last two boards where everything is right for declarers who bid them up. However, not all the boards were so kind.....

Ave HCP	N 10.50	S 9.46	E 10.11	W 9.93	Balanced	N 11	S 13	E 13	W 10
Voids/ Singletons	N 3/7	S 3/9	E 1/10	W 2/13	7+ Suit	N 1	S 1	E 1	W 0