

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



*First Interclub – Heat B*

*22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021*

*Commentary by Ian Hamilton*

**1**

♠ AK9865  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ K732  
 ♣ 106  
 ♠ Q107  
 ♥ 96  
 ♦ QJ1098  
 ♣ K87  
 ♠ J2  
 ♥ AKQ832  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ A953  
 ♠ 43  
 ♥ J1074  
 ♦ A54  
 ♣ QJ42

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

I guess many norths will open 1♠ and probably compete to 2♠ when west bids hearts over south's 1NT. This isn't entirely sound bidding, but at love all anything goes. The fate of 2♠ is finely balanced.

East must lead a diamond, or west switch to the suit after a heart. After two trumps east needs to win a first club lead by declarer and remove dummy's diamond entry to the club winners to take six tricks in defence.

Many will make, but even one light is a good save against 2♥. The defence will usually set up a spade and south only ruffs this away with his trump winner. If they attack clubs early that simply cedes three tricks in the suit.

A nice part-score battle to warm up.

**2**

♠ AK73  
 ♥ J743  
 ♦ J75  
 ♣ 43  
 ♠ Q82  
 ♥ 108  
 ♦ AK109  
 ♣ Q1075  
 ♠ J1065  
 ♥ AKQ6  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ AJ96  
 ♠ 94  
 ♥ 952  
 ♦ Q8643  
 ♣ K82

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

This one looks like 3NT whether east opens light or west opens 1♣, 1♥ or a strong NT.

With the spade 9 dropping, and the club king onside, there are eleven tricks for declarer if the opponents cannot get three first. To do so requires a diamond lead and continuation when north wins the first spade.

Will many find it?

**3**

♠ KQ543  
 ♥ AJ852  
 ♦ J3  
 ♣ 10  
 ♠ A1096  
 ♥ Q96  
 ♦ Q1097  
 ♣ A9  
 ♠ J8  
 ♥ K74  
 ♦ 852  
 ♣ KQJ75  
 ♠ 72  
 ♥ 103  
 ♦ AK64  
 ♣ 86432

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

We have another finely-balanced part-score battle, west either opening a weak NT, 1♦ or passing, north bidding his spades or his majors. East might try to declare clubs.

If north shows the majors over west's opener south could elect for 2♥. After a 1♠ opener 2♠ will result.

2♥ can just make when declarer plays twice towards north's spades, then weakens the defensive trumps by ruffing or over-ruffing spades in south.

2♠ should fail via a club force. Whether declarer sets up hearts or plays trumps he loses control and six tricks.

Even 2♣ by east fails on a spade lead or switch after a top diamond. If declarer wins and pulls trumps there are six losers. If he ducks he now loses a diamond ruff.

**4**

♠ 753  
 ♥ KQ3  
 ♦ J765  
 ♣ Q85  
 ♠ Q86  
 ♥ AJ10542  
 ♦ Q104  
 ♣ 2  
 ♠ A94  
 ♥ 96  
 ♦ 832  
 ♣ 109763  
 ♠ KJ102  
 ♥ 87  
 ♦ AK9  
 ♣ AKJ4

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

West's classic Multi or Weak Two in hearts is likely to see south doubling, and north electing for no trumps. The other possibility is a penalty pass.

Declaring no trumps east is best to lead a diamond, guaranteeing four defensive tricks, but is more likely to lead hearts, ducked to declarer. East hops up with the spade ace and clears hearts. It looks like the defence are in charge now, but west gets squeezed when clubs are cashed, and can be end-played to lead from one of his queens to cede ten tricks.

Those that defend 2♥x should go plus, but shouldn't better 500. Indeed they need to be careful to avoid playing diamonds too often or may allow declarer seven tricks.

**5**

♠ K1084  
 ♥ K652  
 ♦ Q7  
 ♣ 865

♠ Q9752  
 ♥ 10  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ AK10743

♠ AJ3  
 ♥ A97  
 ♦ A106432  
 ♣ 2

♠ 6  
 ♥ QJ843  
 ♦ KJ98  
 ♣ QJ9

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

West has an awkward bid after east's 1♦ opener. Probably 1♠ is best. If west continues with 3♣ over the 2♦ rebid and gets spade preference 4♠ may eventuate.

4♣ looks awkward on a red suit lead, but declarer simply ruffs a club in dummy and plays trumps from the top, losing just two trumps.

Some souths could intervene with hearts at adverse vulnerability. South luckily finds a fit opposite, but can still be held to 6 tricks on a defensive cross-ruff, and a nasty penalty in the unlikely event of E/W electing double.

**6**

♠ AQ1087  
 ♥  
 ♦ K86  
 ♣ Q9753

♠ J954  
 ♥ QJ95  
 ♦ Q1042  
 ♣ 4

♠ 632  
 ♥ 108642  
 ♦ J5  
 ♣ J62

♠ K  
 ♥ AK73  
 ♦ A973  
 ♣ AK108

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	7	5	3	6	7
S	7	5	3	6	7
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

I think I would open 2NT on the south hand, despite the obvious spade deficiency. North will be eyeing slam, transferring to spades, then bidding clubs over the 3♣ completion.

Some might play this as ace asking, but either way some slam is likely to eventuate.

7♣ is the easiest spot, but 7NT is also there when west can't guard diamonds and spades, squeezed for the 13th trick.

Will everyone make thirteen tricks in their contract? Will any manage to bid and make the Grand?

**7**

♠ A5  
 ♥ J1075  
 ♦ 54  
 ♣ K7432

♠ KJ63  
 ♥ Q  
 ♦ KJ1098  
 ♣ A108

♠ Q1082  
 ♥ K864  
 ♦ Q7632  
 ♣

♠ 974  
 ♥ A932  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ QJ965

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

When south opens 1♣ and west overcalls in diamonds N/S could easily miss their heart fit, north supporting clubs, rather than making a Sputnik double, lest a spade bid be forthcoming. In practice, the heart fit is awkward to play when trumps split 4:1.

East will support diamonds, so we will have a battle to declare, with the stakes high at both vulnerable. E/W will be in the same position as N/S, liable to miss their spade fit, which makes the same tricks as diamonds but for a better score.

Today, it is N/S with a making spot at the 4 level. 4♣ should score 130, whereas E/W can only manage nine tricks in either spades or diamonds.

Will any get the magic 200 from a failing E/W contract?

**8**

♠ KJ64  
 ♥ Q87  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ KJ985

♠ 97  
 ♥ A10  
 ♦ Q7653  
 ♣ 7643

♠ AQ53  
 ♥ J642  
 ♦ K104  
 ♣ AQ

♠ 1082  
 ♥ K953  
 ♦ J982  
 ♣ 102

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

East is liable to be left to declare his 1NT overcall of north's 1♣, and this could be a nip and tuck affair on a dutiful club 10 lead. A heart lead from south is actually best.

Declarer should get over the line, even if he fails to divine the diamond position, the defence having to cede two spade tricks to the ace and queen.

Theoretically, 120 is there on the club lead. Will many manage it?

9

♠ 82  
♥ Q7542  
♦ K97  
♣ 982

♠ AKQ109653  
♥ 8  
♦ J6  
♣ AK

♠ J4  
♥ AK9  
♦ Q103  
♣ J6543

♠ 7  
♥ J1063  
♦ A8542  
♣ Q107

Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

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

Some could open east 1♣, but pass looks more credible at adverse vulnerability. West could try 1♠, 4♠ or a strong 2♣, the last maybe best.

The 2♣ bid may not work well should east relay with 2♦. South could double, paving the way to N/S cashing their due tricks against west's spade contract.

However, I can see most E/Ws being allowed to make twelve tricks on a passive lead at many tables, north not leading from a king up to a strong hand.

E/W should be able to diagnose the lack of a diamond control when east can only cue bid in hearts, by-passing diamonds, and avoid the theoretically failing slam. However, I bet many make slam, either blasting it, or ace-asking - unsound with two tops missing in a suit?

10

♠ J108  
♥ 984  
♦ QJ632  
♣ A3

♠ AQ65432  
♥ J2  
♦ 7  
♣ J54

♠ 7  
♥ Q1076  
♦ K854  
♣ 9862

♠ K9  
♥ AK53  
♦ A109  
♣ KQ107

Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

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

N/S should get to 3NT whatever south opens, despite west likely making a nuisance with a weak jump in spades. South probably chances 3NT even over a west 3♠ and north pass - it being now or never.

Many will only make nine tricks, but a tenth can be built in spades, or donated on opening lead.

In fact, a double of 3♠ nets an 800 penalty, but few will manage that.

Maybe some will double with the south hand and north take out to diamonds. Sadly, with east on lead there are three defensive tricks, and a possible N/S minus.

11

♠ 7  
♥ 109  
♦ J109872  
♣ K742

♠ AK96  
♥ 743  
♦ 65  
♣ A1095

♠ J3  
♥ QJ8652  
♦ KQ4  
♣ J8

♠ Q108542  
♥ AK  
♦ A3  
♣ Q63

Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

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

South won't get much cooperation from north when he opens 1♠, east probably protecting with 2♥, if he hasn't opened a weak Two, Multi or even 1♥.

E/W should avoid the hopeless heart game - either a club or spade lead gets four or more tricks for the defence, by force or via a spade ruff.

Some souths could be allowed to play in spades. They should be able to manage six tricks and, so long as undoubled, this is cheaper than ceding the part-score.

12

♠ AQ1094  
♥ 107  
♦ J104  
♣ 532

♠ 872  
♥ 3  
♦ KQ98  
♣ AQ1087

♠ KJ3  
♥ J854  
♦ 632  
♣ J96

♠ 65  
♥ AKQ962  
♦ A75  
♣ K4

Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

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

This looks like another part-score tussle, though if east responds 1♥ to a west 1♣ south could be disinclined to later weigh in with 2♥, where he can make using dummy's spade entry to finesse trumps.

Despite a singleton in partner's suit west might rebid 1NT over a silent south, if weak. When this comes round south can double, this requesting the lead of east's first bid suit.

N/S can take the first eight tricks against 1NT, for a nice penalty. Will any be allowed to, or will E/W retreat to and rack up nine or ten tricks in clubs, their par spot?

**13**

♠ K74  
 ♥ AK  
 ♦ Q10862  
 ♣ K105  
 ♠ 109632  
 ♥ J963  
 ♦ K4  
 ♣ Q8  
 ♠ AQJ5  
 ♥ Q107542  
 ♦ 9  
 ♣ A2

Dealer: North  
Both Vulnerable

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

This could be an unexciting hand, with most getting to 4♥ and making eleven tricks. Either north or south could declare, the former after a strong NT.

It looks as if declarer should lose a diamond but in double dummy declarer can make a dozen, winning a (say) spade lead in south and pitching a diamond on the third club. Now declarer cannot be prevented from ruffing a diamond, making four spades, and finishing with a cross-ruff. The only winning lead is a trump.

In practice few will play for west to have two singletons, and are only likely to make twelve tricks on a club lead, should east furnish the queen, or on ace and another diamond lead, which allows a later trump coup.

**14**

♠ AJ10953  
 ♥ 1097  
 ♦ A104  
 ♣ 5  
 ♠ 8764  
 ♥ KQ84  
 ♦ J2  
 ♣ 863  
 ♠ KQ2  
 ♥ A32  
 ♦ Q876  
 ♣ K72  
 ♠ J65  
 ♥ K953  
 ♣ AQJ1094

Dealer: East  
Neither Vulnerable

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

North could find himself breaking (David) Burn's Law on this one "When declaring a suit contract declarer should have more trumps than the opponents".

He could end up in 2♠ after a weak NT from east, or after a 1♦ opener is overcalled 2♣ by south, though most play 2♠ as forcing in this position. 2♠ should make, declarer losing two trumps and finessing the club queen for a diamond pitch.

Alternatively, south can equal that score by making 3♣. If the defence fail to cash three hearts one goes on a spade, and diamonds play for three tricks. If they do, east can be squeezed between diamonds and spades for the ninth trick.

**15**

♠ J97  
 ♥ AK984  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ K972  
 ♠ AK10832  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ A9742  
 ♣ 8  
 ♠ Q  
 ♥ Q752  
 ♦ Q8  
 ♣ AQ10654  
 ♠ 654  
 ♥ J103  
 ♦ KJ1063  
 ♣ J3

Dealer: South  
N-S Vulnerable

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

This one could also end in a variety of contracts, when E/W essentially have a misfit. My guess is that the boss suit will win out, west declaring a spade part-score.

Again, Deep Finesse has fun, pulling trumps and finessing clubs for a diamond pitch. South can have his hearts eliminated and end up being end-played to play diamonds, promoting west's pips, and ceding ten tricks.

Will any manage that many?

**16**

♠ A7543  
 ♥ A9  
 ♦ KQ7  
 ♣ 742  
 ♠ 2  
 ♥ QJ865  
 ♦ A98  
 ♣ AJ83  
 ♠ KQ98  
 ♥ 742  
 ♦ J643  
 ♣ K9  
 ♠ J106  
 ♥ K103  
 ♦ 1052  
 ♣ Q1065

Dealer: West  
E-W Vulnerable

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

E/W could end up in 1NT on this one, or declaring a heart part-score after south supports north's spades.

Declaring no trumps the defence have to help declarer at every turn, and east can rack up eight tricks.

Likewise, defending hearts, north has to help declarer, three rounds of trumps best to start off. However, north now either loses the spade ace or fails to make a diamond trick. Indeed, playing the spade ace can cede ten tricks, declarer getting three pitches on spades, then finessing clubs for his tenth.

N/S just might buy it in spades, conceivably doubled. It looks as if six tricks are the limit, not good if the red card has been applied, maybe very good if it isn't.

17

♠ A965  
♥ KJ104  
♦ 85  
♣ A92

♠ J72  
♥ 83  
♦ 9764  
♣ Q1076

♥ Q652  
♦ KQJ102  
♣ KJ85

♠ KQ10843  
♥ A97  
♦ A3  
♣ 43

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Whether north opens a weak NT or 1♣ it is hard to see N/S not finding a 4♠ contract, though they might have had diamond interference from east.

Declarer will usually make eleven tricks, but can do better, making twelve, should east be played for the heart queen, a minor suit loser going away in the south hand. However, playing west for the lady looks more natural.

Will anyone manage it? Where east is silent might west lead his doubleton and cede the twelfth?

18

♠ K1084  
♥ K762  
♦ KQ7  
♣ K2

♠ Q762  
♥ QJ3  
♦ A652  
♣ Q7

♠ A93  
♥ A4  
♦ 83  
♣ AJ10985

♠ J5  
♥ 10985  
♦ J1094  
♣ 643

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

There might be a few missing game here, but most will get to 3NT when east bids and rebids clubs, or opens a weak NT, and west has invitational values.

South will likely lead a diamond, the result being that the declarer may not take the heart finesse for ten tricks, though the defence will have had to make enough pitches on clubs that he should be safe to do so.

Where west declares a heart could easily be led. Now north could be exposed to an end-play in the majors, thrown in with the heart king to lead a spade.

North should be able to avoid that fate, stopping the otherwise eleven tricks.

19

♠ 105  
♥ J102  
♦ A1064  
♣ 10865

♠ K  
♥ K87654  
♦ K2  
♣ Q932

♠ AQ9862  
♥ AQ  
♦ Q853  
♣ 4

♠ J743  
♥ 93  
♦ J97  
♣ AKJ7

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

With something of a misfit, but game values, this could end in a variety of spots. West could get playing his 6:2 heart fit, the only place where game is makeable, north could insist on spades, or the usual haven of 3NT might be declared.

Declaring 4♥, declarer can get a diamond trick, unblock spades and ruff a club in dummy. Clubs are pitched on spades, the last ruffed by north. However, the defence only make a heart, club and diamond.

In spades, declarer can't get rid of enough losers without losing two trumps a club and a diamond, or equivalent.

In no trumps, north mustn't lead a diamond, instead a club, then south attack diamonds, before destroying declarer's communications with a spade lead, holding declarer to eight tricks.

20

♠ Q4  
♥ Q876  
♦ AK753  
♣ 74

♠ 9862  
♥ 9  
♦ 10984  
♣ KJ83

♠ AKJ53  
♥ 4  
♦ J6  
♣ AQ1092

♠ 107  
♥ AKJ10532  
♦ Q2  
♣ 65

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

This looks like being a competitive affair, with E/W's spades likely to win out over N/S's big heart fit.

The Law of Total tricks - the sum of both sides longest fits - suggests a Total of twenty tricks. Critically, there are only nineteen.

However, it also suggests that you can bid to the level of your fit, for N/S - the 5 level with eleven hearts. This proves correct, the 500 penalty in 5♥ doubled being cheaper than ceding 650 in 4♠ by E/W. Of course E/W can do better by advancing to 5♠, rather than accepting the penalty.

Will most judge this one correctly?

**21**

♠ QJ84  
 ♥ J3  
 ♦ Q10863  
 ♣ K9

♠ K52  
 ♥ A10864  
 ♦ J9  
 ♣ Q87

♠ A10963  
 ♥ 952  
 ♦ K  
 ♣ AJ105

♠ 7  
 ♥ KQ7  
 ♦ A7542  
 ♣ 6432

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Despite a singleton king most south's will open 1♠ in 3rd seat, almost certainly buying the part-score in the suit.

As the cards lie declarer can get heart and club ruffs in dummy, plus pick up trumps for no loser, recording 170. The singleton king is working too, useful for establishing a pitch on the queen opposite, unnecessary as it happens with the club queen falling in three rounds.

Will everyone manage the ten tricks available?

**22**

♠ AKQ97  
 ♥ K963  
 ♦ Q103  
 ♣ 8

♠ 652  
 ♥ A104  
 ♦ 9876  
 ♣ Q73

♠ J1084  
 ♥ QJ5  
 ♦ J4  
 ♣ J965

♠ 3  
 ♥ 872  
 ♦ AK52  
 ♣ AK1042

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

West's 1♦ gets overcalled 1♠, though some might erroneously double, risking a 4:3 heart fit with a 5:3 spade fit available. Luckily, partner is at home in spades, and N/S should again win the part-score auction over E/W's clubs.

E/W shouldn't make more than their four top losers, N/S chalking up 140 this time, in another rather dull affair with little scope for variation. Maybe some E/Ws will be allowed to play in clubs, where they can make 110 despite declarer being forced with spades. 3♦ is much more comfortable, but the 4:4 fit could be hard to find.

**23**

♠ KQ107  
 ♥ K7  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ AKQ963

♠ A83  
 ♥ AQJ104  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ J542

♠ J2  
 ♥ 983  
 ♦ KJ109642  
 ♣ 10

♠ 9654  
 ♥ 652  
 ♦ Q875  
 ♣ 87

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

A totally unsound 3♦ pre-empt by south could get its come-uppence when west passes east's takeout double and leads a heart, collecting 500. Sadly, any other lead results in minus 670.

Where south passes north and south will be bidding against each other. East does best to take it quietly, or he could easily lose 200 declaring a heart contract.

With north declaring he can make 3♣, setting up a diamond for a heart pitch and accessing dummy with the spade knave. East has to ruff with his club winner.

No predictions on this one, scores possible both ways.

**24**

♠ KQJ10  
 ♥ 872  
 ♦ 942  
 ♣ 843

♠ 632  
 ♥ K10543  
 ♦ AQ53  
 ♣ 5

♠ A954  
 ♥ A6  
 ♦ K7  
 ♣ AK976

♠ 87  
 ♥ QJ9  
 ♦ J1086  
 ♣ QJ102

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

For the third time in three hands N/S have a decent spade fit, and should find it, even if east opens a light third seat 1♥.

A bit of nifty footwork is required by declarer to make the ten tricks possible. Whatever the lead declarer needs to use north's trump entries to lead a diamond to the king. After one round of the suit, a club needs led towards south's honour, meaning east ruffs a loser, the remaining trumps falling 2:2 should he do so.

Will everyone play clubs correctly, establishing the suit, and making ten tricks?

**25**

♠ AJ2  
 ♥ A654  
 ♦ AK  
 ♣ J862  
 ♠ K1054  
 ♥ J9  
 ♦ Q76  
 ♣ AK95  
 ♠ Q96  
 ♥ Q73  
 ♦ 952  
 ♣ Q1043  
 ♠ 873  
 ♥ K1082  
 ♦ J10843  
 ♣ 7

 Dealer: North  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

North's strong NT is likely passed out, unless the vulnerable west bravely gets involved. 1NT doesn't fare well on a club lead, north unlikely to make more than his top five tricks, and a 100 penalty to E/W.

An Acol 1♥ could well fetch a raise, and this is some danger of getting to game, which in theory goes light. However, east has to lead spade.

This sets up two spade tricks for the defence before declarer can cede a club, set up diamonds, ruff clubs in south and pitch a spade on a winning diamond. Even one round of clubs before a spade switch is too late.

Will many go positive N/S in hearts?

**26**

♠ Q7  
 ♥ AKQ876  
 ♦ J103  
 ♣ 53  
 ♠ 543  
 ♥ 8764  
 ♦ A109872  
 ♣ A962  
 ♥ 9543  
 ♦ K5  
 ♣ K64  
 ♠ KJ108  
 ♥ J102  
 ♦ AQ92  
 ♣ QJ

 Dealer: East  
 Both Vulnerable

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

West would be wise to transfer to clubs over an east weak NT, and this might even silence the vulnerable north. E/W make a lot of tricks in clubs when the trump finesse scores, especially should declarer play the odds in diamonds, finessing the J10, before the king.

Where east opens 1♦ west could raise that suit, again conceivably buying it. However, most norths will bid hearts at some level, and may well win the auction, where they can rack up 140.

It is actually E/W's hand, with 130 or 150 possible in clubs. Will many E/W's go plus, or will many N/Ss steal it?

**27**

♠ AKJ853  
 ♥ 95  
 ♦ Q8  
 ♣ 1092  
 ♠ 4  
 ♥ AK86  
 ♦ KJ762  
 ♣ J87  
 ♠ Q92  
 ♥ QJ73  
 ♦ A104  
 ♣ AKQ  
 ♠ 1076  
 ♥ 1042  
 ♦ 953  
 ♣ 6543

 Dealer: South  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

East has enough for a Sputnik double whether north overcalls west's 1♦ with 1♠, or tries to obstruct with a weak 2♠ jump.

E/W will surely find game in hearts either way, and east, with A10x in partner's suit, could push all the way to slam once it is established that west has spade control.

The play in hearts basically revolves around the diamond suit. Those that fell the diamond queen, or finesse north for it, register twelve tricks, eleven if they take a losing finesse.

The weak jump in spades suggests few values outside the suit, so could induce some to go wrong.

**28**

♠ J9  
 ♥ A96  
 ♦ 108732  
 ♣ 874  
 ♠ K102  
 ♥ K753  
 ♦ AKQ54  
 ♣ 9  
 ♠ Q876  
 ♥ 82  
 ♦ J  
 ♣ AK10652  
 ♠ A543  
 ♥ QJ104  
 ♦ 96  
 ♣ QJ3

 Dealer: West  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

E/W may well drive to game when west has 15HCP and east is good enough to make a 2 level response.

Today, this looks a bridge too far for most, there being insuperable communication problems, despite the 3:3 club split. In addition, south gets on lead in clubs to push through a heart, and south has the setting trick with the spade ace.

It is hard to see many E/W pluses on this one, but you never know.

So concludes an interesting set, with slams, defensive and play problems. It is hoped they were enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 10.11	S 9.93	E 10.25	W 9.71	Balanced	N 14	S 13	E 15	W 8
Voids/singletons	N 1/8	S 1/8	E 2/8	W 1/12	7+ suit	N 0	S 2	E 0	W 2