

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



First Interclub – Heat B

21st - 22nd September 2022

Commentary by Ian Hamilton

1

♠ J87
 ♥ J1042
 ♦ K82
 ♣ J96
 ♠ Q106542
 ♥ AQ6
 ♦ Q43
 ♣ 10
 ♠ A93
 ♥ 9873
 ♦ J10
 ♣ KQ53
 ♠ K
 ♥ K5
 ♦ A9765
 ♣ A8742

 Dealer: North
 Neither Vulnerable

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

West's spades will surely outbid N/S's diamonds or clubs on this one, 3♠ probable. Success will hinge around declarer getting a club trick set up and accessed before the defence get a heart trick established.

On a diamond lead to south and heart switch declarer needs to finesse the queen, and play a club immediately. Now the spade ace is still there as an entry.

Some could muddle this and play trumps too soon. They may still be able to recover by ruffing west's diamond winner, but I can see a few held to 110 or beaten in 3♠.

2

♠ AJ9
 ♥ KJ3
 ♦ A8
 ♣ AJ1097
 ♠ Q7653
 ♥ 8
 ♦ K642
 ♣ 854
 ♠ 108
 ♥ Q9765
 ♦ J109
 ♣ Q32
 ♠ K42
 ♥ A1042
 ♦ Q753
 ♣ K6

 Dealer: East
 N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	7	4	5	4	7
S	7	4	5	5	7
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

With 30HCP Deep Finesse has no problem making 7NT, making eight tricks in the black suits, forcing a cover of the diamond queen, then squeezing east in the red suits, finessing against the heart queen en route.

Mere mortals are unlikely even to be in 6NT, and may well not make it even then. Most will fail to get clubs right and could also lose a heart finesse.

My guess is 690 will be a top, in an annoying hand with two queen finesse guesses.

3

♠ 2
 ♥ 98732
 ♦ KQ1042
 ♣ KJ
 ♠ AJ754
 ♥ J5
 ♦ 75
 ♣ 8432
 ♠ KQ863
 ♥ AK4
 ♦ 63
 ♣ 1065
 ♠ 109
 ♥ Q106
 ♦ AJ98
 ♣ AQ97

 Dealer: South
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Acol could well play the N/S cards in 2♥ after a south weak NT and transfer, east not strong enough to compete at the two level.

North may raise a south 1♦ pre-emptively to 3♦, or may simply respond 1♥, letting east into the auction with 1♠. The latter could lead to a competitive auction, E/W quite possibly too high in 4♠.

N/S can actually make 4♥, but need to make an anti-percentage play in the trump suit, playing east for both top honours. Some might, or the defence play trumps.

Losing 200 in 4♠ undoubled might not be a duck, a few N/Ss with 420 on the card, north swayed by the diamond fit.

4

♠ A84
 ♥ KQ
 ♦ 62
 ♣ AQ10754
 ♠ QJ972
 ♥ 852
 ♦ KQ8
 ♣ 63
 ♠ 63
 ♥ A1096
 ♦ J10974
 ♣ 92
 ♠ K105
 ♥ J743
 ♦ A53
 ♣ KJ8

 Dealer: West
 Both Vulnerable

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

Where north opens a strong NT this should result in 3NT, which has nine top tricks. East has to lead diamonds, and west unblock, to hold it, or overtricks ensue.

Where north opens 1♣ 3NT is still likely the spot, though some might favour 5♣. Where west is on lead a top spade could well emerge, allowing 660 via two extra heart tricks. In 5♣ it is hard to see more or fewer than eleven tricks.

This will result in rather random results depending on who declares. Who said life was fair.

5

♠ AKJ94
 ♥ QJ3
 ♦ K74
 ♣ K3
 ♠ 87
 ♥ A76
 ♦ Q92
 ♣ QJ852
 ♠ 5
 ♥ K94
 ♦ A108653
 ♣ A109
 ♠ Q10632
 ♥ 10852
 ♦ J
 ♣ 764

 Dealer: North
 N-S Vulnerable

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

I suspect once more everyone will be in 3NT as N/S, east probably on lead.

Twelve tricks are there whatever the lead, so long as declarer plays diamonds for six tricks. When the king fetches the knave from west, the odds are 2:1 that it is singleton, following the Principle of Restricted Choice. Therefore, declarer should finesse the 10 when east plays the 9 on round 2 of the suit.

Will the field have 690 on the card, or will some eschew the odds?

6

♠ Q10864
 ♥ K92
 ♦ J8
 ♣ J63
 ♠ AK95
 ♥ A3
 ♦ K74
 ♣ AK74
 ♠ J
 ♥ QJ765
 ♦ A10953
 ♣ 52
 ♠ 732
 ♥ 1084
 ♦ Q62
 ♣ Q1098

 Dealer: East
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Again, it looks like 3NT, by east this time, after a 2NT opener. West transfers to hearts, but probably simply bids 3NT next, rather than introducing diamonds.

A club lead pretty well guarantees holding declarer to ten tricks, since to make more the lead needs lost twice in the red suits, and the defence have at least one club by then.

However, declaring diamonds the heart suit can be finessed and ruffed good, twelve tricks resulting. Sadly 5♦ plus one doesn't beat 630, so the slam needs bid to get a great board.

Will anyone do it?

7

♠ A763
 ♥ K3
 ♦ J432
 ♣ A95
 ♠ KJ94
 ♥ A10864
 ♦ A65
 ♣ 10
 ♠ Q10852
 ♥ J975
 ♦ Q9
 ♣ J6
 ♠ Q2
 ♥ K1087
 ♣ KQ87432

 Dealer: South
 Both Vulnerable

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

North might well have a shot at 3NT when south pre-empt 3♣ vulnerable, hoping to score a heart, spade and seven clubs before the defence can score five tricks. Should east pass that might well eventuate, east's natural lead being a heart.

Should 3♣ be passed round or raised to 3NT or 4♣ east may double, and west declare a major. Neither 4♥ nor 4♠ have any realistic prospect of success, but could escape for minus 100, maybe not a bad result.

Pre-empt can often goad opponents into an indiscretion and a minus, though here N/S could get a larger score declaring, the winning spade lead versus not obvious. 130 in clubs may not be that bad either, though a heart lead and diamond switch could see a ruff in the suit and four defensive tricks.

8

♠ 972
 ♥ 976
 ♦ 109754
 ♣ K10
 ♠ A8
 ♥ AKQJ10832
 ♦ J8
 ♣ 5
 ♠ KQ54
 ♥ 54
 ♦ A32
 ♣ A986
 ♠ J1063
 ♥
 ♦ KQ6
 ♣ QJ7432

 Dealer: West
 Neither Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	1	-	-	-	-
S	1	-	-	-	-
E	-	1	7	2	7
W	-	1	7	2	7

What to do with east's collection when west opens a weak NT (or 1♣ for that matter). There could well be a lot of tricks should west have aces, probably only game otherwise.

Today, there are thirteen top tricks. Will many bid a slam, in hearts or better still no trumps? I expect some may simply punt a slam, hoping there are twelve tricks, and that the defence miss the killing lead if there is one - there isn't.

9

♠ A6
♥ Q10976
♦ K107
♣ K72

♠ 1054
♥ K
♦ 96432
♣ QJ83

♠ Q932
♥ A543
♦ Q5
♣ 1054

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

Acoul probably declares 1NT as north, the weak variety passed out. 5 card majors get to a heart contract, either at the 2 or 3 level, north being minimum, and refusing any invitation.

3♥ may well make ten tricks, east leading a diamond. The fortunate trump and minor suit positions mean only a spade, diamond and club need be lost. A club opening lead is needed to save a trick.

A diamond might also be led against 1NT, the result likely to be nine tricks. It takes a spade lead and perfect discarding to hold declarer to 120.

Looks a winner for the 5 card major brigade, with a bigger score on the card.

10

♠ AQ862
♥ A84
♦ QJ10
♣ 75

♠ 103
♥ 1063
♦ A73
♣ K10843

♠ 974
♥ KJ92
♦ K652
♣ Q9

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

Opening light in third seat as west, vulnerable, looks unwise, as the only possible opener is 1♣, or a very thin weak NT. The latter might actually make if passed out, north leading a spade and declarer rapidly grabbing seven tricks when clubs drop 2:2.

More credibly, it will be north opening 1♠ or 1NT. The former works much better, the spade part-score wrapping up nine tricks when trumps behave, the third heart going on a diamond.

N/S can make 1NT after the defence have taken five club tricks, just losing to the diamond ace, but some might take the heart finesse, rather than the spade one, and go light.

11

♠ 10854
♥ K863
♦ Q62
♣ A10

♠ AKJ
♥ A542
♦ 5
♣ K9872

♠ 9632
♥ Q107
♦ A1084
♣ J3

♠ Q7
♥ J9
♦ KJ973
♣ Q654

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

East has an awkward rebid should west's limited hand respond 1♠ to 1♣ rather than 1♦. 2♠ looks best by east. Where west responds 1♦ 1NT is likely to result.

In practice, south might intervene with diamonds, and north raise, whether or not west tries 1NT, or makes a Sputnik double.

N/S hold poorly sited or conveniently dropping intermediates in the shape of the club 10, heart knave and diamond 9, so E/W should be able to go plus in no trumps or defence.

They may not do so in a spade contract, dummy getting forced to ruff diamonds with big trumps.

Either side could come out on top here.

12

♠ A43
♥ 1098
♦ 964
♣ 8754

♠ J109762
♥ AQJ
♦ AK2
♣ 9

♠ Q85
♥ 653
♦ 87
♣ KQJ102

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

This could be an interesting bidding exercise to get to the top scoring spot of a red suit slam. E/W are quite likely to finish in 4♠, where there are eleven easy tricks. In no trumps there is a worse score available on a club lead, declarer having to run the red suits for 430.

But declaring diamonds declarer can ruff two clubs in dummy and rack up the magic twelve tricks. In the unlikely event of a heart contract seeing the light of day declarer needs trumps 3:3, so that spades can be ruffed good. They are, and he can, for the even better 980.

Be a nice to see somebody with a slam on the traveller.

13

♠ 74
 ♥ 109865
 ♦ Q94
 ♣ 843
 ♠ KJ8
 ♥ AKJ42
 ♦ 52
 ♣ AKQ
 ♠ 532
 ♥ 73
 ♦ AJ1086
 ♣ 965
 ♠ AQ1096
 ♥ Q
 ♦ K73
 ♣ J1072

 Dealer: North
 Both Vulnerable

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

West doubles south's 1♠ and has to decide how to proceed over east's 2♦, which only promises 13 cards. Holding a double spade stop, a source or tricks, and hoping for a few points opposite, many will reasonably punt 3NT.

North does best to lead hearts rather than assist with a spade lead, then needs to brightly hop in with the diamond queen when west leads the suit, killing dummy's suit. Declarer still survives by winning and playing a spade to the knave, south having to eventually cede another spade or diamond in the end-game.

I can't see many managing the classic defensive play in diamonds, so some will rack up eleven tricks. Will everyone be in game?

14

♠ AKQ84
 ♥ KJ108
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ QJ
 ♠ 109
 ♥ A93
 ♦ 52
 ♣ AK9752
 ♠ J5
 ♥ 62
 ♦ J109863
 ♣ 643
 ♠ 7632
 ♥ Q754
 ♦ K74
 ♣ 108

 Dealer: East
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Again, we have a very powerful hand sitting over a possible 3rd seat light opener, north best to double 1♣, south bidding 1♥. North could well now cue 2♣, and a brave south try 2♠. Most should finish in 4♥ or 4♠ one way or other, but some may not.

4♥ is in potential jeopardy had west had one more heart, giving a ruff discard after two club winners, winning the third trump, and forcing the long trump hand with clubs.

Today, all is well in either major suit, and everyone should comfortably make ten tricks. Will many be left in part-score?

15

♠ Q854
 ♥ Q94
 ♦ A65
 ♣ AQ5
 ♠ A1062
 ♥ J
 ♦ J942
 ♣ KJ102
 ♠ 93
 ♥ A10832
 ♦ KQ
 ♣ 8763
 ♠ KJ7
 ♥ K765
 ♦ 10873
 ♣ 94

 Dealer: South
 N-S Vulnerable

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

North could declare 1NT when he opens the weak version. Where 1♣ is opened north could still end up in the same spot where east is silent. Where east overcalls 1♥, south likely plays 1NT.

1NT is a close run thing, there double dummy, even on the best lead of a club. Declarer's pips can force a second heart trick, even if the suit isn't led, and north's spade 8 can be finessed on the third round if the defence allow it.

However, entries are all very iffy, and I wouldn't be surprised to see quite a few failures. I also doubt the par contract of 2♣ by E/W will see the light of day.

16

♠ 987
 ♥ AQ1065
 ♦
 ♣ KJ853
 ♠ 43
 ♥ KJ9872
 ♦ QJ98
 ♣ A
 ♠ AKJ105
 ♥ 3
 ♦ A106
 ♣ 10764
 ♠ Q62
 ♥ 4
 ♦ K75432
 ♣ Q92

 Dealer: West
 E-W Vulnerable

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

E/W have borderline game values here when west opens, and could easily get too high, west re-bidding hearts or introducing diamonds. They might stop in 2NT, but even that is not a pretty contract, albeit on a diamond lead by south they should at least manage seven tricks.

It is hard to believe but west can actually make 2♥ if allowed to play there. North makes all his trumps, or if south makes the diamond king at some point north ends up end-played in trumps.

But will many E/Ws go plus in real life?

17

♠ 9743
♥ 10832
♦ 9
♣ A1052

♠ 1052
♥ AQJ9
♦ 104
♣ J764

♠ AJ6
♥ 76
♦ AKQJ5
♣ KQ3

♠ KQ8
♥ K54
♦ 87632
♣ 98

 Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

East looks as if he will play 3NT after opening 2NT. South presumably leads his long suit. With the heart finesse working and two club tricks easily set up there are eleven tricks.

However, north needs to be careful to keep four hearts and four clubs, abandoning spades. Few should err here, with the suits on view in dummy, and discarding after it.

Will any manage 490 through misdefence?

18

♠ Q8542
♥ 5
♦ J2
♣ Q9543

♠ A93
♥ AKJ87
♦ AQ4
♣ 76

♠ J6
♥ 64
♦ K10987653
♣ 2

♠ K107
♥ Q10932
♦
♣ AKJ108

 Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

The cat will be firmly amongst the pigeons on this one when east opens 3♦ and south is goaded into overcalling 3♥. West might have a red card for that, but cannot actually defeat it all that heavily. North might redouble for rescue, and find the havens of 3♠ or 4♣.

Both of these spots can make, 4♣ with an overtrick, so west would be well advised to remove to 5♦, unlikely to bid the cold 6♦, which relies on the club singleton opposite, plus the marked heart finesse.

No predictions on this, which could see a variety of large scores either way.

19

♠ 1053
♥ AQ64
♦ 865
♣ 1064

♠ AJ4
♥ J53
♦ Q73
♣ J973

♠ KQ872
♥ 10982
♦ K10
♣ 82

♠ 96
♥ K7
♦ AJ942
♣ AKQ5

 Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

N/S will surely finish is 2/3♦ on this, unless a certifiable east elects to bid spades opposite a passed partner. He might escape punishment even if he does.

A few could stretch to a game-forcing 3♣ rebid and could find themselves in 3NT, which could conceivably make should west not find an early spade switch. Although declarer really only has one dummy entry in hearts the doubleton K10 of diamonds means the suit plays for only one loser anyway.

Those stretching to 5♦ should be defeated, even if the spade lead is missed, as declarer has three black suit losers and only one can be pitched on the heart queen.

Will any be allowed home in game?

20

♠ Q986
♥ 84
♦ AK7
♣ A753

♠ AJ32
♥ KQ5
♦ 653
♣ 1086

♠ 104
♥ 109
♦ QJ1084
♣ KQ94

♠ K75
♥ AJ7632
♦ 92
♣ J2

 Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

The weak NT will result in north playing 2♥. Where 1♣ is opened by north south will declare. No other contract is credible, E/W well short of intervening values.

It looks as if declarer should lose four major suit tricks and a club. However, declarer can strip all west's minor suit cards by ruffing, playing a spade to the queen at some point, then end-playing west with the trump king. The defence cannot play spades without squandering a trick.

Will many make 140?

21

♠ A95
 ♥ J72
 ♦ KQJ
 ♣ Q862
 ♠ 10632
 ♥ 109743
 ♦ AJ103
 ♣ K
 ♠ 8
 ♥ 109854
 ♦ 865
 ♣ 9754

 Dealer: North
 N-S Vulnerable

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

East can only respond 2♦ to west's 2♣ opener, but has more than enough to raise 2♠ to 3♠, stronger than 4♠. I would hope most would get to the cold 6♠.

Declarer has to be careful on a diamond lead, unblocking clubs before ruffing a heart and taking a pitch on the club ace. With trumps 3:1 declarer can play trumps now, but not a second if north ducks, else a trump continuation kills the second heart ruff.

Will most have 980 on the card?

22

♠ 753
 ♥ KQ10
 ♦ 875
 ♣ 10932
 ♠ 98
 ♥ 965
 ♦ KQ109
 ♣ AJ54
 ♠ J
 ♥ J73
 ♦ AJ432
 ♣ KQ86
 ♠ AKQ10642
 ♥ A842
 ♦ 6
 ♣ 7

 Dealer: East
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Most will overcall east's 1♦ with 4♠, best, as even four or five hearts opposite is unlikely to lead to a better spot. West just might try 5♦, a great move if undoubted, it drifting 200 light - 500 away if it is - a disaster. South may well not double, however, and not all will advance to 5♠ if pushed.

There is nothing to the play in 4♠, declarer just losing the minor suit aces. It could be all about what N/S do if 5♦ comes round.

23

♠ AKJ5
 ♥ Q2
 ♦ J4
 ♣ KQJ85
 ♠ 10764
 ♥ K763
 ♦ 103
 ♣ A42
 ♠ 92
 ♥ A1084
 ♦ K9865
 ♣ 97
 ♠ Q83
 ♥ J95
 ♦ AQ72
 ♣ 1063

 Dealer: South
 Both Vulnerable

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

South could respond 1♦ or, maybe better 1NT, to north's 1♣, either way 3NT the probable contract.

A heart lead holds this to 600, the defence having a long heart to go with the club ace. 4♠ is actually a better spot, though is difficult to get to and could easily go light.

If the defence play hearts declarer needs to pull just two trumps before forcing out the club king. If they lead something else the force with the long heart is obviated, so declarer simply pulls trumps.

Will any have 420 or 430 on the card, topping the 400s?

24

♠ J7
 ♥ J54
 ♦ AJ986
 ♣ AK2
 ♠ 95
 ♥ K83
 ♦ K2
 ♣ QJ10853
 ♠ Q
 ♥ AQ1092
 ♦ 10754
 ♣ 976
 ♠ AK1086432
 ♥ 76
 ♦ Q3
 ♣ 4

 Dealer: West
 Neither Vulnerable

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

This looks like a universal 4♠ by south, unless north has opened 1NT, in which case he declares.

The defence need to find a heart lead or there are twelve easy tricks when the diamond finesse wins.

With the trump queen singleton, those going for the maximum on a trump lead can actually finesse and set up diamonds, for all the tricks, but that risks a poor score should the finesse lose. East might lead a seemingly passive diamond and allow it, but that looks a rare event.

25

♠ 108
♥ K975
♦ 1093
♣ AJ85

♠ A5
♥ A6
♦ QJ5
♣ K109763

♠ K742
♥ Q1083
♦ A72
♣ Q2

♠ QJ963
♥ J42
♦ K864
♣ 4

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

Even where east passes west will be there with 1♣ or 1NT. Some will open lightish on east's cards. Either way, 3NT is likely to eventuate, either east or west declaring.

On a spade lead from south, declarer has to win in east, preserving west's entry, and play a diamond, knocking out south's entry. Now the clubs can be established, spades isolated.

It is much easier where north leads a red suit, declarer able to play clubs immediately he gets the lead.

Will many be beaten in this one, the play on a spade lead far from obvious?

26

♠ KQ103
♥ Q84
♦ 84
♣ Q752

♠ 642
♥ J6532
♦ K72
♣ J9

♠ AJ975
♥ 107
♦ Q3
♣ A1063

♠ 8
♥ AK9
♦ AJ10965
♣ K84

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

East's 1♠ will be overcalled 2♦, conceivably doubled if south thinks he is too strong for an overcall. The simple overcall will rarely see game declared, but the double might, with north having an excellent spade stop.

Tony Forrester reckons AJ10 is the most undervalued holding in the Milton Work count (4321), five HCP having a 75% chance of two tricks via two finesses. Thus, I think the doublers are probably correct.

Those getting to the no trump game should have little difficulty making nine tricks, the diamonds happily situated, and the defence unable to get more than three black suit tricks and a diamond.

27

♠ K765
♥ A104
♦ 94
♣ AK97

♠ A982
♥ J52
♦ KJ8763
♣

♠ J1043
♥ KQ86
♦ 1052
♣ 82

♠ Q
♥ 973
♦ AQ
♣ QJ106543

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S should easily get to 3NT when south opens 1♣, overcalled in diamonds and north doubling. Indeed, west has to find a heart lead to prevent overtricks.

Will any miss this one, or worse, allow E/W to play a diamond contract at low level?

28

♠ 8753
♥ 1098
♦ 842
♣ AQ3

♠ AQ4
♥ J7643
♦ AJ
♣ 1052

♠ K96
♥ K5
♦ 976
♣ KJ764

♠ J102
♥ AQ2
♦ KQ1053
♣ 98

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

3♣ is E/W's best spot, but many will finish in 1NT, conceivably 2NT. East is sure to cede seven tricks declaring on a top diamond lead. West may fare better on a spade lead, though south can get on lead in hearts early on to play diamonds.

It isn't easy at Pairs to find 3♣ on this one, an easy 110 on offer.

Many won't play this offering, which is typical of the set, there being a large number of hands where the top spot is difficult to find.

It is hoped the field found them enjoyable.

Ave HCP	N 10.25	S 9.75	E 9.64	W 10.36	Balanced	N 21	S 12	E 11	W 14
Voids/singletons	N 1/3	S 3/11	E 1/9	W 1/8	7+ suit	N 0	S 4	E 2	W 0