

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



*Second Interclub – Heat A*

*20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023*

*Guest commentary by Paul Denning  
Many times Wales International*

**1**

♠ J  
♥ A654  
♦ 1096  
♣ AK986

♠ Q107632  
♥ Q2  
♦ J7  
♣ 732

♠ 985  
♥ J987  
♦ KQ42  
♣ 54

♠ AK4  
♥ K103  
♦ A853  
♣ QJ10

 Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

3NT by south is the normal contract and some may receive a favourable small spade lead. Now the correct play for another overtrick is to play a heart to the ten in the hope of both queen and jack with east or the hearts three-three. You may also choose to run the ten of diamonds from dummy which will lose to the jack, but whichever method you have chosen you will have rectified the count for a red suit squeeze against east which will provide the twelfth trick.

Those that don't receive the favourable spade lead will have time to set up a second diamond trick to bring their total to eleven.

**2**

♠ 92  
♥ Q63  
♦ 976432  
♣ A9

♠ AJ105  
♥ J75  
♦ KQ108  
♣ K3

♠ K873  
♥ 104  
♦ AJ  
♣ Q10874

♠ Q64  
♥ AK982  
♦ 5  
♣ J652

 Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

With well fitting hands ten tricks is available in spades. Those playing a weak NT may try to play there, but South may well rescue them by competing. Those playing a strong NT may well reach game for a very good score on the hand.

**3**

♠ J54  
♥ 106  
♦ J1087  
♣ K1053

♠ Q2  
♥ Q84  
♦ AK432  
♣ A87

♠ 9876  
♥ AK92  
♦ Q  
♣ 9642

♠ AK103  
♥ J753  
♦ 965  
♣ QJ

 Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

With fifteen points opposite nine 2NT may be a popular contract. A club lead from north will set up tricks for their side to beat the contract. A diamond will give away a tempo allowing west to set up their eighth trick in diamonds. Those E/W pairs playing a weak No Trump will be opening one diamond to tell north which suit to lead.

**4**

♠ Q862  
♥ 1098  
♦ AK8  
♣ J32

♠ 97  
♥ K43  
♦ J107532  
♣ K6

♠ 104  
♥ QJ52  
♦ Q9  
♣ AQ1075

♠ AKJ53  
♥ A76  
♦ 64  
♣ 984

 Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

2♠ is the normal place to play, with very little chance of an overtrick. If E/W like to play three weak twos and decide to open the west hand they are likely to find that south will overcall two spades and be raised by their partner. Any plus score for E/W will score very well.

**5**

♠ KJ953  
 ♥ 82  
 ♦ AJ7  
 ♣ A65  
 ♠ 1072  
 ♥ QJ754  
 ♦ Q52  
 ♣ 87  
 ♠ AQ64  
 ♥ 1096  
 ♦ 93  
 ♣ Q942  
 ♠ 8  
 ♥ AK3  
 ♦ K10864  
 ♣ KJ103

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

3NT by north looks the normal contract which is likely to receive a favourable club lead. So you win in dummy and have a choice as to who to play for the queen of diamonds. What you don't want on this hand is for west to win the queen of diamonds a play a spade through your hand, so you may as well play a diamond to the jack and now you have eleven tricks with the aid of the repeated club finesse.

**6**

♠ J54  
 ♥ AK5  
 ♦ 875  
 ♣ J984  
 ♠ AK82  
 ♥ J9  
 ♦ K63  
 ♣ Q1053  
 ♠ 1063  
 ♥ Q1076  
 ♦ AQ4  
 ♣ K76  
 ♠ Q97  
 ♥ 8432  
 ♦ J1092  
 ♣ A2

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Optimistic west players will declare 3NT. Pessimistic west players will declare 2NT. Whichever you play you will need to play the contract carefully to set up the nine tricks that are available to you. First your two heart tricks, then your three spade tricks (perhaps by ducking the first round) and finally your club trick.

**7**

♠ A854  
 ♥ 1064  
 ♦ A7532  
 ♣ K  
 ♠ 932  
 ♥ AQ9872  
 ♦ K6  
 ♣ Q4  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ J53  
 ♦ Q1098  
 ♣ J10952  
 ♠ KQJ107  
 ♥ K  
 ♦ J4  
 ♣ A8763

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

A normal 4♣ contract by south and it is just a question of how many clubs the defense will allow south to ruff in dummy. Repeated trump leads by west will cut the number to two which still allows the contract to be made, but only conceding ten tricks should score well.

**8**

♠ K52  
 ♥ AQ10764  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ J64  
 ♠ J  
 ♥ 982  
 ♦ KQ84  
 ♣ AK972  
 ♠ A10863  
 ♥ 53  
 ♦ 1053  
 ♣ Q53  
 ♠ Q974  
 ♥ KJ  
 ♦ AJ962  
 ♣ 108

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

I'm still waiting for an exciting hand. Many tables may play in 2♥ and E/W need an accurate defense to hold it to eight tricks. After west has opened 1♣ and received a club lead they win with the king and switch to the jack of spades for a ruff, which, after north covers with the king, they duly receive. Now west needs to watch partner's spade pip that they have returned very carefully and have faith to play a club to the queen for a second ruff.

**9**

♠ AK75  
 ♥ Q95  
 ♦ 6  
 ♣ AQ1032  
 ♠ Q109632  
 ♥ 103  
 ♦ AJ  
 ♣ 986  
 ♠ J84  
 ♥ K82  
 ♦ 8543  
 ♣ K54  
 ♠ AJ764  
 ♥ KQ10972  
 ♣ J7

 Dealer: North  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Perhaps some excitement here. After north opens 1♣ a 2♠ overcall really does give south an uncomfortable time. With six-five a take out double really does not seem suitable so you have to bid a suit. Three diamonds may still allow you to find a five-four heart fit, but not a five-three fit. Bid three hearts and you may miss a diamond fit. Whatever your choice you should end up with a plus score, especially with the favourable position in both minors.

**10**

♠ Q42  
 ♥ 10954  
 ♦ A7542  
 ♣ 2  
 ♠ K9853  
 ♥ Q872  
 ♦ K  
 ♣ 765  
 ♠ 76  
 ♥ A6  
 ♦ Q10983  
 ♣ AJ98  
 ♠ AJ10  
 ♥ KJ3  
 ♦ J6  
 ♣ KQ1043

 Dealer: East  
 Both Vulnerable

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

A hand where you are better off defending. If you do open a strong NT as south, then partner may think that Stayman is the answer knowing they can pass whatever you bid. Two diamonds looks playable, but the five-one break is horrible.

**11**

♠ KJ105  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ J87  
 ♣ AKQ108  
 ♠ 876  
 ♥ J65  
 ♦ AK92  
 ♣ 654  
 ♠ 94  
 ♥ AQ1073  
 ♦ 543  
 ♣ 972  
 ♠ AQ32  
 ♥ K982  
 ♦ Q106  
 ♣ J3

 Dealer: South  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

All roads seem to lead to a 4♠ contract. E/W just need to cash their AK diamonds quickly to keep this to ten tricks.

**12**

♠ 954  
 ♥ KQ109  
 ♦ AKQ10  
 ♣ Q3  
 ♠ K876  
 ♥ AJ862  
 ♦ 83  
 ♣ 42  
 ♠ AJ103  
 ♥ 3  
 ♦ J962  
 ♣ A876  
 ♠ Q2  
 ♥ 754  
 ♦ 754  
 ♣ KJ1095

 Dealer: West  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

N/S have the majority of the points, but E/W are the ones who can make two spades. Some norths may declare 1NT and E/W will need to defend carefully to take their seven tricks. It's not that easy to work out that you have to duck the first round of clubs and then win the second. If the second round is ducked this gives declarer a chance to play a heart to the ten.

**13**

♠ J743  
 ♥ KJ  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ Q107653  
 ♠ 1062  
 ♥ 109543  
 ♦ 753  
 ♣ J2  
 ♠ AQ95  
 ♥ Q86  
 ♦ 9842  
 ♣ A9  
 ♠ K8  
 ♥ A72  
 ♦ AKQJ6  
 ♣ K84

 Dealer: North  
 Both Vulnerable

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

This set so far has not been very nice to those playing a weak NT. Here, when east opens a weak NT their opponents have a chance to collect at least +800. Against 2♥x starting with four rounds of diamonds does the trick.

If N/S declare 3NT then only an initial spade lead will stop eleven tricks.

**14**

♠ J83  
 ♥ 10543  
 ♦ A652  
 ♣ 98  
 ♠ K5  
 ♥ KQ87  
 ♦ J1073  
 ♣ A42  
 ♠ Q96  
 ♥ A96  
 ♦ K94  
 ♣ K1073  
 ♠ A10742  
 ♥ J2  
 ♦ Q8  
 ♣ QJ65

 Dealer: East  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

3NT seems a very normal contract, but destined for one off.

**15**

♠ 843  
 ♥ KQ105  
 ♦ 843  
 ♣ 754  
 ♠ Q10762  
 ♥ 42  
 ♦ 72  
 ♣ QJ82  
 ♠ A95  
 ♥ J86  
 ♦ QJ9  
 ♣ AK103  
 ♠ KJ  
 ♥ A973  
 ♦ AK1065  
 ♣ 96

 Dealer: South  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

With the favourable lie of the diamond suit and a good spade guess N/S make ten tricks in hearts. However, I think that sometimes E/W will steal the hand in 2♠.

**16**

♠ 97  
 ♥ J10  
 ♦ 987542  
 ♣ 1053  
 ♠ Q1063  
 ♥ AK97  
 ♦ AKJ  
 ♣ A7  
 ♠ KJ54  
 ♥ Q85432  
 ♦  
 ♣ KJ4  
 ♠ A82  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ Q1063  
 ♣ Q9862

 Dealer: West  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Some excitement. After a 2NT opener east will plan to transfer to heart and then show spades, but partner should break the transfer to show heart support. If the transfer has been broken to 3♠, 3NT or 4♣ then east may be able to bid 5♦ as exclusion Blackwood which will get you to 6♥ knowing you are missing one keycard. Most of us will just rely on good old Blackwood and hopefully not be too optimistic and bid the grand slam.

**17**

♠ QJ1062  
♥ QJ7  
♦ K104  
♣ J8

♠ 84  
♥ 963  
♦ Q873  
♣ A1062

♠ AK975  
♥ AK42  
♦ A2  
♣ K7

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Another slam. An awkward opening bid for south, do you try opening two 2NT or risk the 1♠ opener. Whichever your choice you soon work out that you have a big spade fit. Be sure to use Blackwood on your way to slam.

**18**

♠ A102  
♥ A4  
♦ 6543  
♣ A976

♠ QJ65  
♥ 107  
♦ AQ9  
♣ KQJ8

♠ K8  
♥ KQJ963  
♦ K8  
♣ 1043

♠ 9743  
♥ 852  
♦ J1072  
♣ 52

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

A choice of 3NT or 4♥. With their strong NT values and such good values in three suits west should insist on playing in NT for the better match point score.

There are things to watch out in the play. Against 3NT declarer will set up first hearts then clubs. North needs to be careful not to go to bed with the ace of spade as declarer may have eleven tricks. When playing four hearts on a club lead declarer will need to cash three diamonds, discarding a club otherwise they suffer a ruff to defeat the contract.

**19**

♠ KJ6  
♥ Q1086  
♦ J10985  
♣ 8

♠ 8543  
♥ A75  
♦ K73  
♣ AQ3

♠ A10972  
♥ KJ94  
♦ A6  
♣ J2

♠ Q  
♥ 32  
♦ Q42  
♣ K1097654

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

With such wonderfully fitting hands N/S have ten tricks available as long as they take a club ruff in dummy. Not many pairs will bid this game unless west gives them a helping hand.

**20**

♠ AK10532  
♥ AQ9  
♦ A43  
♣ 8

♠ J984  
♥ K32  
♦ 976  
♣ AQ4

♠ Q  
♥ J1075  
♦ KJ52  
♣ KJ63

♠ 76  
♥ 864  
♦ Q108  
♣ 109752

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

Most tables will play the hand in a spade contract, perhaps with E/W bidding and reaching 1NT along the way. A heart lead from east will give declarer a chance to cash one top spade before crossing to dummy with a diamond to take the second round spade finesse which will give them the valuable ninth trick.

**21**

♠ Q84  
 ♥ AKQ  
 ♦ 1065  
 ♣ A542  
 ♠ J10732  
 ♥ 832  
 ♦ A93  
 ♣ KQ  
 ♠ A965  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ Q842  
 ♣ J1098

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Some north players will open a strong NT and play there. The lead of the three of spades will work much better than the jack. Then, after west wins the king and switches to a heart north may well decide that there are not two entries in dummy to take the double club finesse, so will play ace and another and be very pleased with the outcome.

**22**

♠ 1032  
 ♥ 1052  
 ♦ K96  
 ♣ QJ94  
 ♠ Q875  
 ♥ AJ8  
 ♦ 108  
 ♣ AK85  
 ♠ A6  
 ♥ Q9643  
 ♦ 753  
 ♣ 1063

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

A normal 4♠ contract making eleven tricks which should lead to one of the flattest boards of the evening.

**23**

♠ Q  
 ♥ Q10842  
 ♦ QJ3  
 ♣ KQ97  
 ♠ A54  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ AK10842  
 ♣ 532  
 ♠ KJ10963  
 ♥ J53  
 ♦ 97  
 ♣ J8

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

Those that protect with three diamonds over south's weak two spades may find themselves declaring 3NT. After a spade lead by south (perhaps they should lead the king) east can duck the queen of spades knowing north will not have a spade to lead back. A club switch is now best and declarer can win and it may now be best to play diamonds from the top. North wins the third round, but at least you don't have a club led through you ten. Making 3NT even without the overtrick should score very well.

**24**

♠ J10  
 ♥ A832  
 ♦ K107  
 ♣ QJ64  
 ♠ AQ984  
 ♥ J9754  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ 83  
 ♠ K75  
 ♥ KQ  
 ♦ 9532  
 ♣ A1052  
 ♠ 632  
 ♥ 106  
 ♦ AQJ86  
 ♣ K97

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Another hand which fits very well to allow E/W to make game on minimum values. Some west players may be able to open two spades to show a two suiter with spades. When given the chance some north players may choose to open the north hand which will silence east and lead to a competitive sequence as long as west is bold and bids on the second round.

Lots of possibilities on this hand.

**25**

♠ QJ96  
 ♥ 1084  
 ♦ 965  
 ♣ 1094  
 ♠ A842  
 ♥ AQJ76  
 ♦  
 ♣ AJ76  
 ♠ K  
 ♥ 932  
 ♦ AKQ87  
 ♣ KQ82  
 ♠ 10753  
 ♥ K5  
 ♦ J10432  
 ♣ 53

 Dealer: North  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

With a combined thirty-three points slam should be reached, but which one? 6♣ is a better contract than 6♥ or 6NT, but it certainly won't score as well as the other two. If west does work out that partner has extra values they may opt for the top scoring contract.

**26**

♠ Q8  
 ♥ 984  
 ♦ K65  
 ♣ AQ976  
 ♠ K53  
 ♥ AQ732  
 ♦ 1032  
 ♣ J4  
 ♠ A104  
 ♥ K65  
 ♦ AQ74  
 ♣ K52  
 ♠ J9762  
 ♥ J10  
 ♦ J98  
 ♣ 1083

 Dealer: East  
 Both Vulnerable

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

After a strong NT from east a transfer to hearts and then 3NT from West the choice is which game to play? With three card trump support it is usually correct to play in the Major suit game. It works here, but declarer must play the hand carefully, taking the diamond finesse early enough and clearing the suit while they still have an entry to the east hand.

**27**

♠ A62  
 ♥ 106  
 ♦ AK7  
 ♣ AQ432  
 ♠ KJ1097  
 ♥ Q92  
 ♦ 965  
 ♣ K8  
 ♠ Q43  
 ♥ AJ3  
 ♦ 832  
 ♣ 10965  
 ♠ 85  
 ♥ K8754  
 ♦ QJ104  
 ♣ J7

 Dealer: South  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Yet another hand where game makes if you bid it. If you are a pair who like to bid up then you will have done well with these hands. Many tables are likely to play a heart part-score so make sure you make the maximum number of tricks.

**28**

♠ K2  
 ♥ AK  
 ♦ KJ94  
 ♣ Q7432  
 ♠ 96  
 ♥ J107642  
 ♦ AQ5  
 ♣ J6  
 ♠ Q7  
 ♥ Q983  
 ♦ 108  
 ♣ AK1098  
 ♠ AJ108543  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ 7632  
 ♣ 5

 Dealer: West  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Finally, a nice competitive hand to finish with. After west opens a weak two, then 2NT by north, a number of hearts from east, then south should bid a firm four spades with a good seven card suit and a 7-4 shape. Now it's over to E/W to judge whether to bid 5♥. N/S can still prevail in 5♠, but it's very murky.

Ave HCP	N 10.07	S 9.93	E 10.29	W 9.71	Balanced	N 15	S 13	E 15	W 14
Voids/singletons	N 0/10	S 1/7	E 1/6	W 1/6	7+ suit	N 0	S 1	E 0	W 1