

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION ♥♣



*Third Interclub – Heat A*

*11<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021*

*Commentary by Ian Hamilton*

**1**

♠ 87632  
♥ J2  
♦ K652  
♣ K8

♠ Q  
♥ Q9865  
♦ J43  
♣ J1074

♠ AJ  
♥ A1074  
♦ Q1097  
♣ AQ9

♠ K10954  
♥ K3  
♦ A8  
♣ 6532

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Acol E/Ws should find their heart fit when east opens the suit. However, south will overcall in spades and be supported, and I can see E/W letting the opponents play at the 3 level, east having a rather defensive looking hand, and not anxious to get too high.

Where east opens a strong NT south again may intervene with his suit. This time west is less sure of a fit and there is even more likelihood of N/S buying it.

Of course, the cards lie nicely for E/W and 4♥ is actually there, though this could require a good trump view should the opponents get a diamond ruff.

Par is for N/S to be down one doubled in 4♠, but I bet there are a fair few N/S pluses, E/W selling out too cheaply.

**2**

♠ J1064  
♥ 98  
♦ AQJ94  
♣ 62

♠ 82  
♥ KJ1062  
♦ K10  
♣ KJ95

♠ K93  
♥ AQ53  
♦ 872  
♣ 873

♠ AQ75  
♥ 74  
♦ 653  
♣ AQ104

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

Whether south opens a weak NT, 1♣ or even passes west is likely to be there with the heart suit. North has an ideal values double where south has opened, though some could simply bid diamonds. Where south has passed he hasn't a sound intervention.

With the cards lying nicely for N/S they need to be declaring, rather than collecting 50s from E/W's heart spot.

Will most manage to get a decent plus N/S, where the preferred strain is spades, 170 possible?

**3**

♠ AQ10986  
♥ 74  
♦ KJ7  
♣ 107

♠ 53  
♥ J10983  
♦ 10984  
♣ A6

♠ KJ  
♥ Q65  
♦ 6532  
♣ J852

♠ 742  
♥ AK2  
♦ AQ  
♣ KQ943

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

N/S should finish in 4♠, presumably after south has opened 1♣ and rebid 2NT.

The number of tricks taken revolve around declarer's play of the trump suit, those taking two finesses losing to the doubleton knave and recording only 420, those playing the odds, or safety-playing the suit, recording an overtrick.

The stakes are higher should any declare 3NT, they in danger of defeat should they go wrong in the spade suit. It is an inferior contract anyway, since on a heart lead declarer hasn't time to also get a club trick, 430 the best possible.

**4**

♠ J95  
♥ KQJ854  
♦ 5  
♣ Q72

♠ Q76  
♥ 1063  
♦ K84  
♣ 10653

♠ K843  
♥ 2  
♦ QJ10973  
♣ K9

♠ A102  
♥ A97  
♦ A62  
♣ AJ84

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

The power of aces, pips and position come into play here, most hopefully getting to the heart game, perhaps played by south after a Multi sequence at some tables.

The knave/10/9 of spades combine to provide a trick after two finesses, and the club king is handily placed doubleton, onside.

So we could be looking at a pretty flat board, with 680 on the card. Will everyone manage it?

**5**

♠ Q109862  
♥ K5  
♦ A10  
♣ KQ5

♠ A43  
♥ Q872  
♦ Q83  
♣ 1042

♠ K5  
♥ J9  
♦ J764  
♣ J9863

♠ J7  
♥ A10643  
♦ K952  
♣ A7

Dealer: North  
N-S Vulnerable

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

We could see north in 3NT after opening 1♠ and rebidding the suit over south's 2♥. South should probe with 3♦ and north's KQx in clubs look adequate for 3NT.

As often, the major suit contract is better, declarer losing just the top two trumps in 4♠. Contrast 3NT, which is held to ten tricks should east select a red suit opening lead.

In practice, many will lead the 4th suit, clubs, against 3NT, eleven tricks now in no danger.

Getting to the best spot of 4♠ is a real challenge unless south assumes six spades in north, eschews FSF, and raises. Sadly, the theoretically top spot doesn't always get the best score.

**6**

♠ AQ8632  
♥ 3  
♦ A87  
♣ Q93

♠ 5  
♥ A8652  
♦ 65  
♣ AK1042

♠ KJ94  
♥ 94  
♦ KQ10432  
♣ 5

♠ 107  
♥ KQJ107  
♦ J9  
♣ J876

Dealer: East  
E-W Vulnerable

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

E/W could easily finish in an unfortunate spot here, east opening 1♥ and rebidding 2♣ over west's 1♠ response. West is neither strong enough for an initial 2♦ nor a 2♦ advance over 2♣, which would be fourth suit forcing, instead giving preference to 2♥. South will be delighted to defend.

2♥ looks as if it should go two light, minus 200 a poor result. This time unsound bidding has a chance. If west stretches to 2♦ there is a chance of stopping in 3♦, though more likely a silly 3NT will eventuate.

Will there be many E/W pluses?

**7**

♠ Q97  
♥ 5  
♦ J8732  
♣ AKJ4

♠ J1053  
♥ 106432  
♦ Q109  
♣ Q

♠ K84  
♥ J7  
♦ K65  
♣ 109852

♠ A62  
♥ AKQ98  
♦ A4  
♣ 763

Dealer: South  
Both Vulnerable

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

Whether south opens 1♥ or a strong NT should not affect N/S getting to 3NT, south usually in charge.

Declarer must avoid a finesse when west leads a club. It is possible to make ten tricks various ways, perhaps the easiest being to play on diamonds.

Should declarer play on hearts instead there are four tricks in the suit and the defence can either set up the spade queen for declarer or get two diamond tricks - but not both, again only taking three tricks in defence.

Will any fail to make the 630 due?

**8**

♠ A107  
♥ A743  
♦ A943  
♣ 93

♠ 83  
♥ KQ  
♦ 8765  
♣ QJ874

♠ KJ964  
♥ 1065  
♦ K102  
♣ A6

♠ Q52  
♥ J982  
♦ QJ  
♣ K1052

Dealer: West  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Love all is for bidding and a thin west 1♠ could see east bidding 1NT and being passed out. This will not fare well on a heart lead. The number of undertricks is critical as N/S can make 140 declaring hearts, if they ever get into the auction.

East can get out for two light, losing 100, whatever the defence do. They cannot make more than one club, two diamonds, three hearts and two spades unless declarer goes wrong somewhere, which he easily could.

This looks a triumph for the light opener, so long as east makes his just desserts.

**9**

♠ KQ95  
 ♥ Q876  
 ♦ KQ2  
 ♣ 92  
 ♠ J872  
 ♥ K2  
 ♦ 97  
 ♣ Q10643  
 ♠ 4  
 ♥ AJ943  
 ♦ J1086  
 ♣ A85

 Dealer: North  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

I suppose this could be passed out, but usually north will kick off with either a weak NT or one of a minor playing 5 card majors. Thus the heart fit should be established. The original weak NT will see north declaring in the suit, otherwise south.

E/W need to produce a club opening lead else a spade towards the K/Q results in either no club trick or no spade trick for the defence, trumps being happily placed and the diamonds solid apart from the ace.

It isn't fanciful to suggest that some will bid game, but most will probably be happy enough with 170/200 N/S.

**10**

♠ 872  
 ♥ Q10985  
 ♦ 62  
 ♣ K72  
 ♠ AKQ10  
 ♥ A7  
 ♦ AK8754  
 ♣ 4  
 ♠ J543  
 ♥ KJ432  
 ♦  
 ♣ QJ65  
 ♠ 96  
 ♥ 6  
 ♦ QJ1093  
 ♣ A10983

 Dealer: East  
 Both Vulnerable

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

West presumably rebids a game-forcing 2♠ after his quiet 1♦ has fetched a 1♥ response. It looks like most will get to 4♠, a few perhaps over-reaching to slam after west has stretched to a 2♣ opener. Although the five Quick Tricks criterion is fulfilled west cannot guarantee game opposite a bust, and is best opening at the 1 level.

Declarer has eleven tricks with two diamond ruffs and his outside winners, including the heart finesse. He or the defence play a club. If south wins north is eventually squeezed between hearts and clubs. Should north rise with the king south's ace can be ruffed out.

The opening lead is critical again. A heart breaks up the position, south threatening a ruff. In reality, few will make the twelve tricks possible double dummy, but maybe some hero will, for a great board.

**11**

♠ 1062  
 ♥ QJ43  
 ♦ 10543  
 ♣ K5  
 ♠ AK9  
 ♥ 86  
 ♦ K62  
 ♣ AQ864  
 ♠ QJ73  
 ♥ K952  
 ♦ Q9  
 ♣ 1072  
 ♠ 854  
 ♥ A107  
 ♦ AJ87  
 ♣ J93

 Dealer: South  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

This is another borderline game, west either opening a strong 1NT or rebidding it after 1♣/1♥. Some easts could invite, despite a maximum of 25HCP on offer.

However, even 1NT is in jeopardy with north on lead, who needs to start with a diamond. The defence now have three diamonds, three hearts and a club winner for a one trick defeat.

One isn't often light in 1NT with 24 HCP between the two hands, but it could happen on this one. E/W are much better off in a black suit, but it is hard to see many avoiding the lure of no trumps, and so some will surely go minus.

**12**

♠ AK95  
 ♥ 109  
 ♦ Q65  
 ♣ K964  
 ♠ Q82  
 ♥ J5  
 ♦ AKJ72  
 ♣ J103  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ AK832  
 ♦ 1094  
 ♣ Q852  
 ♠ J10743  
 ♥ Q764  
 ♦ 83  
 ♣ A7

 Dealer: West  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

The weak NT may do its job here, east transferring to hearts and passing the completion. Vulnerable, south is unlikely to enter the fray. N/S's spade fit, with 140 available, could be lost anyway, even when west opens 1♦, east responding 1♥, and west likely passed out in his 1NT rebid. The only hope is that north makes an off-shape double at his first turn, decidedly unsound.

2♥ looks the best spot for E/W, possibly allowed to make for the loss of a spade, trump and three minor suit losers. South needs to get a club ruff or force east often enough with spades.

1NT could also escape for one light should west get his spade queen. However, north can lead hearts, establishing a trick in the suit to go with with the seven black suit winners, and a two trick defeat.

**13**

♠ J53  
♥ AQ  
♦ K109  
♣ 97432

♠ A97  
♥ KJ109643  
♦ 5  
♣ A6

♠ Q102  
♥ 875  
♦ AQ8764  
♣ K

♠ K864  
♥ 2  
♦ J32  
♣ QJ1085

Dealer: North  
Both Vulnerable

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

What do you call a seven card suit? Trumps would be west's response after his 1♥ response to 1♦ has only garnered a 2♦ rebid by east. I would certainly expect to see most wests at the wheel of 4♥.

Making ten tricks is straightforward, only a spade and two trumps being lost. The spade suit is frozen, the defenders unable to lead it without loss, so declarer can ruff the diamond suit good and play trumps from hand, losing just to the A/Q of trumps, and using the trump 8 as an entry to diamonds, recording an overtrick.

Will many make manage the 650 possible? Maybe not - most will use dummy's limited entries to finesse trumps. Though they can still do it if they now risk the diamond finesse.

**14**

♠ 10985  
♥ K92  
♦ J95  
♣ Q73

♠ AKJ62  
♥ 7  
♦ KQ104  
♣ 1084

♠ 743  
♥ AQ1083  
♦ A82  
♣ J6

♠ Q  
♥ J654  
♦ 763  
♣ AK952

Dealer: East  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Acol has to pass the east hand and decide how to respond when west opens 1♠. 2♥ cramps the bidding badly, but at least gets the values over. The 2♠ rebid can be raised. Unfortunately, west is now guessing, not knowing if east has club or diamond values. It is easier where east opens 1♥ and rebids a weak NT. West can make a 2♦ rebid and advance over the 2♠ preference.

With the cards fitting nicely and diamonds breaking there are ten easy tricks in spades, west's third club ruffed in dummy.

Will many manage to bid and make game in spades? West must not try 2NT or he could find himself light in the wrong game. 3♣, FSF, is the answer, east repeating his spade support when he hasn't a club stop.

**15**

♠ K1084  
♥ A1076  
♦ 9  
♣ J764

♠ A95  
♥ KJ82  
♦ KJ42  
♣ 82

♠ 54  
♥ AQ8763  
♦ Q10953  
♣ QJ7632

♥ Q93  
♦ 105  
♣ AK

Dealer: South  
N-S Vulnerable

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

West could well double south's 1♠ opener - he lacks clubs, but the holding of four hearts is fulfilled. Over the double north has a 2NT bid - a high card raise to 3♠.

At favourable vulnerability east has a great hand for a sacrifice and should bid 5♦. With equal length in the minors 4NT would have been his bid.

N/S do best to take the limited money available - a 100 penalty. Any that advance to the 5 level cannot avoid losing three tricks.

Will everyone find the cheap sacrifice? Note also the importance of aces at a high level. Give west the heart ace rather than the K/J and 5♦ is unbeatable, never mind being a great sacrifice.

**16**

♠ KQ43  
♥ J1053  
♦ 542  
♣ 104

♠ A875  
♥ 7  
♦ AJ1076  
♣ AQ5

♠ J6  
♥ KQ6  
♦ KQ9  
♣ K9863

♠ 1092  
♥ A9842  
♦ 83  
♣ J72

Dealer: West  
E-W Vulnerable

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

When east responds 2♣ to west's 1♦ I suppose some might reverse into 2♠ with west's cards. Even then, it is hard to see the auction advancing beyond 3NT too often.

West actually does best to support clubs at some stage, a strain where slam is available. Strangely, it is only there in clubs, trumps drawn and east's two losers pitched on diamonds before a heart is conceded. Playing in diamonds insufficient west spades can be pitched on clubs, the slam defeated on a spade lead.

Could anyone get there? Will many have 690 on the card, the spade lead missed against 3NT?

**17**

♠ KJ97  
♥ Q8  
♦ AK76542  
♣ AK76542

♠ Q10  
♥ 97  
♦ A9542  
♣ J983

♠ A8543  
♥ KJ832  
♦ 6  
♣ Q10

♠ 62  
♥ AQ10654  
♦ KJ1073  
♣

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

East could well either bid spades or use Michaels over north's 1♣ opener. Michaels theoretically has him in penalty territory, south doubling and west doubtless passing the buck back by passing. Neither 2♥x nor 2♠x is a pretty sight, and represents the best N/S can do on the board, at least 300 on the card.

North could well not stick any double, taking out to clubs. Sadly, this is likely to be at the 3 level, where north will do well to make the eight tricks possible, particularly should east start with a diamond ruff.

Looks like fun and games on this one, defending easily best.

**18**

♠ A874  
♥ 4  
♦ Q984  
♣ KQJ9

♠ K53  
♥ J109  
♦ A105  
♣ A1063

♠ J9  
♥ 852  
♦ 732  
♣ 87542

♠ Q1062  
♥ AKQ763  
♦ KJ6  
♣

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

The spade fit is quickly found when north responds in the suit to south's 1♥. South is probably only worth 3♠, rather than a 4♣ splinter, which would not excite north.

Hopefully, all will keep to the safety of the game level, where no more than a trump and diamond need be lost, though it is awkward on a club lead from east. Many will let the ace win to keep control, though this isn't risk-free, the number of trump losers unclear.

With J/9 doubleton in east luckily any credible play in trumps should hold trump losers to one, so those that ruff the club should manage a joint top with 650 when hearts run, the only other loser the diamond ace.

**19**

♠ Q  
♥ A106  
♦ AQ85  
♣ AKQ83

♠ 9653  
♥ 9432  
♦ 63  
♣ 654

♠ AKJ102  
♥ Q7  
♦ J74  
♣ J107

♠ 874  
♥ KJ85  
♦ K1092  
♣ 92

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	6	5	1	2
S	2	2	5	1	2
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

The Duke of Yarborough allegedly made money in the days of whist by offering odds of 1:1000 against holding west's hand - no card above a 9 - the true odds 1:1827.

West will be a spectator as North opens 1♣ and N/S wend their way to a possible diamond slam, east probably helping them avoid a silly NT spot by overcalling in spades, south doubling to show the other two suits. Opening 2♣ with north is a mistake. It won't leave bidding space to explore various possible strains.

It is really quite a challenge to get the the right strain of diamonds here, it being lucky that 6♣ is also a make with a good heart view, thanks to the 3:3 break.

Will many have 920 on the card? Could any play in hearts, west making a trump trick with his Yarborough?

**20**

♠ A3  
♥ KJ7543  
♦ 72  
♣ A86

♠ K87  
♥ AQ10  
♦ 64  
♣ KQ1075

♠ Q109542  
♥ 9862  
♦ Q5  
♣ 3

♠ J6  
♥  
♦ AKJ10983  
♣ J942

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

I can't see many in the supposedly par spot of 3NT N/S here. South may never even bid his diamonds, put off by a void in partner's heart suit, whether this is bid over a west weak NT or 1♣. East is likely to compete with spades.

Those that do bid diamonds can make as many as ten tricks, just losing a spade and two clubs, outscoring those defending 2♠, which might even make should declarer finesse the club knave, to get two heart pitches. To beat 2♠ legitimately the defence need to lead clubs, get a heart ruff, then two diamonds, north ruff a third with the ace, before delivering a second heart ruff.

Scores both sides of the traveller predicted, the par score of 600 N/S in 3NT a rarity, and a very dubious spot anyway, badly light were diamonds to misbehave.



**21**

♠ 1083  
♥ AJ5  
♦ 87654  
♣ 95

♠ AKQJ6  
♥ 1094  
♦ AKJ9  
♣ 2

♠ 975  
♥ KQ876  
♦ Q  
♣ Q1063

Dealer: North  
N-S Vulnerable

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

Similarly to #6 west has the choice of responding either 1NT or a thin 2♣ to east's 1♠ opener. The latter works best today, as east can simply bid a forcing 2♦, getting spade (false) preference. East proceeds with a FSF 3♥. West has no heart stop so must bid either 4♣ or 4♠, converted to the latter anyway by east.

After a 1NT response east needs to force to game with 3♦. Looking at two small hearts west should bid 3♠, letting east be the one to bid 3NT should he have a heart stop, which of course he hasn't.

With the diamond queen dropping and the clubs onside against 4♠ the defence need to grab their heart tricks at the start or they may lose some of them. Those that do play in 3NT may survive if north is on lead with his unattractive heart holding.

**22**

♠ Q3  
♥ 974  
♦ J1062  
♣ AK43

♠ AK8652  
♥ J83  
♦ 9875  
♣ 9875

♠ J1074  
♥ A1065  
♦ AQ4  
♣ QJ

♠ 9  
♥ KQ2  
♦ K98753  
♣ 1062

Dealer: East  
E-W Vulnerable

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

An east weak NT should see west transferring to spades. With east maximum and holding four trumps he should break the transfer, allowing the game to be bid.

5 card majors open east 1 of a minor. East can raise west's 1♠ response, showing four trumps or three with shortage somewhere.

Either way I would trust most will get to the cold game, losing only a heart and two clubs. There is little scope for the defence to go wrong, so it could be a pretty flat board.

**23**

♠ J976  
♥ 742  
♦ Q632  
♣ 92

♠ 842  
♥ Q105  
♦ AK  
♣ J8764

♠ AKQ103  
♥ K983  
♦ 75  
♣ Q3

♠ 5  
♥ AJ6  
♦ J10984  
♣ AK105

Dealer: South  
Both Vulnerable

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

An inverted north weak 3♦ raise of south's 1♦ could goad east into a double. This could see west bidding hearts or clubs, and possibly going minus, rather than 3NT, which looks best.

Vulnerable and being so weak most north's will wisely pass south's 1♦, making it easier for east, who is probably only worth 1♠. E/W could well now miss game, but at least should go plus on the board.

Ten tricks are there in both spades and no trumps, but involve picking up south's heart holding, which is not a certainty.

Will many bid and make game here, there in either major or no trumps? Or will some be minus somewhere, maybe after mis-guessing hearts.

**24**

♠ AK4  
♥ Q8  
♦ KJ1086  
♣ QJ6

♠ QJ1072  
♥ J5  
♦ Q2  
♣ K983

♠ 985  
♥ AK62  
♦ A95  
♣ A104

♠ 63  
♥ 109743  
♦ 743  
♣ 752

Dealer: West  
Neither Vulnerable

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

North's strong NT should silence east, and north will likely end up declaring 2♥, east electing to defend. On a spade lead north finds himself having to lead from his hand a lot and could easily finish three light, though many will manage six tricks.

A north 1♦ opener should see an east 1NT overcall, and east declaring spades after a transfer, possibly in game.

For once, having the stronger hand declaring proves a disadvantage, a diamond opening lead from south setting up four defensive tricks.

With east being absolutely minimum some may stay low and avoid going light in game.

**25**

♠ Q4  
 ♥ KQ3  
 ♦ 1097  
 ♣ Q7643  
 ♠ AJ983  
 ♥ 52  
 ♦ J42  
 ♣ KJ9  
 ♠ K1065  
 ♥ 84  
 ♦ AKQ8  
 ♣ A85  
 ♠ 72  
 ♥ AJ10976  
 ♦ 653  
 ♣ 102

 Dealer: North  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

East will usually be in charge of 4♠ here, whether he opens an Acol 1♠ or a strong no trump, west transferring to the suit.

I can't see many souths starting with ace and another heart, guaranteeing two tricks in defence. South could do worse, producing the club 10, picking up north's queen and ceding twelve tricks should declarer play the odds in trumps, felling the queen.

A lot of hands turn on the opening lead.

**26**

♠ Q53  
 ♥ J83  
 ♦ KQ1076  
 ♣ 109  
 ♠ J94  
 ♥ 972  
 ♦ AJ3  
 ♣ AK73  
 ♠ AK1076  
 ♥ 65  
 ♦ 954  
 ♣ J84  
 ♠ 82  
 ♥ AKQ104  
 ♦ 82  
 ♣ Q652

 Dealer: East  
 Both Vulnerable

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

South is just about worth a 1♥ opener, north either raising or trying 1NT, correcting the 2♣ rebid to 2♥.

With 2♥ at least in theory making E/W need to act. West could make a light off-shape double of 1♥, and certainly should protect with same should a 2♥ raise come round. In the Acol sequence it is up to east to butt in with 2♠ when north corrects to 2♥.

This is a nice part-score battle with both vulnerable, the stakes high with minus 200 a possibility. Will many manage nine tricks as E/W in spades, pinning the 10/9 of clubs? Or will there be many stealing it in hearts N/S?

**27**

♠ QJ1085  
 ♥ K93  
 ♦ K  
 ♣ A752  
 ♠ K96  
 ♥ QJ86  
 ♦ Q1095  
 ♣ J9  
 ♠ A73  
 ♥ A1052  
 ♦ J4  
 ♣ K843  
 ♠ 42  
 ♥ 74  
 ♦ A87632  
 ♣ Q106

 Dealer: South  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Again it is E/W's hand, but N/S likely to be doing the bidding, north opening 1♠ and rebidding 2♣ over south's 1NT, corrected to 2♠.

Again, E/W need to be bidding, and finding their heart fit, but it is difficult for them to do so. Like #12, their best chance of getting to their rightful contract is where east makes a skewed double at his first turn.

I can see many getting 100 off 2♠, when they can do better, recording 140 declaring hearts. Will many manage it?

**28**

♠ 1052  
 ♥ A  
 ♦ AQ9764  
 ♣ 984  
 ♠ J973  
 ♥ Q9854  
 ♦ K53  
 ♣ 10  
 ♠ Q8  
 ♥ 106  
 ♦ 1082  
 ♣ AKJ753  
 ♠ AK64  
 ♥ KJ732  
 ♦ J  
 ♣ Q62

 Dealer: West  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Our last hand could easily see N/S in the wrong spot, north responding a passed hand 2♦ to 1♥ and south having an awkward rebid. Pass works best, but few souths will, despite north being an already passed hand - it could be a 4:1 or 5:1 ft. Many will rebid 2♥ and find themselves going light. The best scoring spot is 2♠, but this is very hard to find.

The last two hands E/W had to somehow get into the bidding to find their own contract. This time they are best to let N/S mess it up.

This hand typifies the set, where there were a lot of awkward part-scores, and a few more flat games than I would have preferred. It is hoped the set proved enjoyable.

Ave HCP	N 10.00	S 10.13	E 9.88	W 9.99	Balanced	N 12	S 9	E 11	W 11
Voids/singletons	N 1/6	S 3/7	E 2/8	W 1/6	7+ suit	N 1	S 0	E 1	W 1