

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION♥♣



*Third Interclub – Heat A*

*8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024*

*Commentary by Ian Hamilton*

**1**

♠ QJ85  
♥ KQ9  
♦ Q1053  
♣ A4

♠ K76  
♥ 875  
♦ AJ84  
♣ K98

♠ A932  
♥ 1064  
♦ K6  
♣ Q762

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

A north weak NT is presumably passed out, and may well be blessed with a diamond lead, making nine or ten tricks.

5 card majors will find the spade fit, declared by south, but rarely in game. The trump suit lies nicely, as does the heart suit and club king, the end result also probably ten tricks, but for a poorer score.

Normally, the 4:4 major suit fit would score better, and it does so on a passive lead - those defending no trumps holding it to nine tricks if they avoid a diamond lead.

**2**

♠ 6  
♥ 10964  
♦ KQJ52  
♣ 1064

♠ KJ1084  
♥ Q8  
♦ 74  
♣ Q875

♠ 532  
♥ K732  
♦ A983  
♣ J2

♠ AQ97  
♥ AJ5  
♦ 106  
♣ AK93

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

Few will find Deep Finesse's 4♥ by N/S. Indeed, few will get to game or make one, north passing south's 2NT rebid or raise of 1NT over 1♠, hearts never bid.

Double dummy, 2NT can be made by either north or south, even with the best lead of a spade by east, ducked. Declarer wins a diamond, then loses one to east, who plays spades again, west end-played now, best to return spades or clubs, giving up either a trick or a dummy club entry. Declarer's heart knave now leaves the defence powerless to take more than five defensive tricks.

The play in hearts is similar if more complicated, declarer taking the major suit aces then ruffing spades. A low heart puts west on lead, but the most the defence can take is the diamond ace and two trumps.

**3**

♠ AQ1082  
♥ 42  
♦ KQ53  
♣ Q4

♠ KJ5  
♥ A865  
♦ AJ42  
♣ KJ

♠ 73  
♥ Q1073  
♦ 1087  
♣ A1095

♠ 964  
♥ KJ9  
♦ 96  
♣ 87632

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

At favourable vulnerability north does best to compete over west's 1♥ or strong NT, likely showing spades, or spades and a minor. E/W may be able to compete in hearts.

With the cards lying nicely for N/S they cannot be denied in 2♠, losing just a heart, two clubs and either two diamonds, or one diamond and a trump, diamonds ruffed in dummy.

The best E/W can do is go one light in 3♥, though this contract could sneak home.

With north on lead 1NT is possible by west, the clubs lying handily.

**4**

♠ 982  
♥ AJ94  
♦ K1073  
♣ J4

♠ Q10543  
♥ KQ52  
♦ 986  
♣ K

♠ K7  
♥ 1086  
♦ AQJ2  
♣ A965

♠ AJ6  
♥ 73  
♦ 54  
♣ Q108732

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

We have another border-line game on lucky lies, though E/W will do well to get to 3NT, and I can't see many there.

The spade suit is well situated, the defence cannot knock out both west's club and heart entries to the spade suit, plus the diamond finesse succeeds.

I can see most making nine or ten tricks in spades or no trumps. Will any have the game bonus, though? I reckon most will be in 2♠ after an east weak NT.

**5**

♠ AJ7  
 ♥ 102  
 ♦ AK109  
 ♣ AK42  
 ♠ 4  
 ♥ A9543  
 ♦ QJ74  
 ♣ 1087  
 ♠ KQ1092  
 ♥ KQ76  
 ♦ 3  
 ♣ J93

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Most will get to 4♣ after north opens a minor or stretches to 2NT. A few might settle in 3NT.

4♣ easily makes twelve tricks when a heart is ruffed in north, only the heart ace lost.

3NT by north can also make the same number of tricks for a better board. East gets squeezed in three suits by the run of spades, doing best to pitch a club. However, now the club knave is run, the 10 pinned.

Well done any managing 690, spotting the squeeze and guessing the ending.

**6**

♠ 1098743  
 ♥ A6  
 ♦ Q1082  
 ♣ 9  
 ♠ K  
 ♥ J5  
 ♦ AJ4  
 ♣ AQJ10864  
 ♠ J62  
 ♥ 987432  
 ♦ 97  
 ♣ K7

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

At favourable vulnerability there could be a few bidding a major as N/S, but most E/Ws should have a free run, east opening 1♣ and re-bidding 3♣ over west's 1♦. West has an easy 3NT call now.

It looks a pretty flat board, south getting the club king and north the heart ace. However, after a spade lead declarer could come to west with a diamond and finesse clubs. South could easily now return a spade, declarer making twelve if brave enough to finesse diamonds.

I can't see that happening too often.

**7**

♠ AK6  
 ♥ 9  
 ♦ AQ10872  
 ♣ 1075  
 ♠ Q4  
 ♥ AK8  
 ♦ K954  
 ♣ J843  
 ♠ J1098753  
 ♥ 5  
 ♦ J  
 ♣ AK92

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

South maybe shouldn't open 3♣ with a poor suit, and a decent side suit, but many will. However, what is the alternative? Either way, it is hard to see north advancing past the spade game.

However the defence start declarer can draw trumps and ruff out the diamond king, making twelve tricks (again) unless the defence have failed to bank a heart, in which case there could be thirteen on the card.

I suppose some might try the double club finesse, and only make eleven, or take the simple diamond finesse.

**8**

♠ AKQ3  
 ♥ K874  
 ♦ 103  
 ♣ KQ4  
 ♠ 7  
 ♥ AJ953  
 ♦ AK5  
 ♣ 10982  
 ♠ J862  
 ♥ 62  
 ♦ J74  
 ♣ A753  
 ♠ 10954  
 ♥ Q10  
 ♦ Q9862  
 ♣ J6

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S could miss their best spot when north reasonably overcalls west's 1♥ with 1NT, playing there. Doubling works better when south bids spades rather than diamonds.

In 1NT a club lead is best for the defence. However, after two top spades a diamond can be played, west winning and returning clubs. West ends up winning another diamond and having to give south an entry, unless he has unblocked clubs - in which case it is east stuck after the fourth club, having to set up the heart 8 for declarer.

2♠ is an easy make, ruffing hearts in south.

**9**

♠ 108  
♥ Q102  
♦ AJ10  
♣ AK1032

♠ QJ32  
♥ K75  
♦ K854  
♣ 64

♠ AK76  
♥ 96  
♦ Q732  
♣ J85

♠ 954  
♥ AJ843  
♦ 96  
♣ Q97

Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

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

North is liable to be passed out in his weak NT or get there after rebidding it over south's 1♠.

East has an awkward lead, and could try a spade, which might run to the 10, the end result ten tricks when the clubs behave. A diamond is lost, but the defence cannot take more than two hearts in addition, unless declarer pops up with the queen, rather than finessing the 10.

Any other lead holds declarer to at most nine tricks.

Will many defences let declarer put 180 on the card?

**10**

♠ Q1053  
♥ 10865  
♦ AQ84  
♣ 2

♠ A974  
♥ 94  
♦ J75  
♣ AQJ7

♠ K2  
♥ Q7  
♦ K10963  
♣ K843

♠ J86  
♥ AKJ32  
♦ 2  
♣ 10965

Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT can get beaten if N/S manage to avoid blocking hearts. North needs to show length on the king, win the third round and return the suit, south running hearts and switching to a spade.

N/S are actually better declaring hearts, and just might get into the auction should south overcall an east 1♣ with the suit, though this is dangerous, vulnerable with skimpy values.

The best E/W can do defending hearts is get a spade ruff, play a club to the ace and then a third spade. South needs to ruff high then drop the queen. Few will start with the doubleton spade king, so many will rack up 140.

So going light in 1NT may not be so bad after all.

**11**

♠ A10982  
♥ A1092  
♦ 10  
♣ Q102

♠ QJ64  
♥ 43  
♦ 95  
♣ K8643

♠ 7  
♥ Q8  
♦ AQJ873  
♣ AJ75

♠ K53  
♥ KJ765  
♦ K642  
♣ 9

Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

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

I imagine 3NT by north to be the spot after neither of south's suits enthralls north, and he has a double stop in west's overcalled hearts, plus invitational values.

Declarer is in luck when the diamond 9 falls in two rounds - so the most the defence can get is a diamond and two spades (in the unlikely event of the suit being led).

I can see some managing 460 when the club finesse works and west sets up hearts in north for declarer.

**12**

♠ A9632  
♥ J753  
♦ 72  
♣ Q10

♠ QJ  
♥ Q862  
♦ A85  
♣ J865

♠ 754  
♥  
♦ QJ1063  
♣ AK432

♠ K108  
♥ AK1094  
♦ K94  
♣ 97

Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

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

N/S might not get into the bidding here should west start with 1♦ and east respond 1♥. West's 2♣ rebid will be raised to 3♣, rapidly dropped by west.

E/W's 3♣ should lose only two spades and a diamond, making 130.

This is a great steal, as N/S can actually make 4♥, though this is decidedly fortuitous, the spade QJ falling. They likely at least get to a part-score in the suit when west passes, south opening 1♥ in 4th seat.

Will many N/Ss manage to get into the auction and get a plus score? Of course, west can overcall 2NT and east advance to 4♣ if necessary, a make.

**13**

♠ Q875  
♥ KQ42  
♦ 76  
♣ A76

♠ A10642  
♥ 876  
♦ K109  
♣ 103

♠ KJ3  
♥ AJ953  
♦ A3  
♣ QJ8

♠ 9  
♥ 10  
♦ QJ8542  
♣ K9542

Dealer: North  
Both Vulnerable

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

North might open 1♣, but most Acol players will pass. East could overcall 1NT/1♥ or open one or other.

Either way it looks like a bidding battle of the minors against the majors, and I suspect the majors will win out.

E/W have the balance of points and can make 4♥ if the trump suit is played against the odds, finessing the knave, felling the 10. North may help by splitting. The spades need picked up too, so 4♥ is not straightforward by any means.

N/S do best to give up, rather than compete or sacrifice, in danger of losing a penalty larger than the opponents' score declaring. Indeed, E/W could muddle the play and go light in game or part-score, giving N/S a plus.

**14**

♠ 109532  
♥ 75  
♦ A72  
♣ J54

♠ KQ7  
♥ A10  
♦ J93  
♣ AKQ108

♠ 4  
♥ Q98643  
♦ KQ65  
♣ 93

♠ AJ86  
♥ KJ2  
♦ 1084  
♣ 762

Dealer: East  
Neither Vulnerable

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

East has a possible Weak Two in hearts, but even if he passes west has a decent hand and so 4♥ should result, probably played by east.

The defence could easily fail to take their spade ace at trick 1, in which case the happy 3:3 club split means that the singleton spade can be pitched without an adverse ruff. An overtrick could result in the unlikely and anti-percentage play of a trump to the 10.

Looks like some possible failures, few playing the trumps to advantage.

Of course, 3NT is there with an overtrick or two by west on a spade to the ace, hearts ignored. Could be some there, I suppose. Usually, the 6:2 major game is better.

**15**

♠  
♥ KJ862  
♦ AK10762  
♣ K3

♠ A62  
♥ AQ10  
♦ QJ9  
♣ 7654

♠ KQJ84  
♥ 97543  
♦ 8  
♣ J2

♠ 109753  
♥  
♦ 543  
♣ AQ1098

Dealer: South  
N-S Vulnerable

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

West has a weak NT and east 7HCP, so it is a bit surprising that it is N/S who can make game, indeed slam. North does best to bid 2♥ (assuming hearts and a minor) over 1NT, bid 2NT (lowest two) over the alternative west 1♣.

N/S may well not get to game, though south is very playable in either minor.

5♦ is a comfortable make, taking one trump then ruffing hearts in south, then playing clubs from the top. West can't ruff in until all north's hearts are disposed of, the result twelve tricks.

E/W could get too high in spades and lose a nasty penalty, so a variety of scores are possible.

**16**

♠ 9  
♥ AKQ932  
♦ J6  
♣ A942

♠ 6543  
♥ 8  
♦ K1075  
♣ Q873

♠ KJ107  
♥ J765  
♦ AQ3  
♣ J6

♠ AQ82  
♥ 104  
♦ 9842  
♣ K105

Dealer: West  
E-W Vulnerable

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

East might risk a double of a north 1♥ opener. However, nothing should stop N/S reaching 4♥. Ideally, east needs to cash two diamonds early, or one goes on the spade queen after a finesse. Clubs are played from the top and declarer only loses a club, diamond and trump.

However, declarer can still prevail if two diamonds are cashed, spades finessed and west squeezed in the minors, the defence unable to broach clubs.

Will many manage the heart game? Again, like #13 and #14, not a simple assignment.

**17**

♠ K10642  
♥ A106  
♦ 543  
♣ 93

♠ Q5  
♥ 752  
♦ KJ872  
♣ KJ5

♠ 973  
♥ J84  
♦ A10  
♣ A10864

♠ AJ8  
♥ KQ93  
♦ Q96  
♣ Q72

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Acoul does a better job here, south opening a weak NT, and north transferring to spades. 5 card majors open south 1♣ and rebid 1NT over north's 1♠, almost certainly playing there.

1NT is beaten after five clubs are run, the defence taking at least two more diamonds, maybe more tricks if south mis-discards. It can be badly mangled should north rarely declare, a diamond to the 10, then ace, followed by a club switch taking the first ten tricks.

Meanwhile, 2♠ has a chance. It loses five minor suit tricks, but can then succeed if declarer gets trumps right, though they probably won't.

Random system differences could affect this one.

**18**

♠ 6  
♥ J53  
♦ AJ7642  
♣ A103

♠ KQ1073  
♥ A974  
♦ 3  
♣ K84

♠ J9542  
♥ KQ108  
♦ 105  
♣ J9

♠ A8  
♥ 62  
♦ KQ98  
♣ Q7652

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

Should west simply punt 4♣ after east's opener in the suit, that likely buys it.

As the cards lie the non-vulnerable N/S have an excellent adverse vulnerability save in diamonds, ceding only 200. A handful might overcall clubs with south's threadbare suit and values, getting to the wrong minor suit, losing 500, but few will. Might north venture 5♦ opposite a passed partner? Crazy, but it works.

I suspect few will find the sacrifice against E/W's cold game, and the traveller will be pretty flat at 420 E/W - unless there a few (successful) lunatics about.

**19**

♠ KJ  
♥ K1075  
♦ 105  
♣ K10732

♠ 10863  
♥ AJ8  
♦ Q83  
♣ Q65

♠ A7542  
♥ Q4  
♦ AKJ74  
♣ 4

♠ Q9  
♥ 9632  
♦ 962  
♣ AJ98

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

East has only an invitational raise of west's spades with his balanced hand with few controls, whether or not north makes a decidedly thin overcall or double.

However, west surely goes on to game with his extra shape and non-minimum high-card values.

This time, E/W are cold for an overtrick in 4♠, so long as two rounds of trumps are played early, crashing the defensive cards 2:2.

Another flat looking affair.

**20**

♠ Q3  
♥ AJ4  
♦ AKQ42  
♣ Q98

♠ 9742  
♥ KQ63  
♦ 109  
♣ 1063

♠ K106  
♥ 109872  
♦ J7  
♣ J52

♠ AJ85  
♥ 5  
♦ 8653  
♣ AK74

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	6	7	3	5	5
S	6	7	2	4	5
E	-	-	-	-	-
W	-	-	-	-	-

My guess is that despite the known diamond fit south will simply raise to game north's 2NT rebid after 1♦/1♠, missing the excellent slam. With four diamonds, shortage, and great controls that is far too conservative.

6♦ easily makes an overtrick when trumps and clubs divide evenly, and the spade king is onside.

Will many get to 6♦? Great board if they do.

**21**

♠ J72  
♥ 95  
♦ KQ94  
♣ KQ104

♠ 1098  
♥ KJ4  
♦ J1062  
♣ 963

♠ AKQ53  
♥ A763  
♦ 8  
♣ A85

♠ 64  
♥ Q1082  
♦ A753  
♣ J72

 Dealer: North  
N-S Vulnerable

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

4♠ looks the spot here, north worth an invitation raise after south opens the suit and rebids hearts. Some norths might open a thin minor, guaranteeing that game is reached.

West does best to lead a heart, and needs to hop up with the diamond ace when the suit is led, then cash a heart. Otherwise, declarer can make three clubs, cede a heart and cross-ruff twelve tricks.

Will many make a dozen here?

**22**

♠ J975  
♥ 74  
♦ J1094  
♣ 1072

♠ A104  
♥ KJ93  
♦ 72  
♣ K843

♠ K82  
♥ Q108  
♦ KQ83  
♣ A65

♠ Q63  
♥ A652  
♦ A65  
♣ QJ9

 Dealer: East  
E-W Vulnerable

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

South could well escape undoubled should he open a weak NT, probably making five tricks, losing 100. Things might not go quite so well where 1♦ is opened, certainly if north makes a weak jump raise to 3♦, which should be defeated three tricks.

Where east opens south may not bid, and E/W declare hearts. Unfortunately, they are liable to be in game, and cannot escape losing a trick in each suit.

West could elect to double an opening 1♦ where east passes, and the partnership manage to stay in part-score.

In theory, a good one for N/S if they only lose 100. In practice, not necessarily.

**23**

♠ 10987  
♥ 8764  
♦ K9532  
♣

♠ KQJ  
♥ J5  
♦ AJ  
♣ AQ10982

♠ A652  
♥ AK1032  
♦ 7  
♣ KJ5

♠ 43  
♥ Q9  
♦ Q10864  
♣ 7643

 Dealer: South  
Both Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	1	-	-	-
S	-	1	-	-	-
E	7	-	6	6	7
W	7	-	6	7	7

East will respond 2♣ to west's 1♥ and west has no other sound bid than to raise to 3♣, a 2♠ reverse a bit skimpy on high cards. However east surely drives to slam. Should west reverse, east is on surer ground and may find the grand slam, there in any of three denominations.

This is more a bidding exercise than a card play one, there being thirteen top tricks. Only an improbable 7♠ by east is defeated by a club ruff.

Will any contract for the lot?

**24**

♠ AK75  
♥ A93  
♦ Q53  
♣ K63

♠ QJ2  
♥ QJ10654  
♦ J4  
♣ J7

♠ 9863  
♥ AK8762  
♦ Q102  
♣

♠ 104  
♥ K872  
♦ 109  
♣ A9854

 Dealer: West  
Neither Vulnerable

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

A few might pre-empt in diamonds with west's cards, but usually north will kick off with a strong NT or 1♠ in Acol. 1NT could well be passed to west, who may belatedly show his one suiter. South can try 3♣ or might essay 2♥, clearly a four-carder in the absence of an earlier transfer.

Over north's 1♠ south bids 1NT, west either passing or trying 2♦. North might raise to 2NT.

1NT by south could go light, declarer mis-guessing diamonds. It makes eight tricks on east's diamond knave lead, may have the diamond guess on a heart lead, west on lead in clubs in due course.

3♣ is an easy make, and even 2♥ can scramble home, east having to follow to N/S's winners, and a late cross-ruff bringing in eight tricks.

**25**

♠ 8643  
♥ KQ2  
♦ A4  
♣ 8763

♠ J1075  
♥ 10953  
♦ Q10  
♣ J109

♠ 86  
♥ KJ98732  
♦ AK42  
♣ AKQ92  
♥ AJ74  
♦ 65  
♣ Q5

 Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

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

N/S should get to 4♣ when east's 1♦ is overcalled in the suit by south. South's alternative is to double, but a club response would be awkward.

It looks as if 4♣ is doomed, losing a trump, diamond and two clubs. However, when the bad trump break comes to light declarer can simply run hearts, pitching north's losing diamond, then ruffing one. Even had west had only three hearts it would succeed.

Will most get to and make 4♣?

**26**

♠ 7  
♥ 965  
♦ K875  
♣ 109632

♠ 10832  
♥ 873  
♦ J4  
♣ AKQ4

♠ Q5  
♥ AKJ2  
♦ AQ1093  
♣ 85

♠ AKJ964  
♥ Q104  
♦ 62  
♣ J7

 Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

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

South may well make a nuisance of himself with a weak jump to 2♠ over east's 1♦, silencing west. However, east's protective double can see west pass, the result bloody, N/S held to five tricks on best defence.

3NT or even 4♥ are possible other contenders, but the 800 penalty is best, via two clubs, three diamonds as south pitches, west ruffing. Two hearts are followed by a fourth diamond, promoting another trump in west.

Will it happen often? Or at all, this being #26?

**27**

♠ KJ963  
♥ QJ953  
♦ AQ6  
♣

♠ 1042  
♥ 1072  
♦ 743  
♣ 7654

♠ A5  
♥ K8  
♦ KJ1082  
♣ AK98

♠ Q87  
♥ A64  
♦ 95  
♣ QJ1032

 Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S should get to 4♠ when south has primary support, plus a decent holding in north's trial bid suit, hearts.

It is possible to make eleven tricks by picking up the conveniently situated heart suit, plus getting a diamond ruff in dummy. In defence, east is best not to cover a top heart from north, leaving declarer to decide whether to play east for the doubleton king or west for the doubleton 10.

A minor technical challenge, but one many will hopefully be up to.

**28**

♠ 9865  
♥ K875  
♦ 10863  
♣ 2

♠ KQJ3  
♥ Q  
♦ A952  
♣ QJ96

♠ A7  
♥ A10964  
♦ 74  
♣ A874

♠ 1042  
♥ J32  
♦ KQJ  
♣ K1053

 Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

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

All roads probably lead to 3NT by E/W on this one, there being no real fit in any of the suits, though some might get adventurous and venture the club slam, in the unlikely event that the suit even gets bid.

In 3NT there could be overtricks, but this probably requires the club suit to be guessed correctly, and even then isn't totally straightforward.

It is a shame that few will play this one, where east can make 6♣ on a cross-ruff after making three spades, a diamond and heart.

It is hoped the set with some challenges was enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 10.18	S 9.82	E 10.54	W 9.46	Balanced	N 13	S 12	E 16	W 15
Voids/singletons	N 3/9	S 1/9	E 1/5	W 2/8	7+ suit	N 0	S 1	E 2	W 1