

♦♠NORTHERN IRELAND BRIDGE UNION♥♣



Fourth Interclub – Heat A

7th - 9th March 2021

Commentary by Ian Hamilton

1

♠ Q853
♥ KJ87
♦ 1086
♣ J3

♠ 92
♥ AQ10542
♦ Q7
♣ K62

♠ AK107
♥ 9
♦ KJ9532
♣ A7

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

South could be passed out in his 2♦ overcall of 1♥ here, though at love all east will usually bids his hearts again, allowing south to try 2♠, and getting to the optimal strain, albeit rarely in the makeable spade game.

It is possible to also make ten tricks in diamonds, though, with only one dummy entry, a diamond to the king looks a better shot than a finesse of the knave, the result only nine tricks.

Declaring spades, a heart through the K/J, followed by a club switch, is awkward. Again, declarer could easily go wrong, playing a trump to dummy and the diamond king losing to the ace. The defence can now promote a trump with heart leads, holding the contract to eight tricks.

2

♠ A976532
♥ 32
♦ 5
♣ Q92

♠ 108
♥ 10984
♦ K10874
♣ 84

♠ QJ
♥ A765
♦ A932
♣ J53

♠ K4
♥ KQJ
♦ QJ6
♣ AK1076

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT will get doubled, and I would bid 4♠ with north's hand, irrespective of west's action, if any. Lacking aces, south is best to pass.

A south double of an east 1♦ is more awkward, particularly if west makes a weak double raise of diamonds. However, north still surely bids spades, and takes out any 3NT call to 4♠. It is hard to see south advancing.

With trumps 2:2 and the club suit running the defence need to grab their aces at the start or they will be writing minus 680 on the card. Will any fail the test, trying to cash a second diamond?

3

♠ KJ9
♥ 109
♦ AK32
♣ AQ87

♠ Q10762
♥ AK82
♦ 964
♣ 2

♠ A3
♥ J7654
♦ J107
♣ K64

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

East likely gets away with a light 1♠ overcall of a north 1♦, pointless opposite a passed hand. South either doubles, or bids 1NT, 3NT resulting either way.

Should east show the majors or bid spades over a north strong NT it is a different matter, the likely result the loss of 800 on the marked trump lead, or indeed any other credible defence.

Where north declares 3NT ten tricks are possible, playing on hearts, and running the diamond knave. Where south declares a west spade lead has the defence a tempo ahead, the contract held to nine tricks.

4

♠ 3
♥ AKJ4
♦ A43
♣ KJ1098

♠ Q10872
♥ 863
♦ 10752
♣ 5

♠ AJ6
♥ 1095
♦ QJ986
♣ AQ

♠ K954
♥ Q72
♦ K
♣ 76432

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

East might risk a 1NT overcall of north's 1♣. This could see east doubled either there or in a 2♠ or 2♦ rescue. 1NT should be held to four tricks, the suit contract playing better, but still for the loss of at least 200.

An east 1♦ overcall could help N/S, south doubling and north bidding hearts. Even on the unlikely start of repeated spade leads declarer can cede two clubs and the spade ace, making ten tricks when trumps divide. However, unless game is bid a penalty is better.

Will many N/Ss manage to get playing in hearts? The same number of tricks are there in clubs, but for a worse score. Any that declare no trumps N/S can be held to seven tricks and a poor result. The defence get their diamonds going after declarer has been forced to let east win the first two spades.

5

♠ AQ876
♥ 64
♦ KJ4
♣ A98

♠ K10942
♥ Q75
♦ 76
♣ Q103

♠ J3
♥ AJ82
♦ Q93
♣ KJ76

♠ 5
♥ K1093
♦ A10852
♣ 542

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

North might open a top of the range weak NT, alternatively 1♠, in which case it will be south trying to make seven tricks in no trumps.

Whatever the lead the correct way to play diamonds is king followed by an attempt to run the knave, in a position to pick up Q9xx with east, this play doing the job today.

Indeed, as the cards lie, even on a club lead, declarer cannot be denied nine tricks if care is taken with entries, the heart king and spade queen and ace also scoring.

Will many manage the nine tricks and 150 possible?

6

♠ AJ106
♥ A6
♦ KQ742
♣ 105

♠ 8743
♥ J82
♦ 986
♣ A92

♠ Q2
♥ Q109543
♦ AJ53
♣ K

♠ K95
♥ K7
♦ 10
♣ QJ87643

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

Many souths will make a weak jump of 3♣ over east's 1♥, assuming played. Unfortunately, this time the player inconvenienced is partner, who is probably best to simply take his medicine and pass. It is hard to see east backing in again, but if he does the result could be painful.

N/S easily score 130 in clubs, and can actually make the rather more uncomfortable spot of 4♠, but are most unlikely to get there. Any attempt in no trumps is thwarted by the defence having the opening lead tempo, able to get hearts going before clubs are established.

7

♠ QJ1065
♥ A82
♦ K86
♣ A5

♠ 94
♥ K53
♦ AJ1072
♣ Q84

♠ 87
♥ QJ104
♦ 9543
♣ 632

♠ AK32
♥ 976
♦ Q
♣ KJ1097

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

N/S should certainly get to 4♠, whether or not west ventures a very thin 1♦ overcall. I cannot see many bidding what proves to be a decent slam, there when clubs play for four tricks, the queen ruffing down on the third round, providing two heart pitches.

In truth, it looks a pretty flat board, unless someone goes off piste and plays east for four clubs to the queen, taking a losing finesse to west.

A lot of 680s N/S predicted.

8

♠ 8632
♥ Q7652
♦ 10
♣ Q98

♠ AJ
♥ K43
♦ KQ763
♣ J43

♠ K1097
♥ 109
♦ AJ954
♣ 52

♠ Q54
♥ AJ8
♦ 82
♣ AK1076

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

West could play in his weak NT here. On a heart lead and continuation declarer would be wise to cash his eight top tricks, but could go for gold, finessing south for the spade queen and making 180.

The same score could result where south makes a thin fourth seat double and north sticks it. The defence can take the heart ace and five clubs, holding but not beating the contract. North should take out to hearts, but this only steers E/W into their best strain of diamonds, where 130 is easily available.

Where west opens 1♦ east will respond 1♠, and again diamonds are the likely resting place, whether or not south butts in with 2♣.

Lots of different scores likely.

9

♠ K4
♥ K
♦ KJ976542
♣ A7

♠ 1065
♥ Q106
♦ A
♣ KQ10862

♠ AQ82
♥ 5432
♦ 103
♣ J53

♠ J973
♥ AJ987
♦ Q8
♣ 94

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

With a broken suit, decent HCP and defensive values north is best opened 1♦, rather than with some sort of pre-empt. South responds 1♥. North may well continue with 3♦ over west's 2♣ overcall.

South does best to pass, but with a fitting diamond honour might well try 3♣, and north venture 3NT. Sadly, this spot will not be a success on the club lead. It would have been different had south's honour been the ace, rather than the queen, or south had as little as J10x in clubs.

It is a rather frustrating hand, 3NT hopeless, and only nine tricks possible in diamonds, south having no quick entry to the heart ace for a club pitch.

Will many stay low and go plus?

10

♠ 7
♥ A6
♦ J98654
♣ Q1063

♠ K1053
♥ J4
♦ 72
♣ J8752

♠ AJ962
♥ Q1083
♦ Q10
♣ K4

♠ Q84
♥ K9752
♦ AK3
♣ A9

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

Again, we have a tricky bidding problem, south having to take action over east's 1♠. Despite the poor spade stop 1NT looks best, rather than 2♥ on such a broken 5 card suit, or double which could end in a 4:2 club fit.

North will now compete with diamonds when west raises spades, and might well do anyway when south has expressed values somehow.

The vulnerable E/Ws are best to shut up rapidly, in danger of going off in hundreds, leaving N/S to bid to their best spot.

This is in diamonds, where game is possible, though highly unlikely to be bid. It even beats hearts or no trumps, the 150 available topping the 110 or 120 possible in the other strains.

11

♠ QJ7632
♥ A96
♦ Q8
♣ 65

♠ 10
♥ QJ107432
♦ 65
♣ AQ3

♠ A9854
♥ K
♦ AKJ102
♣ K10

♠ K
♥ 85
♦ 9743
♣ J98742

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

Opposite a passed partner north shouldn't bid 3♠ over west's 3♥ pre-empt, though some will. East will know what to do to that, and should be writing 800 in in the plus column shortly after.

Left alone, east will only raise 3♥ to game. However, unlike #9, the fitting honour in trumps proves invaluable, the result being that slam is there with the perfect fit.

I can't see many slams being bid, most scoring 480, only beaten by those getting a penalty from north's indiscipline.

12

♠ K102
♥ KQ86
♦ 7652
♣ Q10

♠ AQ7653
♥ A
♦ Q43
♣ AKJ

♠ J9
♥ J105432
♦ J8
♣ 962

♠ 84
♥ 97
♦ AK109
♣ 87543

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

West's best opener is a strong 2♣, if available. If it isn't 1♠ is the alternative, there being too many holes in the hand to be able to underwrite game opposite a bust, as east's hand nearly is.

However, I can see many opening 2♣ and getting to game, which turns out not to be hopeless, though it can be beaten. North needs to lead a club. Declarer hasn't the entries to play diamonds for a trick, so needs a dummy ruff. This lets the defence get a club ruff. Either that or declarer plays trumps and loses three diamonds.

At the table many will be in a position to make ten tricks after a diamond lead, though could still use dummy's only entry to take a losing club finesse, and finish up with nine tricks, when ten were possible.

13

♠ K875
♥ 53
♦ J9872
♣ J7

♠ AQ9642
♥ A6
♦ AKQ103
♣ AKQ103

♠ 10
♥ KQJ10942
♦ Q
♣ 9652

Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

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

East should open 2♣, since Jx of spades and nothing else opposite gives game most of the time. South will bid at least 2♥, the result being that spades may not get aired below the 3 level. West has just about support, but could well struggle to show his extra values.

The end result is that I cannot see many bidding the cold slam, only a trump lost when the 10 conveniently drops, along with the club knave behaving similarly.

6♣ is a pretty odds-on slam, despite the heart ace being redundant, though on another day the trumps could play for no loser but the clubs be 5:1 and it necessary.

6NT even makes double dummy. Five clubs squeeze north down to three diamonds and his four spades, no room for a heart. Now a spade can be ceded.

14

♠ AQ62
♥ 4
♦ Q764
♣ AKJ9

♠ 9853
♥ KQ92
♦ K8
♣ Q32

♠ KJ1074
♥ J1063
♦ J102
♣ 8

♠ A875
♥ A953
♦ 107654

Dealer: East
Neither Vulnerable

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

Holding both majors passed hand east may well double north's 4th seat 1♦. South may have a quandary as to whether to bid hearts or support diamonds, the latter better, east likely having hearts.

West will certainly bid spades, and although north has a good stop there he hasn't in hearts, the result being that N/S are high certain to alight in one of their minor suit fits.

A club must be lost, and most will only make ten tricks in a minor. However, it is possible to guess the doubleton diamond king to chalk up an improbable eleven.

Any who do elect to play in no trumps, when south has shown heart values, should be held to eight or fewer tricks, the defence getting a major going too soon.

15

♠ 108
♥ Q106532
♦ KQ83
♣ 8

♠ A76
♥ AJ8
♦ 652
♣ AJ42

♠ KQJ54
♥ 9
♦ AJ
♣ Q9753

♠ 932
♥ K74
♦ 10974
♣ K106

Dealer: South
N-S Vulnerable

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

Like #1, bidding vulnerable on north's threadbare collection is ill-advised opposite a passed partner so E/W should have a free run to either 4♠ or 5♣.

4♠ should comfortably make eleven tricks, but the club contract is interesting, particularly should E/W stretch to what is not a ridiculous slam.

Defending clubs, the defence need to find a diamond lead or declarer can knock out the trump king and later ditch all east's diamond losers on the spade suit.

Will anyone manage it? Sadly, if they succeed in doing so in game rather than slam it is likely to be a poor board, beaten by a host of 450s.

16

♠ 72
♥ 873
♦ KJ954
♣ 854

♠ AK8
♥ A9652
♦ A6
♣ Q107

♠ 1096543
♥ 10
♦ 82
♣ A932

♠ QJ
♥ KQJ4
♦ Q1073
♣ KJ6

Dealer: West
E-W Vulnerable

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

South probably overcalls an east 1♥ with 1NT. West might try 2♣, clearly limited, as he hasn't doubled 1NT. Where east opens a strong NT south is best to pass, west transferring to spades.

I cannot see too many bidding the spade game, but the number of tricks taken may vary. Where south has overcalled 1NT declarer should decline the normal play in spades when an honour falls from south. The principle of restricted choice is 2:1 in favour of a finesse, but NOT when south has shown a balanced hand, where a singleton spade honour is not credible.

If declarer gets trumps right, plus makes the percentage play of two club finesses through south, as many as eleven tricks can be recorded.

17

♠ 103
♥ Q42
♦ Q107
♣ K10652

♠ 9
♥ A86
♦ AJ864
♣ AQ94

♠ AKQJ864
♥ KJ10
♦ 932
♣

♠ 752
♥ 9753
♦ K5
♣ J873

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

It is always hard to know what to open on east's hand-type. With one already passed opponent 1♠ looks preferable to 4♠, which could easily miss a slam opposite a few well placed cards.

This is indeed the case today, west's three bullet hand producing twelve tricks a lot of the time.

West will respond 2♦. East should rebid 3♠, forcing after the 2-level response, and setting the suit.

Thus some might get to the playable slam, which is better than the heart guess, as the suit might be led, or a club, which allows a diamond pitch, trumps drawn, a diamond ducked, and the suit ruffed good.

18

♠ J109
♥ 987632
♦ QJ
♣ AK

♠ A65
♥ 10
♦ 10873
♣ Q10962

♠ KQ8743
♥ Q5
♦ 2
♣ 8543

♠ 2
♥ AKJ4
♦ AK9654
♣ J7

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	-	5	6	-	1
S	-	5	6	-	1
E	2	-	-	3	-
W	2	-	-	3	-

East now has thirteen spades in two hands. This time he will open a Weak Two or Multi, if played, giving south a problem, probably best solved by doubling.

Again we have a slam, though N/S this time, and as on #17 it could be hard enough to bid. North will certainly bid the heart game after a south double, but with no club control south may well not advance.

Left alone, south opens 1♦ and can splinter in spades when north responds 2♥. Unfortunately, north could still get frightened off by his weak suit, and the cold slam be missed.

Will many get there?

19

♠ Q762
♥ 76
♦ 1065
♣ KJ32

♠ AKJ53
♥ K
♦ KJ42
♣ AQ10

♠ 9
♥ AJ10954
♦ A83
♣ 876

♠ 1084
♥ Q832
♦ Q97
♣ 954

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

Opening 1♠ on west's hand is best, leaving more space for enquiry. 2♣ is wrong, east needing a few fitting high cards to underwrite any game. One won't be missed if he passes, and the opposition may come to the rescue anyway, giving west a second shot, now at part-score.

East is worth a 2♥ response so west will be eyeing slam, bidding diamonds and hopefully ending up as declarer in a no trump contract, protecting this club tenace.

Declaring no trumps, even on the best lead of a heart, declarer can make a dozen by setting up the hearts, crashing the king under the ace, then forcing out the queen. All west's black suit losers disappear on hearts, and diamonds conveniently play for four tricks.

Will any manage these rather fortuitous twelve tricks?

20

♠ K1086
♥ Q65
♦ 9654
♣ 62

♠ 2
♥ K10872
♦ QJ
♣ AKQJ5

♠ QJ95
♥ K10872
♦ 10983

♠ A743
♥ AJ943
♦ A3
♣ 74

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

Despite having a decent hand it is hard for south to intervene when west opens 1♥, east tries 1♠ and west's 2♣ is passed round. This actually a blessing as N/S have no makeable contract, going down in hundreds.

E/W can make 150 declaring clubs, losing only a spade and a diamond as east's diamonds get set up, west holding great fillers and trumps obliging by being 2:2.

Passed out in 1♥, west will struggle in the 5:0 fit, and I can see some not succeeding in this less than ideal contract, though they can do it.

The moral is that with a misfit in pard's opened suit scraping up a response is usually best, though with fingers crossed that the 2NT card doesn't appear across the table on the next round.

21

♠ A52
 ♥ QJ975
 ♦ 73
 ♣ J108
 ♠ K76
 ♥ A86
 ♦ A42
 ♣ AKQ5
 ♠ Q1043
 ♥ K1043
 ♦ 106
 ♣ 763
 ♠ J98
 ♥ 2
 ♦ KQJ985
 ♣ 942

 Dealer: North
 N-S Vulnerable

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

West's 4th seat 2NT is likely to end in 3NT after a failed major suit enquiry. This might or might not put north off the heart queen lead.

Nine tricks are straightforward on a heart lead, and even on a diamond lead south can be isolated and hearts played for three tricks double dummy. A spade is the ninth trick.

Without a diamond switch it might even be possible to set up the spade suit, conceivably making as many as ten tricks.

However, I can see some going light in this spot, awkward enough on passive defence.

22

♠ AJ942
 ♥ 10
 ♦ 7
 ♣ AQ10743
 ♠ KQ1085
 ♥ 2
 ♦ AQJ1065
 ♣ 5
 ♠ 763
 ♥ A74
 ♦ K832
 ♣ K98
 ♠ KQJ98653
 ♥ 94
 ♦ J62

 Dealer: East
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Despite one passed opponent many will open 4♥ with the south hand. A 4♣ venture by west will surely be doubled by north, as will any retreat to 5♦. 4♣ will not fare well, but the 5♦ spot gets out for 1 light, makes if north is foolish enough to duck the club ace. Passing 4♣ may work better than doubling, it losing 300.

Any minor defeat by E/W could prove to be a good sacrifice, as the normal lead against 4♥ is the spade king, allowing a diamond to be pitched. Declarer can now succeed, losing just a diamond, heart and club.

I can't see many starting with a trump or diamond as west, extracting dummy's trump and cashing two diamonds to beat 4♥.

23

♠ A108
 ♥ AKQ54
 ♦ K3
 ♣ A83
 ♠ K6532
 ♥
 ♦ A9765
 ♣ Q74
 ♠ Q9
 ♥ J10932
 ♦ Q1082
 ♣ 106
 ♠ J74
 ♥ 876
 ♦ J4
 ♣ KJ952

 Dealer: South
 Both Vulnerable

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

I can see many in 4♥ here when a puppet Stayman enquiry over 2NT elicits the 5:3 heart fit. Others will simply be in 3NT, perhaps after a normal Stayman.

East will often lead the heart knave against no trumps, declarer now attacking clubs. West's diamond back results in either nine tricks or seven, depending on the guess. An opening diamond lead ensures defeat.

4♥ is worse, a diamond, two trumps and at least one spade certainly lost. The defence are highly likely to make a club too, although the club 10 can be pinned, holding the loss to 100.

There is no point in pinning the 10 in no trumps, south having no entry outside the club suit in this rather unfortunate hand for N/S.

24

♠ KJ106
 ♥ A1032
 ♦ AK7
 ♣ 65
 ♠ 7432
 ♥ 8
 ♦ 10965
 ♣ J872
 ♠ AQ
 ♥ KJ74
 ♦ Q84
 ♣ KQ94
 ♠ 985
 ♥ Q965
 ♦ J32
 ♣ A103

 Dealer: West
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Few double a strong NT for penalties, it rarely a paying proposition. Even if beating it pard usually takes out. Any easts who double north's 1NT will regret it, most ceding 180, assuming they eventually find a club switch. A rescue to clubs works well, but may not be found.

Acol norths open 1♥, and where east overcalls 1NT he could be the one doubled. Unfortunately for N/S they are unable to get more than 100. South is better to raise to 2♥, a contract that just staggers over the line so long as east's trumps are picked up. E/W can save in 3♣, losing 50, but few will.

This is a classic example of the need to declare at love all with any sort of fit. It can be wrong if the opening lead tempo puts the defence ahead, but is usually profitable at or below the 3 level.

25

♠ 54
♥ AJ10
♦ QJ987
♣ J97

♠ KJ832
♥ 8762
♦ 6
♣ K62

♠ Q10976
♥ 3
♦ 10543
♣ 1053

♠ A
♥ KQ954
♦ AK2
♣ AQ84

 Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

South will land on his feet if he opens 2♣, rebidding hearts. North has decent support, and there is a chance that the excellent slam will be bid.

Some will open 2NT, rather nervous of the weak heart suit, not ideal for a suit rebid after 2♣. They now have a chance getting to the even better spot of 6NT, there in top tricks, with the club finesse for the overtrick.

However, N/S have only 29 HCP between them, and the perfect fit may be hard to diagnose, a lot playing at the game level.

Will many manage the top spot, or at least reach slam?

26

♠ J3
♥ AJ642
♦ Q7
♣ 10652

♠ 106
♥ K10
♦ AK64
♣ K9743

♠ AQ985
♥ 975
♦ J10982
♣

♠ K742
♥ Q83
♦ 53
♣ AQJ8

 Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

South's weak NT fetches a 2♦ transfer to hearts, the completion passed to east, who may or may not elect to introduce spades. With west marked with some values bidding is not unreasonable.

By contrast, a south 1♣ likely silences west, allowing east a 1 level intervention of 1♠ over north's 1♥. Whether east should come in vulnerable is another matter.

Today, the brave route works, E/W able to make eight or nine tricks in spades, depending on their diamond view. They make an extra trick in diamonds if that fit can be located.

Left to declare hearts N/S seem to have nine tricks with the trump king doubleton onside. However, trump control is precarious, and declarer can be held to seven tricks.

27

♠ J62
♥ 98652
♦ 106
♣ Q103

♠ 54
♥ AKQ73
♦ AJ
♣ AK64

♠ AK1087
♥
♦ Q9872
♣ 752

♠ Q93
♥ J104
♦ K543
♣ J98

 Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

Opening 2NT looks best on the west hand, and those that do will surely declare 3NT after east has transferred to spades, and west has passed the 3NT continuation. Whether declarer plays ace and another diamond or ducks a spade he can come to eleven tricks when either suits play for four tricks.

The same spot is reached after a 1♥ opener. Stretching to a decidedly thin 2♣ (though west does have five quick tricks) could see a suit contract declared. Here, a side suit can be established by ruffing, allowing twelve tricks.

However, I can't see many either being in slam or making one.

28

♠ AJ43
♥ K532
♦ Q5
♣ K109

♠ Q82
♥ Q86
♦ AJ97
♣ J52

♠ K109765
♥ 4
♦ 43
♣ AQ74

♠
♥ AJ1097
♦ K10862
♣ 863

 Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

A north weak NT will see east competing with spades, his shape compensating for the lack of HCP. South could advance with a red suit. The same competitive issues arise over a north 1♣ opener.

As often the boss suit should win the day, and some could be doubled. It looks as if east could lose trump control on repeated heart leads. However, if he abandons trumps after knocking out the ace, instead playing clubs, dummy can stop the force.

The end result is that nine tricks cannot be prevented in this final part-score exhibit, where N/S could do better playing in hearts, so long as not doubled, nine tricks possible.

It is hoped that the set was enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 10.00	S 9.96	E 10.04	W 10.00	Balanced	N 15	S 12	E 11	W 7
Voids/singletons	N 0/9	S 3/11	E 5/7	W 1/15	7+ suit	N 2	S 3	E 1	W 1