



The 2024 Welsh Bridge Union Autumn Simultaneous Pairs

Friday 20th September

Thank you for supporting the WBU Simultaneous Pairs. This year we are donating to two very worthy causes – The Air Ambulance (something I hope none of us will ever need) and our own WBU Juniors.

We all know the fantastic work of the Air Ambulance, but we would like to take this opportunity to talk a bit about our juniors. The WBU is committed to supporting our juniors as they are the future of Welsh Bridge. For the first time in many years, this year we were able to enter both a Junior Camrose (U26) and Peggy Bayer (U21) team in the Home Internationals following the Freshers Fair at Cardiff University where we persuaded / bribed these young people to try out bridge. It has been a pleasure to see so many of them playing at our local clubs as well as in some of our area and national events. They are all absolutely delightful - I hope you will stumble across them one day when you are playing and make them very welcome at your table.

This year, we are running another Freshers Fair at Cardiff University with follow up lessons and we would like very much to extend this to other Universities (and schools) in Wales – if you are interested in participating, please do get in touch. None of this comes cheap of course, so your support for this worthy cause and our investment into the future of bridge is very much appreciated.

We hope that you have enjoyed playing in the Sims this week and that you enjoy the write up of the hands – we hope to see you in future events.

Best wishes,
The Welsh Bridge Union

1

♠ 8542
♥ J96
♦ KQ95
♣ J5

♠ 6
♥ A107432
♦ 8
♣ K10974

♠ KQJ
♥ Q5
♦ A10732
♣ Q62

♠ A10973
♥ K8
♦ J64
♣ A83

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

A weak NT by east probably sees south silent, and west transferring to hearts. Many souths will now compete with spades, and west show his second suit, north almost certainly advancing to 3♣ with his 4 card support. E/W's winning action is to double, collecting 300, but some may pass or support west to the 4 level.

Where east opens 1♦ south gets his spades in immediately. West needs to double, not strong enough for a forcing 2♥, though some may bid this. Again north will surely support spades to the 3 level.

4♥ is not a ridiculous spot, and could make with slightly stronger trump pips, west's trump 7 being the 9, two finesses taken through south. As it is, declarer needs either the heart king or knave finesse to succeed, unlucky today. The club knave also needs picked up.

2

♠ 94
♥ 1064
♦ Q543
♣ KQ87

♠ AK53
♥ A32
♦ A986
♣ AJ

♠ Q1082
♥ KQJ97
♦ K2
♣ 102

♠ J76
♥ 85
♦ J107
♣ 96543

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

This is a classic hand, E/W able to easily make 7♠ in the 4:4 fit, but only 6♥ in the 5:3. However, it could prove difficult to get to the Grand with any confidence, as west has no way of establishing the presence of the heart queen after spades are agreed.

West is best to respond 1♠ to east's 1♥, planning on getting to the heart slam. However, he may re-think matters when his spades get raised. I can see many, maybe most, getting to major suit small slams, but few succeeding in declaring for the lot.

There could be those technicians managing all thirteen in hearts, absent a club lead. Declarer takes four trumps, throwing west's club knave, then runs spades. North is forced to either bare his club honours or allow the diamonds to be ruffed good.

3

♠ AJ3
♥ AJ10853
♦
♣ KQ96

♠ 862
♥ KQ7
♦ QJ87
♣ J32

♠ 975
♥ 4
♦ A96432
♣ 875

♠ KQ104
♥ 962
♦ K105
♣ A104

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

N/S should find their heart fit easily via a transfer over a south weak NT. Where south opens 1♣ and rebids 1NT or 1♠ preference or checkback does the job.

Despite wasted diamond values in south the heart slam is still there, and some may bid it after a succession of cue bids, Blackwood not being helpful when you have a void.

No lead threatens 6♥, it all boiling down to how to best play trumps. The odds make it 75% to take two finesses through west. It is marginally worse to play the ace and another, which only gains where east holds a specific doubleton (the KQ), whereas two finesses gain where east has either of two small singletons, or is void.

4

♠ A73
♥ 97643
♦ AQ98
♣ 10

♠ J8
♥ AK
♦ 65432
♣ AKJ8

♠ Q965
♥ 52
♦ KJ107
♣ 952

♠ K1042
♥ QJ108
♦
♣ Q7643

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

West's hand is probably best opened a strong NT, where relevant, in all probability passed out. Acol opens 1♦, and will declare the suit contract after east responds 1♠, but gives preference to diamonds.

I suppose some brave souls could intervene with the N/S cards, most likely south after 1♦/1♠, perhaps doubling. They do nicely in their 9 card heart fit, scoring 140, if allowed to play it.

West's no trump spot may well be held to seven tricks on a heart lead, as declarer's diamonds get blocked. He needs to risk the club finesse to make more.

E/W might better this in diamonds, making ten tricks, though north can get a club ruff, holding it to 110.

5

♠ Q10975
♥ A75
♦ 1076
♣ K3

♠ J
♥ 9643
♦ K3
♣ Q98765

♠ A832
♥ K8
♦ J8542
♣ A10

♠ K64
♥ QJ102
♦ AQ9
♣ J42

Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

N/S could get jockeyed out of their spade fit here, south thin and off-shape for a double of east's 1♦, and north light for a spade intervention when west responds 1♥. East could well bid 1♠ himself otherwise and west end matters with 2♦ or 1NT. It is hard for E/W to get to their club part-score, west being too weak for a 2♣ response, and a later 2♣ bid by west would be FSF, not clubs.

East's 2♦ looks to be two light on a heart lead and trump switch. 1NT may fare a bit better on a spade lead, likely only 50 off.

Where N/S do manage to declare spades they may only manage eight tricks rather than the possible nine, but even 110 is better than 50 or 100 in defence.

6

♠ A63
♥ AQ1084
♦ 974
♣ A8

♠ KQ92
♥ J
♦ Q65
♣ K10432

♠ J854
♥ 6532
♦ 1032
♣ 75

♠ 107
♥ K97
♦ AKJ8
♣ QJ96

Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

South's weak NT will find him playing 4♥ after a transfer. North declares after a south 1♦ opener.

A spade ruff in south ensures ten tricks. For eleven declarer has the option of taking what proves to be a losing diamond finesse, then rising with the club ace on the switch, making the overtrick when diamonds divide.

Better is to run the club queen, a diamond later going even when the finesse loses. West mustn't cover, or the 9/6 grow up for a ruffing finesse against the 10, allowing twelve. A west opening club lead has the same effect.

Eleven tricks are possible in no trumps. A spade can be ducked and west later end-played in the minors. More credibly, west could lead a club at the start, the 8 scoring at trick 1, and allowing three tricks in the suit.

7

♠ KJ
♥ Q10976
♦ 108
♣ 9753

♠ 92
♥ AJ54
♦ AKJ5
♣ A62

♠ 10
♥ K832
♦ 76432
♣ Q104

♠ AQ876543
♥
♦ Q9
♣ KJ8

Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

Nobody will resist opening 4♠ on south's cards, will they? The hand is not remotely a 2♣ opener or even a strong 2, lacking outside defence. West may well double 4♠, and east should sit this, any takeout to the 5 level a definite minus.

After two diamonds stand up west does best to try the heart ace or a trump. Declarer has two spade entries to dummy, and needs to use them wisely. East cannot credibly have both the ace and queen of clubs so some may find the winning play of a club to the eight, finessing east for the queen and 10.

Will many get home in this one, taking the deep club finesse?

8

♠ AJ4
♥ J96
♦ K5
♣ Q10732

♠ Q10653
♥ K43
♦ J103
♣ 65

♠ 7
♥ Q1072
♦ A942
♣ A984

♠ K982
♥ A85
♦ Q876
♣ KJ

Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

Where north opens 1♣ or a thin weak NT he will be back-peddalling, but could still find himself in 3NT.

With the spade finesse working a diamond opening lead by east lets 3NT through, declarer's ninth trick in the bag already after the club ace is knocked out.

On a heart or black suit lead the defence can get three hearts and the minor suit aces before declarer can get his ninth trick in diamonds. But east needs to find the heart switch after taking his club ace where he doesn't lead the suit initially.

Will many get home in this one, or will the conservatives in 2NT win the day?

9

♠ 764
♥ AK10963
♦ J109
♣ J

♠ AJ1052
♥ 84
♦ Q2
♣ AK72

♠ K8
♥ J2
♦ AK764
♣ Q543

♠ Q93
♥ Q75
♦ 853
♣ 10986

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

North's Weak 2 or Multi shouldn't complicate the auction for E/W too badly, east probably overcalling in diamonds and west bidding his spades. The partnership could get to 4♠ or 5♦. Where north is silent east could get bidding his clubs and finish in 5♣, defeated by the bad trump break.

In spades or diamonds both suits behave in a very friendly fashion, dividing 3:3, so eleven tricks are possible in either strain. In diamonds declarer must avoid a ruffing finesse against north's possible Qxxx in spades, unlikely where he has shown a heart Weak Two. In spades the queen needs guessed correctly.

I trust nobody gets to 3NT after confusion about telling or asking about a heart stop. However, even this could get home should the defence block the heart suit.

10

♠ Q75
♥ 107
♦ K42
♣ AK963

♠ J1096
♥ J432
♦ 53
♣ 854

♠ AK82
♥ A8
♦ A10876
♣ J7

♠ 43
♥ KQ965
♦ QJ9
♣ Q102

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

South hasn't enough to bid vulnerable over east's 1♦, but north will protect with 2♣ when west passes too. South could try 2♥ now, and north end up in either 2NT or 3♣. Any advance is in danger of ending in a minus.

Again, we have friendly divisions, and with north declaring he should not lose more than east's top tricks where he declares clubs. He needs to pull trumps and play hearts, rather than try to ruff a spade in dummy. Otherwise he can sustain a diamond ruff.

In no trumps, east needs to play early spades to prevent nine tricks. A low diamond at trick 1 ruins the defensive tempo, allowing two hearts to score before east gets his suit going. Declarer makes another diamond or spade. Minus 150 will score poorly for E/W.

11

♠ 754
♥ AJ42
♦ 10865
♣ QJ

♠ AQ92
♥ K95
♦ AQ
♣ 10842

♠ K108
♥ Q10873
♦ J3
♣ 765

♠ J63
♥ 6
♦ K9742
♣ AK93

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

South's 1♦ allows west to double or overcall 1NT, either of which will see east competing in hearts over the opponents' fit.

Defending hearts south could well crash north's clubs, forcing him to ruff a later club and making the handling easier, with north now shorter in trumps. The play should mark north with the trump length anyway, so even on a diamond lead the trump knave can be picked up and nine tricks recorded.

Should N/S get playing in diamonds the defence need to improbably lead spades from the start, or declarer ditches a spade from dummy on clubs before playing trumps. Making nine tricks, even if doubled in 4♦, is a good save against the E/W part-score.

12

♠ A754
♥ KQ82
♦ A976
♣ 10

♠ J1086
♥ 53
♦ K2
♣ J6432

♠ KQ93
♥ A96
♦ J84
♣ KQ8

♠ 2
♥ J1074
♦ Q1053
♣ A975

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

Ac01 opens the north hand 1♥. East is perhaps better to double rather than bid the alternative 1NT, though it is close. Over this south can bounce to 3♥, a sound raise to 2♥. Over 1NT he supports only to 2♥.

Where east doubles a 5 card major north 1♦ it is more awkward for N/S to play in hearts, south far more likely to support diamonds.

In practice making more than nine tricks declaring either red suit N/S could prove tricky, since declarer cannot both cross-ruff fully and enjoy his side suit tricks. However, it is possible to get two ruffs in one hand or other and establish the side suit, only losing a diamond, heart, and one black suit trick. Needless to say the heart declarers score better.

13

♠ AK83
 ♥ K93
 ♦ AK7
 ♣ A53
 ♠ 1072
 ♥ 752
 ♦ QJ105
 ♣ 986
 ♠ 9654
 ♥ QJ8
 ♦ 63
 ♣ J1072
 ♠ QJ
 ♥ A1064
 ♦ 9842
 ♣ KQ4

 Dealer: North
 Both Vulnerable

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

South could pass out north's 2NT, where there are only eight tricks on a diamond lead. Advancing is borderline at pairs, where plus scores are at a premium. Should south advance a Stayman enquiry is best, north then declaring 4♠, presumably on the diamond queen lead.

It looks hopeless, but if declarer knocks out the heart ace and cashes top trumps a diamond can be ruffed in dummy and heart winners cashed. West is allowed to make a club honour, but is now end-played to cede either another ruff in dummy or an extra club. A club start from east is no better, the 7 coming into its own.

Will any manage it?

14

♠ J62
 ♥ K43
 ♦ KJ7542
 ♣ 2
 ♠ AKQ95
 ♥ A
 ♦ 9
 ♣ K106543
 ♠ 10
 ♥ J109852
 ♦ 1086
 ♣ AJ9
 ♠ 8743
 ♥ Q76
 ♦ AQ3
 ♣ Q87

 Dealer: East
 Neither Vulnerable

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

East should be able to show his big two-suiter by opening 1♣ then bidding and re-bidding spades. North may make a nuisance of himself by overcalling in diamonds, and south could support.

It is hard to know how high the auction will get, but many will find themselves in 5♣, maybe some in slam. The play revolves around getting clubs right. Strong bidding by north could provide declarer with the clue as to how to play the suit, finessing south for the queen.

Will many get this one right?

15

♠ AJ
 ♥ K2
 ♦ K10832
 ♣ KJ63
 ♠ Q1052
 ♥ QJ98
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ Q52
 ♠ 8743
 ♥ A105
 ♦ J6
 ♣ 10984
 ♠ K96
 ♥ 7643
 ♦ 9754
 ♣ A7

 Dealer: South
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Where north opens 1♦ east doubles, and south passes, west responding 1♥. North could try 2♣ now, but pass is maybe wiser at adverse vulnerability. In any event 2♣ will rarely buy it, east advancing to 2♥.

A diamond lead helps declarer in 2♥ to an extent, but west is still very short of entries. He is best to play trumps from the top, since south will make the heart 10 anyway on a trump promotion via a third round of diamonds. It should be possible to hold losers to three trumps, a club and a spade, making exactly.

I suppose some could get to 3♣ as N/S, which is cheaper than ceding 110 if undoubled, the defence collecting two diamonds, a spade and two trumps, but only getting 100.

16

♠ AQ3
 ♥ A94
 ♦ KQ5
 ♣ J984
 ♠ 86
 ♥ J652
 ♦ 1086
 ♣ A762
 ♠ 975
 ♥ 83
 ♦ 9743
 ♣ KQ53
 ♠ KJ1042
 ♥ KQ107
 ♦ AJ2
 ♣ 10

 Dealer: West
 E-W Vulnerable

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

We have a near-perfect fit here, N/S having a spade contract, and north few wasted values opposite south's singleton. Where north opens an Acol 1♣ or a strong NT his values could become apparent early on, and some will doubtless be in slam, although it is thin on 30HCP.

Making twelve tricks in spades needs the hearts to come in - or does it? On a club lead declarer ruffs the 2nd round and tests trumps with the king and ace. When they prove to be 3:2 he has the entries to ruff all north's clubs before re-entering north to cash the trump queen, as south pitches his fourth heart.

Will any find the dummy reversal? A poorer alternative is to cash two trumps and three hearts, hoping nobody can ruff, and if necessary ruffing the 4th round in north. This fails today, west ruffing the third heart.

17

♠ 93
♥ A62
♦ K10652
♣ 985

♠ K106
♥ Q
♦ AQ843
♣ QJ643

♠ J752
♥ Q9854
♦ J9
♣ K7

♠ AQ84
♥ KJ1073
♦ 7
♣ A102

 Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

Some will try 2NT for the minors over south's 3rd seat 1♥ east having to play a 7 card fit at the 3 level. A trump is the normal lead in such circumstances, but no lead particularly helps or hinders the defence. The defence should be able to manage six tricks in either strain, collecting 100, or 300 if doubled.

North could support hearts rather than defending, and south get declaring in the suit. Despite the 5:0 break eight tricks are there, and nine might be achieved on cross-ruff lines, declarer holding his losses to a spade, diamond and two clubs.

With at least 110 available to them N/S need to double an E/W minor suit spot to get a better score. Not all will.

18

♠ AQ10
♥ K86542
♦ J5
♣ K3

♠ 8765
♥ Q
♦ A93
♣ QJ976

♠ 43
♥ J97
♦ Q10874
♣ A85

♠ KJ92
♥ A103
♦ K62
♣ 1042

 Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

South may well pass with his flat 11HCP, leaving north to open 1♥, but it should still not be beyond most to get the red suit game.

Best play in the trump suit is the king first, and when an honour falls in west finesse the 10, following the Principle of Restricted Choice. West is twice as likely to have a stiff honour than the doubleton QJ. Missing the 9 there is no advantage in starting with the ace.

Losses can be held to two clubs and a diamond, north's second eventually pitched on a spade. The defence cannot get their two possible tricks in the suit by playing it themselves unless declarer mis-guesses.

Will everyone manage 620, playing the percentages in trumps?

19

♠ A843
♥ K10972
♦ 3
♣ A63

♠ Q9
♥ QJ
♦ KJ10986
♣ J104

♠ J106
♥ 64
♦ AQ752
♣ KQ8

♠ K752
♥ A853
♦ 4
♣ 9752

 Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

We are likely to see a 3rd seat 1♥ from north and either a double or diamond overcall by east. West would be wise not to bounce too high in diamonds, as he has poor shape, and a lot of wasted queens and jacks.

We could still see either side at the 4 level, where neither can go plus.

E/W's diamond contract has five top losers, though a heart loser could escape if the defence cash out incorrectly. Where N/S declare hearts (or spades) east's bidding is liable to suggest heart shortage. Thus few should lose to the doubleton QJ of trumps (see #18), playing the ace first.

Judging this one right could be an issue for both sides, any plus welcome.

20

♠ 93
♥ J97
♦ AJ8542
♣ A8

♠ QJ8
♥ K1052
♦ Q3
♣ 9654

♠ A10542
♥ 83
♦ K107
♣ J107

♠ K76
♥ AQ64
♦ 96
♣ KQ32

 Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

South is liable to be at the helm of 1NT here, certainly if he opens the weak variety. North might declare diamonds where south opens 1♣.

Declaring no trumps it is tempting to play west for the diamond 10 plus a higher honour. However, this lets east get his spades going, even if west has led a heart at the start, the result at best the contract just made.

Better, certainly on a heart lead, is to make sure of three hearts tricks by returning the suit. With the spade king worth a trick there are then eight in all. Even on a spade lead double dummy a heart can be played to the 9, the defence only getting a heart and four spades.

Diamonds are easier to declare, nine tricks available. Will any play in hearts where 140 can be recorded?

21

♠ 765
♥ A64
♦ 98643
♣ J10

♠ QJ104
♥ Q102
♦ K72
♣ AK2

♠ K83
♥ J95
♦ AJ105
♣ 643

♠ A92
♥ K873
♦ Q
♣ Q9875

Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

Where west gets to open a strong NT after a south pass or overcalls south's thin 3rd seat 1♣ with 1NT he is could find himself raised to game. Being minimum and with such flat shape he will pass an invitational 2NT.

By contrast, where Acol gets to open 1♠ in 4th seat, east responds 1NT. Facing a maximum of 9HCP west will let east play there, missing the thin game.

With the diamond queen conveniently single, and the spades bolstered by the 10, there are nine easy tricks. Some could make a tenth in hearts where clubs are not led at the start.

North could lead a low diamond where south is silent. Should declarer be suckered into the "free" finesse nine tricks are the limit and some could be held to eight.

22

♠ K52
♥ KQ1098
♦ 763
♣ QJ

♠ Q94
♥ J32
♦ AQJ94
♣ 72

♠ A6
♥ A54
♦ K2
♣ A108654

♠ J10873
♥ 76
♦ 1085
♣ K93

Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

If east opens another strong NT he will declare game with N/S silent. The spade knave lead allows the 9 to later score for the ninth trick.

Many easts will open 1♣ and see north bidding 1♥ over west's 1♦. 3NT looks doomed on south's heart lead.

If in doubt play out your long suit. Here, north can pitch one spade, but is in trouble on the last diamond. If he throws a club the ace is cashed and he is put on play with a heart to lead spades. Pitching a heart to keep another club is no better - either north wins the second club and is endplayed, or south puts up the king to switch to spades, in doing so setting up the club 10.

23

♠ Q106532
♥ 102
♦ 64
♣ KJ8

♠ J
♥ Q764
♦ J72
♣ A9752

♠ A87
♥ J
♦ AQ1095
♣ Q1063

♠ K94
♥ AK9853
♦ K83
♣ 4

Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

Hands with a decent suit, but with tripleton support for partner are awkward to handle. Here south can rebid hearts or support spades but not both, whether or not east intervenes with a double or diamond call when north responds 1♠ to his 1♥.

A 2♥ rebid will be passed to east, who will protect with a double if he hasn't already intervened. Either way E/W should find their club fit, where nine or even ten tricks are available.

A 2♠ support call allows north to advance to 3♠ over any intervention, knowing of the 9 card fit. Some use a double or redouble of intervention to show 3 card support, direct support promising 4. Here, the 9 card spade fit plays much better than 8 card heart one. E/W are unlikely to go to the 4 level, where they may make.

24

♠ 973
♥ 105
♦ 9542
♣ 10765

♠ Q4
♥ J83
♦ AQ1087
♣ AQ3

♠ AKJ5
♥ AKQ72
♦ K6
♣ 42

♠ 10862
♥ 964
♦ J3
♣ KJ98

Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

Here we have a bidding challenge, west opening either 1♦ or a strong NT, east bidding or showing hearts. A trial bid of 2♠ will see west jumping to the heart game in the Strong NT sequence. Now east knows of 35-37HCP, and will surely get to slam, quite likely the Grand.

Acol rebids a 15-16 NT after 1♦-1♥, so east is in much the same position, except that he is unaware of three card support opposite. Again 2♠ should see west advancing in hearts, all east needs to know, especially with a fitting diamond card.

There is nothing to the play in hearts or no trumps as the cards lie, though declaring hearts declarer should start with the heart knave, in a position to pick up 5:0 hearts with north. No trumps is perhaps better, another string to the bow in diamonds should hearts misbehave.

25

♠ J9
♥ 9653
♦ 10764
♣ Q106

♠ 8654
♥ 107
♦ 93
♣ AJ843

♠ 732
♥ AQ2
♦ AK85
♣ 975

♠ AKQ10
♥ KJ84
♦ QJ2
♣ K2

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT gets doubled, west escaping to 2♣. Disasters are easiest avoided where a pass from north shows sound values, 5HCP upwards, a desire to defend, but an inability to double the escape suit, if known. Here, north would bid 2♦ with his weak hand, which south should pass. As it happens south is strong enough to beat any E/W spot, but such is life. Indeed, 2♣ can be held to six tricks on a trump lead.

Where east opens a 5 card major 1♦ south doubles, planning on rebidding 1NT (18-20). With north maybe a bust south should not raise 1♥ to more than the 2 level.

Against either N/S red suit spot the defence can get east's tops, a ruff, and the club ace at most. The ruff could easily be missed defending diamonds, so 110 is the likely score in either strain.

26

♠ J7
♥ K742
♦ J9543
♣ J8

♠ K63
♥ J86
♦ Q10876
♣ K7

♠ AQ105
♥ AQ105
♦ AK
♣ 642

♠ 9842
♥ 93
♦ 2
♣ AQ10953

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

Acol opens east 1♥ and raises west's 1NT to game. I suppose some might respond a very thin 2♦ on the west cards, east bidding a forcing 2NT. 3NT should still eventuate. 5 card majors open 1♣ and rebid 2NT over west's 1♦, reaching the same spot.

South may not lead clubs where east has bid the "suit", maybe preferring a spade. Now, when diamonds fail to divide declarer is forced to take the heart finesse for the ninth trick, and should finish with 690, as south has only clubs left when the suit finally gets played.

On a club lead the king scores. Few will risk the heart finesse now, nine tricks in the bag and defeat certain were the heart king to be in south.

27

♠ Q6
♥ KJ984
♦ 108754
♣ J

♠ 75
♥ A32
♦ QJ6
♣ KQ1065

♠ J102
♥ 1076
♦ 3
♣ A98432

♠ AK9843
♥ Q5
♦ AK92
♣ 7

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

South's nice hand will see west overcalling 1♠ with 2♣ and north probably doubling. East could well bounce to 5♣. South's winning action is to double, and a 500 penalty should ensue, worth more than the 4♠ contract available.

However, I can see many trying 5♦, which has three losers. Some could get home in 5♠, should west take the first heart, south getting his diamonds away.

The Law of Total Tricks is way off here. It suggests 20 Total Tricks, the sum of E/W's club length and N/S's diamonds. In fact there are only 18.

Well done those judging this one correctly.

28

♠ AK105
♥ KQJ
♦ KJ73
♣ 94

♠ 764
♥ A1043
♦ 4
♣ Q10853

♠ QJ93
♥ 986
♦ Q8652
♣ 7

♠ 82
♥ 752
♦ A109
♣ AKJ62

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

We finish with yet another 3NT contract, almost certainly declared by north whether he opens an Acol 1♠ or a strong NT.

Diamonds are unlikely to have been bid, so east could easily select one, the result being an easy 630. A spade makes declarer work a little harder, knocking out the heart ace and either trying to guess diamonds, or taking a club finesse.

So we could have between nine and eleven tricks recorded on yet another hand where the opening lead is critical, something of a theme on the set, which it is hoped was enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 9.89	S 10.11	E 9.89	W 10.11	Balanced	N 15	S 17	E 14	W 15
Voids/singletons	N 1/6	S 2/9	E 0/8	W 1/8	7+ suit	N 0	S 1	E 0	W 0