

## Food For Thought

### Wednesday 22nd May 2024

(Commentary on the Hands - Fearghal O'Boyle)

For the purposes of our discussion, let us assume that we are playing simple ACOL '4-card majors, weak No-Trump, Stayman, Transfers, Weak 2's in 3 suits, RKCB and natural signals (High Encouraging)'. We will mention other variations where relevant but as is often the case, the bidding system used will make little or no difference.

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<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J983 ♥ 6 ♦ Q742 ♣ AJ62</p> <p>♠ 1052            ♠ AKQ7 ♥ 1093            ♥ AQJ2 ♦ 986              ♦ J3 ♣ 10954           ♣ Q73</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 64 ♥ K8754 ♦ AK105 ♣ K8</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">8</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">0</td><td style="text-align: center;">19</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		8		0	19	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	4	1	1	2	S	1	4	1	1	2	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 1 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>?</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u>          Although N/S have the balance of power, it is hard to see them winning the auction. E/W will have a good start if East shows restraint. The auction on this board can go many different ways depending on the E/W system. If E/W play 4 card majors then East will be declarer in 1H, 2H, 1NT, 1NTx or 2NT while if E/W play 5-card majors, East will be declarer in 2C, 2H or 2NT.</p> <p>If E/W play 4-card majors then East has a 1♥ opening bid and this might go 'All Pass'. Fair play to any North who finds a balancing Take-Out-Double (having the perfect 4=1=4=4 shape allows us to be a little light in terms of HCP). If North doubles then this will either get N/S to play in a diamond partscore or else catch East in 1♥ doubled.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	Pass	Pass	1♥	Pass	Pass	?		
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If E/W play 5-card majors then East will open 1♣ and South will either overcall 1♥ or double. Some North players might find a 1NT response to South's 1♥ overcall and if they do they will probably set N/S up for a good board.

The Play:

While N/S can make 10 tricks in a diamond contract, it is unlikely that N/S will find their diamond fit much less make more than 9 tricks if they do. To make 4♦ requires very careful play as we need to setup a heart trick and also ruff 2 hearts. However, making 3♦ will still score well - East cashing ♠AKQ will help declarer and even cashing just two top spades might allow a cunning declarer to setup a spade trick by leading the ♠J himself on the third round to pin West's ♠10.

Plus 110 or better will be a good score for N/S while minus 50 will be good for E/W.

**Tip:** We tend to overbid good hands. So when we have a very strong hand we need to learn to be patient - partner might be trying hard to tell us that he has a very very weak hand.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 93 ♥ 108743 ♦ A93 ♣ K54</p> <p>♠ J4                      ♠ A765 ♥ J92                     ♥ AK5 ♦ Q85                     ♦ 762 ♣ Q8763                ♣ 1092</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ KQ1082 ♥ Q6 ♦ KJ104 ♣ AJ</p>	<p>Board 2 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> There will be a few N/S pairs in 3NT or 4♠ and if their card play can match their 'rosy' bidding they will score very well.</p> <p>South will open 1♠ and North should respond 1NT. For sure North is not worth a 2♥ response (10-15) but if he does then N/S will end in 3NT or 4♠ both of which have chances of making.</p> <p>As an aside, the East hand is very very close to an opening bid – there is good advice that a hand with AK and an A is worth an opening bid but ideally we would like the AK to be in a 4-card suit or better still in a 5-card or longer suit....so for sure if ♥K were the ♠K we should be taking some action with the East hand.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>			Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	2♠	All Pass	
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HCP	
7	
6      11	
16	

  

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

### The Play

As the cards lie, declarer can make 3NT or 4S - the defence seem to be powerless – they can only defeat these contracts if declarer mis-guesses the location of the ♦Q or the ♠J ...and if East does not open the bidding then there is no reason for declarer to guess correctly.

When South plays in a spade contract, he might get a club lead and make 11 tricks allowing him to discard one of his heart losers on the third round of spades, guesses to play West for ♦Q and then either, plays trumps from the top or leads towards the ♠KQ.

Neither guess is easy – the first guess is tough but when one guess works, the second guess is a bit easier because you have learned a little bit more about the hand ... but as ever when we think too much, we over-think and get it wrong.

Any North managing to land in a heart part score will do well – making 8 tricks and 9 if he guesses the location of the ♦Q.

**TIP:** If you ever get a chance to watch or listen to Tom Hanlon in action - take it - he is one of the best declarers in the world at 'Finding the Lady'.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ A Q 4 3 ♥ 8 4 ♦ Q 10 8 5 2 ♣ A 10</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 9 7                      ♠ K 8 5 ♥ 10                         ♥ K Q J 2 ♦ K J 9 6                 ♦ 7 4 3 ♣ Q J 9 6 5 3         ♣ K 4 2</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ J 10 6 2 ♥ A 9 7 6 5 3 ♦ A ♣ 8 7</p>	<p>Board 3 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u></p> <p>The trick is for N/S to find their spade fit – it seems easy on paper but at the table South might be blinded by his 6-card heart suit.</p> <p>Getting to 4♠ might be pushing the boat out but even 3♠ should score well for N/S. Once North shows his 4-card spade suit, the South hand grows up and with 2 aces, 4 card spade support and a 7-loser hand, 4♠ is not an unreasonable bid.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>				Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass			
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		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
12	N	-	-	2	4	-
7      12	S	-	-	2	3	-
9	E	2	-	-	-	1
	W	2	-	-	-	1

The Play:

With North as declarer, East will be tempted to lead a heart even though South has bid hearts. While it doesn't seem to matter which card East leads, it is still hard to see many declarers making 10 tricks.

One successful line is to win the heart lead in dummy and exit on a heart – the plan being to crossruff the red suits. If West ruffs in at any point it seems we need to revert to Plan B where we attempt to setup dummy's heart suit – Still respect to any North player making 10 tricks.

**TIP:** The Losing Trick Count (LTC) is worth reading up on – counting HCP works well with balanced hands but with unbalanced hands we need another method and LTC is one such method.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ KQ104 ♥ AQ72 ♦ Q98 ♣ 105</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">♠ A3 ♥ 63 ♦ A1064 ♣ Q8762</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">♠ 92 ♥ J94 ♦ J753 ♣ AJ43</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J8765 ♥ K1085 ♦ K2 ♣ K9</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="padding: 2px;">HCP</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">13</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="6" style="padding: 2px;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;"></th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♣</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♦</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♥</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♠</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">S</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">E</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	♠ A3 ♥ 63 ♦ A1064 ♣ Q8762	♠ 92 ♥ J94 ♦ J753 ♣ AJ43	HCP		13		10	7	10		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	4	4	1	S	-	-	4	4	1	E	2	2	-	-	-	W	2	2	-	-	-	<p>Board 4 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>West</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>North</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>East</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>South</b></th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">1NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">2♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">4♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="padding: 2px;">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u></p> <p>Although this is the easiest hand to play in either 4♥ or 4♠ there will be quite a few who decide to play in a partscore.</p> <p>A lot will depend on how South values his hand – if he treats it as 10 points then he might not invite game. The only thing that could improve that South hand would be for one of the minor suit Kings to swap places with the Spade Jack.</p> <p>If North opens a ‘weak’ NT then some Souths will use Stayman and some will ‘Transfer’ (first showing the spades and then showing the 4-card heart suit on the next round.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♥	Pass	4♥	All Pass			
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When the major suit fit comes to light, that South hand becomes mighty good i.e. 2 minor suit kings, 2 doubletons and a 7-loser hand.

Those playing ‘Strong’ No-Trump might bid it as follows: 1♣ - 1♠ - 3♠ - 4♠?

However it is hard to fault those who do not bid game – after all it is only a 50-50 shot – put the Ace of clubs in West’s hand and it’s ‘Adios Amigos’.

The Play:

In the play there are 10 easy tricks in a Heart or Spade contract - losing three tricks to the opponent’s 3 aces. It is pretty much impossible to make anything other than 10 tricks in either contract....but ‘there’s always one’!

**TIP:** When most of your points are in Aces and Kings you should be tempted to accept any game invitations that might come your way.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ AK753 ♥ 9 ♦ 72 ♣ QJ742</p> <p>♠ 62                      ♠ 8 ♥ A87532                ♥ KJ1064 ♦ Q64                     ♦ 1098 ♣ 106                     ♣ K953</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ QJ1094 ♥ Q ♦ AKJ53 ♣ A8</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td style="text-align: center;">17</td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>-</td> <td>6</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td>4</td> <td>5</td> <td>-</td> <td>6</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		10	7	6	17	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	4	5	-	6	1	S	4	5	-	6	1	E	-	-	1	-	-	W	-	-	1	-	-	<p>Board 5 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>West</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>North</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>East</b></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><b>South</b></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>5♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>6♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>Although there are 12 easy tricks for N/S here, bidding slam will be worth a bundle of matchpoints.</p> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> If North decides to open the bidding with his 10 count there will be no stopping South but even if N/S do stop in 4♠, North will probably escape the heart lead and make all 13 tricks thereby earning his side a nice score too.</p> <p>It is very tempting to open with the North hand and if North were not vulnerable I imagine most would be 'in like Flynn'.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	4♠	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♠	Pass	6♠	All Pass			
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If North passes then South will open 1♠. Some West players might bid 2♥ or 3♥ and North might try to play 'catch-up' by bidding 4♥ to show a good raise and maybe heart shortage.

The strange thing is that while both North and South will be delighted with their heart shortages, their delight would be quenched if they were to discover that their partner also held the same heart shortage – in general hands that are 'shape-mirrored' do not fit well together. So 'not' bidding this slam, should not keep you awake all night.

As an aside, it is worth noting that a 2♦ rebid after 1♠ - 2♣ should be forcing for one round – this means that we can release 3♦ and 3♥ to become 'splinter bids' showing 4+ card club support and shortness in the suit bid.

The Play:

With the club finesse working, there is nothing to the play – declarer has 5 spade tricks, 2 club tricks, 4 diamond tricks, 1 diamond ruff and a heart ruff for 13 tricks if the defence do not lead a heart.

**TIP:** A 2 level rebid by opener in a new suit, after a 2-level 'Acol' response, should be forcing for 1 round.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 85 ♥ AJ10762 ♦ 976 ♣ Q10</p> <p>♠ AQ976      ♠ K2 ♥ K              ♥ 9843 ♦ KJ82         ♦ 543 ♣ 976           ♣ AK53</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J1043 ♥ Q5 ♦ AQ10 ♣ J842</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>10</td></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>3</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		7		13	10	10		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	3	3	1	3	1	W	3	3	1	3	1	<p>Board 6 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>A testing hand for E/W - holding 23 HCP they cannot afford to get a negative result on the board - and yet there is a good chance that they might all so easily get too high here.</p> <p>East will want to bid but doesn't have an obvious bid - so maybe this predicament has all the signs of being a 'Negative Double' situation?</p> <p>Maybe some Norths will make a 3♥ overcall and maybe win the auction?</p>	West	North	East	South	1♠	2♥	Pass	Pass	3♦	All Pass	Dbl	Pass
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The play:

Playing in a heart contract, North can make only 6 tricks (5 hearts and the ♦ A) but maybe the defence will gift South a club trick at some point?

If East decides to take a shot at 3NT he will probably make it more often than not because the defence is not at all obvious. The ♥Q is obvious but then North needs to either allow dummy's ♥K to win trick 1 or play the ♥A and switch to a black suit - top marks to any North player finding that excellent defence.

If West wants to try his hand at 3NT, he will most likely make it too as most Norths will lead either the ♥J or the ♥10 – the only two cards to allow the contract to make.

**TIP:** It is worth researching 'Negative' doubles – saying 'I want to bid but I do not have an obvious bid'.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ KQJ8542 ♥ K542 ♦ J4 ♣ -</p> <p>♠ 9                      ♠ A763 ♥ AQ8                  ♥ 93 ♦ A87                    ♦ KQ1096 ♣ AQJ843              ♣ 96</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 10 ♥ J1076 ♦ 532 ♣ K10752</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">17</td><td style="text-align: center;">9</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	HCP		10		17	9	4		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	1	-	S	-	-	-	1	-	E	5	5	1	-	5	W	5	5	1	-	5	<p>Board 7 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♣</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>Dbl</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>While E/W can make +660 in their own 3NT contract, they might have to make do with +500 from North's 3♠x or +800 from 4♠x.</p> <p><u>The bidding:</u> West will most likely open 1♣ (although a few might try an off-shape strong 1NT - but imho this hand is too strong for a strong 1NT opening bid)</p> <p>The size of E/W's bonus depends upon how high North pre-empts (1♠, 2♠, 3♠ or 4♠). If North were non-vul then 4♠ would be automatic but being vulnerable then 3♠ might be enough.</p> <p>6♣ and 6♦ both fail because of the bad club break.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♣	3♠	Dbl	Pass				All Pass
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The Play:

Declarer has 6 spade tricks after losing one to East's ace. On paper he can lose 2 heart tricks and make 2 heart tricks to win 8 tricks but in real life if the opponents have the patience to keep playing diamonds or clubs and making declarer ruff in his hand then declarer will be held to only 7 tricks.

**TIP:** The 'Forcing' defence, where the defenders force declarer to ruff in his hand, is often the 'killer' defence.

<p>♠ AQ1075 ♥ A85 ♦ 93 ♣ A43</p> <p>♠ K8                      ♠ 642 ♥ K6                        ♥ J9732 ♦ K764                    ♦ QJ108 ♣ Q9876                ♣ 10</p> <p>♠ J93 ♥ Q104 ♦ A52 ♣ KJ52</p>		<p>Board 8 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <th><i>West</i></th> <th><i>North</i></th> <th><i>East</i></th> <th><i>South</i></th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> Some West players might think about opening 1♣ but having half of your high card strength in your two shortest suits should dissuade them from doing so.</p> <p>With 25 HCP and an 8-card spade fit, most N/S will end up in 4♠.</p>				<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass																											
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The play:

There will be a few declarers who end up with only 9 tricks in 4♠.

North has a guess in the heart suit when he cashes the ace of hearts and leads towards the Q and 10 of hearts in dummy – does he play the Queen and make only 9 tricks or play the 10 and make 10 tricks?

A lot will depend on who East is - but I guess the simplest advice is - if East plays small smoothly you should believe him (he doesn't have anything to think about i.e. he does not have the ♥K) and play the 10.

If you are declarer in 3NT then you need to avoid the club finesse and instead find the cute play of exiting on a diamond after cashing your spade winners and one top club to endplay your opponents into opening the clubs or the hearts for you.

**Tip:** Avoid giving declarer any information - play your cards in an even tempo.



<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J1085 ♥ A1098 ♦ K2 ♣ A73</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">♠ 92 ♥ KQ54 ♦ A986 ♣ J84</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">♠ K3 ♥ 62 ♦ Q53 ♣ KQ10952</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ AQ764 ♥ J73 ♦ J1074 ♣ 6</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	♠ 92 ♥ KQ54 ♦ A986 ♣ J84	♠ K3 ♥ 62 ♦ Q53 ♣ KQ10952	HCP		12	10	10	10	8		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	2	4	5	2	S	-	2	4	5	2	E	1	-	-	-	-	W	2	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 9 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥ (T)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦ (♥ Fit)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥ (T)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Respect to any N/S pair who manage to bid and make 4♠ here.</p> <p><u>The Bidding:</u></p> <p>Even if you and your partner agree to 'Break the Transfer' with 4-card support and a good hand, it is still difficult to bid on to 4♠. In the above auction, 2♥ was a transfer, 3♦ showed 4-card spade support, a maximum hand and a doubleton diamond but still South could not manage to go higher than 3♠.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		1NT	Pass	2♥ (T)	Pass	3♦ (♥ Fit)	Pass	3♥ (T)	Pass	3♠	All Pass	
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The Play:

The play is relatively straightforward – declarer has 5 spade tricks, 3 heart tricks, 1 club trick, 1 diamond trick and a diamond ruff. The only issue is whether he loses 2 diamond tricks or just one. If South did not have the ♦J10 then declarer would only lose diamond trick because he would play a diamond towards the king in the North hand.

However having the ♦J10 in the South hand gives declarer a losing option of running the ♦J and now he loses 2 diamond tricks and 1 heart trick – just making 10 tricks.

Making 11 tricks, whether or not you are in 4♠ will score above average.

**TIP:** When we move to the 'advanced class' we will learn that when partner makes a 'Transfer' bid, we are not duty-bound to 'complete' the transfer. Sometimes it can be helpful to tell partner that you have 4-card support for partner's major suit by 'Breaking' the transfer e.g. North's 3♦ in auction above.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J ♥ KJ1052 ♦ K943 ♣ 1072</p> <p>♠ 97542      ♠ A8 ♥ A74          ♥ 983 ♦ Q76          ♦ AJ82 ♣ 95            ♣ 8643</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ KQ1063 ♥ Q6 ♦ 105 ♣ AKQJ</p>		<p>Board 10 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> N/S have 25 points and so it is not unreasonable to see them land in 3NT.</p> <p>While 3NT can be defeated on paper, it is quite likely to make in practice. It looks like a race between declarer and defenders to see which side can win 2 diamond tricks first.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>			Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2NT	Pass	3♥	Pass	3NT All Pass																											
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The Play:

4♥ and 4♠ go down naturally without much effort from the defence – even a helpful ♦A lead still leaves declarer with 2 diamond losers that cannot be disposed of.

3NT on the other hand is not so easy to defeat. In theory as long as East does not lead ♦8 or ♠8 the contract goes down. But in real life I can see 3NT making at almost every table. It seems that to beat the contract, E/W have to find a rare ‘defensive intra-finesse’ in the diamond suit.

If and when East decides to attack diamonds, and decides to lead the ♦2 then West must keep his ♦Q sitting over dummy’s ♦10. On the next round of diamonds, West leads ♦Q to pin dummy’s ♦10. A brilliancy prize for any defenders who find this defence!

The N/S players who carefully avoid game might have to let ‘virtue be its own reward’.

**Tip:** ‘Temperament’ is just as important as ‘Technique’ in Bridge - you won’t be a good winner at Bridge until you know how to be a good loser. Inevitably, you will get some bad scores that will be completely outside of your control – the really good players know how to instantly sweep these bad boards under the carpet.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 105 ♥ A743 ♦ AJ109 ♣ AQ4</p> <p>♠ KJ63            ♠ A8742 ♥ KQJ102        ♥ 8 ♦ K86             ♦ 32 ♣ J                ♣ K8632</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q9 ♥ 965 ♦ Q754 ♣ 10975</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">15</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">14</td><td style="text-align: center;">7</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>-</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>1</td></tr> </table>	HCP		15		14	7	4		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	1	-	-	-	S	-	1	-	-	-	E	1	-	2	3	-	W	1	-	3	4	1	<p>Board 11 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>1♥</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> This could be a lovely board for E/W depending on how North chooses to enter the auction. If North bids 1NT (probably the best bid), East will want to bid 2♠ but might be afraid that it shows 10+ points – well it doesn't – if East really had 10 points he would make a penalty double of North's 1NT bid.</p> <p>Even if West raises 2♠ to 3♠ or even 4♠, all is not lost because some Souths will make the reasonable opening lead of ♣10 and now declarer has time to draw trumps, knock out the ♥A and make 10 tricks –</p> <p style="text-align: right;">South needs to find the diamond lead to beat 4♠.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	1NT	All Pass	Pass
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Some North players might make a take-out-double of the 1♥ opening bid (not an ideal call holding 4 cards in hearts) and now E/W will play the hand in 2♠, 3♠ or 4♠.

The best E/W scores would seem to come from those who defend 1NT – declarer might not make more than 3 tricks and +200 to E/W will beat all the spade partscore results.

Will any East players find a penalty double of North's 1NT? Highly unlikely. This hand also gives Gay Keaveney and his Galway friends another opportunity to deploy their famous 'Flannery 2♦' opening bid showing 5 hearts and 4 spades and 11-15 points.

### The Play:

If North is declarer in 1NT he should make 3 tricks only i.e. his 3 aces. If East leads a club then declarer will make 4 tricks.

If East plays 4♠ it takes a diamond lead from South through West's ♦K to beat the contract.

**TIP:** When partner opens the bidding and the next opponent overcalls 1NT, a double by you is a penalty double showing 9+ HCP, which means that other responses by you tend to show 'shapely' hands with less than 9 HCP.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ K8653 ♥ QJ87 ♦ 852 ♣ 2</p> <p>♠ AJ10972     ♠ 4 ♥ 3                ♥ 10654 ♦ 1096            ♦ AKQ3 ♣ 863             ♣ QJ74</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q ♥ AK92 ♦ J74 ♣ AK1095</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2">HCP</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">17</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		6		5	12	17		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	1	-	3	-	1	S	1	-	3	-	1	E	-	-	-	1	-	W	-	-	-	1	-	<p>Board 12 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Dbf</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> Some West players might try a non-vulnerable weak two opening. South has a routine take-out double and then North has a decision to make – to pass and defend 2♠x or bid 3♥.</p> <p>And then if North bids 3♥, does it show values or is it just a forced 3♥ bid. Only those N/S pairs playing some sort of 'lebensohl' here will be able to tell the difference between a value showing 3♥ and a forced 3♥.</p> <p>Most like those Norths who bid 3♥ will find themselves in 4♥ pretty quickly.</p>	West	North	East	South	2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbf	All Pass			
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The play:

2♠x looks like it will go down one on most defences. One such defence is for South to win the club lead, cash his second club winner, give North a club ruff, win the heart return and lead a 4<sup>th</sup> round of clubs – this will promote North ♠8 into the setting trick.

The North players in 4♥ have to lose 4 tricks off the top i.e. ♦AKQ and ♠A.

The North players in 3♥ will also lose 4 tricks off the top but then they need to be careful to draw at most 1 round of trumps, cash at least one top club and then start 'cross-ruffing' the remaining tricks.

**TIP:** Keep an eye out for 'Cross-Ruffing' opportunities and then remember to cash your side suit winners before embarking on such a plan.

<p style="margin: 0;">♠ Q 10 6 3 ♥ 8 6 2 ♦ K 2 ♣ Q 10 8 3</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ 8 7 4                      ♠ A K 5 ♥ A Q 4                      ♥ 10 5 3 ♦ Q 6 5 3                    ♦ A J 9 8 ♣ K 9 5                      ♣ A J 6</p> <p style="margin: 0;">♠ J 9 2 ♥ K J 9 7 ♦ 10 7 4 ♣ 7 4 2</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>11</td><td>17</td></tr> <tr><td>5</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>4</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	HCP		7		11	17	5		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	4	5	4	4	5	W	4	5	4	4	5	<p>Board 13 : Dealer North : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2NT</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>The Bidding: It looks like all roads lead to 3NT by East or by West.</p> <p>The Strong No-Trumpers will have a simple 1NT-3NT auction – and may also get a helpful heart lead (a very normal lead from South).</p> <p>The weak No-Trumpers might bid the hand 1♦ - 2NT but now West won't get the helpful heart lead from North.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		Pass	1♦	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
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The Play:

This hand is all about the number of tricks that declarer can make i.e. 9 will not be good, 10 will be average, 11 above average while 12 tricks will be a huge score for E/W.

To start with declarer has a guess in the diamond suit – the best line in a pairs game is to start by playing small from the West hand and finessing the jack. Now declarer has to guess whether North the doubleton king or South has the doubleton 10. If declarer thinks the king is doubleton he cashes the ace next while if declarer thinks the 10 is doubleton he goes to the West hand to run the ♦Q.

If declarer guesses well in diamonds he will make all 4 diamond tricks. There are no guiding clues to help declarer and I suspect that East's ♦98 might lure a few declarers into quite reasonably playing to drop the ♦10 in one or two rounds.

Those EW who can arrange for East to play the hand have a great chance of making 12 tricks on a small heart lead from South – as long as they play small from dummy at trick 1 and then guess to play North for ♦K2.

**TIP:** In general, when taking a finesse we lead a small card rather than an honour towards the high picture cards.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ K985 ♥ K76 ♦ J97 ♣ 864</p> <p>♠ AQ43      ♠ J7 ♥ Q942      ♥ AJ3 ♦ K105      ♦ AQ32 ♣ KQ          ♣ 7532</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 1062 ♥ 1085 ♦ 864 ♣ AJ109</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">16</td><td style="text-align: center;">12</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td></tr> </table>	HCP		7		16	12	5		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	3	4	4	4	3	W	3	4	4	4	3	<p>Board 14 : Dealer East : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♣</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> It is difficult to see how any table can land in any contract other than 3NT played by East? The Weak No-Trumpers will open 1NT while the Strong No-Trumpers will rebid 1NT with the East hand. The only point of discussion is whether or not West should use Stayman? There is a lot to be said for simply bidding 3NT with the West hand because in general with 28+ HCP we want to play in 3NT in matchpoint scoring even if we do find a major suit fit.</p> <p>However, tonight, any E/W pair who accidentally find themselves in 4♥ will earn themselves the 'top of the night' because 9 tricks seems to be the absolute limit for those playing in 3NT.</p>	West	North	East	South			1NT	Pass	2♣	Pass	2♦	Pass	3NT	All Pass		
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The Play:

The club lead from South seems to be automatic and now the defence look set to win 3 club tricks and either a spade or a heart.

Declarer needs to count his tricks at various points during the hand to make sure that he is not giving the defenders a 5<sup>th</sup> trick. For starters declarer needs to hope that the opposing clubs are divided 4-3 so that he can afford to lose the lead once and only once and then hope that he has 9 tricks after the defenders have taken their 4m tricks.

One sensible line is to win the club lead and play a heart to the jack, cash the heart ace and concede a heart to North. Now the 3-3 diamond break gives declarer 9 tricks – unless he tries the spade finesse and ends up with 3NT-1.

A cunning declarer might lead the ♥Q from the West hand at trick 2 and now North needs to cover with the King - otherwise N/S do not get their heart trick and declarer makes 3NT+1.

**TIP:** With a combined 28+ HCP it is a good idea to play your game contracts in 3NT.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q2 ♥ K1043 ♦ K832 ♣ K102</p> <p>♠ K9874      ♠ AJ63 ♥ QJ8        ♥ A76 ♦ 9            ♦ AQJ10 ♣ AJ83       ♣ 97</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 105 ♥ 952 ♦ 7654 ♣ Q654</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td style="text-align: center;">16</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> </table>	HCP		11		11	16	2		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	4	4	3	6	5	W	4	5	3	6	5	<p>Board 15 : Dealer South : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2NT (Spades 13+)</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦ (short)</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♦ (♦A)</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> This will be a make or break board for some E/W pairs – do we or don't we bid slam? Those who bid slam probably started off with West finding a 1♠ opening bid – I suspect most West players will open the bidding if only for the simple reason that they are not vulnerable. In today's modern game, more and more players are looking for excuses to open with 11 counts (11 is the new 13).</p> <p>This West hand is worth an opening bid in my opinion - the only bad thing about the hand is that we have 3 points in one of our short suits but this is off-set by the fact that the Queen and Jack of hearts are supporting one another – rather than being in separate suits.</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	1♠	Pass	2NT (Spades 13+)	Pass	3♦ (short)	Pass	4♦ (♦A)	Pass	4♠	All Pass		
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For sure if East gets excited and starts using 'Blackwood' then West's two keycards will propel him to bid 6♠ i.e. the auction might go: 1♠ - 2♦ - 2♠ - 4NT - 5♠ - 6♠

The Play:

This is not a 'good' slam to be in - you have a club loser, a heart loser and a potential trump loser to take care of. I can very easily see some good declarers going down in this slam because declarer has a choice of taking a simple diamond finesse (playing North to have ♦K or taking a ruffing diamond finesse playing South the have ♦K). The ruffing diamond finesse is very attractive because if South has ♦K then you won't need the heart finesse.

This is a hand where the Tom Hanlons of this world really shine – they can divine from table presence which opponent has the ♦K and play accordingly. The rest of us will have to rely on believing that when North leads a small diamond at trick 1 that he really has ♦K, take the simple diamond finesse, followed shortly afterwards by the heart finesse and make our 12 tricks.

As ever in a matchpoint pairs event, making 12 tricks will yield you a great score whether you are in 4♠ or 6♠.

**TIP:** Good declarer play often scores just as well as good bidding.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J ♥ 973 ♦ A1092 ♣ AJ943</p> <p>♠ 542                      ♠ K109873 ♥ AJ                        ♥ K842 ♦ 754                        ♦ KJ ♣ Q10852                ♣ 6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ AQ6 ♥ Q1065 ♦ Q863 ♣ K7</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td style="text-align: center;">10</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>2</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		10		7	10	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	2	3	2	-	2	S	3	3	2	-	2	E	-	-	-	2	-	W	-	-	-	2	-	<p>Board 16 : Dealer West : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Dbl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♣</td> <td>3♠</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> As is usual in competitive auctions, all four players have decisions to make. After 2 passes, East has to choose from 1♠, 2♠ and 3♠. The vulnerability might rule out 3♠ and because game is still a runner, even facing a passed hand, it looks like 1♠ is the best option.</p> <p>South then has to decide whether to make a Take-Out Double on the first round or wait until the second round to do so.</p> <p>If East opens 2♠ then South or North will double for take-out.</p> <p>It looks like the best that NS can do is to double E/W in 3♠ and collect +100.</p>	West	North	East	South	Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♠	Pass	Pass	Dbl	Pass	3♣	3♠	All Pass
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The Play:

2♠ by East is an easy make - just losing 3 spades, a diamond and a club.

Those N/S who play in a diamond partscore must lose 2 hearts and a diamond and might even lose 2 diamonds if they finesse twice into East – however if East opens 1♠ then that should point declarer towards the simpler line of playing ace and another diamond towards the queen.

Sadly 3NT by South has no chance - declarer just can't seem to find his 9<sup>th</sup> trick (2 spades, 3 diamonds and 3 clubs).

If by some chance N/S can arrange to have North declare 3NT then they will probably make it because it takes the inspired ♠K lead to beat it.

**TIP:** Listening to our opponent's bidding (or lack of) can often offer us vital clues to help us in the bidding and play.



<p style="text-align: center;">♠ KJ975 ♥ A643 ♦ Q7 ♣ K6</p> <p>♠ A10843      ♠ Q2 ♥ J95            ♥ KQ10 ♦ K5             ♦ AJ92 ♣ A74            ♣ QJ92</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 6 ♥ 872 ♦ 108643 ♣ 10853</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">HCP</th> <th colspan="5" style="padding: 2px;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <th style="padding: 2px;">♣</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♦</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♥</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♠</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">13</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">12    15</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">0</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> </table>	HCP	Makeable contracts						♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	13	-	-	-	-	-	12    15	-	-	-	-	-	0	3	2	2	2	4		4	3	2	3	4	<p>Board 17 : Dealer North : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>West</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>North</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>East</b></th> <th style="text-align: left; padding: 2px;"><b>South</b></th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;">1♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Dbl</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;">2NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">Pass</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">3NT</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> 3NT by E/W will be a popular contract with 10 tricks being the most likely outcome.</p> <p>The only other possible contract is if West decides to convert his partner's Take-Out Double of 1♠ into a penalty double by passing - if so North might come out with a scrappy 5 or even 6 tricks – so it seems E/W do best to declare the hand themselves in 3NT.</p> <p>South doesn't quiet have a 'yarborough' this time - his two tens spoil that.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		1♠	Dbl	Pass	2NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass
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The Play:

In 3NT, West seems to have 10 tricks, 2 spades, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 3 clubs (by playing a low club towards the QJ). The defence win 3 tricks, 1 heart, 1 diamond and 1 club – any defenders that manage to win 4 tricks will earn themselves a huge score.

**TIP:** Converting Take-Out Doubles to penalty doubles at the 1-level requires GOOD trumps.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ 10962 ♥ K84 ♦ Q ♣ Q10985</p> <p>♠ 8                      ♠ QJ754 ♥ AJ7653              ♥ Q ♦ J8753                ♦ AK92 ♣ J                        ♣ 742</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ AK3 ♥ 1092 ♦ 1064 ♣ AK63</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">HCP</th> <th colspan="5" style="padding: 2px;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <th style="padding: 2px;">♣</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♦</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♥</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">♠</th> <th style="padding: 2px;">NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">7      12</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">14</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">E</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">3</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP	Makeable contracts						♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	7	N	3	-	-	1	1	7      12	S	3	-	-	1	1	14	E	-	5	3	-	-		W	-	5	3	-	-	<p>Board 18 : Dealer East : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♠</td> <td>Dbl</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> This could take any number of twists and turns and it all depends on what West bids over South's Take-Out double.</p> <p>If South had passed the 1♠ (and indeed Pass is a good call here) then West would have been forced to respond an off-centre 1NT but when South doubles, a 2♥ response is not as crazy as it looks.</p> <p>If West really had 10+ points he would have redoubled so there is a school of thought that says West's 2♥ must therefore show 5-9 points.</p>	West	North	East	South			1♠	Dbl	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♦	All Pass		
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Of course there is another school of thought that says West should only 'Redouble' on hands that have an interest in penalising N/S and that otherwise West should ignore South's double. Do you know your own partnership style in this area? It is important to know this in order to decipher what partner means by 3♦ - but I suppose a 'courtesy' raise to 4♦ by East won't hurt?

At some tables N/S might bid as far as 3♣ - nonetheless E/W will still win the auction. If East gets a chance to rebid 2♦ then West's gut will tell him to jump to 5♦ but his heart will tell him to explore a possible heart fit – always listen to your 'gut'. Any E/W pair bidding 5♦ or even getting to a diamond or a heart partscore has done very well.

The Play:

4♥ has no play, going down when North leads any non-trump card - so long as N/S engineer a diamond ruff for North. Declarer needs to play carefully to avoid going 2 down – the trick in hands like this when you know the opening lead is a singleton is to just play ace and another trump as soon as you can so that you can get as many 'children' off the street as you can. By playing ace and another trump you will make sure that North only gets one diamond ruff instead of 2.

5♦ on the other hand is an easy make, declarer losing one spade and one club trick.

**TIP:** After partner opens 1 of a suit and the next player doubles remember to 'Redouble' to show a hand with 9+ points and no fit for partner.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ AK72 ♥ A1042 ♦ K9543 ♣ -</p> <p>♠ Q                      ♠ J10653 ♥ 9853                  ♥ KJ ♦ A1062                ♦ 8 ♣ KQ95                ♣ J10873</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 984 ♥ Q76 ♦ QJ7 ♣ A642</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">14</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">9</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>1</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		14		11	6	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	4	3	1	2	S	-	4	3	1	2	E	3	-	-	-	-	W	3	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 19 : Dealer South : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u>  North's 1♦ opening is routine. Some Easts might be tempted to either overcall 1♠ or wheel out some of their favourite '2-suiter' gadgets. However there are a number of factors that should deter East from taking any action – he is vulnerable and both of his suits are 'minging'. Remember we like to have our high card points in our long suits.</p> <p>South's 1NT response is pretty routine too but it's when we come to North's rebid that our paths may diverge? Our choices are: Pass, 2♦, 2♥, 2♠?</p>	West	North	East	South				Pass	Pass	1♦	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	All Pass	
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Partner's 1NT response denied 4 hearts or 4 spades so there is little point in us rebidding 2♥ or 2♠ especially since both bids are 'reverses' (above the 2♦ barrier) showing much stronger hand types – typically 17+. I am afraid all we can do is rebid 2♦.

However there will be some pairs who will find themselves in 3NT played by South.

The Play:

The only lead to give away the contract is a diamond lead - on any other lead the defence will come to 5 tricks. Even if West blocks the club suit, his side must still come to 3 club tricks, 1 diamond and 1 heart trick.

**Tip:** Put the brakes on if most of your points are in your short suits.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ AK8642 ♥ J ♦ J965 ♣ 54</p> <p>♠ 73                      ♠ J10 ♥ K952                  ♥ Q864 ♦ Q743                  ♦ K ♣ Q93                    ♣ AJ10762</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q95 ♥ A1073 ♦ A1082 ♣ K8</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">13</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		9		7	11	13		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	4	-	5	3	S	-	4	-	5	3	E	-	-	1	-	-	W	-	-	1	-	-	<p>Board 20 : Dealer West : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="4" style="text-align: center;">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p>This will be another good board for players with good judgement.</p> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> Given that there are 11 easy-peasy tricks, the challenge is for N/S to find a way to bid to 4♠.</p> <p>North has to decide whether to 'Pass', open 1♠, open 2♠ or open 3♠.</p> <p>If North opens 3♠ then South should raise to 4♠ with 3-card support, 2 aces, a king and a doubleton (vulnerable pre-empts tend not to be horrible).</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass			
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If North opens 1♠ then all roads lead to 4♠.

I think even North passes they will still get to 4♠ (maybe P-1NT-2♥-2♠-3♠-4♠).

So the problems only arise if North decides, quite reasonably, to open 2♠. In that case, South needs to take a very rosy view of his hand but will have to be forgiven if he decides to pass.

The Play:

There is nothing to the play, the defence win one diamond trick and one club trick and declarer makes the remaining 11. The diamond pips are so good that declarer cannot go wrong no matter what card he leads from hand on the first round of the suit.

**Tip:** 6-4-2-1 shapes have great playing strength and are therefore worth more than their point count might suggest.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ KQ106 ♥ Q9 ♦ AQ5 ♣ AK43</p> <p>♠ AJ9532      ♠ 7 ♥ J8              ♥ AK542 ♦ 3                ♦ KJ86 ♣ J972          ♣ 1065</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 84 ♥ 10763 ♦ 109742 ♣ Q8</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th style="padding: 2px;">HCP</th> <th colspan="5" style="padding: 2px;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">20</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">7      11</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♣</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♦</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♥</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">♠</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">S</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">E</td> <td style="padding: 2px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px;"></td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="padding: 2px; text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP	Makeable contracts					20						7      11	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	2	N	S	E	W			1	1	-	1	2		1	1	-	1	2		-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 21 : Dealer North : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">2NT</td> <td style="text-align: center;">All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u></p> <p>Respect to any North who manages to bid and makes 2NT.</p> <p>Ideally 2NT should show a 21-22 or a good 20 - and maybe since we've all seen worse 20's then this North hand might qualify as a good 20?</p> <p>Those who do not open 2NT might instead get a plus result by opening 1♣ or 1♠ and tempting their opponents into the auction.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		2NT	All Pass	
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The Play:

Making 2NT will be a great score for N/S. There are 8 tricks available if declarer is prepared to be patient. The heart suit is very favourable for declarer and should provide 2 tricks – especially if declarer realises the value of his ♥9. These 2 tricks, along with 2 spades, 3 clubs and a diamond trick will yield 8 tricks for declarer.

Those modern North players who open 1♠ might find themselves in 1♠x and as the cards lie this contract cannot be defeated – declarer making 3 club tricks, 1 club ruff, the ace of diamonds and 2 spade tricks.

**TIP:** Learn to notice big spot cards i.e. 7's, 8's and 9's – sometimes these become winners after 2 rounds of the suit.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ A8763 ♥ Q7 ♦ A1094 ♣ 105</p> <p>♠ KQ2                      ♠ 94 ♥ 632                        ♥ 1094 ♦ 3                             ♦ QJ8765 ♣ QJ9832                  ♣ AK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ J105 ♥ AKJ85 ♦ K2 ♣ 764</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">8</td><td style="text-align: center;">10</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td><td style="text-align: center;">-</td></tr> </table>	HCP		10		8	10	12		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	1	4	4	2	S	-	1	4	4	2	E	1	-	-	-	-	W	1	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 22 : Dealer East : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">3♠</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4♠</td> <td colspan="2">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> N/S can make game in either major and they can even make 3NT if they can avoid a club lead but bidding game will not be obvious.</p> <p>East has the first decision to make: whether to pass, open a weak 2♦ or open 1♦. The problem with the East hand is the ♣AK i.e. when we bid diamonds it will be hard to get partner to realise that we have more points in the club suit. In summary, we are too heavy for a weak two and too light for a 1♦ opening and yet 'passing' is hard to do.</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>			2♦	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	3♠	Pass	4♠	All Pass	
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Paradoxically, opening 2♦ might make it easier for N/S to get to game than opening 1♦ or even passing. A 2♥ overcall over a weak 2♦ opening will show opening values at least and help to get North excited about her 2 aces, ♥Q and ♦A10. A simple 1♥ opening or 1♥ overcall won't excite North as much.

The Play:

Declarer in 4♥ or 4♠ can make 10 tricks because of the lucky spade position i.e. by running the ♠J on the first round of spades declarer can escape with only one spade loser because the ♠9 drops in 2 rounds. Next week the E/W hands will be reversed and 4♥/4♠ will go down – another indication that staying in partscore on this deal is sensible bridge.

**TIP:** When the opponents open 'weak' – our overcalls are 'strong'.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ K9 ♥ 10864 ♦ KQ63 ♣ AJ7</p> <p>♠ 853                      ♠ AJ1072 ♥ K972                    ♥ QJ3 ♦ J1094                    ♦ 85 ♣ 86                        ♣ 1094</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q64 ♥ A5 ♦ A72 ♣ KQ532</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> <th colspan="5" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 15px;"></td> <td style="width: 15px;">♣</td> <td style="width: 15px;">♦</td> <td style="width: 15px;">♥</td> <td style="width: 15px;">♠</td> <td style="width: 15px;">NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">13</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">15</td> <td style="text-align: center;">S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">5</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> </table>	HCP		Makeable contracts								♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	13	8	N	5	4	2	1	4	4	15	S	5	4	2	1	4			E	-	-	-	-	-			W	-	-	-	-	-	<p>Board 23 : Dealer South : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>1♣</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>1♦</td> <td>1♠</td> <td>1NT</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>3NT</td> <td>All Pass</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> It is hard to imagine any contract other than 3NT by South on this board. I suppose there might be someone in 5♣ or even 6♣ and maybe there will be an East-West pair or two in 2♠x.</p> <p>While a 2♠ raise is not the worst bid in the world, it often pays to keep an eye on the vulnerability when bidding. For sure, West would have an easy raise to 2♠ if non-vul.</p>	West	North	East	South				1♣	Pass	1♦	1♠	1NT	Pass	3NT	All Pass	
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The Play:

If N/S are playing Weak No-Trump then East will get a chance to bid his spade suit and now a spade lead gives South no chance of making more than his 10 top tricks (1 spade, 1 heart, 3 diamonds and 5 clubs)...as long as West is careful to keep his 4 diamonds intact.

However if N/S play Strong NT then East will probably not be able to show his spade suit and now some Wests will lead ♦J. This normal looking lead will give a champion South a glimmer of hope of winning all 4 diamond tricks - declarer wins ♦A and leads ♦7 towards dummy's KQ6 - if West plays the ♦10 or ♦9 then South will be able to win this trick, return to hand and finesse ♦6 on the third round of the suit....3NT+2.

**TIP:** Don't be afraid to give partner's overcall a single raise with 3 trumps with 5+ points.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J54 ♥ QJ ♦ QJ ♣ QJ10876</p> <p>♠ A10                      ♠ KQ97 ♥ A108743                ♥ K96 ♦ AK53                     ♦ 10964 ♣ 5                            ♣ AK</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 8632 ♥ 52 ♦ 872 ♣ 9432</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>10</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>15</td></tr> <tr><td>0</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>7</td><td>7</td></tr> </table>	HCP		10		15	15	0		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	3	7	7	7	7	W	3	7	7	7	7	<p>Board 24 : Dealer West : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 15%;">South</th> </tr> <tr><td>1♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>1♠</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>2♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>3♣</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>3♥</td><td>Pass</td><td>4NT</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>5♦</td><td>Pass</td><td>5♥</td><td>Pass</td></tr> <tr><td>6♥</td><td>All Pass</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> Most E/W pairs will find themselves in 6♥ one way or another - some might even wheel out Blackwood on round one!</p> <p>The Grand Slam is a lucky make for those who choose to bid and then play for the 2-2 trump break. Don't be surprised if a few very good players only make 12 tricks.</p> <p>Those who decide to play in 6NT will score most of the matchpoints.</p> <p>South finds himself with a rare 'Yarborough' - we expect to find one of these in every 1827 hands - so maybe South should have a go at the Lotto this weekend.</p>	West	North	East	South	1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♣	Pass	3♥	Pass	4NT	Pass	5♦	Pass	5♥	Pass	6♥	All Pass		
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The Play:

This hand is all about whether or not you make all 13 tricks or just 12. If declarer simply cashes his ace and king of hearts then he makes all 13 tricks.

Spare a thought for those declarers who receive the ♥Q lead or even a cunning ♥J lead. These declarer's might be inclined to place the remaining heart honour in the South hand and they will win the lead with dummy's ♥K and then run the ♥9 losing to North. I know I would only make 12 tricks - so I will be looking at the results later to see how many good players do likewise.

**TIP:** With 9 cards missing the Queen, play for the drop unless you can see a singleton in your hand or in dummy in another suit in which case you take a finesse.



<p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q43 ♥ KQ1094 ♦ J2 ♣ Q83</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">♠ AJ96</td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">♠ K105</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">♥ A765</td> <td style="border: none;">♥ J832</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">♦ AQ</td> <td style="border: none;">♦ 1095</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: none;">♣ 1064</td> <td style="border: none;">♣ KJ9</td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 872 ♥ - ♦ K87643 ♣ A752</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: center;">HCP</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">15</td> <td style="text-align: center;">8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th colspan="6" style="text-align: center;">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td>N</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>S</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> <td style="text-align: center;">-</td> </tr> <tr> <td>E</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>W</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> </tr> </table>	♠ AJ96	♠ K105	♥ A765	♥ J832	♦ AQ	♦ 1095	♣ 1064	♣ KJ9	HCP		10		15	8	7		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	2	1	4	4	4	W	2	1	4	4	4	<p>Board 25 : Dealer North : EW vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>West</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>North</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>East</b></td> <td style="width: 25%;"><b>South</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♦</td> </tr> <tr> <td>dbl</td> <td style="text-align: center;">Pass</td> <td style="text-align: center;">2♥</td> <td style="text-align: center;">All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> This board could go in many different directions ending in many different contracts such as E/W in hearts or No-Trumps and N/S in hearts or diamonds.</p> <p>Some Norths might chance a non-vulnerable 1♥ opening – not my cup of tea (5332 shapes are not very attractive) but each to his own.</p> <p>If North does not open the bidding then South has to decide whether or not to open a weak 2♦ - but if you do not open a weak 2♦ third in hand non-vul with this hand, then when will you ever open 2♦?</p>	<b>West</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>East</b>	<b>South</b>		Pass	Pass	2♦	dbl	Pass	2♥	All Pass
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If South opens 2♦ then West has to choose between a take-out-double to get both majors into the picture or 2NT to show his strong balanced hand and diamond stoppers. Both calls are good and if I had a third diamond then 2NT would be 100% correct because it shows a balanced hand with stoppers while still keeping alive the possibility that partner can always use Stayman if he has a 4-card major.

But with AQ tight in diamonds, I think double is a slightly more preferable call. Tonight the 2NT bidders will score better especially if they can divine that North is more likely to have the ♠Q than South – because we already know that South has 6 cards in diamonds i.e. there is more room in North's hand to have the ♠Q than in South's (Theory of Vacant Spaces).

Although, the computer tells us that E/W can make 4♥ and even 4NT, very few pairs will manage to bid game and even fewer will make 10 tricks. To get to game, East would need to make a jump response of 3♥ to his partner's take-out-double of 2♦ but that East hand with its 4-3-3-3 shape does not look like it is worth a full 8 HCP?

If there are 3 passes to West then he either opens 1NT if playing 15-17 and either plays there or in 3♥ if East uses Stayman, or West opens 1♥ if playing a 12-14 No-Trump and ends in 2♥.

2♥ or 2NT both making 9 tricks will be common results.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ Q854 ♥ Q108 ♦ J3 ♣ QJ83</p> <p>♠ K7632      ♠ J ♥ A53      ♥ K964 ♦ K986      ♦ Q1042 ♣ A      ♣ K962</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A109 ♥ J72 ♦ A75 ♣ 10754</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>14</td><td>9</td></tr> <tr><td>9</td><td></td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; text-align: center;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>1</td><td>4</td><td>3</td><td>2</td><td>2</td></tr> </table>	HCP		8		14	9	9		Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	1	4	3	2	2	W	1	4	3	2	2	<p>Board 26 : Dealer East : All vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">West</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">North</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">East</th> <th style="text-align: left; width: 25%;">South</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>1NT</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♦</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>3♦</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u> This is another board that could end up anywhere. E/W can make a part-score contract in diamonds, hearts, spades or No-Trumps.</p> <p>Some will get to game – most likely 3NT or 5♦. Sadly these contracts lack that final contract making trick.</p> <p>Those E/W pairs who can ‘get off the bus’ early will be happiest.</p> <p>While it might be a bit ‘chicken’ to pass 3♦ in the above auction, the only other bid available is 3♥ showing the 5-3-4-1 shape but such a move commits us to 3NT, 4♦ or 4♥. At the end of the day, the West hand is not that great especially since partner bid a 1NT response showing 6-9 on the first round.</p>	West	North	East	South			Pass	Pass	1♠	Pass	1NT	Pass	2♦	Pass	3♦	All Pass
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The Play:

In No-Trump, there does not seem to be any way to make more than 8 tricks in No-Trump i.e. 1 spade, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds and 2 clubs. Even if there are more tricks it seems the defence always to get to 5 before declarer gets to 9.

The hand seems to play easier in a diamond contract, with declarer losing 1 spade trick, 1 heart trick and 1 diamond trick. Declarer could lose 2 diamond tricks if he has to guess the location of ♦J himself.

**TIP:** Listen to all of your partner’s bids and piece them together to complete the jigsaw puzzle.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ QJ ♥ 104 ♦ A98 ♣ J106542</p> <p>♠ K10984      ♠ A6 ♥ -              ♥ AQJ9865 ♦ K107432    ♦ J ♣ KQ            ♣ A83</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ 7532 ♥ K732 ♦ Q65 ♣ 97</p> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="2">HCP</th></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">8</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">11    16</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">5</td></tr> </table> <table border="1" style="margin-top: 10px; width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><th colspan="6">Makeable contracts</th></tr> <tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr> <tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr> <tr><td>E</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td>2</td><td>5</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>5</td></tr> </table>	HCP		8	11    16	5	Makeable contracts							♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	-	-	S	-	-	-	-	-	E	2	5	5	6	5	W	2	5	5	6	5	<p>Board 27 : Dealer South : Love all</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>West</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>North</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>East</i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i>South</i></th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td></td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♥</td> <td>Pass</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2♠</td> <td>Pass</td> <td>4♥</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u></p> <p>I don't see anyone bidding the unbeatable 6♠ which happens to make because the ♠QJ drop doubleton. Most E/W pairs will find themselves in 4♥.</p> <p>Does West open 1♦ or 1♠ or Pass? For starters, when neither side is vulnerable it is important that you do not allow your opponents a free run in the auction if the points are 20-20.</p> <p>The West hand is definitely worth some sort of bid – the wise adage tells that 'with six five we come alive'.</p>	<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>				Pass	1♠	Pass	2♥	Pass	2♠	Pass	4♥	All Pass
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Maybe we do best, when we have such a weak hand, to hide one of our diamonds and pretend we we 5 spades and 5 diamonds and then open 1♠. On this hand it doesn't really matter whether we open 1♠ or 1♦, the contract will be 4♥ regardless.

### The Play:

This hand is all about making 11 or 12 tricks. In the unlikely event that declarer is playing in a spade contract, he will make 12 tricks while the rest of us will make 11 or 12 in a heart contract.

The normal way to play the hand is to come to hand and start drawing trumps by playing the Ace and then the Queen. This loses to South's King but with the ♥10 dropping at the same time, declarer will win the remaining tricks if South does not find the diamond switch.- and South probably should find it – if North has a spade trick it can't run away, while if North has a diamond trick it might disappear on dummy's spade suit.

**TIP:** Defence is difficult but it becomes much easier if you are prepared to give it some extra thought – and the rewards in terms of satisfaction and scores are well worth developing the skill.

<p style="text-align: center;">♠ J8 ♥ Q976 ♦ QJ9874 ♣ 3</p> <p>♠ 632                      ♠ KQ75 ♥ 1084                     ♥ A3 ♦ AK1052                 ♦ 63 ♣ K4                        ♣ AJ1082</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A1094 ♥ KJ52 ♦ - ♣ Q9765</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <tr> <th style="width: 10%;">HCP</th> <th colspan="5">Makeable contracts</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <th>♣</th> <th>♦</th> <th>♥</th> <th>♠</th> <th>NT</th> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">6</td> <td>N</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10    14</td> <td>S</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2</td> <td>-</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td>E</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2   1</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>W</td> <td>1</td> <td>-</td> <td>-</td> <td>2   1</td> </tr> </table>	HCP	Makeable contracts						♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	6	N	-	-	2	-	10    14	S	-	-	2	-	10	E	1	-	-	2   1		W	1	-	-	2   1	<p>Board 28 : Dealer West : NS vulnerable</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><i><b>West</b></i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i><b>North</b></i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i><b>East</b></i></th> <th style="text-align: left;"><i><b>South</b></i></th> </tr> <tr> <td>Pass</td> <td>2♦</td> <td>Dbf</td> <td>All Pass</td> </tr> </table> <p><u>The Bidding:</u>          Maybe North should not open a weak 2♦ vulnerable?          If he does, E/W should be able to 'catch him speeding' by converting East's take-out-double to a penalty double. But even 2♦ passed out should lead to a good score for E/W.</p> <p>North will do very well to make 6 tricks – but in practice he might well end up making 7 tricks.</p> <p>If North does not open then E/W will find it very difficult to avoid the doomed 3NT.</p>	<i><b>West</b></i>	<i><b>North</b></i>	<i><b>East</b></i>	<i><b>South</b></i>	Pass	2♦	Dbf	All Pass
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The Play:

If E/W end up playing the hand, there just doesn't seem to be any suit where they can establish any tricks. 7 tricks seem to be their limit in No-Trump (1 spade, 1 heart, 2 diamonds and 3 clubs).

**TIP:** Sometimes it is ok to leave your vulnerable opponents play in a contract.