

1

♠ 843
♥ K10943
♦ 6
♣ 8543

♠ 10752
♥ Q5
♦ AKJ10
♣ Q72

♠ KQJ96
♥ AJ
♦ Q752
♣ 96

♠ A
♥ 8762
♦ 9843
♣ AKJ10

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

This looks like 4♠ by east after he has opened the suit and west has bid 2NT over south's double, showing a sound raise to 3♠+.

Presumably a top club is led, and then a switch needs found. Here it is useful for N/S to play suit preference signals when a continuation is clearly futile.

Unfortunately, north has a high card in hearts and could well play a high club, suggesting a heart switch, when in fact it is a diamond that is the killer, south getting the lead in spades and then clubs to deliver two ruffs.

Will many find the defence to beat this one?

2

♠ KJ98
♥ Q53
♦ A976
♣ 107

♠ AQ43
♥ 6
♦ KJ10843
♣ Q4

♠ 1065
♥ AKJ8
♦ 5
♣ A8632

♠ 72
♥ 109742
♦ Q2
♣ KJ95

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

West doubtless closes up shop with 3NT after east has introduced his two suits and west his diamonds. A spade lead will get the defence off to a bad start when dummy's 10 wins.

From there it should be possible to establish four diamond tricks when south's queen proves doubleton, allowing most to manage nine tricks.

A heart lead from north is more awkward. Double dummy, the knave must be finessed or north can hold off diamonds till the third round, then exit clubs to south, who leads spades. Declarer is later endplayed.

Should north win the diamond ace first up he is the one later endplayed when he wins his diamond 9. So successes and failures are predicted.

3

♠ K9763
♥ AK2
♦ 64
♣ K97

♠ 8
♥ J10954
♦ Q3
♣ A6432

♠ AQJ10
♥ 873
♦ 952
♣ 1085

♠ 542
♥ Q6
♦ AKJ1087
♣ QJ

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

This time north looks to be the one at the helm of 3NT, though occasionally it will be south with his half-stoppers in the unbid suits.

Declarer is perhaps best to win the opening club or heart lead in south, then play diamonds from the top, getting the good news. Extra club tricks can now be set up.

Some could win a heart lead in north, or play a heart to north themselves, before losing a diamond finesse. This could lead to defeat, since the diamonds squeeze north out of either winners or a spade stop.

A tricky play hand, easier if you know where the spade ace lies!

4

♠ 92
♥ Q4
♦ AJ10
♣ AKJ742

♠ J83
♥ AJ83
♦ KQ652
♣ 9

♠ KQ10764
♥ K9
♦ 9843
♣ 10

♠ A5
♥ 107652
♦ 7
♣ Q8653

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

When north overcalls west's 1♦ with 2♣ it is tempting for east to try 2♠, with a fall-back of supporting diamonds. As it happens either suit out-bids N/S's club fit, where an easy 130 is available.

It will be interesting to see how many E/Ws buy this competitive offering at the making 3 level, and how many venture one level higher, where there is a profitable save, unless north produces the red card, in which case minus 200 will not score well.

5

♠ K632
♥ A8
♦ 62
♣ KQ873

♠ A10
♥ KQ10
♦ K1097
♣ AJ92

♠ J974
♥ J65
♦ Q854
♣ 65

♠ Q85
♥ 97432
♦ AJ3
♣ 104

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

After 1♣ from north and 1♥ from south west is best to keep schtum, the opponents potentially going light in 100s. The alternative is 1NT, in the "sandwich position" supposedly 18-20. Left alone, north rebids 1♠ and it is south declaring 1NT.

When the diamond 10 goes to the queen and ace west knows that south holds the knave. Declarer probably tries a club, the queen scoring, and likely continues with a spade to the queen and west's ace.

Now west needs to be patient, not cashing his diamond king in the hope of felling the knave, instead exiting with a major. The end result should be east eventually getting on play to lead diamonds, and N/S losing 100-300, more than E/W will usually score declaring.

6

♠ KQ63
♥ AQ3
♦ J862
♣ 32

♠ 92
♥ 65
♦ A943
♣ KJ975

♠ J
♥ J10942
♦ K105
♣ Q1084

♠ A108754
♥ K87
♦ Q7
♣ A6

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

Like #1 it is hard to see 4♠ being missed when south opens the suit and north has an opener, plus 4 card support.

Once again the defence is crucial. West needs to lead a club to establish a trick in the suit, or find the switch after he scores the diamond ace.

On a passive defence declarer plays a diamond from dummy to the queen and ace, and has the entries to ruff down the diamond king, establishing the knave for a club discard.

Will many find the club lead or switch from west at the critical point, holding declarer to 420?

7

♠ KQJ95
♥ K1075
♦ 8
♣ AJ3

♠ 84
♥ AJ84
♦ 63
♣ 97654

♠ 10732
♥ Q63
♦ J109
♣ K108

♠ A6
♥ 92
♦ AKQ7542
♣ Q2

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

It will be interesting to see where this finishes after south opens 1♦ and rebids 3♦ over north's 1♠ response. Without a diamond fit north may well continue with 3♥. South now has the choice of showing 3♠ preference, or bidding 3NT holding a club half-stop. Over the spade preference north could easily select 3NT himself, rather than 4♠. Some could get to slam in spades or no trump.

Defending no trumps west must improbably cash the heart ace at trick 1, though declarer could duck a club lead to east's king, or play low on an opening small heart lead. Where east is on lead a heart maybe stands out, ensuring the ace doesn't escape.

Declaring spades thirteen tricks result on a black suit lead. A diamond holds this strain to eleven tricks as the only dummy entry outside trumps is the club queen.

8

♠ 9743
♥ J7
♦ AJ762
♣ 42

♠ J2
♥ A105432
♦ Q83
♣ Q7

♠ Q1065
♥ K6
♦ 10
♣ AJ10863

♠ AK8
♥ Q98
♦ K954
♣ K95

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

West has a nice Weak 2♥ or Multi, over which south may compete with 2NT, though in the absence of an assured heart stop some will pass, letting E/W play 2♥.

2♥ might easily scrape home, the defence needing to find an early club play from north and force east to twice ruff diamonds, setting up an extra defensive trump trick.

Where south gets to 2NT and the defence clear hearts declarer needs to take the diamond finesse to keep west off lead. Now nine tricks result. To ensure five defensive tricks west needs to lead clubs at the start, denying declarer a ninth trick in hearts, where east has an entry to his club winners.

Indeed, where clubs are led declarer may try to drop the diamond queen, finishing badly light.

9

♠ K10852
 ♥ K9
 ♦ Q9
 ♣ K952
 ♠ Q9
 ♥ AQ65
 ♦ 874
 ♣ AJ87
 ♠ AJ74
 ♥ 1032
 ♦ J10652
 ♣ 3

 Dealer: North
 E-W Vulnerable

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

When north opens 1♠ and east doubles south can bounce to 3♣, a sound raise to 2♠, unlike 2NT (see #1) which shows more values. This pre-empt might buy it, but some wests will not be put off, bidding 4♥.

With the trump king doubleton, and the club king on-side their bravery will be rewarded. The best N/S can do is to advance to 4♠, where they should lose 300, or 500 should the trump queen score. East needs to avoid starting with the heart ace to maximise the penalty.

With a hand like west's, holding some defence, it is often worth confidently bidding a speculative game. The non-vulnerable opponents will often be reluctant to risk an adverse vulnerable make and will sacrifice, sometimes when they are beating it.

10

♠ K9
 ♥ 104
 ♦ Q109732
 ♣ A83
 ♠ A106543
 ♥ Q5
 ♦ A6
 ♣ 964
 ♠ Q8
 ♥ AKJ9632
 ♦ 84
 ♣ Q2

 Dealer: East
 Both Vulnerable

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

Where east has a Multi or Weak 2♠ available west can advance to 3♠ when south competes in hearts. With the club queen on-side a useful 140 on the minority of high cards ensues, unless N/S advance.

N/S's heart spot should be held to nine tricks, east switching to clubs when he wins his spade ace. Otherwise, west must allow east to win the first diamond led from south, and he find the switch.

Where south gets to open he could easily get to declare hearts at a makeable level, the vulnerable east unlikely to intervene when north responds 1NT or a thin 2♦ to south's 1♥ opener.

So the E/W Multi or Weak Two should be the winner here, getting a decent plus one way or other.

11

♠ 7
 ♥ KQ62
 ♦ J875
 ♣ AKJ5
 ♠ KQ84
 ♥ J875
 ♦ AQ
 ♣ Q86
 ♠ AJ532
 ♥ 1043
 ♦ K1064
 ♣ 3
 ♠ 1096
 ♥ A9
 ♦ 932
 ♣ 109742

 Dealer: South
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Where east opens a weak NT E/W shouldn't get overboard in spades, unless west breaks the transfer and east takes too rosy a view with his shape.

5 card majors open 1♣ and west likely only raises spades to the 2 level. In neither case can north sensibly intervene, though he just might double 2♠ on the 2nd round, finding the club fit, and maybe pushing E/W to the 3 level, albeit to little avail.

There is little hope of an E/W spade contract making more than nine tricks, since even if early hearts are not cashed, the diamond knave does not fall, so no more than one heart can be pitched in west. Maybe someone will find a way, however.

12

♠ KJ43
 ♥ AK6
 ♦ J102
 ♣ 1095
 ♠ 72
 ♥ 2
 ♦ KQ987653
 ♣ A4
 ♠ A10965
 ♥ Q9543
 ♦ 4
 ♣ KJ
 ♠ Q8
 ♥ J1087
 ♦ A
 ♣ Q87632

 Dealer: West
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Despite a poorish 8 card suit some will try 5♦ as west, which may or may not be doubled. Unfortunately, declarer cannot avoid the loss of a heart, spade and trump, unless north tries to cash two top hearts. Note that declarer must make sure he leads trumps from dummy, benefitting here when south has the singleton ace.

Some may have a 4♦ bid available, which is maybe more appropriate, though many play this as a good 4♣ call, so-called South African Texas, leaving either 3♦ or 5♦, the former looking a bit feeble.

At least the 3♦ call should get a plus for E/W, as N/S have no spot beyond 3♣ that makes, and neither party really has enough to act anyway. Often, this level isn't enough to keep the opposition quiet.

13

♠ 97
♥ KJ104
♦ K94
♣ KQ86

♠ AQJ10
♥ 9865
♦ A62
♣ 75

♠ 865
♥ AQ32
♦ QJ1085
♣ 2

♠ K432
♥ 7
♦ 73
♣ AJ10943

 Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

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

North's weak NT should have the desired effect of keeping everyone else quiet. East's diamond lead sets up declarer's seventh trick. An improbable spade lead and heart switches can take seven tricks in defence. Some souths could transfer into clubs if methods allow.

5 card majors open the north hand 1♣ and north rebids 1NT over the 1♠ response. Passed to west he just might find the double, a request for the lead of dummy's first bid suit. In practice south is far more likely to retreat to clubs, and will certainly do so over the double.

Opening first can be a big advantage, here E/W often never bidding and ceding 90-110, when they can make 130-140 in a red suit. Neither has a sound vulnerable overcall when north opens.

14

♠ J10753
♥ AK98
♦ K9
♣ 108

♠ Q862
♥ 32
♦ 854
♣ K764

♠ AK9
♥ Q7654
♦ Q2
♣ A52

♠ 4
♥ J10
♦ AJ10763
♣ QJ93

 Dealer: East
Neither Vulnerable

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

Passed out east's strong NT fares poorly, at least two off on a diamond lead. However, north could transfer the minus the other way by showing the majors, albeit if 2♦ is the call, south can pass this.

Acol opens east 1♥, overcalled 2♦. North has a decent enough hand and could overstretch to 3NT, off five quick cashers. However, east doesn't know that and could easily let it home with a heart lead. He should maybe start with a top spade to see the dummy, but even then may find the wrong switch.

Scope for a variety of scores here.

15

♠ 9
♥ AK73
♦ Q54
♣ AK1053

♠ AKJ7532
♥ 862
♦ 986
♣ 986

♠ 108
♥ J
♦ AKJ7632
♣ QJ7

♠ Q64
♥ Q10954
♦ 1098
♣ 42

 Dealer: South
N-S Vulnerable

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

We could well see E/W in 4♠ here after west pre-empts, north doubles for takeout, and east raises the ante. Frustratingly for E/W N/S can take two clubs, a ruff and a heart, east's diamonds withering on the vine.

However, letting South play the alternative 4♥ is worse, east entryless, and north's clubs set up for diamond pitches and ten tricks.

Pre-empts can have the effect of getting the opponents into a spot they would otherwise not have bid, here N/S unlikely to get to game in hearts otherwise, and usually failing if they did. It is only the minor suit splits that allow it to make - and only by south.

16

♠ KQ7
♥ Q108742
♦ 54
♣ 109

♠ A10863
♥ K
♦ K10963
♣ A7

♠ J92
♥ 953
♦ J87
♣ K632

♠ 54
♥ AJ6
♦ AQ2
♣ QJ854

 Dealer: West
E-W Vulnerable

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

This looks like a competitive affair after west opens 1♠ and south doubles after two passes. North needs to bid up to 3♥, as E/W can make 2♠, which they will likely get to after west shows his second suit.

Only a diamond lead threatens 3♥, the trump king needing felled to succeed. This could happen, as east may have played the club king before declarer gets to tackle trumps, meaning, as a hand unable to reply to 1♠, he cannot have the heart king as well.

West can make 3♣ by entering dummy in clubs after ruffing the second heart. South wins the diamond lead and west ruffs another heart. Now north can be end-played with a low spade after the club ace is cashed. Any lead allows a dummy entry to pick up diamonds.

17

♠ K4
♥ AJ83
♦ KJ1096
♣ J5

♠ Q9865
♥ K764
♦ A72
♣ Q

♠ AJ7
♥ 9
♦ Q53
♣ AK10873

♠ 1032
♥ Q1052
♦ 84
♣ 9642

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

East will surely show the majors over a north weak NT, or overcall 1♦ with 1♠. Doubling 1♦ would be an error, as west could bid clubs. An change of suit by east now shows extra values, which he doesn't have. Also, were west to have equal major suit length he would select his cheaper suit - hearts, and the wrong fit be declared.

West will not stop short of game now. In 4♠ eleven tricks are possible, only necessarily losing the trump king and heart ace. In practice declarer could go light on a south diamond lead. Declarer has to win, take the club queen and trump ace before running clubs. Due to the fortuitous lies north has to ruff with a winner as east sheds diamonds.

Many will be happy to get home on this awkward enough hand to declare.

18

♠ 95
♥ 10982
♦ J982
♣ Q74

♠ A742
♥ KQJ75
♦ Q105
♣ K

♠ J83
♥ 64
♦ A64
♣ 109632

♠ KQ106
♥ A3
♦ K73
♣ AJ85

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

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

South would be wise to pass when all north can do is bid 2♦ after he has doubled east's 1♥ opener. Indeed, there is really no sensible advance, the only realistic one being 2♥, trying to coax a no trump bid from north. However, this way over-states south's values and is pretty well guaranteed to incur a minus.

Not that 2♦ is any thing of beauty, it near certain to go light, possibly more than one trick, though the fall of the club king helps somewhat, and declarer can manage seven tricks double dummy.

This looks like one to defend, though it will probably be E/W doing so.

19

♠ 10832
♥ A97
♦ J32
♣ K109

♠ AKJ965
♥ K5
♦ 107
♣ J85

♠ 74
♥ Q1062
♦ 65
♣ A7632

♠ Q
♥ J843
♦ AKQ984
♣ Q4

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

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

South will try to play in 2♦ after rebidding his suit over north's 1♠ response. He is not strong enough to reverse into hearts. However, east should protect, bidding 2♠, clearly to play after passing north's original response. An original double of 1♠ would not show spades. It shows the unbid suits - hearts and clubs.

East's 2♠ likely pushes N/S up a level, but they should still manage to avoid losing more than four tricks and record 110.

East can actually make 2♠, but only if the trump queen is felled and the suit is picked up. Whether many will be allowed to play there is the question, where even losing 100 should be a decent board, though it could be 200 if trumps are mis-guessed on round one, and the defence do not to allow a second dummy entry in hearts.

20

♠ J864
♥ 852
♦ 96
♣ AJ42

♠ K72
♥ J6
♦ Q52
♣ Q9863

♠ 103
♥ AKQ974
♦ AK3
♣ 105

♠ AQ95
♥ 103
♦ J10874
♣ K7

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

West has a close decision whether to rebid 2♥ or 3♥ over east's 1NT response to 1♥. Even if the latter is selected east should probably pass, as his 8HCP are uninspiring, mainly queens and knaves.

However, some will doubtless manage to make ten tricks when one of east's clubs gets set up and north fails to find a spade switch.

The stakes could be higher at some tables where east over-stretches and responds 2♣. Now west is certainly worth 3♥, which is forcing, and 4♥ be declared.

In truth, 4♥ is not a bad spot, requiring little more than the spade ace onside. Unfortunately, today it isn't.

21

♠ J943
♥ K95
♦ 743
♣ K52

♠ AQ876
♥ 86
♦ QJ1052
♣ 6

♠ 5
♥ AQ104
♦ K
♣ QJ109743

♠ K102
♥ J732
♦ A986
♣ A8

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

This could get messy for N/S if south opens a light 5 card major 1♦, west overcalls 2♣ and north doubles. West will be happy to defend 2♥ by south, and will surely beat this at least one trick, perhaps several, a forcing defence in clubs best. East may well get a club ruff for good measure.

West is also best to attempt to defend south's alternative thin weak NT, at least one light on a club lead. In practice east could come to south's rescue, showing spades and a minor, much to the annoyance of west.

Whoever declares here is unlikely to emerge with a plus score, not the first hand of this ilk in the set.

22

♠ KJ6
♥ KQ4
♦ KQJ63
♣ 76

♠ 53
♥ A10
♦ 109874
♣ QJ43

♠ AQ92
♥ 87652
♦ A
♣ A98

♠ 10874
♥ J93
♦ 52
♣ K1052

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

When north overcalls west's 1♥ with 1NT that probably ends it. North should drop the heart king under the ace, winning the second heart in dummy.

Now a diamond lead means that west's diamond ace is played on air, and declarer should be able to manage his red winners and an eventual black suit trick, finishing one off. The alternative 2♦ overcall fares worse, at least seven tricks lost.

However, as N/S are not vulnerable, losing 50-100 is in theory not too bad a score, with 2♥ makeable by E/W. Whether many E/Ws will be declaring is another matter, so it could be the smallest penalty lost by N/S that decides it.

23

♠ J6
♥ 9
♦ AQ1098
♣ A8432

♠ 75
♥ Q10752
♦ K62
♣ QJ5

♠ K10932
♥ J84
♦ J7
♣ 1096

♠ AQ84
♥ AK63
♦ 543
♣ K7

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

Over an Acoll 1♥ north responds 2♦ and continues with 3♣ over south's 2NT. Many souths will shut up shop with 3NT now, but those that give preference to diamonds just might get to the slam, makable when the minor suits behave.

The slam requires the loss of only one trump trick, plus some luck with the club suit, so is not one I would recommend.

At least those playing NT should get a plus score. Many will only make nine tricks on a heart lead, though it is possible to make ten, ducking a heart, setting up one of the minors, then losing a spade to west.

On a spade lead from west some will make eleven, just losing two minor suit tricks to east.

24

♠ A
♥ 10862
♦ A9643
♣ QJ4

♠ Q85
♥ QJ5
♦ KQ105
♣ K65

♠ K742
♥ 93
♦ J82
♣ A1082

♠ J10963
♥ AK74
♦ 7
♣ 973

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

Some could finish in the inelegant contract of 2♦ by north, after he has opened the suit and rebid it over south's 1♠, being well short of a reverse into hearts, as #19.

However, south should not pass 2♦, instead trying his second suit, which north may raise. Declaring hearts, cross-ruff lines should produce nine tricks, the defence unable to take more than two clubs and two trumps.

I am expecting most to be in the heart part-score, where they should make 140.