

Board 1. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

♠ 8 7 3	
♥ A Q J 8 2	
♦ K	
♣ Q 9 5 3	
♠ A K Q J 6	♠ 10 9 4 2
♥ 9	♥ 7 6 4 3
♦ 9 6	♦ Q 5
♣ K J 8 4 2	♣ A 10 7
♠ 5	
♥ K 10 5	
♦ A J 10 8 7 4 3 2	
♣ 6	

Hard hand for either side to get right. A 1♥-p-5♦ auction will work, if S thinks "where are the black suits?" Not good if Exclusion for ♥ though! Par is 5♦x one off, but W must be careful to lead his singleton ♥ immediately. Cashing a ♠ first will give S an entry to draw a second trump. On a ♥ lead the best shot is to cash ♦K and lead a ♠. E can rise with ♠9 to give partner his ruff. If not, a ♣ to his ace puts him back in.but a 2nd ♣ now will not go down well.

Board 2. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

♠ 10 9 8 7	
♥ K Q 6 5 4	
♦ K 2	
♣ 3 2	
♠ J 6 5	♠ Q 3
♥ 10	♥ 9 8
♦ Q 10 9 8 6 4	♦ A J 3
♣ Q 6 5	♣ K J 10 8 7 4
♠ A K 4 2	
♥ A J 7 3 2	
♦ 7 5	
♣ A 9	

Most N/S pairs will reach a ♥ contract after 1♣ from E. 9 tricks are the limit, but declarer may be able to test the defence if he assumes E has the ♦A. Declarer should duck the ♣ lead, hoping W will not overtake if declared from N. Then ♥A, ♥K and a ♠ to the 3 and the K. Back to dummy with a ♥ and a small ♠ ducked when ♠Q appears, will endplay W to lead a ♦ or give a ruff and discard. E must rise with the ♠Q on the first round to foil this play, thus retaining a ♠ exit.

Board 3. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

♠ 3 2	
♥ A K Q J 2	
♦ K 9 6 5	
♣ 6 2	
♠ A K Q 10 6	♠ 7 4
♥ 8 5	♥ 9 6 3
♦ 8 7 4	♦ Q 3
♣ 10 5 3	♣ A Q J 9 7 4
♠ J 9 8 5	
♥ 10 7 4	
♦ A J 10 2	
♣ K 8	

Will W open a 5-card 2♠? Can N/S get to a lucky 4♥? Declarer will need to ruff he third spade high, draw trumps and both lead up to ♣K and find the ♦Q.

A potential bad result for E/W if they bid 4♠ over 4♥ and E/W remember to double as this will be -500 and a bad score. Saving vulnerable against non-vulnerable is a dangerous business.

Board 4. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

♠ 8 6 3	
♥ J 9 8 5 4	
♦ A K Q J 10	
♣ —	
♠ K Q 9 2	♠ A 10
♥ A K Q 6	♥ 10 7 2
♦ 7 4 3	♦ 8
♣ 6 5	♣ A Q 10 8 7 4 2
♠ J 7 5 4	
♥ 3	
♦ 9 6 5 2	
♣ K J 9 3	

I think many will get too high on this hand with the rounded suits breaking badly for E/W. Would you bid something as E over a weak NT from partner? Surely. Some will try 3NT and go one off (N is endplayed after cashing 5♦s)).

Any who invite with a club transfer then play 3♣ conservatively when W registers no fit will win this Board, but unlucky if you bid 5♣ which is an excellent contract, simply requiring an odds-on decent ♣ break.

Board 5. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

♠ A K Q 7	
♥ K 10 9 7	
♦ 10 9 4	
♣ 5 4	
♠ 8 6 4 2	♠ 9 3
♥ A 8 6	♥ Q 4 3 2
♦ —	♦ K Q 6 2
♣ A K 10 6 3 2	♣ Q J 7
♠ J 10 5	
♥ J 5	
♦ A J 8 7 5 3	
♣ 9 8	

Part score battle again. A weak NT from N may get a transfer to \heartsuit from S. W may risk $3\clubsuit$ at pairs and will E compete with $4\clubsuit$ over N's $3\heartsuit$ to win the Board? N/S will probably not compete any higher when vulnerable, but if they do E/W must double as +100 will lose out to other scores of +130. Need to be a little trigger happy with doubles of vulnerable opponents at pairs. Plus 200 is almost always good.

Board 6. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

<p>\spadesuit 10 8 7 \heartsuit 9 8 \diamondsuit Q 8 4 \clubsuit K Q 9 3 2</p> <p>\spadesuit K J 6 5 \heartsuit — \diamondsuit K J 10 9 5 3 2 \clubsuit 7 4</p> <p>\spadesuit A Q 2 \heartsuit K Q 7 6 2 \diamondsuit 6 \clubsuit J 8 6 5</p>	<p>\spadesuit 9 4 3 \heartsuit A J 10 5 4 3 \diamondsuit A 7 \clubsuit A 10</p>
--	--

You'll need to have DeepFinesse bidding and playing W to make a slam on this Board, as she predicts. Win the \clubsuit lead, pitch a \clubsuit on \heartsuit A, a \spadesuit to the J, run the \diamondsuit , \heartsuit to the A then another \spadesuit is what is required to make $6\diamondsuit$. Possible for a silicon-based intelligence who can see all 4 hands, but not for a carbon-based one seeing only two I think! Getting to $5\diamondsuit$ (which should be made – spades need to be favourable) will get a shared top.

Board 7. Dealer South. Vulnerability All

<p>\spadesuit 8 5 4 \heartsuit Q 5 \diamondsuit K 9 \clubsuit K J 10 8 3 2</p> <p>\spadesuit 10 6 \heartsuit 9 7 6 2 \diamondsuit A J 7 4 \clubsuit 9 6 4</p> <p>\spadesuit A K J 7 \heartsuit A K 4 3 \diamondsuit 6 3 2 \clubsuit A 5</p>	<p>\spadesuit Q 9 3 2 \heartsuit J 10 8 \diamondsuit Q 10 8 5 \clubsuit Q 7</p>
--	--

The epidemic of long minor suits continues. Again forget DeepFinesse's slam suggestion – most will probably play 3NT at pairs. This is an anxious business on a \heartsuit lead but as they are 4-4, the losing \clubsuit finesse will still result in 9 tricks. On any other lead, declarer will finesse clubs into the "safe" hand for 11 tricks one way or another.

Board 8. Dealer West. Vulnerability None

<p>\spadesuit A K 2 \heartsuit 3 \diamondsuit K J 4 2 \clubsuit A K 9 7 2</p> <p>\spadesuit 10 8 4 3 \heartsuit 9 8 7 6 \diamondsuit Q 3 \clubsuit 8 6 3</p> <p>\spadesuit Q 7 5 \heartsuit A K J 4 2 \diamondsuit 7 6 \clubsuit J 10 4</p>	<p>\spadesuit J 9 6 \heartsuit Q 10 5 \diamondsuit A 10 9 8 5 \clubsuit Q 5</p>
--	--

DF is trying to seduce us into another 29 point slam and again you will need to drop a doubleton \clubsuit Q, guess \heartsuit s and take a \heartsuit finesse to make this! In 3NT, assuming a normal \clubsuit finesse, 10 tricks are easy and 11 should be made if N is declarer on a \heartsuit lead. Having lost a \clubsuit , another 7 black suit winners will put E under pressure and the position should be clear, with E squirming and throwing all his small diamonds.

Board 9. Dealer North. Vulnerability E/W

<p>\spadesuit J 6 \heartsuit A K 9 4 \diamondsuit A J 10 9 \clubsuit K 10 8</p> <p>\spadesuit 10 4 3 \heartsuit 7 5 3 2 \diamondsuit 5 \clubsuit A 7 6 4 2</p> <p>\spadesuit A 8 \heartsuit Q J 10 6 \diamondsuit Q 8 6 3 \clubsuit Q J 3</p>	<p>\spadesuit K Q 9 7 5 2 \heartsuit 8 \diamondsuit K 7 4 2 \clubsuit 9 5</p>
--	--

28 points and no game with the \heartsuit K offside. As long as E bids spades or leads a \spadesuit honour if N plays 3NT, this will go about 3 off. $4\heartsuit$ is a much better shot, but after a \spadesuit lead declarer cannot draw all the trump without losing control. He will need to draw a couple of trumps and try the \heartsuit finesse, hoping E forgets to give his partner a ruff. The ruff should be easy if S plays $4\heartsuit$ and W leads his singleton. Might be missed otherwise. At least $4\heartsuit$ should go only one off.

Board 10. Dealer East. Vulnerability All

	♠ K 8 6 4	
	♥ A Q 8 6 4	
	♦ A J 8	
	♣ J	
♠ A 9 5		♠ 7 2
♥ 9 7 5		♥ K 2
♦ Q 4 3		♦ 10 2
♣ 9 6 3 2		♣ A K Q 10 7 5 4
	♠ Q J 10 3	
	♥ J 10 3	
	♦ K 9 7 6 5	
	♣ 8	

N/S make four of a major, but can they bid game with 22 points? In spades by S, only a ♥ lead troubles declarer. who must play the ♥A to avoid a ruff when W is in with the ♠A. In hearts (by N), best defence is ♣K then a spade ducked. Now a losing ♥ finesse will result in a spade ruff! You'll need to play ♥A and another to survive. Hard at pairs. The moral? Always rise with the ace of hearts – at least on this hand.

Board 11. Dealer South. Vulnerability None

	♠ J 9 6 5 4 3	
	♥ K 9 7 6	
	♦ 6 5	
	♣ 8	
♠ —		♠ A Q 8 7
♥ Q 10 8 4 3		♥ 2
♦ Q J 10 7 3		♦ K 2
♣ 7 6 4		♣ Q J 10 9 3 2
	♠ K 10 2	
	♥ A J 5	
	♦ A 9 8 4	
	♣ A K 5	

With a big south hand, N/S should have no trouble reaching 4♠. If W has bid an unwise 1♥ over 1♦, E may be inclined to double 4♠, and that should be -590 – oh dear! Two spade losers, but hearts can be easily picked up. Don't play the K first though! A ♥ to the jack and the position will be exposed when the A is cashed.

Board 12. Dealer West. Vulnerability N/S

	♠ K 5 4 2	
	♥ Q 8	
	♦ 8 7 5	
	♣ A K 9 5	
♠ A 9		♠ Q 10 8 6
♥ 9 5 2		♥ A K 10 6 3
♦ J 3 2		♦ K 6 4
♣ 10 8 4 3 2		♣ J
	♠ J 7 3	
	♥ J 7 4	
	♦ A Q 10 9	
	♣ Q 7 6	

Nice hand for a part-score battle. Perhaps a weak NT from N and 2♣ (majors) from E, or perhaps 1♣ – double. E/W should reach 2♥ (which can make) and in my view S must compete opposite an opening at pairs. Remember, you should be more willing to compete at pairs when non-vul. If one off, they can only double you for +100, often less than their score, 110 here. 2NT should make but anything even -1 beats losing 110 in 2♥.

Board 13. Dealer North. Vulnerability All

	♠ K J 9	
	♥ —	
	♦ 6 5 4	
	♣ K J 10 6 4 3 2	
♠ 6 4 2		♠ A 10 7
♥ A 9 5 4		♥ Q 10 8 6 3
♦ 10 9 7		♦ A J 8 2
♣ Q 9 8		♣ 5
	♠ Q 8 5 3	
	♥ K J 7 2	
	♦ K Q 3	
	♣ A 7	

3♣ from N vulnerable seems about right. It's a big stretch for E to double and if E does, S will redouble and double 3♣ for a juicy +500 with decent defence. If E passes S should not bid 3NT. The defence is likely to be able to set up one of the majors with your bad intermediates. 5♣ can be made but the ♣Q must be picked up and the ♦A must be onside, so it is a poor contract. 3♣+1 should be the normal score.

Board 14. Dealer East. Vulnerability None

	♠ 10 4 3	
	♥ J 5	
	♦ 8 7 6 3	
	♣ Q J 8 7	
♠ A Q J 2		♠ K 8 7 5
♥ K 8 7 4 2		♥ A 10 6 3
♦ A 10		♦ 9
♣ 5 2		♣ A 9 4 3
	♠ 9 6	
	♥ Q 9	
	♦ K Q J 5 4 2	
	♣ K 10 6	

A thin but making slam, with every card working 100% and hearts 2-2. Hard to reach with a combined 25 count but a start of 1♥ – 4♦ (splinter) might get there. If W scratches up a slam try, E should co-operate on his hand,

with primary cards and the ♥10 (which adds nearly 6% to the chances of picking up this suit). Aces and Kings are much better than queens and jacks on this sort of hand. Slam is less than 50% though so don't worry if you miss it.

Board 15. Dealer South. Vulnerability N/S

<p>♠ J 8 7 5 ♥ A 6 ♦ 9 8 6 5 ♣ K 8 3</p> <p>♠ K 10 2 ♥ Q 10 4 2 ♦ 7 3 ♣ Q J 7 4</p>	<p>♠ Q 9 6 4 3 ♥ J 5 ♦ A K Q ♣ 6 5 2</p>
<p>♠ A ♥ K 9 8 7 3 ♦ J 10 4 2 ♣ A 10 9</p>	

In principle, E/W with 8 spades and non-vulnerable (compete when non-vul., remember?) should win this partscore hand easily, but what if the auction starts 1♥ – p – 1♠, which is quite likely? If N/S subside in 2♥, E should double at pairs, (takeout of hearts) and W may pass. Fine, but don't lead the ♣Q! It's these types of hand that pairs specialists handle well.

Board 16. Dealer West. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ K J 8 7 6 ♥ K 9 6 2 ♦ 9 8 ♣ A Q</p> <p>♠ Q 10 5 2 ♥ Q J 10 7 3 ♦ A Q 5 4 ♣ —</p>	<p>♠ 4 3 ♥ — ♦ K J 10 6 3 2 ♣ 10 7 6 5 4</p>
<p>♠ A 9 ♥ A 8 5 4 ♦ 7 ♣ K J 9 8 3 2</p>	

W will probably save N/S from their unfortunate 4-4 ♥ fit by opening 1♥. Goodness knows how the bidding will now go, but E/W, with their 15 points, can make more than N/S with their 25! Par is 5♣x by S, minus 1 over E/W's 4♦, and this will happen occasionally, as will 3NT-2.

Please do not contact me to ask for my recommended auction on this hand. I don't have one.

Board 17. Dealer North. Vulnerability None

<p>♠ A Q 8 5 4 ♥ K J 8 ♦ J 7 2 ♣ A 6</p> <p>♠ K J 10 9 6 ♥ A 3 2 ♦ Q ♣ J 5 3 2</p>	<p>♠ 2 ♥ Q 7 6 4 ♦ A K 6 4 ♣ K Q 10 8</p> <p>♠ 7 3 ♥ 10 9 5 ♦ 10 9 8 5 3 ♣ 9 7 4</p>
--	--

N will open either 1♠ or a strong INT. Easy enough for E to double over 1♠ but what to do over a strong NT?

INT passed out will score some points for N/S, even if three off. Over 1♠- x- p- ? W can either pass or try NT, probably 2NT. Pass will result in +300 or 500, and 2NT (raised by E) probably +400. Have I mentioned, compete? Oh yes, even over a strong NT, and fans of Astro variants will fare better than Multi-Landy exponents on this hand.

Board 18. Dealer East. Vulnerability N/S

<p>♠ A J 8 6 ♥ 9 8 ♦ 8 6 ♣ J 10 8 7 6</p> <p>♠ 10 3 ♥ 10 3 2 ♦ K J 10 9 4 ♣ K Q 5</p>	<p>♠ 9 5 2 ♥ A Q 7 4 ♦ A Q 2 ♣ 4 3 2</p> <p>♠ K Q 7 4 ♥ K J 6 5 ♦ 7 5 3 ♣ A 9</p>
---	---

Sorry – I'm getting boring – compete! E will open something – a weak NT or perhaps 1♣ or 1♦ from 5-card major pairs.

To score on the Board, S must bid, and holding some spades should encourage him or her. Perhaps 2♣ (majors) over INT or double otherwise. N/S can win the part-score contest in spades, but not if south meekly passes!

Board 19. Dealer South. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ J 10 9 7 5 2 ♥ 9 7 ♦ 10 8 4 3 ♣ 8</p> <p>♠ K 8 6 3 ♥ K 6 ♦ 7 6 2 ♣ A 9 7 6</p>	<p>♠ A Q ♥ Q J 8 4 3 2 ♦ 9 5 ♣ Q J 3</p>
---	--

♠ 4
♥ A 10 5
♦ A K Q J
♣ K 10 5 4 2

Does N bid 1♠ over 1♣ from S? I would, though not everyone's cup of tea I know. Minus 50 or 100 beats 140 by E/W in hearts. A bid may even keep E/W out of the bidding. If not, E/W will play a heart partscore (or even game) and N/S will need to defend well and find their club ruff to hold this to 9 tricks.

Board 20. Dealer West. Vulnerability All

<p>♠ 9 5 4 3 ♥ 10 7 6 4 ♦ 9 ♣ 10 5 4 2</p> <p>♠ 7 ♥ A K Q J 9 8 2 ♦ 2 ♣ A Q J 9</p>	<p>♠ K Q 2 ♥ 5 3 ♦ A J 8 7 6 5 ♣ 8 6</p>
---	--

♠ A J 10 8 6
♥ —
♦ K Q 10 4 3
♣ K 7 3

W may open 2♣ with a decent chance of 10 tricks in his own hand, but all routes should lead to 4♥, and occasionally slam.

The singleton ♦ is the most troublesome lead against 6♥ and declarer must win, take an immediate ♣ finesse, cash ♣A, and ruff a club. Hooray, the K falls, so draw trumps and claim. The alternative, (and not unreasonable) line of a ♠ after ♣Q holds, will be a disaster. S will win and lead a ♦, promoting a trump for N. Useful to have a bad luck story for the bar to explain a poor score though. "Trumps didn't have to be 4-0....."

Board 21. Dealer North. Vulnerability N/S

<p>♠ J 6 ♥ A J 7 5 4 ♦ J 10 3 2 ♣ J 6</p> <p>♠ K 9 2 ♥ Q 3 2 ♦ A K 9 4 ♣ Q 5 4</p>	<p>♠ 8 7 3 ♥ 9 8 6 ♦ 7 ♣ A K 10 9 8 3</p>
--	---

♠ A Q 10 5 4
♥ K 10
♦ Q 8 6 5
♣ 7 2

A 3♣ opening second in hand will work well for E/W. S should not bid 3♠ opposite a passed partner, but a few will. If W finds a double, that will be +500. If S passes 3♣, W should pass also and an easy +110 will result.

A very pushy 3NT from W will fall foul of a ♥ lead (not the Ace with no entry) for a quick 2 off. What the 3NT bid deserved, I'm afraid.

Board 22. Dealer East. Vulnerability E/W

<p>♠ 10 9 6 ♥ K 10 3 ♦ A 6 5 2 ♣ 5 4 3</p> <p>♠ A J 4 3 2 ♥ A 6 5 4 ♦ 9 ♣ K 8 2</p>	<p>♠ K Q 5 ♥ Q 7 2 ♦ 10 4 ♣ A Q J 9 7</p>
---	---

♠ 8 7
♥ J 9 8
♦ K Q J 8 7 3
♣ 10 6

Most will be seduced by spades and play 4♠. A routine 11 tricks unless N leads a ♥, allowing the Q to score. A 26 point 6♣ can be made but is hard to bid. ♦K then a ♥ and declarer will win the ace, arrange to ruff a ♦ and throw two hearts on the long spades. Slightly different on an initial ♥ lead. Win the A, draw trump, throw 2 ♦s on long spades then a ♥ towards the Q. A little more testing, but should be found by declarer.