

1

♠ 9854
♥ Q8642
♦ A
♣ J92

♠ J106
♥ KJ103
♦ J874
♣ A7

♠ Q32
♥ 75
♦ 10632
♣ 10543

♠ AK7
♥ A9
♦ KQ95
♣ KQ86

Dealer: North
Neither Vulnerable

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

It looks like south will be in 3NT after opening 2NT and failing to have three hearts or four spades. West's best lead is a diamond, removing a dummy entry.

With the club knave an entry declarer can either play for the spades to divide, or for the heart king to be onside, the latter a better shot - 50% vs 36%.

Some could make ten tricks by doing both, or getting clubs right. It is hard to see many light in this one.

2

♠ AK7542
♥ K2
♦ A9
♣ A107

♠ Q86
♥ A75
♦ J8752
♣ Q3

♠ 9
♥ 1083
♦ K1063
♣ 96542

♠ J103
♥ QJ964
♦ Q4
♣ KJ8

Dealer: East
N-S Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	3	-	5	6	6
S	3	-	5	5	4
E	-	1	-	-	-
W	-	1	-	-	-

Again, we should have most in the same spot, 4♠ by north after he opens his suit and south has respectable values plus three card support.

With hearts conveniently 3:3 and east unable to profitably lead diamonds at the start everyone should make either eleven or twelve tricks depending on their trump view.

With no good reason to do other than play for the drop I suspect it will be pretty flat at 650 N/S.

3

♠ A862
♥
♦ AKQ32
♣ K962

♠ 974
♥ AKJ8642
♦ 65
♣ 7

♠ Q53
♥ Q95
♦ 1098
♣ Q543

♠ KJ10
♥ 1073
♦ J74
♣ AJ108

Dealer: South
E-W Vulnerable

	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT
N	7	7	-	7	-
S	7	7	-	7	-
E	-	-	1	-	-
W	-	-	1	-	-

Even at adverse vulnerability west is worth a 3♥ preempt, north doubling. South could well pass with his balanced hand, and the 500 penalty should be a decent board.

Should south not pass north's double N/S will probably find themselves in a game somewhere. With no wasted heart values it is actually possible for N/S to make all thirteen tricks in any of three denominations, finessing east for both black queens. However, few north's will advance to slam opposite a passed partner.

Will anyone get 510 in spades, or bring home a slam to beat the penalties?

4

♠ 6
♥ A107652
♦ K62
♣ 863

♠ A85
♥ 9843
♦ A53
♣ A92

♠ 932
♥ QJ
♦ Q87
♣ KQ1054

♠ KQJ1074
♥ K
♦ J1094
♣ J7

Dealer: West
Both Vulnerable

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

West's weak N/T could see south electing for 2♠ in 4th seat, and this should get home, just losing the obvious five tricks. A 1♣ opener could also see the same contract, whether east responds 1NT or an inverted 2♣. E/W actually do better to advance to 3♣, where they should be defeated, but the small penalty cheaper.

An opening pass may work better for west, certainly if north opens a Multi or Weak 2 in hearts. South now has the Hobson's choice of playing or watching partner go light in hearts, or advancing with a forcing 2♠ or 2NT, as appropriate, and getting too high.

5

♠ KJ1084
♥ 74
♦ 972
♣ Q85

♠ 752
♥ Q1052
♦ J64
♣ J64

♠ AQ
♥ AKJ63
♦ K53
♣ 1032

♠ 963
♥ 98
♦ AQ108
♣ AK97

Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

East's 1♥ might be doubled by south, though this is thin without four spades, and vulnerable opposite a passed partner. West could bounce in hearts, getting E/W overboard. Where south passes and west does as well north may not protect with his 6HCP, allowing east to chalk up 110.

North protecting with his very thin 1♠, or south doubling is much better for N/S, where they manage 110 themselves, despite the trump finesse losing, but with friendly lies elsewhere.

East could be passed out in a strong NT occasionally. This looks as if it should be held, but an overtrick is possible should south lead a diamond.

6

♠ 853
♥ 643
♦ K3
♣ 98632

♠ J97
♥ 72
♦ AQJ8
♣ AQ104

♠ 1062
♥ KJ9
♦ 7652
♣ K75

♠ AKQ4
♥ AQ1085
♦ 1094
♣ J

Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

Again we might have a vulnerable double of an opponent's 1♥ without four spades, though here E/W shouldn't get into serious trouble, unlikely to be doubled in 2♦, where they can scrape seven tricks, losing 100.

A west double could make it awkward for N/S to play in their heart fit, though south has enough to bid again, despite north's pass over the intervention.

Declaring hearts south can record a remarkable eleven tricks when dummy turns up with a diamond trick and a ruffing entry, both needed to pick up the nicely positioned trumps. Spades 3:3 is the icing on the cake.

Will anyone better 200 N/S by bidding the lucky game?

7

♠ A83
♥ AJ82
♦ 105
♣ 10975

♠ KQ96
♥ 10
♦ QJ62
♣ AQJ3

♠ 2
♥ KQ974
♦ A9874
♣ K8

♠ J10754
♥ 653
♦ K3
♣ 642

Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

There could be those getting to 5♦ as E/W when east has 5 card support for his partner's first bid suit. However, exploration should show that west has spades held and east a heart suit. It being Pairs the 3NT game will be the spot for most.

3NT could be held to nine tricks where east declares, south leading a small spade to the queen and ace, and the suit returned.

However, I reckon west will often declare after a FSF 2♣, and north will lead a club. The best the defence can do now is get their aces and diamond king.

5♦ can go down, but it does need the defence to take the spade ace at trick 1, so most will survive. They get a poor score anyway, beaten by the 430s.

8

♠ A65
♥ Q9
♦ AJ976
♣ QJ5

♠ K72
♥ AJ85
♦ K32
♣ 1092

♠ 84
♥ 1064
♦ 104
♣ A87643

♠ QJ1093
♥ K732
♦ Q85
♣ K

Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

N/S should play in 4♠, by north after a weak NT and transfer, by south where north opens 1♦, and either raises spades or rebids 1NT.

Orthodox wisdom is that the no trump opener should declare, the lead being up to his likely tenaces. Today, 4♠ plays better by south, where the defence cannot stop him accessing hand for the trump finesse, even if it means ruffing a winning club.

Where north declares a heart can go to the knave and queen. With no quick entry to dummy declarer tries club. But east pops up with the ace, and the heart 10 through the king forces north to ruff, promoting west's trump king. Indeed, unless the diamond 10 is felled declarer goes light in this tricky enough hand where there could be a fair few minuses.

9

♠ 984
♥ QJ93
♦ A1096
♣ A2

♠ K32
♥ 10876
♦ 83
♣ QJ73

♠ A65
♥ A5
♦ Q754
♣ K1065

♠ QJ107
♥ K42
♦ KJ2
♣ 984

Dealer: North
E-W Vulnerable

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

East could well declare 1NT, after either opening the weak variety or rebidding it having started with 1♦. On the spade queen lead six tricks appear to be the limit.

At green, south might overcall 1♦ with 1♠, and end up in 2♠ when north takes him seriously. This spot can make as many as nine tricks if the defence fail to get a diamond ruff.

Occasionally, north will deem his 11HCP worthy of a weak NT or 1♦ opener, the likely result 1NT by north. On a club lead this has six losers, but declarer could make more should the defence fail to lead the suit in time.

So east losing 100 in 1NT may may be a decent enough board, N/S often exceeding this declaring.

10

♠ 1065
♥ 7
♦ AK10943
♣ J62

♠ Q74
♥ AKJ1094
♦ J86
♣ A

♠ 93
♥ 6532
♦ 75
♣ Q8754

♠ AKJ82
♥ Q8
♦ Q2
♣ K1093

Dealer: East
Both Vulnerable

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

N/S can make game in either spades or diamonds, but could easily languish in part-score when west overcalls south's 1♠ with 2♥. North has a spade raise playing 5 card majors, and a 2♠ bid may be best anyway, he a bit thin for a forcing 2♦. Those who do stretch to 2♦ could get there, but may not.

With Qx in west's suit many south's will not be keen to advance, missing the borderline game. When the trump queen fails to drop this needs the defence to be unable to get two club tricks. Holding all the other tops west cannot access east for a club lead anyway, even had he held the queen, and the diamonds dispose of the remaining clubs after west makes his trump.

Another triumph for those who bid them up.

11

♠ Q98
♥ 103
♦ J765
♣ A954

♠ 2
♥ A8
♦ A943
♣ K108762

♠ A73
♥ KQ9742
♦ Q102
♣ Q

♠ KJ10654
♥ J65
♦ K8
♣ J3

Dealer: South
Neither Vulnerable

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

A spade Weak Two by south and a north raise could make it tricky for east to introduce his hearts, whether or not west overcalls in clubs. The Multi is less likely to get the job done, east introducing the suit at the three level, or doubling a "pass or correct" north 3♥ advance.

4♥ is far from straightforward anyway. A club has to be ruffed to establish the suit, and trumps cannot be drawn at the start, as they are needed as dummy entries, and to ruff a spade. Well done anyone who succeeds in this mighty ticklish contract.

5♣ is maybe easier, though declarer has to give up both trump losers before running hearts. The defence are unable to lead diamonds to advantage against either game, the losers ultimately going away on the established side suit.

12

♠ J
♥ K104
♦ KQJ94
♣ 10543

♠ 1052
♥ Q97532
♦ 5
♣ J92

♠ Q964
♥ A6
♦ 86
♣ AK876

♠ AK873
♥ J8
♦ A10732
♣ Q

Dealer: West
N-S Vulnerable

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

N/S have a 5♦ contract, made by ruffing spades good and guessing hearts correctly.

In practice, getting to this spot could be awkward when east opens 1♣. Playing Michaels, or absent any two-suited agreement, south has to overcall 1♠, and this could end it at some tables. A club lead forces south, who can be held to seven tricks.

North could try 1NT over 1♠, or east may bid again giving south another go. Some play Ghestem or Questem where two specific suits can be shown over an opener, finding the diamond fit.

Though E/W have a profitable save in hearts west is too weak for a Multi or Weak Two, so the suit will rarely get an airing. Will many actually get to and make 5♦?

13

♠ AQ4
♥ Q9
♦ Q863
♣ 9864

♠ K87
♥ KJ76
♦ K1054
♣ J10

♠ J10962
♥ 1032
♦ A92
♣ Q5

♠ 53
♥ A854
♦ J7
♣ AK732

Dealer: North
Both Vulnerable

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

A thin west double of south's 1♣ could cause problems for E/W when north jumps to 2NT, a sound club raise. Should east feel obliged to bid spades serious minus territory looms.

Where south's 1♣ could be short north probably redoubles instead. Now E/W are only at the 1 level, and unlikely to be punished.

Rather than declare clubs some N/Ss could find the no trump strain, where they can make a rather lucky nine tricks. Clubs divide, the spade finesse works, and the heart queen is a trick, if the defence haven't already set up the diamond queen.

In practice the straightforward 130 in clubs might be near enough the top of the traveller.

14

♠ A1093
♥ 4
♦ Q102
♣ 105432

♠ Q4
♥ A10763
♦ K43
♣ A98

♠ J8752
♥ J85
♦ AJ7
♣ KQ

♠ K6
♥ KQ92
♦ 9865
♣ J76

Dealer: East
Neither Vulnerable

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

E/W are likely to find 3NT or 4♥, whether or not east opens his ugly hand 1♠, a weak NT or passes.

The stakes are high in 4♥ - with two top spade losers declarer cannot afford two trump losers. He can play south for a doubleton honour - low to the 10, then play the ace - or south for the heart 9, plus at least one top honour, by running the knave, then the 8.

The two lines offer close odds, the latter the winner today. It is maybe better anyway, as south may not cover with a doubleton honour, particularly if the queen.

3NT looks a better bet, with triple stops in both minors. Even if declarer plays a low heart to the 10, then the ace there is still time to set up the fifth heart before the opponents can get at five tricks.

15

♠ AQ92
♥ KJ975
♦ 53
♣ K2

♠ 10753
♥ 64
♦ Q9642
♣ 63

♠ K86
♥ Q1083
♦ 87
♣ AQ98

♠ J4
♥ A2
♦ AKJ10
♣ J10754

Dealer: South
N-S Vulnerable

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

This looks like 3NT again, probably played by south, who could open a weak NT or 1♣. The only non-damaging lead by west is a heart, though a diamond looks more normal.

Some will now make overtricks when they continue with a club to the king and ace - it is wrong to run the knave, losing out to a doubleton queen in east. Winning the club ace east can get out with a diamond but is in trouble when the spade knave is run to the king, best being a low club to south's knave. Declarer now has nine tricks for sure, and can finesse the spade 9 for a tenth, though this is risky.

In practice some will get into trouble by playing on hearts, and could well go light on this start, the suit lying poorly, dummy entries being limited,

16

♠ A4
♥ J4
♦ AJ762
♣ Q532

♠ Q8763
♥ 9652
♦ 3
♣ 864

♠ K52
♥ KQ3
♦ Q985
♣ K97

♠ J109
♥ A1087
♦ K104
♣ AJ10

Dealer: West
E-W Vulnerable

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

This could be a hat trick of 3NT contracts when north opens 1♦ and either rebids 2♣ or his off-shape 1NT over south's 1♥. Over the former south is best to try 2♣, FSF, north bidding 2NT and south raising.

The benefit of the short honour declaring is apparent here, there being two spade stops with east on lead, only one with west on play. Declarer can still make 3NT on a west spade lead, but has to run the club queen, luckily finding the suit 3:3 and the king onside. Then the diamond 10 needs finessed, after north is accessed in diamonds for the last club winner.

So there should be a fair few souths light, and ten tricks a serious rarity. Ten looks the limit, even by north, unless someone proves me wrong.

17

♠ Q843
 ♥ 52
 ♦ 9863
 ♣ Q63
 ♠ K102
 ♥ 63
 ♦ AQ5
 ♣ AJ754
 ♠ 975
 ♥ K9874
 ♦ K42
 ♣ K2
 ♠ AJ6
 ♥ AQJ10
 ♦ J107
 ♣ 1098

 Dealer: North
 Neither Vulnerable

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

South's Weak NT could buy it, unless east is feeling adventurous in the pass-out seat. West's club lead should see the defence take at least eight tricks, possibly nine, though the difference between +100 and +150 could be crucial.

Where south opens 1♣ this runs to east, who protects with 1♥. West likely plays 1NT, maybe 2NT. A dutiful north club lead is a disaster, nine tricks certainly resulting. A spade gets the money, holding a no trump spot to seven tricks, unless declarer has second sight, running the club knave, keeping north off lead.

Remarkably, east can make 2♥, should he ever be there, ruffing a club, cashing diamonds and eventually making his heart king on an endplay.

18

♠ J108762
 ♥ 984
 ♦ K76
 ♣ A
 ♠ AQ94
 ♥ AJ753
 ♦ J9
 ♣ K3
 ♠ K
 ♥ Q106
 ♦ AQ1085
 ♣ J1054
 ♠ 53
 ♥ K2
 ♦ 432
 ♣ Q98762

 Dealer: East
 N-S Vulnerable

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

E/W could be in 4♥ or 3NT on this one. With all the finesses working and the red suits dividing there are twelve tricks even without having to guess clubs.

It looks like a little care is needed with entries, but even if hearts are run before diamonds, without cashing west's spades, declarer can still make a dozen if he guesses clubs. North has to win his bare club ace and cede black tricks to west.

It looks like twelve tricks for the vast majority, the no trumps on top.

19

♠ Q52
 ♥ AQJ86
 ♦ 863
 ♣ A3
 ♠ A104
 ♥ A10975
 ♣ Q10752
 ♠ KJ3
 ♥ K9753
 ♦ 42
 ♣ 964
 ♠ 9876
 ♥ 1042
 ♦ KQJ
 ♣ KJ8

 Dealer: South
 E-W Vulnerable

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

A north Weak NT is presumably passed out, few wests having the mechanism to show a minor two suiter. East's heart lead works out poorly, running to the 8, declarer now able to establish eight tricks.

West can double where south responds 1♠ to north's alternative 1♥ opener, getting his two suits over. East may not be keen on declaring a club contract, but he can manage nine tricks if everything is done perfectly.

Should E/W succeed in finding their part-score N/S are surely booked for a minus, as a heart won't be led against 2NT, and the alternative 2♥ or the Moysian 2♠ should be beaten.

A fun part-score, various results possible.

20

♠ J73
 ♥ 543
 ♦ Q8732
 ♣ Q7
 ♠ K1065
 ♥ Q
 ♦ J10
 ♣ K98643
 ♠ AQ2
 ♥ KJ62
 ♦ 965
 ♣ A102
 ♠ 984
 ♥ A10987
 ♦ AK4
 ♣ J5

 Dealer: West
 Both Vulnerable

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

N/S can take the first six tricks against east's weak NT, though in practice south may well lead a heart rather than a top diamonds, the result eleven tricks instead.

South could intervene with hearts and west elect to play in clubs, which he may anyway, even without any intervention. E/W's club contract should easily score 130, losing just the obvious three top tricks.

Where east opens 1♣ south almost certainly bids hearts. No trumps could still ensue, but now south might find the winning lead. More likely E/W will play in clubs.

A possible triumph for the weak no trump, racking up 210 at some tables?

21

♠ 6
♥ KQ2
♦ Q92
♣ A96532

♠ K982
♥ 986
♦ 104
♣ KQJ8

♠ AQJ43
♥ AJ43
♦ K53
♣ 4

♠ 1075
♥ 1075
♦ AJ876
♣ 107

 Dealer: North
N-S Vulnerable

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

East is better overcalling north's 1♣ with 1♠ rather than doubling, since with equal major suit length west would choose hearts, getting to the worse fit.

As the cards lie, E/W should play in spades whatever east does. There is some danger of getting too high, though west will not be impressed with his holding in north's suit, and should back-pedal.

The defence can take three quick tricks in the minors, then cannot be denied a heart. It looks as if north could be squeezed between hearts and clubs, but declarer hasn't the entries to execute this.

It looks pretty flat in 140 E/W, unless some E/Ws over-reach to game, or some N/Ss get too high in clubs.

22

♠ 2
♥ KQ1084
♦ Q98
♣ AK72

♠ AQ84
♥ J7
♦ K106
♣ 9865

♠ K96
♥ A932
♦ J54
♣ QJ3

♠ J10753
♥ 65
♦ A732
♣ 104

 Dealer: East
E-W Vulnerable

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

North's 4th seat 1♥ could be passed out, though west can double, east presumably electing for 1NT. This is beaten on the lead of a low diamond, but a spade or heart looks more normal, it now probably scraping home, though diamonds may need to be guessed correctly.

Declaring 1♥ declarer makes at least three trumps, two diamonds and two clubs. Indeed, it requires a spade lead to west, then heart switch and continuation to hold the contract to seven tricks, declarer otherwise getting a club ruff or an extra trump.

Small scores either way look the order of the day.

23

♠ K4
♥ 7642
♦ AKQ43
♣ 105

♠ Q10987
♥ QJ3
♦ 1092
♣ J8

♠ 65
♥ AK1098
♦ 65
♣ AQ72

♠ AJ32
♥ 5
♦ J87
♣ K9643

 Dealer: South
Both Vulnerable

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

This looks like a battle of the red suits, east overcalling north's 1♦ with his hearts. South probably doubles initially, but north has nowhere to go except his own suit. West could support to 2♥, pushing N/S to the 3 level, since 2♥ should make, east ruffing the third diamond and leading a low club towards the knave.

An east trump lead at trick 1 is required to hold 3♦. Admittedly, on a heart lead and trump switch declarer has to play on clubs, ruffing the suit good, as well as getting a heart ruff in south along the way. Trumps can be pulled and dummy accessed in spades. Only two hearts and a club are lost.

Well done anyone getting 130 on this one.

24

♠ AKJ654
♥ J9862
♦ Q
♣ 4

♠ Q103
♥ AK10
♦ KJ5
♣ J1095

♠ 872
♥ Q4
♦ A873
♣ KQ62

♠ 9
♥ 753
♦ 109642
♣ A873

 Dealer: West
Neither Vulnerable

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

At love all nobody will resist showing spades or the majors over west's weak NT. As in #21 the former is wiser, even a 6:1 spade fit better than a 5:2 heart one.

Nine tricks look there in either major, However, an improbable diamond lead and continuation at every opportunity forces declarer, making eight tricks the limit in either. A more orthodox club lead gives declarer time to work on his side suit and record 140.

E/W will rarely find their club part-score where west has opened 1NT, but might where west has opened a 5 card major 1♣, whether north overcalls Michaels or 1♠. Despite the trump break nine tricks are available, but even eight represent a good save against the N/S part-score, and could push them to the 3 level, where in theory they go minus.

25

♠ KQ9
 ♥ J973
 ♦ 862
 ♣ 643
 ♠ A753
 ♥ K
 ♦ AJ5
 ♣ KQ852
 ♠ J42
 ♥ AQ54
 ♦ KQ73
 ♣ J9
 ♠ 1086
 ♥ 10862
 ♦ 1094
 ♣ A107

 Dealer: North
 E-W Vulnerable

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

When east opens a weak NT west knows of a maximum of 31HCP and should limit his ambitions to game after Stayman elicits the wrong major. It is essentially the same when east opens a 5 card major 1♦, rebidding 2NT over west's 2♣. Here, west can use Checkback lest east has four spades. He hasn't, so 3NT should ensue whatever system is played.

With the club suit behaving there are twelve tricks, unless the defence lead a spade. Where this is found they are unlucky that north has both honours, eleven tricks unstoppable. 3NT could conceivably have been beaten had south five spades to the honour/10 plus the club ace, so there is a case for playing the ace, hoping to block the suit. This would backfire spectacularly were north to unblock, then turn up with the club ace. Anyone taking this "safety play" today is held to 430.

26

♠ Q
 ♥ AQ76
 ♦ AJ63
 ♣ 10742
 ♠ KJ108764
 ♥ K3
 ♦ K107
 ♣ 6
 ♠ A53
 ♥ J85
 ♦ 942
 ♣ AQ85
 ♠ 92
 ♥ 10942
 ♦ Q85
 ♣ KJ93

 Dealer: East
 Both Vulnerable

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

Should north double west's 3rd seat 3♠ opposite a passed partner, both vulnerable? It looks dangerous to me, but some may. The result is likely to be the loss of several 100, probably in hearts.

Where E/W do get contracting for spades, as most will, the poor lie of the cards mean that they should be held to nine tricks, losing four in the red suits.

This could be expensive where east has opened light, and west presses to game. 4♠ needs either the heart king inside, or for the defence to establish a heart or club for declarer, then find the diamond ace well positioned. No joy this time around.

27

♠ AK875
 ♥ A2
 ♦ AQ9863
 ♠ Q43
 ♥ Q6
 ♦ K10965
 ♣ 1042
 ♠ A10852
 ♥ 103
 ♦ J7
 ♣ KJ75
 ♠ KJ976
 ♥ J942
 ♦ Q843
 ♣

 Dealer: South
 Neither Vulnerable

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

North has 4½ Quick Tricks, so could open 2♣. However, if he now bids 3♣ it could make it awkward to find the heart fit if south then bids spades, as he likely will. It is perhaps better to open 1♣, then reverse into hearts, if necessary rebidding the suit.

Where N/S do get playing in hearts declarer cannot afford to play trumps first up, instead must ruff three clubs low, without cashing the ace, using the red aces and a spade ruff as entries. When trumps subsequently drop he only loses a diamond.

Indeed, 4♥ is the only making game, never mind slam, on best defence, so those not finding the fit could finish minus.

28

♠ J10876
 ♥ 642
 ♦ A95
 ♣ K5
 ♠ Q
 ♥ Q9
 ♦ KJ3
 ♣ AJ108743
 ♠ 53
 ♥ AKJ8753
 ♦ Q74
 ♣ 6
 ♠ AK942
 ♥ 10
 ♦ 10862
 ♣ Q92

 Dealer: West
 N-S Vulnerable

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

I suppose a brave north or south might bid spades, despite the adverse vulnerability, but most of the time west will open and rebid his clubs over east's 1♥. Strictly speaking an east 3♥ jump is not now forcing after a simple 1 level response. So many will rebid 4♥, a spot they are destined to get to anyway as west can raise a 3♥ bid.

With south having both spade tops and only one trump declarer cannot be prevented from ruffing a spade in dummy, recording eleven tricks.

So we finish with another flattish board, but there were plenty of others far from flat, with opportunities both ways. It is hoped they were enjoyed.

Ave HCP	N 9.96	S 10.04	E 10.00	W 10.00	Balanced	N 12	S 14	E 17	W 15
Voids/singletons	N 2/11	S 1/7	E 0/6	W 1/10	7+ suit	N 0	S 0	E 1	W 3