



# **The Celtic Nations**

## **Simultaneous Pairs**



Fostering our Celtic links

**Set D**

**Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd April 2016**

Hosted by:-

Northern Ireland Bridge Union

**Commentary by Ian Hamilton**

Northern Ireland Camrose player and winner of every major NIBU trophy

1

♠ 1096  
 ♥ A  
 ♦ KJ6  
 ♣ J108542  
 ♠ Q52  
 ♥ 108732  
 ♦ 82  
 ♣ Q96  
 ♠ K74  
 ♥ QJ96  
 ♦ A1054  
 ♣ K7  
 ♠ AJ83  
 ♥ K54  
 ♦ Q973  
 ♣ A3

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

East's weak NT could be a winner here, silencing south, and buying it in 2/3♥ after a transfer. North might protect with 3♣ over 2♥ passed round, but it is very hard for N/S to get to 4♣ over a 3♥ transfer break.

East's heart contract should be held to seven tricks on passive defence. However, minus 50-100 compares favourably with the part-score available to the opposition, and some may even succeed in going plus.

5 card majors open 1♦ as east, allowing south to double or try a thin 1NT. East's club holding allows north to record 130 declaring clubs after a double. South's 1NT will likely be raised, but should manage eight tricks, even on heart lead, thanks again to the club situation.

West is almost certainly frozen out of the auction where south intervenes, the heart suit never bid.

2

♠ 9  
 ♥ J84  
 ♦ AQ1075  
 ♣ KQ84  
 ♠ KJ76  
 ♥ KQ75  
 ♦ KJ64  
 ♣ 6  
 ♠ AQ1084  
 ♥ A62  
 ♦ 832  
 ♣ J9  
 ♠ 532  
 ♥ 1093  
 ♦ 9  
 ♣ A107532

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

E/W should declare 4♠ here, whether east opens light, or west opens in 3rd seat. West's correct opener in Acol is 1♥, but some could start with 1♠ and declare.

With south on lead the singleton diamond lead should lead to defeat unless north elects to preserve his cards over dummy's diamonds, and fails to deliver south a 3rd round ruff. Declarer ultimately sheds a diamond on the 4th heart and manages ten tricks.

Where west rarely declares a club top can be overtaken for the diamond switch, but with west's hand hidden this defence will not be found that often.

In theory this is a good game to miss, but in practice many will succeed, the conservatives in part-score losing out.

3

♠ 10  
 ♥ AQ97  
 ♦ A  
 ♣ K1076542  
 ♠ J98  
 ♥ J1083  
 ♦ 975  
 ♣ AJ8  
 ♠ A654  
 ♥ 52  
 ♦ 108632  
 ♣ Q9  
 ♠ KQ732  
 ♥ K64  
 ♦ KQJ4  
 ♣ 3

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

With no playable fit except clubs many will declare 3NT. The best lead is south's second suit, diamonds, though some will lead what may be the unbid heart suit.

North needs to win the red suit lead and try a spade, which east must duck, or the whole suit is good. Declarer now has the entries to get clubs going, and could easily emerge with eleven tricks if the defence fail to cash out.

I suppose some might muddle the play and go light, so we could have anything from eight to twelve tricks attained by N/S on this hand with awkward entry problems, frequently the case with misfits.

4

♠ A1072  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ A963  
 ♣ A853  
 ♠ KJ  
 ♥ AQ753  
 ♦ 75  
 ♣ J1097  
 ♠ Q8543  
 ♥ 92  
 ♦ KJ1082  
 ♣ Q  
 ♠ 96  
 ♥ KJ1064  
 ♦ Q4  
 ♣ K642

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

A light west 1♥ opener will find north doubling, and a competitive auction ensue, E/W buying it in spades or N/S in clubs. East can manage to score eight tricks in spades if he guesses diamonds correctly, losing the equivalent of two diamonds, a club and two trumps.

Where west passes north opens a diamond, and may well declare either 1NT or clubs, undisturbed. The successful defence to 1NT is unfindable, east requiring to start with the heart 9, then west switch to the club 7. I will be surprised if any go light.

Declaring clubs declarer should be able to establish a heart trick, an extra diamond, then cross-ruff, managing eight tricks, in this interesting complex hand with both sides in with chances of a plus declaring or defending.

5

♠ 1075  
 ♥ 86  
 ♦ AQJ52  
 ♣ 632

♠ KQ94  
 ♥ Q1052  
 ♦ 876  
 ♣ 84

♠ AJ86  
 ♥ K97  
 ♦ K93  
 ♣ AK7

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Whether he opens an Acol 1♠, 5 card major 1♣ or, with his 4:3:3:3 shape, downgrades to a strong NT south should still declare 3NT.

A diamond lead leads to an easy nine tricks, with outside chances of ten, should east come under pressure on the run of clubs - he needs to keep a diamond.

A passive lead may lead to defeat, declarer not guessing the heart position, and east getting on lead in both hearts and spades to lead diamonds.

So we could have a few minuses recorded by N/S in this potentially closely fought contract.

6

♠ 9865  
 ♥ A2  
 ♦ AQ10  
 ♣ J865

♠ AK107  
 ♥ 975  
 ♦ 7632  
 ♣ 72

♠ QJ32  
 ♥ KQ643  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ Q93

♠ 4  
 ♥ J108  
 ♦ KJ985  
 ♣ AK104

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

After responding 1♠ to south's 1♦ north has the option of raising the 2♣ rebid, alternatively trying 2NT, either presumably passed out.

Today south can make eleven tricks in clubs, when trumps break, and the queen is onside. Even if declarer plays trumps from the top after ruffing the second spade the same tricks eventuate, an extra ruff now available.

This hand illustrates one of the relatively rare instances that the 4:4 fit is superior to the 5:3, there only being ten tricks available in diamonds, declarer forced in spades.

Well done anyone getting to game in clubs. The other possible game, 3NT, also makes, spades being 4:4 and the clubs playing for at least three tricks without loss. However, it offers worse odds than the minor suit game.

7

♠ KJ8  
 ♥ J7  
 ♦ J654  
 ♣ QJ62

♠ 6  
 ♥ Q10964  
 ♦ Q1032  
 ♣ 975

♠ Q1042  
 ♥ AK82  
 ♦ K97  
 ♣ K10

♠ A9753  
 ♥ 53  
 ♦ A8  
 ♣ A843

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

When north raises south's 1♠ it makes it hard for east to get into the auction, though with spade shortage marked opposite, perhaps some might risk a double, today landing on their feet in 3♥.

North's Acol 1NT response (though 2♠ is perhaps better) fixes east too. North could correct the 2♣ rebid to 2♠, pass or raise clubs. If passed out, 1NT is several light.

Declaring spades declarer should manage to restrict his losers to a club, trump and three red suit tricks, though the defence might score a second trump trick.

Club contracts have the same losers, so those at the two level should survive. Where E/W manage to get into the auction their 3♥ spot depends on finding the diamond knave, unless north splits his club honours, setting up west's 9 for a diamond pitch.

8

♠ 96542  
 ♥ 4  
 ♦ A82  
 ♣ 10962

♠ AKQ103  
 ♥ AK9  
 ♦ 65  
 ♣ Q87

♠ 7  
 ♥ QJ87632  
 ♦ K93  
 ♣ K4

♠ J8  
 ♥ 105  
 ♦ QJ1074  
 ♣ AJ53

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

East is just about worth 2♥ over west's 1♠, and may struggle to get the brakes on when west has 18HCP and good support.

He is perhaps lucky that west has no easy bid over 2♥, he probably temporising with 3♣, but having no cue bid over 3♥, since 3♠ sounds more like an attempt to emphasise the suit. RKCB does the job, but is unsound with a low doubleton in a side suit.

Some may survive in 6♥, since the aces are divided and must be taken immediately, there being otherwise enough pitches available on dummy's spades. However, I expect a lot of 450s on the card, and few in slam, making or otherwise.

9

♠ K97  
 ♥ 85  
 ♦ Q987  
 ♣ 10864  
 ♠ J2  
 ♥ AKJ107  
 ♦ KJ53  
 ♣ J9  
 ♠ Q10  
 ♥ 9643  
 ♦ A1064  
 ♣ Q73  
 ♠ A86543  
 ♥ Q2  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ AK52

Dealer: North  
E-W Vulnerable

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

This competitive hand should see north supporting his partner's spades, though a few may think they have insufficient ammunition. East supports west's hearts, leaving both sides to judge level.

The Law of Total Tricks (the sum of both sides longest fits) suggests it is safe to bid to the level of your fit, so over 3♥ south, knowing of at least a 9 card fit should advance to the (easily making) 3♠.

I can see few west's outbidding this, looking at a lot of losers. Those brave enough, and undoubled, can get out for minus 100, but need to get diamonds right, plus set up a club trick, lucky south has both honours.

My money is on a lot of 140s N/S, the boss suit winning out over E/W's 3 level part-score, with few allowed to declare it.

10

♠ A43  
 ♥ 842  
 ♦ 10  
 ♣ AK10983  
 ♠ K105  
 ♥ AJ75  
 ♦ QJ842  
 ♣ J  
 ♠ 92  
 ♥ K6  
 ♦ K9753  
 ♣ Q765  
 ♠ QJ876  
 ♥ Q1093  
 ♦ A6  
 ♣ 42

Dealer: East  
Both Vulnerable

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

It looks as if west will open 1♦ in 3rd seat and north overcall 2♣. East should be happy to support to the 3 level, making it awkward for N/S to get a plus score, 3♦ being an easy make, with just four losers. Indeed, a wrong switch by north after the club ace opening lead could allow an overtrick.

A pre-emptive jump to 3♦ by east will almost certainly remove both south's majors from the equation, but he may get bidding spades over a 2♦ raise, and be allowed to play 3♠, where he can notch up four trumps, the minor winners and a diamond ruff, losing just 100.

In the unlikely event of north declaring 4♣ he only gets close if he forces out east's trump queen, and the opponents fail to cash out hearts when he later plays a spade to the queen.

11

♠ AJ852  
 ♥ AJ2  
 ♦ 108  
 ♣ Q73  
 ♠ Q109743  
 ♥ 87  
 ♦ A52  
 ♣ 42  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ K964  
 ♦ QJ93  
 ♣ AK96  
 ♠ K  
 ♥ Q1053  
 ♦ K764  
 ♣ J1085

Dealer: South  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Where west opens a Multi or Weak Two in spades it looks as if 2♠ will eventuate E/W, east declaring in the Multi sequence. North will feel like doubling for penalties, if systemic, but may regret it if he does.

With the helpful fall of the diamond 10 and the heart ace onside, declarer can avoid more than four trump losers and a heart, scraping home.

Where north gets to open 1♠, east doubles, and south is best to bid 1NT. Redouble is ill-advised opposite a 3rd seat opener, and is liable to result in a minus.

Declaring 1NT declarer may read west's short diamond ace and escape with five minor suit losers and a heart. So we could have scores both ways on this, yet another competitive offering.

12

♠ KQ2  
 ♥ A62  
 ♦ J8752  
 ♣ 86  
 ♠ 1086  
 ♥ J3  
 ♦ KQ64  
 ♣ Q1072  
 ♠ AJ4  
 ♥ Q109854  
 ♦ A10  
 ♣ K3  
 ♠ 9753  
 ♥ K7  
 ♦ 93  
 ♣ AJ954

Dealer: West  
N-S Vulnerable

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

East might rebid 2♥ or stretch to 3♥ over west's 1NT response to 1♥. However, west is unlikely to advance with his soft values.

Declaring hearts east shouldn't lose more than the top trumps, a spade and a club, and may do better, south perhaps leading the club ace, and failing to find an early enough spade switch, declarer eventually ditching his spade losers on dummy's winners.

It is not impossible that some souths will lead a diamond and manage a diamond ruff holding declarer to 110, but this looks improbable, north having no entry except the heart ace, in which case the ruff is with the trump king.

13

♠ QJ8  
 ♥ A1086  
 ♦ 109  
 ♣ AQ105  
 ♠ A10963  
 ♥ 5432  
 ♦ AK  
 ♣ 74  
 ♠ 7542  
 ♥ KJ  
 ♦ 742  
 ♣ K862  
 ♠ K  
 ♥ Q97  
 ♦ QJ8653  
 ♣ J93

 Dealer: North  
 Both Vulnerable

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

We could have either side declaring part-scores here, N/S managing to buy it in either 1NT, or more likely in diamonds, perhaps after a transfer. West has just enough to double or bid 1♠ over south's 1♦ response to north's 5 card major 1♣, finding the spade fit for E/W.

Declaring spades nine tricks are there via a cross-ruff if hearts are correctly guessed, and no more than two rounds of trumps get played - but most will make fewer.

To prevent nine tricks defending diamonds E/W need to either set up both east's kings before the spade ace is dislodged, alternatively organise a heart ruff.

Against 1NT the defence cannot get both kings and their spades so long as declarer plays on diamonds, eventually accessing dummy via either the club knave or the heart queen. However, many will tackle hearts or clubs first and should then go light.

14

♠ KJ952  
 ♥ K9  
 ♦ A5  
 ♣ KJ32  
 ♠ A104  
 ♥ AQ743  
 ♦ K6  
 ♣ A94  
 ♠ Q73  
 ♥ J82  
 ♦ Q984  
 ♣ Q86  
 ♠ 86  
 ♥ 1065  
 ♦ J10732  
 ♣ 1075

 Dealer: East  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Where west opens 1♥ and north overcalls 1♠ E/W will probably finish in 2NT, west either raising east's 1NT, or bidding it himself over a 2♥ raise. West cannot be prevented from making nine tricks, south never on lead. Where east declares a dutiful spade lead helps set up five defensive winners.

West may have a strong NT available, which will backfire on this hand, north intervening with spades, or spades and a minor. East has insufficient to compete, though a few might double, and west can hardly introduce hearts at the 3 level.

North's 2♠ should manage to scramble six tricks, thanks to any east lead helping, and both black suits breaking. The small penalty should be a decent board. North is fortunate that a couple of west's points are not with east, or he would surely have been doubled, losing 300.

15

♠ 983  
 ♥ KJ65  
 ♦ 32  
 ♣ Q974  
 ♠ 106  
 ♥ A9732  
 ♦ 964  
 ♣ KJ5  
 ♠ AQ754  
 ♥ 8  
 ♦ J85  
 ♣ A832  
 ♠ KJ2  
 ♥ Q104  
 ♦ AKQ107  
 ♣ 106

 Dealer: South  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Allowed to declare his strong NT south should make eight tricks, the defence unable to stop declarer making his diamonds and two hearts, plus another heart or a black trick.

At favourable vulnerability east could well compete with his spades and may be able to muster six or seven tricks, losing 50-100, less than the opposing part-score.

Playing Acol east is less likely to buy it, south rebidding 1NT over north's 1♥ and east's overcall, and usually being passed out. A few brave east's might bid again, trying 2♣ in the protective seat when 1NT comes round, but now the preference to 2♠ is likely to be doubled, resulting in the loss of at least 100.

This looks like another hard-fought battle.

16

♠ 652  
 ♥ 109  
 ♦ J32  
 ♣ K8762  
 ♠ KQ74  
 ♥ K852  
 ♦ A654  
 ♣ 5  
 ♠ J1098  
 ♥ AJ64  
 ♦ K10  
 ♣ QJ9  
 ♠ A3  
 ♥ Q73  
 ♦ Q987  
 ♣ A1043

 Dealer: West  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

E/W should find 4♥ here, after either west's 1♦ or Acol 1♥ opener. Some Acol wests will play in 4♠ having incorrectly opened 1♠. Declaring either major declarer should manage to ruff two minor losers in one or other hand, losing just a club and a trick in each major suit.

Some wests might get a trump lead against 4♥, setting up the 8. Two diamonds can now be ruffed using a spade as an entry. Should the defence fail to get a compensating spade ruff declarer can now manage eleven tricks for a great board. The doubleton heart lead also should get the trick back via a ruff in 4♠, but may not.

In truth, it looks like a lot of 620s E/W, with few managing the extra trick, which requires a heart lead and the absence of a ruff.



17

♠ A107  
 ♥ K102  
 ♦ J10632  
 ♣ 93  
 ♠ 8  
 ♥ 753  
 ♦ AQ  
 ♣ AQJ10752  
 ♠ KQJ952  
 ♥ AQ8  
 ♦ K8  
 ♣ 86  
 ♠ 643  
 ♥ J964  
 ♦ 9754  
 ♣ K4

Dealer: North  
Neither Vulnerable

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

Some E/W pairs will go minus on this one, either getting too high or being the victim of best defence.

It takes a diamond lead to sink 4♠, declarer having to commit one or other hand to winning the next diamond trick. When the trump ace is taken north then plays the relevant minor to destroy the threat of dummy's clubs.

East's 5♣ is beaten on a heart lead, the spade winners not set up in time. The only making game is everyone's favourite spot, 3NT, declarer managing at least six club tricks and three red winners.

Generally it is best to declare the 6:1 major game, but with so many HCP, some wasted, the NT game looks a better bet, and I reckon will be declared by many.

18

♠ QJ964  
 ♥ A75  
 ♦ AJ  
 ♣ 865  
 ♠ A  
 ♥ K1042  
 ♦ 976532  
 ♣ AQ  
 ♠ K1032  
 ♥ 986  
 ♦ 4  
 ♣ 109742  
 ♠ 875  
 ♥ QJ3  
 ♦ KQ108  
 ♣ KJ3

Dealer: East  
N-S Vulnerable

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

North will protect with 1♠ when east's 1♦ comes round. South is perhaps soundest to simply bid 1NT. Protective evaluation is normally that of imagining holding an extra king in your hand when protecting, and subtracting one when responding to a protective call. However, holding a triple diamond stop 2NT by south is not unreasonable, and north will surely add the extras. He may anyway.

Against no trumps, played by south, west could find a heart lead, holding declarer to eight tricks. In the unlikely event of north declaring nine tricks are always there should declarer manage his entries correctly, and play spades to advantage.

South's no trumps should prove better than north's spades, a west diamond ruff holding spades to eight tricks, and the trump break making it awkward anyway.

19

♠ KJ953  
 ♥ Q85  
 ♦ AK6  
 ♣ 76  
 ♠ 10764  
 ♥ 72  
 ♦ Q2  
 ♣ QJ1084  
 ♠ A1093  
 ♥ J10975  
 ♦ AK92  
 ♠ AQ82  
 ♥ KJ64  
 ♦ 843  
 ♣ 53

Dealer: South  
E-W Vulnerable

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

North's 1♠ will find east doubling and south raising, probably via 2NT, which conventionally shows a high card raise to at least 3♠. North could advance, or he may settle for part-score, put off by his flat distribution.

Declaring spades north should be held to five trumps, two hearts and two diamond tricks, nine in all, unless east delivers a ruff and discard or plays the heart ace early on air.

The alternative north weak NT may well be passed out, and can be held to seven tricks. However, on a normal diamond lead, followed by five spade winners, east seriously struggles with discards and it may not be at all clear to discard hearts and a diamond, then win the heart ace immediately and cash clubs.

20

♠ K1095  
 ♥ A87  
 ♦ AJ7432  
 ♠ A6  
 ♥ K10974  
 ♦ KJ4  
 ♣ KQ9  
 ♠ Q74  
 ♥ J865  
 ♦ 953  
 ♣ 1086  
 ♠ J832  
 ♥ AQ32  
 ♦ Q1062  
 ♣ 5

Dealer: West  
Both Vulnerable

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

West's strong NT may well be passed out, and is a close run thing on a club lead. South needs to switch to a spade, not a diamond, when he gets the lead in hearts, for north to win the king and continue clubs.

An Acoll 1♥ could be doubled by north or overcalled 2♣. Whether or not east makes a thin raise the former allows N/S to declare their spade fit.

Defending south's spade contract west is really stuck on opening lead. Whatever he does declarer should be able to get clubs going, and chalk up ten or eleven tricks.

Some could declare clubs as north. With east on lead the defence should be able to manage a diamond as well as two tricks in each black suit, for a much inferior N/S score.

21

♠ 7432  
 ♥ K764  
 ♦ 93  
 ♣ KQ2

♠ 96  
 ♥ 1083  
 ♦ A82  
 ♣ AJ1065

♠ Q85  
 ♥ Q9  
 ♦ KQ105  
 ♣ 8743

♠ AKJ10  
 ♥ AJ52  
 ♦ J764  
 ♣ 9

 Dealer: North  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

North will bid 1NT over south's 1♦. Acol souths open 1♥, over which north could again try 1NT, bid a thin 2♣, conceivably raise hearts. All sequences should end in either north playing 1NT or south 2♥.

East has a variety of unattractive or losing leads available against 1NT, and with the majors lying well, nine or even ten tricks may eventuate.

Hearts theoretically play better, but west is on lead, and could select a diamond, won by east. Unless declarer finesses the spade return he is unlikely to manage more than 140 in this interesting part-score.

22

♠ 754  
 ♥ J942  
 ♦ 7  
 ♣ K6532

♠ QJ98  
 ♥ Q1076  
 ♦ Q865  
 ♣ 7

♠ A103  
 ♥ 53  
 ♦ KJ1032  
 ♣ J109

♠ K62  
 ♥ AK8  
 ♦ A94  
 ♣ AQ84

 Dealer: East  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

North will rarely pass south's 2NT, instead will look for a major suit fit, but settle in 3NT when none is found.

With north presumably promising something in at least one major, but only revealing his suit in a Puppet Stayman sequence, west has a difficult lead. Few will find the diamond, which should lead to defeat so long as the defence do not block the suit.

Blessed with a heart lead ten tricks are possible by running clubs, then playing a spade to the king. A spade opening lead should hold 3NT to nine tricks.

Note that declarer needs to be careful running clubs, playing the ace, queen then 8 to dummy's king. Otherwise an embarrassing blockage occurs, and the contract goes down the Suwannee.

23

♠ KQJ96432  
 ♥ KJ8  
 ♦ 2  
 ♣ A

♠ A87  
 ♥ 9642  
 ♦ KQ4  
 ♣ 632

♠ 5  
 ♥ AQ  
 ♦ AJ986  
 ♣ KQJ104

♠ 10  
 ♥ 10753  
 ♦ 10753  
 ♣ 9875

 Dealer: South  
 Both Vulnerable

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

North will surely open either 4♠ or occasionally the 4♦ transfer pre-empt, South African Texas. Unless very wimpish east has a 4NT overcall, usually played as an unspecified two-suiter.

Although he has some nice cards west will rarely bid more than 5♣, the cheapest suit he is happy to play in. So the pre-empt will have done its job of keeping E/W out of their possible slams, both cold when the heart finesse succeeds, no minor suit ruff is possible, and if declaring clubs, a trump promotion avoided by playing trumps from west.

I suppose some may get pushed into 6♣/♦ should north ill-advisedly bid again, but the defence are more likely to double, collecting 500, when 1370 was available.

24

♠ K954  
 ♥ Q  
 ♦ J984  
 ♣ KJ43

♠ Q8  
 ♥ 109832  
 ♦ AK7  
 ♣ A62

♠ AJ62  
 ♥ 754  
 ♦ Q52  
 ♣ Q85

♠ 1073  
 ♥ AKJ6  
 ♦ 1063  
 ♣ 1097

 Dealer: West  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

West's weak NT is likely to end the auction, and could well make eight tricks on the likely spade lead, though is held to seven tricks on best defence.

5 card Majors open 1♥, which systemically east should raise, though with his flat shape bidding 1♠ and passing west's 1NT rebid is a reasonable alternative.

In theory eight tricks are the limit in 2♥, but dummy may well win an early trick and play a heart. There could easily be a number of red south faces when they play a top honour, crashing their partner's queen, and ceding 140, on this exhibit where par is 110 E/W.

25

♠ AJ1032  
 ♥ 109652  
 ♦ 8  
 ♣ A6  
 ♠ KQ94  
 ♥ A  
 ♦ AKJ976  
 ♣ 75  
 ♠ 875  
 ♥ QJ43  
 ♦ 1053  
 ♣ 843  
 ♠ 6  
 ♥ K87  
 ♦ Q42  
 ♣ KQJ1092

 Dealer: North  
 E-W Vulnerable

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

Few will get to 3NT by south even if north opens light. This makes double dummy, even on a club lead, west getting squeezed by clubs, given the lead with the heart ace, and forced to cede an extra spade or diamond.

More likely is a south 1♣ opener, overcalled 1♦. North is better bidding 1♠ and later 2♥, rather than making a Sputnik double, which suggests less extreme length in the unbid suits.

A N/S club or heart part-score look like the final resting places, perhaps at the rather uncomfortable 3 level.

Nine tricks are possible in both double dummy, maybe easier in hearts on a cross-ruff. In clubs, declarer needs to get hearts right, but only an improbable trump lead makes it difficult. However, some will undoubtedly misread the distribution and go minus.

26

♠ J432  
 ♥ KJ9  
 ♦ Q643  
 ♣ 43  
 ♠ A75  
 ♥ A83  
 ♦ J85  
 ♣ K986  
 ♠ KQ98  
 ♥ Q102  
 ♦ A7  
 ♣ AJ52  
 ♠ 106  
 ♥ 7654  
 ♦ K1092  
 ♣ Q107

 Dealer: East  
 Both Vulnerable

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

This looks like a universal 3NT, probably declared by east after either his strong NT or Acol 1♠. Declarer should be held to nine tricks, but there is scope to go light or make overtricks.

On a diamond lead declarer is best to play clubs, not spades, first relieved that diamonds prove to be 4:4 after south wins his queen. Whatever the defence play next the clubs and the heart ace result in a "show-up" squeeze on north, he unable to keep the heart king and 4 spades.

Some souths will lead a heart, and north switch to diamonds after winning his king. Declarer now has to get the black suits right. Best is to try to drop the club queen, then test spades. When south plays the 10 on the second round, Restricted Choice favours finessing north for the knave.

27

♠ QJ63  
 ♥ 2  
 ♦ AK93  
 ♣ AQ104  
 ♠ 974  
 ♥ K54  
 ♦ Q10876  
 ♣ 75  
 ♠ AK85  
 ♥ 9863  
 ♦ 5  
 ♣ 9832  
 ♠ 102  
 ♥ AQJ107  
 ♦ J42  
 ♣ KJ6

 Dealer: South  
 Neither Vulnerable

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

Again we should have a 3NT spot, though this time declared N/S, whether south opens a weak NT or a 5 card major 1♥.

The defence can collect only the top spades and the heart king, so long as declarer preserves his entries to south, playing hearts before running clubs.

Some could manage eleven tricks when west starts with a diamond, and subsequently fails to find the spade shift. However, it looks like the vast majority will have 430 on the card in either the plus or minus column.

28

♠ 1086  
 ♥ Q10763  
 ♦ AQJ3  
 ♣ 3  
 ♠ AQ3  
 ♥ J2  
 ♦ 72  
 ♣ KQ10972  
 ♠ KJ972  
 ♥ 85  
 ♦ 1084  
 ♣ AJ5  
 ♠ 54  
 ♥ AK94  
 ♦ K965  
 ♣ 864

 Dealer: West  
 N-S Vulnerable

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

Whatever system west plays he is better raising west's 1♠ response to 1♣, rather than rebidding clubs or his (weak) NT. There is now every chance that E/W will buy it, though south could risk a protective double should 2♣ or, more comfortably 2♠, come round to him.

It will be interesting to see how many N/Ss manage to get declaring hearts here, where ten tricks are cold thanks to the perfect fit, but where the declaration may very well be stolen by the adverse opener.

Should N/S defend they need to cash out accurately to take their four defensive tricks, or declarer could make up to eleven tricks.

Yet again we have a competitive part-score hand, rather a theme on this set, where succeeding in declaring will usually result in a favourable score.

Ave HCP	N 9.89	S 10.11	E 9.96	W 10.04	Balanced	N 13	S 13	E 15	W 14
Voids/singletons	N 1/14	S 0/10	E 1/9	W 0/7	7+ suit	N 2	S 0	E 2	W 0