

Hand 1 north has a 2-suited hand but with nine points should pass. East has only nine points but a decent six card suit. He can convey the strength and the shape by bidding a weak two diamonds should make five diamonds to aces and a club. South could be very brave and overcall this with two spades. Which should make a couple of red kings, four spades and two clubs. West might well bid to know trumps but this and all higher contracts fail.

Hand 2 South has a rather grotty 13 points with flat shape and poor intermediates, but should open one no-trump. West has to pass. No should probably hope that one no-trump is the right contract as game is on likely there are too few high cards. He could gamble Stayman intending to raise spade's or otherwise bid to know trumps. When South response showing spade's North might raise invitationally. South will pass. Self must manage the trumps carefully, roughing his heart losers before drawing trumps.

Hand 3 South will open this 14 point hand with a bid of one heart even though he can see his rebid may be awkward if partner comes back clubs. We explored which bits were and weren't foreseen. Robson recommends that the sequence like this, one of a suit (showing a hand meeting rule of 20) with two of a suit response (showing a hand meeting Rule of 14) should be forcing to 2 no trumps. Actually, north who doesn't meet rule of 14 will bid one no Trump which South will probably pass. West leads the 8 of clubs and when south shows out on the second round knows East started with 5. Now, the switch to a spade captures to spades and therefore the first seven tricks taking the contract off. Otherwise South can make ace and king of hearts and five diamonds.

Hand 4 No-ones hand here is worth an opening bid, so hand four should be passed out. On the night, two of the Easts chose to open and were lucky not to be dragged out of their depth by West.

Hand 5 North has 17 high card points: with the sterile 3334 shape and the poor in intermediates, this is a bad 17. If North had a choice of suits he would open clubs with clubs and diamonds, a major with a major and a minor, or hearts with heart and spade's. Here he opens one diamond, his only 4-card suit, planning to rebid no trumps as cheaply as possible. South will probably pass but could just possibly bid one no-trump with the good intermediates making him value his hand as worth six HCP: North would pass. Seven tricks looks easy eight if you couldn't guess the Queen of clubs correctly. That's worth 90 or 120 points on the score. So today it would have been wise for east to overcall his rather marginal 16 HCP hand with one no-trump, making only six tricks but ceding only 50 for going one off.

hand 6 West has a nice 16 high card points. He opens one diamond rather hoping to play in no trumps. North overcalls in clubs: his suit meets the suit quality test being five cards long with three honours, good enough to bid at the two level, $5+3=8$ tricks. That's the highest making contract. Any sacrifice by EW loses more than 90. Beware the vulnerability on part score hands!

Hand 7 at the table, south probably opened 1D and West overcalled 1H, passed out. All West's made 9 tricks, the best possible result, according to Deep Finesse.

Hand 8 west's hand meets Rule of $19:8+7+4$. The choice is 1D, on a minimum hand planning to rebid 2D unless partner mentions hearts, or 3D, preemptive but hiding the playable hearts. As the cards lie, 4H makes (losing one each of C, H, S) so 4S by N, one off, is a good save, even doubled, and north might well bid it over any number of diamonds from west. Note that a weak 2D by west would be an error: bid 1 for meeting rule of 19 or 3 for the length: don't split the difference!

Hand 9 East's 11 points easily meets rule of 20. With 5H & 5S, open spades. South hasn't quite the quality to bid 2H, but might stretch a point with the favourable vulnerability. If west has to bid 3C, that partnership is overboard, though 2S makes with a heart ruff to supplement the five spades and two aces. Note that spades break 4-2 which is likeliest when 6 are out.

Hand 10 it is usually worth passing minimum 4441 hands, so east does. South is too good for a preempt so opens 1D. North just meets rule of 14 but 2D is a poor bid (weak suit, marginal hand) : 1S is better. Two honours in partners suit improve the south hand so he should bid 3D, though 2D with a bit in hand is also ok. Over 2D, North bids 2NT and south raises. Over 3D, north bids 3NT. 3D is a safe contract, but at pairs a gamble of 3NT is often profitable, as pair 1 proved.

Hand 11 this is an interesting hand. East-west can make four spades (use the web site to explore declarer plans), north-south can make five clubs losing just two aces. We haven't worried much about competitive auctions. This auction might go 1S by west (how did pair five get to play 1H?), 2S by north (a Michaels cue bid showing the other major and a minor, at least 5-5). West, with LTC=8, has enough for 3S and south might bid NT to ask about north's minor suit. West may bid 4S to obscure the answer but with seven (count them) clubs, north has enough spare to bid 5C. EW have half the points, but 5C should make. Pair 1 might want to explore alternative plans, probably focussing on drawing trumps, necessary on this hand but by no means always. Alastair word, on very shapely hands, it can be hard to make a penalty double payment as pair 4 found.

Hand 12 in olden times, before weak twos, this hand might have been passed out. Today, after W passes, N opens 2D. East has too few points and too little shape to compete. With a singleton D but 6H, south should probably correct to 2H (non-forcing and obviously hating diamonds: after a weak two the only forcing bid is the artificial, forcing, 2NT). It's hard to make 2H, though Deep Finesse says it should!

Hand 13 west would surely open 1NT. But after two passes, south should take action: though his hand does meet rule of 20 the rebid over a likely 1S response is problematic: I might open 2D, third in hand, for preemptive effect. Luckily, NS don't have a heart fit and EW have too little to compete. Evidently, at the table, south passed, west bid 1NT and apparently two easts unwisely tried Stayman (what will you do if partner responds 2D with neither major?) 2S is a good save against 2D+1 unless doubled.

Hand 14 with balanced hands and 26 points, all pairs found 3NT. A reasonable unopposed auction is 1H, 1S, 1NT, 3NT. **Homework:** try alternative plans to make 3NT, preferably with an overtrick. There are only 6 top tricks but almost too many prospects.

Hand 15 another hugely interesting hand! NS can make a slam in diamonds or spades so in a perfect world EW should save, by bidding a failing slam of their own in C or H. (That's what the "optimum" box on the web site is telling you.) In the real world, south opens 1S and west's suit is too weak to compete. North meets rule of 14 so can bid at the two level, 2D. He can take comfort in the knowledge that south either has more than four spades or has more than 14 points, or both. Think about why you know this, and ask me if unsure. Wow! Partner has around ten points and five diamonds: how to proceed? This two over one sequence is forcing to 2NT, recall hand 3. 3D may be enough now, north will keep the ball in play with 3S, showing three card support (with four he would have shown support immediately). Although slam in D or NT can make, it only does if declarer rightly guesses who might hold Qxx of diamonds. Note that if east doubles, declarer will probably guess right! The hope of an extra 100 costs over a thousand! Moral, don't double slams if that might help declarer. In the real world, game is enough. Prefer the ten-trick spade contract to the eleven trick diamond contract, though this time an inspired lead to AH might win a diamond ruff.