

MICHAEL CODA CUP 2015

Commentary on Hands by Colin Juneman

<p>Unless North has very fanciful ideas about weak 2s, East will open 1D and South, being unable to double with a singleton spade, should content himself with 1H for now. West will bid 1S and North should bid 2H; South will surely now make a game try but should subside in 3H. This can be beaten on trump leads but I am sure that most Wests will lead their singleton diamond and then the contract should make, even if West obtains a ruff. 140 will be a reasonable score for NS while EW will be happy with any plus score.</p>	<div><div><div>1</div><div>♠ A10965 ♥ J65 ♦ 7 ♣ Q1095</div><div>5 7 13 15</div></div><div><div>♠ KJ742 ♥ 972 ♦ 10852 ♣ J</div><div>♠ Q8 ♥ 108 ♦ KJ964 ♣ AK82</div><div>♠ 3 ♥ AKQ43 ♦ AQ3 ♣ 7643</div></div><div><div>♣♦♥♠NT</div><div>N - 1 2 1 1 S - 1 2 1 1 E 1 - - - W 1 - - -</div></div></div>
<p>Even if West makes a very light 1S overcall (light even at the vulnerability), NS should have a smooth run to 4H, though North might prefer to try 3NT. Finding the QH will determine whether 11 or 12 tricks are made in 4H; 3NT can potentially make the same tricks, but not if the defence finds a spade attack.</p>	<div><div><div>2</div><div>♠ KQ953 ♥ Q6 ♦ 7654 ♣ 96</div><div>13 7 5 15</div></div><div><div>♠ A1062 ♥ K97 ♦ J32 ♣ KQ4</div><div>♠ J84 ♥ 854 ♦ 1098 ♣ A873</div><div>♠ 7 ♥ AJ1032 ♦ AKQ ♣ J1052</div></div><div><div>♣♦♥♠NT</div><div>N 5 3 6 - 4 S 5 3 6 - 4 E - - - - W - - - -</div></div></div>
<p>There are those who might open 3C as South, over which North has the opportunity to bid 3NT (3S is pointless), which will play very well on the likely diamond lead. Alternatively, North will open 1S to which South should respond 1NT, not being good enough for 2C; North then has a choice of a direct 3NT or 3S, which South should, on balance, raise to 4S. Making 4S will probably be a reasonable score and making 10 tricks in 3NT should score very well. Failure to bid game (eg South passing 3S) should give EW a good score.</p>	<div><div><div>3</div><div>♠ A92 ♥ K8764 ♦ 1075 ♣ J3</div><div>18 8 7 7</div></div><div><div>♠ KJ8764 ♥ AQJ ♦ K6 ♣ A8</div><div>♠ Q5 ♥ 1032 ♦ AJ843 ♣ 1052</div><div>♠ 103 ♥ 95 ♦ Q92 ♣ KQ9764</div></div><div><div>♣♦♥♠NT</div><div>N 5 - - 4 4 S 5 - - 4 4 E - - - - W - - - -</div></div></div>
<p>East will open 1D or a strong 1NT. Over the latter, West will bid Stayman and subside in 2NT. Over 1D, West will bid 1H which North, as a passed hand, can afford to double; East will bid 1NT, but South can try 2S opposite his partner's double. West might then settle in 3D. Good defence will defeat either 2NT or 3D, whereas 2S can make on a (likely) correct heart view, so – despite EW having the balance of the points – they will probably do well if they emerge with a plus score.</p>	<div><div><div>4</div><div>♠ A4 ♥ Q854 ♦ Q984 ♣ 1082</div><div>10 8 15 7</div></div><div><div>♠ K965 ♥ K106 ♦ 73 ♣ A543</div><div>♠ Q103 ♥ A93 ♦ AKJ5 ♣ J97</div><div>♠ J872 ♥ J72 ♦ 1062 ♣ KQ6</div></div><div><div>♣♦♥♠NT</div><div>N 1 - - 2 - S 1 - - 2 - E - 2 1 - 1 W - 2 1 - 1</div></div></div>

After a start of 1D – 1H – 2C, it is not at all clear what West should do! Several may try a substandard 2NT, which East will raise to game; on the best lead of a club by North, declarer may struggle to find his ninth trick, though there is a slow one available in spades. Others may prefer to rebid 2H as West, for which there should ideally be a sixth heart in a weaker hand; if this prompts East to push on with 3H, then West can now try either 3NT or 4H. Making either game contract should not be a bad score.

5	♠ A982 ♥ 743 ♦ KQ32 ♣ 73	<i>Dir: N</i> <i>Vul: N-S</i>
♠ Q1075 ♥ AK1092 ♦ 9 ♣ 862	♠ 43 ♥ QJ ♦ AJ874 ♣ AK104	
9 9 15 7	♠ KJ6 ♥ 865 ♦ 1065 ♣ QJ95	♣♦♥♠NT N - - - - S - - - - E 3 2 4 3 3 W 3 2 3 3 3

It is borderline but, as all the honours are in the two suits, I would open 1H as East, to which West will respond 1S. North has a good enough hand to double now and bid diamonds later; East will raise to 2S and, despite the void in partner's suit, West's distribution might tempt him to try 4S. North is now far more likely to try 5D than to find the winning double. 5D going quietly one down will probably be quite a popular score; congratulations to any EW who finds the defence to take it two down! Even if East passes initially, he should double North's 1D opener and now the same spade / diamond competition will occur so either side should be happy with a plus score; if East has passed, there might even be a case for North opening 3D fourth in hand (though he is far too strong really), to ensure everyone passes and he obtains a plus score!

6	♠ 8 ♥ K53 ♦ AKJ9843 ♣ A4	<i>Dir: E</i> <i>Vul: E-W</i>
♠ AJ974 ♥ ♦ 65 ♣ J108532	♠ KQ63 ♥ AQ987 ♦ 107 ♣ 76	
15 6 11 8	♠ 1052 ♥ J10642 ♦ Q2 ♣ KQ9	♣♦♥♠NT N - 3 3 - 1 S - 4 3 - 1 E 1 - - 3 - W 1 - - 3 -

Over South's 1H, most Wests will bid 1NT, though there is a good case for passing, given that 8 of the 15 points are in opener's suit. North should double 1NT and now East will wriggle out, giving partner a choice between diamonds and spades if system allows. Conservative Norths will settle in 3C but the bolder ones will try 3NT, successfully, thanks to 10C dropping as the singleton. As there are likely to be some 200 penalties from 2S*, making 3C may not score that well.

7	♠ Q8 ♥ 92 ♦ Q8 ♣ KQJ9752	<i>Dir: S</i> <i>Vul: Both</i>
♠ 104 ♥ AKJ8 ♦ K105 ♣ A843	♠ J9732 ♥ 53 ♦ J9643 ♣ 10	
10 15 2 13	♠ AK65 ♥ Q10764 ♦ A72 ♣ 6	♣♦♥♠NT N 3 - 2 - 3 S 3 - 2 - 4 E - 2 - 1 - W - 2 - 1 -

A likely sequence is 1H – 2D – 2H – 4H, though at Pairs, the odd South might try 3NT. 4H plays very well on a cross-ruff, provided the fourth spade is ruffed with 10H, and 11 tricks in that contract should give a good score. 3NT will make, but is likely to produce fewer tricks.

8	♠ A1086 ♥ AKJ85 ♦ 10 ♣ 1062	<i>Dir: W</i> <i>Vul: None</i>
♠ Q54 ♥ 963 ♦ J964 ♣ J84	♠ J972 ♥ Q7 ♦ K72 ♣ KQ73	
12 4 11 13	♠ K3 ♥ 1042 ♦ AQ853 ♣ A95	♣♦♥♠NT N 3 3 6 3 4 S 3 3 6 3 4 E - - - - - W - - - - -

This, of course, all hinges on how EW deal with a weak 2H opener by South. West must surely start with a double and – playing Lebensohl, East will respond 2NT probably intending to pass 3C! West may, however, cut his losses and take a stab at 3NT, which makes when QD comes down. Interestingly, if EW are not playing Lebensohl, forcing East to respond 3C or 3D, an inspired (is that the right word?) West might just take a punt at a minor suit slam, either of which makes! Even if South doesn't open 2H and West is allowed to open the big hand, it is still not easy to bid a slam without gambling at some point, though a possible sequence might be 2D –

9	♠ QJ43 ♥ Q72 ♦ 965 ♣ QJ8	<i>Dir: N</i> <i>Vul: E-W</i>
♠ A96 ♥ A ♦ AK32 ♣ AK952	♠ K5 ♥ 853 ♦ J1087 ♣ 7643	
8 22 4 6	♠ 10872 ♥ KJ10964 ♦ Q4 ♣ 10	♣♦♥♠NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 6 6 - - 3 W 6 6 - - 3

2H (or 2C – 2D) – 3C – 4C (or 3D, looking for 3NT) – 4D cue bid (or 4H splinter over 3D). Now East, having shown nothing to this stage, could choose to cue-bid KS, which is enough for West to bid the slam.

East will open 1H; I don't like a vulnerable 2C overcall on South's bare hand though, if the bid does come, North would be justified in trying 2NT, over which East might try 3D, probably ending the bidding. If South passes over 1H, West will bid 1S, East bids 2D and West converts to 2H even though, on this occasion the diamond contract will probably produce an extra trick. If EW can make 110 in either red suit, that should be a reasonable score; NS will be pleased with a plus score.

Either South (3D or a weak 2D) or West might open but, in most cases, it will be left for North to open 1S or a strong NT. In the latter case, South should bid 3NT on the strength of the diamond suit. That contract will make except on the likely heart lead; interestingly, it should be one down if declarer wins trick 1 (blocking the suit) or ducks twice, but two down if declarer wins the second heart! 1S – 2D – 2NT – 3NT leads to the same contract, as would an opening weak diamond bid by South. Even if West chances to open 1S, North will probably bid 1NT and then find himself in the same 3NT contract, with even better chances, as he will probably receive a spade lead and there seems little reason for West to find a heart switch. It is less obvious for North to bid 2NT over a Lucas 2S by West, but he will certainly bid 3NT if South protects with 3D. Hence it should be a very common contract!

West opens 1S, passed to South whose attempt to show a heart / club two-suiter will meet with little enthusiasm from North. The most likely result appears to be a 100 penalty from a 3-level contract, with neither East nor West managing to find a double, though they certainly should if NS continue their bidding discussion any further!

I assume East will open 2C or 2D and, as West, I have to admit that I would prefer to make the relay response (2D or 2H) rather than show a positive in diamonds without the A or K of the suit, though it certainly makes it much easier for East to insist on a slam if he has received a positive response. On the other hand, a 2C – 2D start does allow East to show his solid suit by bidding 3H, asking for cue-bids by way of response and it is then just as easy to get to slam. I can see very few Easts stopping short of 6H. Interestingly, if West gambles on trying 6NT, he might get away with it as North might be reluctant to lead AD, particularly if West has shown a diamond suit. Either black suit lead will produce 13 tricks in either contract.

10	♠ K1085 ♥ KJ9 ♦ K43 ♣ 972	<i>Dlr: E</i> <i>Vul: Both</i>
♠ Q7642 ♥ 62 ♦ 1065 ♣ QJ5	♠ 9 ♥ AQ1054 ♦ AQJ72 ♣ 108	
10 5 13 12	♠ AJ3 ♥ 873 ♦ 98 ♣ AK643	♣♦♥♠NT N 3 - - 1 1 S 1 - - 1 - E - 3 1 - - W - 3 1 - -

11	♠ J1042 ♥ A73 ♦ KJ6 ♣ AQJ	<i>Dlr: S</i> <i>Vul: None</i>
♠ AQ965 ♥ K10 ♦ 4 ♣ 108643	♠ 873 ♥ QJ85 ♦ 1053 ♣ K97	
16 9 6 9	♠ K ♥ 9642 ♦ AQ9872 ♣ 52	♣♦♥♠NT N - 3 2 - 2 S - 3 2 - 2 E 1 - - 1 - W 1 - - 1 -

12	♠ 65432 ♥ A7 ♦ KQ105 ♣ J9	<i>Dlr: W</i> <i>Vul: N-S</i>
♠ AKJ108 ♥ 42 ♦ A972 ♣ K5	♠ 7 ♥ QJ65 ♦ J864 ♣ 8643	
10 15 4 11	♠ Q9 ♥ K10983 ♦ 3 ♣ AQ1072	♣♦♥♠NT N 2 - 2 - - S 2 - 2 - - E - 1 - 1 1 W - 1 - 1 1

13	♠ 9654 ♥ 6 ♦ A654 ♣ Q875	<i>Dlr: N</i> <i>Vul: Both</i>
♠ K103 ♥ ♦ QJ9732 ♣ A632	♠ AJ ♥ AKQJ10852 ♦ 8 ♣ KJ	
6 10 19 5	♠ Q872 ♥ 9743 ♦ K10 ♣ 1094	♣♦♥♠NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 3 5 6 - 5 W 3 5 6 - 5

NS will probably bid something like 1S – 2D – 2H – 2NT – 3H – 3NT with a possible light 2C intervention by West. A club lead by East will always defeat this, as will a heart lead and diamond switch. As it happens, 4H has better chances, given the 3-3 break and QS being ruffed out on the third round, though a diamond lead and continuation when in with the first trump will leave declarer very nervous, and grateful for his good fortune with the distribution.

14	♠ A ♥ 82 ♦ AQ875 ♣ J8542	<i>Dir: E</i> <i>Vul: None</i>					
♠ Q32 ♥ KJ4 ♦ 94 ♣ KQ973	♠ 9876 ♥ 753 ♦ KJ632 ♣ 10						
11 11 4 14	♠ KJ1054 ♥ AQ1096 ♦ 10 ♣ A6	<table><tr><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr><tr><td>N 3 2 4 2 1</td></tr><tr><td>S 3 2 4 3 2</td></tr><tr><td>E - - - -</td></tr><tr><td>W - - - -</td></tr></table>	♣♦♥♠NT	N 3 2 4 2 1	S 3 2 4 3 2	E - - - -	W - - - -
♣♦♥♠NT							
N 3 2 4 2 1							
S 3 2 4 3 2							
E - - - -							
W - - - -							

If South opens a weak 2H, North should bid 2S – it can hardly be a worse contract than 2H! South should now re-evaluate his hand and raise to 3S, over which North will bid game. Provided declarer plays with the odds and drops QS, this contract will always make and, without trump leads, he can find enough ruffs in dummy to make 11 tricks.

15	♠ AJ10532 ♥ ♦ A54 ♣ A652	Dir: S Vul: N-S					
♠ 96 ♥ KQ82 ♦ Q86 ♣ K1094	♠ Q8 ♥ A74 ♦ J10732 ♣ J83						
13 10 8 9	♠ K74 ♥ J109653 ♦ K9 ♣ Q7	<table><tr><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr><tr><td>N 3 - 2 4 3</td></tr><tr><td>S 3 - 2 4 3</td></tr><tr><td>E - - - -</td></tr><tr><td>W - - - -</td></tr></table>	♣♦♥♠NT	N 3 - 2 4 3	S 3 - 2 4 3	E - - - -	W - - - -
♣♦♥♠NT							
N 3 - 2 4 3							
S 3 - 2 4 3							
E - - - -							
W - - - -							

It is entertaining to find a hand where EW can make 7C and the suit seems likely not to be bid! At the vulnerability and despite the poor suit, North will surely open 3H; East will double for take-out and there seem to be two possibilities. Either South will bid 4H, which West is very likely to double for penalties, or South will pass and West will bid 3NT. I can see no obvious reason for East to disturb either contract by bidding clubs, though – if he does – West is very likely to bid 6C but seems unlikely to bid 7C. If North, not liking his suit, decides to pass, East will open 1C and South may overcall 1S; West will need to ignore the heart suit and show a good raise in clubs and then the partnership should find the slam.

16	♠ J43 ♥ Q876532 ♦ QJ5 ♣	<i>Dir: W</i> <i>Vul: E-W</i>					
♠ 7 ♥ AJ94 ♦ 743 ♣ K10932	♠ AQ52 ♥ ♦ A102 ♣ AQ8764						
6 8 16 10	♠ K10986 ♥ K10 ♦ K986 ♣ J5	<table><tr><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr><tr><td>N - - 2 2 -</td></tr><tr><td>S - - 2 2 -</td></tr><tr><td>E 7 1 - - 3</td></tr><tr><td>W 7 1 - - 3</td></tr></table>	♣♦♥♠NT	N - - 2 2 -	S - - 2 2 -	E 7 1 - - 3	W 7 1 - - 3
♣♦♥♠NT							
N - - 2 2 -							
S - - 2 2 -							
E 7 1 - - 3							
W 7 1 - - 3							

I am not that keen on any opening bid here though, ironically, I prefer a third-in-hand 1S by South to a 1H opening by East which most will probably find. Over 1H – 1S, West may prefer 2H to 1NT but North will surely bid 2S in either case, and East can say nothing. If there is any bidding, EW should get a plus score (2S is easily defeated), so a throw-in would benefit NS; a plus score for NS will feel like gold dust.

17	♠ Q102 ♥ J53 ♦ K42 ♣ Q1063	<i>Dir: N</i> <i>Vul: None</i>					
♠ K875 ♥ KQ7 ♦ 876 ♣ J92	♠ J ♥ 10962 ♦ AQJ3 ♣ A854						
8 9 12 11	♠ A9643 ♥ A84 ♦ 1095 ♣ K7	<table><tr><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr><tr><td>N - - - -</td></tr><tr><td>S - - - -</td></tr><tr><td>E 3 3 3 - 2</td></tr><tr><td>W 3 3 3 - 2</td></tr></table>	♣♦♥♠NT	N - - - -	S - - - -	E 3 3 3 - 2	W 3 3 3 - 2
♣♦♥♠NT							
N - - - -							
S - - - -							
E 3 3 3 - 2							
W 3 3 3 - 2							

A 1S opening by South will attract a 2D overcall from West, which may be passed all round, as it is difficult for South to find a reopening double with a doubleton heart. If he does so, North will do better to pass for penalties than to bid 2H, though there is a good case for either. It is difficult to see NS finding their club fit, though 3C can be made. Any South who reopens by bidding 2S will deserve to suffer!

18	♠ 3 ♥ KJ87 ♦ Q1092 ♣ 10953	Dir: E Vul: N-S																														
♠ Q96 ♥ 642 ♦ AKJ76 ♣ A7	♠ K1074 ♥ A953 ♦ 53 ♣ J62																															
6 14 8 12	♠ AJ852 ♥ Q10 ♦ 84 ♣ KQ84	<table><tr><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>3</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr></table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	3	-	-	-	-	S	3	-	-	-	1	E	-	1	1	1	-	W	-	1	1	1	-
	♣	♦	♥	♠	NT																											
N	3	-	-	-	-																											
S	3	-	-	-	1																											
E	-	1	1	1	-																											
W	-	1	1	1	-																											

North will probably be unable to resist a minimal weak 2S and East can only bid 2NT which West will raise to 3NT. S should lead QS, which East will duck; North should win the spade continuation and, having no entry, may well switch to a heart. This switch – suggesting a lack of entry - will give East the clue to play diamonds through South and thus make his contract; playing to the Ace and running the 10 will be fatal. All this assumes that declarer has not gone for broke by hoping the clubs will run; if he does that, he will surely fail. Making 3NT will probably be a good score.

Without the 2S opener, EW will probably bid 1D – 2C – 2NT – 3NT and South will probably lead a heart; again, all will depend on how declarer tackles the diamonds.

19	♠ AJ9542	Dir: S																														
	♥ 1032	Vul: E-W																														
	♦ 73																															
	♣ 75																															
♠ 73	♠ K86																															
♥ J84	♥ AQ9																															
♦ A109	♦ Q6542																															
♣ A10864	♣ KQ																															
5	♠ Q10	<table><tr><th></th><th>♣</th><th>♦</th><th>♥</th><th>♠</th><th>NT</th></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>2</td><td>-</td><td>3</td></tr></table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	NT	N	-	-	-	1	-	S	-	-	-	1	-	E	3	4	2	-	3	W	3	4	2	-	3
	♣		♦	♥	♠	NT																										
N	-		-	-	1	-																										
S	-		-	-	1	-																										
E	3	4	2	-	3																											
W	3	4	2	-	3																											
9 16	♥ K765																															
10	♦ KJ8																															
	♣ J932																															

The bidding should be a simple 1H – 3H – 4H by EW, with a probable 2NT interference by North; only those Souths of suicidal tendencies will bid 5C. 4H makes a routine 11 tricks, though if EW somehow mistakenly find their way to 4S, they should be held to 10 tricks by the 4-1 break.

20	♠ K ♥ J3 ♦ A7642 ♣ AJ843	Dir: W Vul: Both					
♠ Q532 ♥ AQ107 ♦ KQJ9 ♣ 9	♠ AJ94 ♥ K985 ♦ 53 ♣ K65						
13 14 11 2	♠ 10876 ♥ 642 ♦ 108 ♣ Q1072	<table><tr><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr><tr><td>N 1 - - -</td></tr><tr><td>S 1 - - -</td></tr><tr><td>E - 2 5 4 2</td></tr><tr><td>W - 2 5 4 2</td></tr></table>	♣♦♥♠NT	N 1 - - -	S 1 - - -	E - 2 5 4 2	W - 2 5 4 2
♣♦♥♠NT							
N 1 - - -							
S 1 - - -							
E - 2 5 4 2							
W - 2 5 4 2							

If North chooses to open 1NT, this will be passed to West, who will bid 2H, It will then be South's turn to decide whether or not to compete with 3D, which could possibly provoke a 'Pairs' double from East. Equally, South may prefer his own 'Pairs' double of 2H; either should yield the priceless 200. If North opens 1S, South will do better to respond 1NT than 2D; West will bid 2H and North must avoid bidding 2S, which could prove very costly (500 or even 800) if doubled by East. Not many contracts will be made on this hand!

21	♠ AJ963 ♥ A4 ♦ 985 ♣ A52	Dir: N Vul: N-S					
♠ 542 ♥ KQ10865 ♦ J ♣ K104	♠ Q1087 ♥ 3 ♦ A1032 ♣ QJ96						
13 9 9 9	♠ K ♥ J972 ♦ KQ764 ♣ 873	<table><tr><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr><tr><td>N - 2 - - 1</td></tr><tr><td>S - 2 - - 1</td></tr><tr><td>E 1 - 1 - -</td></tr><tr><td>W 1 - 1 - -</td></tr></table>	♣♦♥♠NT	N - 2 - - 1	S - 2 - - 1	E 1 - 1 - -	W 1 - 1 - -
♣♦♥♠NT							
N - 2 - - 1							
S - 2 - - 1							
E 1 - 1 - -							
W 1 - 1 - -							

Although East's 10D is a crucial card enabling either 4H or 3NT to make, anyone doing so can count themselves very fortunate because the cards do not justify bidding game. If East opens a top-end weak 2H, this will be passed to North, who will probably play unsuccessfully in 3D; the likely 150 penalty might not prove a bad score! East is, however, much more likely to open 1H; West will bid 1S, East 2H, and then West may chance 2NT, which East can pass or sign off in 3H.

22	♠ KQJ ♥ KJ ♦ A98643 ♣ J8	Dir: E Vul: E-W										
♠ A10874 ♥ 97 ♦ KJ ♣ K543	♠ 93 ♥ AQ8654 ♦ 1075 ♣ A9											
15 11 10 4	♠ 652 ♥ 1032 ♦ Q2 ♣ Q10762	<table><tr><td></td><td>♣♦♥♠NT</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>- - - -</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>- - - -</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>1 - 4 3 3</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>1 - 4 3 3</td></tr></table>		♣♦♥♠NT	N	- - - -	S	- - - -	E	1 - 4 3 3	W	1 - 4 3 3
	♣♦♥♠NT											
N	- - - -											
S	- - - -											
E	1 - 4 3 3											
W	1 - 4 3 3											

NS should find their way to 4S in untroubled fashion; I would expect many pairs to play the hand in 5S because, once North has shown game-going values with spade support, South should certainly try 4NT but be disappointed with the response. As soon as East is given one of his red aces, he will need to cash the other one smartly, or 12 tricks will be made; if the slam enquiry has been made, he should probably do so as he cannot expect there to be much else coming the way of the defence. I would expect that holding the contract to 11 tricks will be well above average for EW.

23	♠ K753 ♥ Q107 ♦ KJ97 ♣ KJ	Dir: S Vul: Both																														
♠ 10 ♥ 954 ♦ 86543 ♣ Q975	♠ J4 ♥ AJ8632 ♦ A102 ♣ 104																															
13 2 10 15	♠ AQ9862 ♥ K ♦ Q ♣ A8632	<table><tr><td></td><td>♣</td><td>♦</td><td>♥</td><td>♠</td><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>N</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>S</td><td>4</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>5</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td><td>-</td></tr></table>		♣	♦	♥	♠	N	N	4	-	-	5	5	S	4	-	-	5	5	E	-	-	-	-	-	W	-	-	-	-	-
	♣	♦	♥	♠	N																											
N	4	-	-	5	5																											
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E	-	-	-	-	-																											
W	-	-	-	-	-																											

West's hand is either a very minimum strong 1NT or a very maximum weak 1NT, which East would transfer to 2S and South cannot justify competing at the 3-level. In the strong NT sequence, East will probably continue with 2NT, which West will pass. The other logical sequence is 1C – 1S – double (by South) – 1NT, passed out. If the defence finds its diamond ruff, a spade contract should be held to 8 tricks. In NT, there are always 8 tricks – AH, 3 clubs and 4 spades (courtesy of South's doubleton honour), with a 9th coming on a red suit lead. Those making 9 tricks in either contract may be in the majority, but should still score quite well.

A likely start seems to be 1H – 2C – double. A 3C bid by West might now secure the contract, with both North and South passing reluctantly. If West passes, North will bid 2H, East and South will pass and West will now bid 3C. Although this contract is automatically one down if North cashes a second heart at trick 2, it is not that clear to do so as he will not know who has the singleton. It appears that declarer might now have a chance, but North's most likely switch is to a spade and it will need declarer to play trumps immediately if North is not to secure a spade ruff as well as a second chance to cash the other heart. Making 3C seems to be the EW optimum; being left to make 2H will be very good for NS, but I would expect to see many one-trick penalties in 3C, 3D or 3H.

I cannot justify a weak 2S vulnerable on East's hand, so the bidding should go 1H – 1NT – 2NT – 3NT. QS lead will ensure the 9th trick and a 10th will emerge from the club suit in the end-game. 3NT by South would be held to 9 tricks by West's natural club lead. If East does choose to open 2S, South will double and, if playing Lebensohl, North has a close decision between a positive or negative response but, having no obvious suit in which to play, he might as well take a stab at 3NT. It is possible that some Souths might find themselves in 4H, which also makes; certainly a diamond or heart part-score will not score well for NS.

A likely start to the unopposed EW bidding would seem to be 1H – 2D – 2H – 3NT. I am not sure that I can now justify a 4H bid by West, though it makes a comfortable 10 tricks. Equally, and despite the computer's analysis, it seems likely that 10 tricks will be made in NT on the natural JD lead. Any NS finding a defence to beat it will certainly deserve their excellent score!

If playing Benj Acol, North will treat his hand as an 8-playing trick hand in clubs, so the bidding will start 2C – 2D – 3C and may well end there. Even this contract can be defeated if the defence refrains from leading hearts at any stage, but it is not that easy to do so. Equally, if South gambles on 3NT, as many will, the best defence is a spade lead and continuation when in with KC; anyone making the natural heart lead will live to regret it. Even a diamond lead and return by East, followed by a spade switch, will leave West vulnerable to a throw-in in the end-play.

24	♠ Q73 ♥ 964 ♦ K7 ♣ J8654	Dir: W Vul: None
♠ AJ4 ♥ Q83 ♦ Q86 ♣ AQ72	♠ 109865 ♥ A52 ♦ J42 ♣ K3	♠ K2 ♥ KJ107 ♦ A10953 ♣ 109
6 15 11	8	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - 1 1 - - S - 1 1 - - E 1 - - 2 3 W 1 - - 2 3

25	♠ 96 ♥ AQJ953 ♦ 862 ♣ K2	Dir: N Vul: E-W
♠ J85 ♥ K742 ♦ KQJ ♣ 1093	♠ AQ3 ♥ 86 ♦ 53 ♣ AJ8654	♠ K10742 ♥ 10 ♦ A10974 ♣ Q7
10 10 9	11	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - 2 2 2 - S - 2 2 2 - E 2 - - - 2 W 2 - - - 2

26	♠ K62 ♥ 1064 ♦ K832 ♣ Q74	Dir: E Vul: Both
♠ A3 ♥ 532 ♦ 7654 ♣ AK106	♠ QJ10975 ♥ J87 ♦ 10 ♣ 953	♠ 84 ♥ AKQ9 ♦ AQJ9 ♣ J82
8 11 17	4	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 2 4 4 - 3 S 2 4 4 - 3 E - - - 1 - W - - - 1 -

27	♠ 9762 ♥ K742 ♦ A3 ♣ 652	Dir: S Vul: None
♠ Q54 ♥ AQJ963 ♦ ♣ Q974	♠ A83 ♥ 8 ♦ KQ7652 ♣ AJ10	♠ KJ10 ♥ 105 ♦ J10984 ♣ K83
7 11 8	14	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N - - - - - S - - - - - E 4 2 4 2 2 W 4 2 4 2 2

28	♠ AK7 ♥ AQ2 ♦ 5 ♣ AQJ1054	Dir: W Vul: N-S
♠ 92 ♥ KJ95 ♦ A763 ♣ K92	♠ QJ43 ♥ 86 ♦ K1042 ♣ 763	♠ 10865 ♥ 10743 ♦ QJ98 ♣ 8
20 11 3	6	♠ ♦ ♥ ♣ NT N 2 - 3 3 2 S 2 - 3 3 2 E - - - - - W - - - - -

