

North Deals  
None Vul

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

  

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

  

♠	♠	♠	♠
West	North	East	South
1 ♠	1 ♦	1 ♠	2 ♦
All pass			

NS 3 ♦; EW 1 N; NS 2 ♣; EW 1 ♠; Par +110

North is too strong to open a weak no trump and starts with his 4-card suit. East is able to overcall and both sides compete to the level of their fit. In other words they bid up to a level that is consistent with the number of trumps they hold (eight in each case).

In 2 ♠ East has a clear six tricks (five trumps via a successful finesse against the queen) and ♣ A. A further trick may arise as the defence cannot play either red suit without giving away a trick eventually.

With his very flat hand North will be reluctant to bid on to 3 ♦ but that is a contract that can make. It's possible to take a spade ruff, two hearts, three diamonds and three clubs to arrive at nine tricks.

Fast Deals  
N-S Vul

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

  

NS 5N; NS 5♥; NS 5♣; NS 3♠; NS 4♦; Par +660	
West      North      East      South	
Pass	3 ♠ <sup>1</sup> Pass
Pass	4 ♥ <sup>2</sup> All pass

1. Heart raise (game+) with a shortage in spades ("splinter raise").

2. Ace-showing cue bid.

South has an eighteen count but it is flawed as he has spade values opposite the shortage. He may sign off in 4 ♠ over 3 ♠ but could take a more optimistic route by cue bidding in clubs. South will be thinking that if partner cue bids the ace of diamonds he'll follow up with Roman Key Card. He'll be in a good position to know if bidding slam is a good option. Here North doesn't cooperate (no 4 ♦ bid) so South sensibly signs off.

Declarer ought to make eleven trick losing just a trump and ♠ A. South can run ♥ 9 and, when that holds, play a second trump to ♥ 10. West may play a heart honour but declarer will have restricted himself to one trump loser.

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Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

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

EW 2N; EW 2♠; NS 2♣; NS 1♦; Par -100; NS 3♣x-1

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♦	Pass	1♣
All pass			1N <sup>1</sup>
1. 15-16.			

South doesn't rebid 1 ♠ as that would show an unbalanced hand 5+clubs and 4+spades. It is possible to miss a spade partscore with this sort of bidding but it is better for the opener to describe the general nature of his hand quickly (balanced or unbalanced).

West may lead a 4th best (from a broken suit) ♠ 7. South will win East's ♠ Q and can take a diamond finesse of the knave. That loses and East fires back a spade. After cashing the spades West will switch to a heart (East, perhaps, playing ♣ 10 as discouraging and therefore implying hearts). Declarer will be held to six tricks taking one spade, one heart, two diamonds and two clubs.

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Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

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

EW 4♠; EW 5♦; EW 2N; EW 2♣; EW 1♥; Par -620

West	North	East	South
1♠	Pass	2♣	Pass
2♦	♦	2♥ <sup>1</sup>	Pass
2♠ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	3♦ <sup>3</sup>	Pass
5♦	All pass		
1. Fourth suit forcing.			
2. Nothing more to say (neutral rebid).			
3. Game forcing having used fourth suit forcing first (3♦ over 2♦ would have been invitational).			

East West will have done well to avoid 3N, a contract that will fail on the inevitable heart lead. 5♦ is a splendid contract and can make with declarer able to lead up to and establish West's spades. The play can be a little involved and it will usually be necessary to take a winning club finesse to come to eleven tricks.

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Board 5

North Deals  
N-S Vul

♠	Q 10 9 2		♠	J 6 5				
♥	6 5 4		♥	J 10 8 7				
♦	6 5 4		♦	J 8 7 2				
♣	K 8 4		♣	9 5				
		<table><tr><td>W</td><td>N</td></tr><tr><td>E</td><td>S</td></tr></table>	W	N	E	S		
W	N							
E	S							
♠	K 8							
♥	A 9							
♦	K Q 10 9							
♣	J 7 6 3 2							

NS 7N; NS 7 ♦; NS 7 ♣; NS 6 ♥; NS 5 ♠; Par +2220	
West	North East South
	2 N1 Pass 6 N

All pass  
1. 19-20, balanced.

The above shows the optimistic auction with South putting emphasis on his five card club suit (not that it's very good). Other auctions are possible but less successful - e.g. 2N - 3N; or 2N - 4N - pass.

Declarer has eight winners outside clubs so it's a simple matter of making four club tricks. We shouldn't, however, limit ourselves to twelve tricks. Win, say, ♥ J with ♥ A and play a club to ♠ 10. Cross to dummy with ♠ K to take another club finesse. When this is successful and both defenders follow again, ♣ A can be cashed and five clubs tricks will be made. Plus one (for 1,470) for a good score.

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Board 6

East Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ 87		♣ Q3	♠ Q104
♥ A9			♥ KJ7
♦ J8542			♦ AQ76
♣ J865			♣ K109

EW 4 ♦; N 2 ♥; E 1N; EW 2 ♣; NS 1 ♠; S 1 ♥; Par -130	
West	North East South
	1 ♦ 1 ♠

2 ♦ 1 2 ♠ Pass Pass  
3 ♦ All pass  
1. Or an immediate 3 ♦ (see text).

[Follow up to last week's workshop on competitive bidding]

More level of the fit competitive bidding. North South arrive at the two level with their eight card fit and West, knowing of a nine card diamond fit, continues to 3 ♦. 3 ♦ will always make (two hearts, four diamonds, three clubs) though declarer can bring in the diamonds for no losers to make an eleventh trick - play ♦ J from dummy. North covers (else the knave is run successfully) and declarer notices the fall of ♦ 10 in the South hand. Now dummy can be reached for a finesse against North's ♦ 9. Of course, had North been dealt a singleton ♦ K that line would not have been successful.

If South plays in 2 ♠ the contract is likely to fail by one trick with declarer taking five spades, a top club and a club ruff.

If West preempts to 3 ♦ on the first round North may feel obliged to bid 3 ♠. Since that fails by two tricks East West do well to double this. The resulting plus 300 will beat 110/130 from the diamond partscore.

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Board 7

South Deals  
Both Vul

		♠ K J 4		♠ 8 5	
		♥ K J 7 5		♥ 4 2	
		♦ 10 7 5 4 2		♦ K Q J	
		♣ 2		♣ A J 8 7 6 3	
♠	A Q 10 9 7 6 3	<div>W N E S</div>	♠	8 5	
♥	9 3			4 2	
♦	6			K Q J	
♣	10 9 4			A J 8 7 6 3	
♠	2		♥	A Q 10 8 6	
			♦	A 9 8 3	
			♣	K Q 5	

NS 3N; NS 3♥; NS 3♦; EW 1♠; EW 1♣; Par +600

West	North	East	South
3♠	Pass	Pass	1♥
All pass			Dbl!
1. Takeout - perfect shape.			

[Follow up to last week's workshop on competitive bidding]

North will have judged very well to have bid as above. It would be tempting to bid 4♥ directly over 3♠ not least because it follows the "support with support" mantra. 4♥ will fail by one trick with declarer losing one spade, two diamonds and a club.

It's just possible for North South to defeat this contract (3♠) by three tricks. That needs North to lead a club and declarer to call for dummy's ace. Now the defence will make two spades, two hearts, a diamond and two clubs. Plus 800 to North South. If, however, West were to play low (or ♣ J/8/7/6) at trick one, South could not play a second club without collapsing one of partner's natural trump winners.

In practice, against 3♠, North will lead a heart and South will have to switch to a club before the diamond winners are established (plus 200/500 to North South).

Expect, however, plenty of plus 100s to East West from defending 4♥.

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Board 8

West Deals  
None Vul

		♠ 9 8		♠ J 5	
		♥ A Q J 8 7 4		♥ 5	
		♦ 7 4		♦ K 9 5 3	
		♣ J 7 2		♣ A K 10 9 8 5	
♠	A K 6 3	<div>W N E S</div>	♠	J 5	
♥	10 9 2			5	
♦	A J			K 9 5 3	
♣	Q 6 4 3			A K 10 9 8 5	
♠	Q 10 7 4 2		♥	K 6 3	
			♦	Q 10 8 6 2	
			♣	—	

EW 6♣; NS 2♥; EW 1N; EW 2♦; EW 1♠; Par -800; NS 6♥x-4

West	North	East	South
1N!	2♥ <sup>2</sup>	3♣	3♥
Dbl!	Pass	4♦	Pass
5♣	All pass		
1. 12-14.			
2. Good suit but pushy.			
3. For takeout (has club support but gets the spades in the picture).			

North gets into the auction, not least because he would like partner to lead a heart. The bid, however, may have backfired in that, left to their own devices, the opponents may have played in the failing 3N (East, looking at the good club suit, may just raise the opening bid directly to game).

5♣ is always making with declarer able to take two spades, two diamonds, a diamond ruff and six clubs. A twelfth trick is possible but declarer needs to take a winning diamond finesse of the knave\* - this is necessary because North holds all three outstanding trumps and only a doubleton diamond.

*\*alternatively, on the lie of the cards, South can be squeezed in spades and diamonds so the diamond finesse isn't strictly necessary.*

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**Board 9**  
North Deals  
E-W Vul

♠ 8 4 3

♥ 9 5 3 2

♦ Q 5 4

♣ 9 6

♠ —

♥ A K J 10 8

♦ A 7 3

♣ K J 10 5 4

♠ J 9 2

♥ Q 6 4

♦ J 9 2

♣ A Q 8 2

N

W

E

S

NS 4♠; NS 4♠; NS 4♥; N 5♦; S 4♦; NS 4♣; Par +430

West North East South

2 ♠<sup>1</sup> All pass

1. 5-9, 6card spade suit ("weak two") but see text.

For some, opening 2 ♠ with the North hand is too heavy. The shape and honours in the long suits suggest a 1 ♠ opening (with Pass being a third option). When we do open with preemptive bids we do so often with the idea of putting the cat among the pigeons. Here it backfires as partner is sitting with a powerful hand but a void in the opened suit. The best long term policy with this sort of 16 hcp hand is to pass and hope for the best. It's possible to make ten tricks with skillful play so the 6-0 fit contract may score reasonably well.

Is there a better spot? Well, if North South can bid to 3N and make it that will score very well. The auction may be Pass - 1 ♥; 1 ♠ - 2 ♣; 2 ♠ - 3 ♣ (extras), 3N. Declarer is short of entries to the North hand but a successful line would be to duck, say, an opening diamond lead. Win the continuation in the South hand and cash the two other diamonds. Cash ♠ A and take the heart finesse. Nine tricks already (one spade, five hearts and three diamonds) albeit somewhat "seat of the pants". More prosaic lines could work too.

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**Board 10**  
East Deals  
Both Vul

♠ A 5 3

♥ A 7 5 3

♦ 9 7 5 4 3

♣ Q

♠ Q 2

♥ 10 8 4 2

♦ J 8

♣ J 9 7 4 2

♠ 9 8 6 4

♥ Q 6

♦ Q 6

♣ A 10 6 5 3

N

W

E

S

NS 3N; NS 2♥; NS 3♣; NS 1♠; NS 1♦; Par +600

West North East South

Pass 1 ♦ All pass

West just doesn't have the right sort of hand with which to protect the auction so the auction will stop at a very lowly level. When looking at very low level contracts it's difficult to know quite how the play will go because there are so many possible variations. The following would be reasonable and see the contract defeated : East leads ♠ 9, covered with ♠ Q, and taken by West. ♣ Q is covered and taken by East who returns a club. Declarer misguessed and plays ♣ J, ruffed by West. West plays a small heart, on which declarer plays low. ♥ Q wins and a second heart comes back. West takes the ace of hearts and gives East a ruff. East exits with ♠ 10, on which West can throw a spade. Now the contract cannot be made. A little fanciful perhaps.

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**Board 11**

South Deals

None Vul

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

N 3N; NS 3♥; S 2N; NS 3♣; N 1♠; NS 1♦; Par +400			
West	North	East	South
Pass	1 N <sup>1</sup>	All pass	Pass
1. 12-14.			

A quiet deal with East leading an obvious ♠K. On general principles, declarer ducks a couple of rounds of the suit and takes the third. The effect of that is to cut East off from his two spade winners. It is possible for declarer to make nine tricks. Declarer crosses to hand with a club to play a heart towards the queen. When East fails to play either ♥K or ♥A he is as good as marked with neither card (he would have won to cash the spade winners). Declarer can play any card from dummy. The route to success lies in East holding ♥10.

Nine tricks can now be made - one spade, two hearts, two diamonds and four clubs.

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**Board 12**

West Deals

N-S Vul

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

EW 6♦; EW 5♥; NS 2♣; EW 1N; NS 1♣; Par -920				
West	North	East	South	
Pass	Pass	1♥	1♠	
Pass	4♠	5♦	All pass	

[Follow up to last week's workshop on competitive bidding]

North doesn't have many values but what distribution. With South promising at least five spades, North knows that the partnership has ten+ trumps. In keeping with "bidding to the level of the fit" North makes the right bid by jumping to game. This is a pressure bid and East will be presented with an awkward decision. There's a lot to be said for the bridge saying "six-five, come alive" so, as East has 6hearts and 5diamonds, he sticks his neck out with a 5♦ bid. That works very well in that East West will make twelve tricks in diamonds (the hearts can be ruffed good, the only loser being the spade). Now North South may guess to bid on to 5♣. That can be doubled and East West will have an easy plus 500 (two hearts, a diamond and a club) [plus 800 is possible if West leads a club, East returns a low diamond and a second club gives East a ruff ... ha, ha].

Of course, if we're at a table of guessers, East West may bid on to 6♦ (over 5♣) and will scoop all the points, somewhat undeservedly.

**Board 13**  
North Deals  
Both Vul

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

NS 2♥; NS 2♠; EW 1♠; Par +110			
West	North	East	South
1 N <sup>1</sup>	Pass	Pass	Pass
2 ♠	All pass		
1. 12-14.			

Bidding 2 ♠ is pretty automatic with the West hand though the shape (no shortage) and lack of side suit honour concentration are minor drawbacks. This contract should fail by one trick with the declarer losing a trump, two hearts, a diamond and two clubs.

Unless North, at some point, leads a heart, declarer (when in dummy) should lead a heart to the king. Were declarer stranded in hand, having not played a heart from dummy, a third heart would be lost.

**Board 14**  
East Deals  
None Vul

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

EW 2♠; EW 2♥; NS 3♣; NS 1N; NS 2♦; Par +100; EW 3♥x-1; EW 3♠x-1			
West	North	East	South
Pass	1 N <sup>1</sup>	Pass	Pass
Pass	2 ♠ <sup>2</sup>	Pass	DBJ <sup>3</sup>
3 ♠	All pass	Pass	Pass
1. 12-14.			

2. Preferable to 2 ♠ ("Landy" showing both majors) with such good spades and poor heart length/suit.
3. For takeout - not the greatest shape but will want to do something.

Had East made the Landy bid of 2 ♠ it would have helped West in competing. In that case West would have known about the element of a double fit (decent cards in hearts and spades opposite the shown suits). If East West do compete to 3 ♠ it's quite possible that South will double. The contract should fail and the easiest way is for North to receive a heart ruff (so two hearts, a heart ruff, a diamond and a club). Alternatively declarer can be forced in diamonds so that he runs out of trumps before the hearts can be set up. It's just possible to see East West making 3 ♠ for a very fine score (five trumps, two hearts, a club and a club ruff).

If 3 ♠ fails by one trick (even doubled) that will work well as North South can make ten tricks in clubs (plus 130 to them). They would generally only lose two spades and a trump to ♠K. Holding North South to nine tricks is just possible if West leads an unlikely diamond which sets up a diamond ruff for partner.