

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

NS 2N; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; Par +120

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 ♠	1 N ¹
Pass	Pass	2 ♠	Pass
Pass	Dbl ²	All pass	

1. 15-17(18), balanced with at least one spade stop.
2. Takeout.

Lead: ♠ A.

East's seventh spade is sufficient for him to compete at the two level. When North makes a takeout double South decides to sit for the penalty. Declarer's only possible entry to dummy is ♦ J and that can only be reached if South doesn't rise with ♦ A (the diamond suit is blocked). South doesn't mind declarer reaching dummy since the purpose of that play will have been to take a heart finesse. That fails and declarer loses three trumps, a heart, a diamond and a club. That's one off (minus 100) but that may not be adequate compensation for North South who can make 3 ♦ for +110.

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

EW 4♠; NS 4♥; EW 3♣; N 1N; EW 2♦; Par -200: NS 5♥×-1

West	North	East	South
		1 N ¹	2 ♥ ²
Pass	3 ♥ ³	Pass	4 ♥
All pass			

1. 12-14.
2. With a little in reserve.
3. Invitational.

Lead: ♦ 9 (second from rubbish [could lead ♦ 10 top of a sequence]).

The lead means there's no need to consider taking a diamond finesse and declarer now has ten tricks - seven hearts and three diamonds. There is nothing to the play other than drawing trumps and claiming.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

NS 3N; NS 3♥; NS 4♦; S 4♣; N 3♣; NS 1♠; Par +400
West North East South
1 ♠ ¹ 3 N All pass 1 ♦

1. Minimum overcall but good suit (suit quality test met).

Lead: ♠ 3 (low from three in partner's suit).

North might try for a penalty by passing over the 1 ♠ overcall (South has the right shape to re-open with a takeout double over which North will duly place the green card on the table). That would be more normal with greater trump length and will only be right if, at the vulnerability, North South can defeat 1 ♠ by two tricks. The percentage decision is to bid as above.

In 3N declarer has a clear nine tricks - two spades, a heart, five diamonds and a club. It's difficult to see how a further trick can be made.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

EW 6N; E 6♠; EW 6♥; E 6♣; W 5♠; W 5♣; EW 1♦; Par -1440

West North East South
1 ♥ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
1 N ¹ Pass 3 ♣ ² Pass
4 ♣ ³ Pass 4 ♠ ⁴ Pass
4 N ⁵ Pass 5 ♥ ⁶ Pass
6 ♣ All pass

1. 15-16.
2. This jump is best played as game forcing and promising 5/5shape.
3. Slam try.
4. Ace-showing cue bid.
5. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
6. 2 of the 5 "aces", no queen of trumps.

Lead: ♦ 6.

It's best to try to attack against small slam suit contracts and, after the above auction, a diamond lead should be preferred to a neutral heart. Declarer wins with dummy's ace and leads ♣ Q for a finesse. It loses but after drawing trumps declarer plays on hearts. With the suit breaking 4-3 (as expected) there are five heart winners and East can ditch all the potential spade losers to chalk up twelve tricks. Had the heart suit only produced four winners declarer would have to fall back on taking a finesse of the queen of spades.

Board 5North Deals
N-S Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

W N E
S

♠ J 7 6 2
♥ J 9 2
♦ K J 8 3
♣ 4 2

EW 5N; EW 5♣; EW 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♦; Par -460

West	North	East	South
	1 N ¹	Dbl	Rdbl ²
Pass	2 ♦	3 ♣	Pass
3 N	All pass		

1. 12-14.

2. An SOS redouble asking opener to bid four card suits up the line until a fit is reached.

Lead: ♦ 3 (fourth best).

The East hand is somewhat problematic during the bidding phase. Penalty doubles of 1N are better when the doubler has a balanced/semi-balanced hand with all round strength. Here East is "suit heavy" and what East might be thinking transpires - namely the opponents manage to bail out cheaply in the suit in which East is short. East's riposte is to show his strong suit at the three level and West has enough to try 3N, banking on partner's suit being a ready source of tricks.

Declarer wins the first trick (not wanting a heart switch from the defence) and plays on clubs, their distribution being benign. It's now a simple matter of taking a spade finesse against the king to gather in a rewarding +460 for East West.

Board 6East Deals
E-W Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

W N E
S

♠ Q 6 5 3
♥ J 10 5 4 2
♦ 9
♣ Q 7 3

EW 4N; EW 5♦; EW 4♣; Par -630

West	North	East	South
		Pass	Pass
1 ♦	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
2 ♣	Pass	3 ♦ ¹	Pass
3 N	All pass		

1. 10-12, 3/4 diamonds ("limit raise").

Lead: ♥ 7.

West trusts in East's spade bid not to worry about that suit for 3N. Leading the unbid suit looks as good as anything here. West wins and can count two hearts, five diamonds (very reasonably assuming a non-five-nil break) and one club as winners. That's eight tricks and further tricks can be established in the club suit. The best play here is to take two finesses against ♣ K and ♣ Q. Here the first finesse loses and a second heart comes back. Declarer braces himself but when attempting the second finesse by running ♣ 10, the king pops up and declarer has four club tricks. That makes for eleven tricks and +660 for East West.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

♠ A
♥ J 8 5 4 3
♦ A 9 5
♣ A K Q 3

♠ 8 7 6 5 4
♥ A K 9
♦ K 7 4
♣ 9 8

♠ K Q J 9 3 2
♥ 10 7 6
♦ 3
♣ 7 5 4

♠ 10
♥ Q 2
♦ Q J 10 8 6 2
♣ J 10 6 2

NS 4♥; NS 5♦; NS 5♣; NS 2N; EW 2♠; Par +600

West	North	East	South
Pass	1♥	2♠ ¹	Pass
4♠	Dbl ²	Pass	5♦

All pass

1. A weak jump overcall.
2. Extra values and veering towards takeout shape.

Lead: ♥ A (it's good to have a sight of dummy after these high level auctions).

(South could pass partner's double and that will give North South +500 as 4♠ is defeated by two tricks). After West has cashed a second heart he will probably exit with a spade. The only other loser South may bear is a diamond (♦ K). Declarer crosses to hand (either with a heart ruff or a club to ♣ J) and finesses ♦ Q. Once that holds declarer should take a second finesse (of ♦ J) and thereby eliminate the diamond loser. It would be lazy (and complacent) to cash the ace of trumps after the first finesse holds.

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

♠ Q J 6 3
♥ 5 4
♦ 7 6 3 2
♣ J 7 5

♠ 2
♥ K J 9 7 6
♦ A 10 9 8
♣ A Q 6

♠ A K 9 5
♥ A 10
♦ K Q 4
♣ 10 9 8 2

♠ 10 8 7 4
♥ Q 8 3 2
♦ J 5
♣ K 4 3

EW 7♦; EW 6N; EW 6♥; EW 6♣; EW 4♠; Par -1440

West	North	East	South
1♥	Pass	1♠	Pass
2♦	Pass	3N	All pass

Lead: ♣ 3.

East is a little heavy for 3N (it tends to show 13-15 and no fit for partner's major; here East has a very good 16). Another approach would see East bidding 3♣ (4th suit) over which West would bid 3N. Now East can bid 4N inviting a slam but West is likely to pass (such raises of no trumps are best played as natural).

It's not obvious but declarer does best to guess to put in ♣ Q which holds. Now a heart is played to ♥ A and East plays and overtakes ♥ 10 with ♥ J (South should not cover ♥ 10 as the queen may still make a trick). Now declarer cashes the king of hearts and gives South the queen. That builds a fourth heart winner to go with two spades, two clubs and four diamonds (where ♦ J dropping is a boon). That's twelve tricks though, as mentioned above, it's not easy to bid the slam.

Board 9
North Deals
E-W Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

♠ K Q J 10
 ♥ Q J
 ♦ Q 8 4
 ♣ A Q J 10

NS 6N; NS 6♠; NS 6♣; NS 5♦; NS 3♥; Par +990
 West North East South
 1 ♦ Pass 1 ♠
 Pass 1 N¹ Pass 6 N
 All pass
 1. 15-16.

Lead: ♥ 8 (best to lead passively against 6N).

In contrast to board 8 this should be an easy slam to reach. Although we describe the heart lead as passive it's just what declarer wanted to see as it acts as a free finesse. Declarer counts his winners - four spades, two hearts, a diamond and four clubs. That's eleven clear winners and a further trick can always be developed in diamonds where declarer holds the two "quackers". So twelve tricks are always there but North should try to make thirteen tricks by taking a simple finesse of ♦ J. In this way thirteen tricks will appear if West has started with a singleton or doubleton king of diamonds. It doesn't work here but North has given it his best shot. It would be lazy to play ace and another diamond as this gives up on the doubleton king onside furnishing that thirteenth trick.

Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

♠ A K 10 8 4
 ♥ 6 5
 ♦ A K 4 3
 ♣ K 10

NS 4♠; NS 4♦; NS 1N; EW 1♥; EW 1♣; Par +620
 West North East South
 Pass 2 ♠ Pass 1 ♠
 Pass 3 ♠² All pass 3 ♦¹

1. Trial bid, looking for help in the suit (plus a non-minimum hand).
2. Close to bidding 4 ♠ - has the diamond support but a very minimum hand.

Lead: ♥ K.

This is a hand that will suit any bidding optimist. With the spade suit breaking 2-2 (3-1 would be OK too if ♠ Q were singleton; 4-0 onside all right too!) and the diamonds behaving (a 3-2 break there), there are always ten tricks. On the opening lead East will encourage by playing ♥ 4 (if playing low likes) or ♥ 9/J (if playing high encouraging) but after taking two hearts there's only ♣ A to come for the defence.

Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

♠ K 9 7
 ♥ A J 8 7 2
 ♦ A Q 4
 ♣ 6 2

♠ J 6 3
 ♥ Q 9 3
 ♦ 8 7
 ♣ K 9 7 5 4

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

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

NS 4♥; NS 3N; NS 3♠; NS 3♦; NS 2♣; Par +420
 West North East South
 Pass 1 N¹ Pass 2 ♣²
 Pass 2 ♥ Pass 2 N
 Pass 3 ♥³ Pass 3 N
 All pass
 1. 12-14.
 2. Stayman.
 3. Shows the fifth heart.

Lead: ♦ 10 (unfortunate as it gives declarer three diamond tricks)

The auction provides a good example of opening 1N when holding a five card major and being able to show that fifth heart later in the dialogue. Here South doesn't have three hearts so prefers 3N to the 5-2 fit major suit game.

After the above lead declarer will play on hearts, taking the finesse of the knave along the way. With that suit breaking 3-3 there are five hearts to go with two spades and three diamonds. That's ten tricks and a very good score of +430. That score will beat those in 4♥ who can make that contract by playing on clubs - the third club providing a discard for the losing spade.

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

♠ J 7 3
 ♥ A 2
 ♦ K J 10 8 2
 ♣ K 9 3

♠ 8 4
 ♥ K J 6
 ♦ A 9 7 6 3
 ♣ A 8 6

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

♠ K Q 9 5
 ♥ 10 9 8 4 3
 ♦ 5 4
 ♣ Q 2

EW 2♣; NS 1♠; NS 1♥; NS 1♦; Par -90
 West North East South
 1 N All pass

Lead: ♦ J

The lead is normal but very unfortunate as it gives declarer both a cheap trick and a further entry to dummy. Declarer will play on clubs and, as good as anything, can finesse ♣ 6, playing South to hold ♣ 9. That doesn't arise here but declarer has a good chance of making three clubs after next playing ace and another one. West always has entries to dummy in the shape of ♠ A and ♥ Q (the latter because the ace is with North). That would seem to give declarer eight tricks - one spade, two hearts, two diamonds and three clubs but the defence might get there first and make six tricks - two spades, ace of hearts, a diamond and two clubs. Cat and Mouse with scores, for North South, varying from +100 to -120.

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

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

West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 N ¹	Pass	2 ♣	Pass
2 ♥	All pass		

1. Insufficient values to bid at the two level.

Lead: ♣ Q.

Declarer arrives in an eight card fit in a delayed fashion after using 1N as a dustbin bid, temporising until partner has made his rebid. West makes an assessment of potential losers - one spade, three hearts and two diamonds (♦ J & ♦ 6). That's six losers which translates to one off. Whilst we're going to find at least one extra winner to make our contract we are playing match-pointed pairs and should aim higher. We could ruff two diamonds in dummy to bring our total to nine tricks (we'll now lose three trumps and a spade) or we could play on trumps and hope to establish some spade winners. The problem with the latter is that the defence has a chance to knock out our entry to the long spades (♦ K) so that might not be too successful. It seems better to take a couple of diamond ruffs in dummy. We win the opening lead and play ♦ K and and a diamond to ♦ A. When we play a third diamond ♦ Q appears. We ruff and play a trump. With the favourable heart position we may only lose two top trumps but South can give North a diamond ruff (there are no trumps left in dummy) and, with the spade loser to come, we make +140.

Board 14
East Deals
None Vul

14th January 2015 Supervised Play

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

NS 3N; NS 4♦; NS 4♣; NS 2♠; Par +400

West	North	East	South
		Pass	2 N ¹
Pass	3 N	All pass	

1. 19-20.

Lead: ♥ K.

This is a standard Benjaminised auction to the nine trick game. West has a very obvious lead and declarer can count eight top tricks - two spades, one heart, three diamonds and two clubs. That's eight tricks and we need an extra one to make game. This can come, generally, from either a 3-3 club break or by divining the diamond position. The important thing is not to let West in as we'll suffer an avalanche of heart winners.

In these positions it's best to put the opponents under pressure by, here, forcing discards from East. Let's duck three rounds of hearts. When we win the fourth heart East will have had to make three discards. East can only throw three spades or two spades and one diamond. If East throws a club declarer can play three rounds of the suit to establish ♣ 9 (granted, this takes some nerve as West may have started with a third club with which to win). If East throws a second diamond the suit can be cashed for four winners with impunity.

Let's say that the defence is spot on with East discarding optimally. Now we may again have to rely on our nerve : with hearts breaking 6-1 East is booked to hold longer diamonds. That means ♦ J is more likely to be on declarer's right. So we play ♦ 9 to one of dummy's top cards and finesse ♦ 10 on the way back. That holds, we can unblock ♦ A and get back to dummy's fourth diamond winner by crossing in clubs. Not fail-proof but very satisfying when, as here, successful.