

Recently we've been looking at the hands played in this year's Corn Cairdis, the annual friendly match between England and the Republic of Ireland. Today's hands include the ten boards of stanza 3 of that match. The other four hands relate to the subject of active and passive leads.

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

		♠ K 4	♥ K 3 2	♦ A J 7 6	♣ J 10 9 2			♠ A 7 5 3 2	♥ 8 7 4	♦ 9 5 4	♣ A K				
		♠ J 10 6	♥ Q J 6 5	♦ 10 8	♣ 8 7 6 4	<table><tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr></table>		N	E	W	S				
N	E														
W	S														
		♠ Q 9 8	♥ A 10 9	♦ K Q 3 2	♣ Q 5 3										
West	North	East		South											
	1 N ¹	Pass		3 N											
All pass															
1. 12-14.															

[Follow up on last week's workshop]

East makes the normal lead of a 4th-best spade (♠ 3) and that is sufficient to defeat the contract. The lead gives declarer a second spade trick but the defence is a tempo ahead. Declarer plays a club but East wins and plays ace and another spade. That sets up two more spade winners, tricks that will be taken when East regains the lead with a second club.

If any other suit is led the contract makes. The spade lead is attractive because East holds two (as good as) certain entries in the club suit.

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

		♠ J 10 8 6	♥ A 7	♦ A 9 7 2	♣ K 9 4						
		♠ K 5 4 2	♥ 6 5 3	♦ J 10 3	♣ J 8 5						
		<table><tr><td>N</td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td>S</td></tr></table>				N	E	W	S		
N	E										
W	S										
		♠ Q 9 7	♥ K Q 10 2	♦ Q 8 4	♣ Q 6 3						
N 3N; NS 3 ♠; S 2N; NS 2 ♥; NS 2 ♦; NS 1 ♣; Par +600											
West	North	East	South								
1. 12-14.		1 N ¹	All pass								

North South have near-game values between them (23 hcp) but East's opening bid is enough to silence them in the auction. A good lead for South would be ♥ 2 ("4th best, partner") but, given that hand's honour holding, that is far-fetched. ♥ K would be a normal lead but that blocks the suit so the defence cannot readily get at their four winners in the suit.

It's difficult, however, to see declarer making more than four tricks* - two spades and two clubs though, perhaps, a fifth trick will slip through.

*e.g., if declarer gets to dummy and plays a diamond he's likely to run ♦ J (losing to ♦ Q) which won't help the cause.

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Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

♠ A 6 5 4 2
♥ 10 7 5 2
♦ A 8 5 4
♣ —

♠ K Q J 10 9
♥ 3
♦ K J 9
♣ Q 9 6 5

N
W E
S

♠ 8 7
♥ K 9 6 4
♦ Q 2
♣ K 10 8 3 2

NS 4♦; NS 4♦; NS 1N; NS 1♠; EW 1♣; Par +420

West

North

East

South

- 1 ♠ 1
4♥3 All pass
Pass
1. Opens the middle suit with a touching 4441 hand (wouldn't be wrong to pass).
2. For takeout, usually (as here) promising 4hearts.
3. Bold.

When North blasts the game he hopes that the two aces and a distribution that includes a void are sufficient to give 4♥ some play.

It might be best to play this hand as a crossruff. With West overcalling in spades declarer is able to overruff if East ruffs in on any spade lead from dummy. When playing a crossruff it's important to play side suit winners first (test the defence makes inconvenient discards that would allow them to ruff those winners later in the play). So, on ♠ K lead, declarer wins, cashes ♦ A, ruffs a spade and cashes ♣ A. Now he can embark on the crossruff, ruffs a club, ruffs a spade and ruffs a club. Now declarer will have to play a trump (lead a spade and East can throw his last club) and can win with ♥ A. NOW the club loser is ruff and a spade can be played with the queen of trumps always making a trick. Tricky ... might be worth replaying with a pack of cards.

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Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

♠ A
♥ Q 10
♦ A K 8 2
♣ K J 7 6 5 2

♠ K 10 6 3
♥ A 5 4
♦ 7 5 4
♣ 10 9 8

N
W E
S

♠ 8 7 5 2
♥ J 9 7 3 2
♦ Q J
♣ Q 3

NS 4♣; NS 2♥; NS 1N; NS 2♦; EW 1♠; Par +130

West

North

East

South

- Pass 1 ♣ 1♥
Pass 2♦1 Pass 3♣
All pass
1. A reverse ("going above the barrier"), showing 16+hcps.

Why is North said to go above his barrier? Because, in introducing a second suit, his first suit can only be supported at the three level (or higher). That mouthful of words defines what is often also referred to as a reverse. South has a poor hand and gives preference to the first suit, hoping partner is 6-4 in the minors (that worked).

East leads a spade (♠ Q) and declarer wins and assesses the contract. There are just two heart and one club losers (the club losers restricted to one provided the suit breaks 3-2). It's a simple matter of knocking out the opponents' trumps and claiming ten tricks. Some might overstretch to 3N but that should fail provided the defence starts on spades (or switches to the suit after a heart lead); else declarer can knock out ♠ A and play as he did in the more mundane 3♣.

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Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

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

NS 6♥; NS 5N; NS 4♠; NS 5♦; NS 4♣; Par +1430				
West	North	East	South	
	1♦ 1	Pass	1♠	
Pass	2♣ 2	Pass	2♥ 3	
Pass	3♥ 4	Pass	4N ⁵	
Pass	5♥ 6	Pass	6♥	
All pass				

- All pass
1. Opening the middle of a touching three-suited 4441 hand.
 2. Ostensibly 5+diamonds and 4+clubs but 4/4possible with this shape.
 3. Fourth suit forcing.
 4. Natural, bidding out the shape.
 5. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
 6. 2 of the 5 "aces" with no queen of trumps.

North follows a natural bidding path where the raise of the fourth suit shows 4cards in that suit. That's just what South wanted to hear. South has controls in all the side suits and can jump to 4N to agree North's last bid suit. Hearts are clearly in the picture.

It isn't obvious as to how to approach this hand but one line is to try to set up the spade suit. East may have led ♠ A but, if not, play a spade towards hand early (when East will play the ace anyway). It'll now be possible to ruff two spades in dummy. That also sets up the fifth spade as a winner though that isn't necessary as it can be thrown on the second club. Let's count : one spade, two spade ruffs, four trumps, three diamonds and two clubs. Twelve tricks and slam made. Well bid too.

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Board 6
East Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

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

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

East's hand is just too powerful to bid a simple 3 ♠. When East jumps to 4 ♠ that may well be sufficient for West to try for the small slam. South leads ♣ Q. Declarer appears to have a loser in diamonds and another in hearts. But look at the pips in the heart suit. That combination makes the suit frozen. In other words neither side can play the suit without giving an advantage to the other side.

The hand is ripe for the technique of *elimination*. Declarer takes the lead, draws trumps, cashes the second club and play three rounds of diamonds. The stage has been set. South takes the third diamond and has an unenviable choice. If he plays a diamond or a club he gives declarer a ruff and discard (he can trump in one hand and discard the heart loser from the other); and if he plays a (low) heart*, West's ♥ 7 is covered by ♥ J and taken in the East hand. Now declarer makes the contract by finessing against South's ♥ Q (contract made).

[Follow up on last week's workshop]

there is a defence that may work in these situations. South switches to ♥ Q. If declarer plays that hand for ♥ J he'll go wrong by winning in the East hand. If he suspects something he'll win in dummy and finesse against ♥ J again. The point about this defence is it gives declarer a **losing option.*

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Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

W

E

S

N

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	2 ♣ ²	Pass	1 N ¹
Pass	4 ♠	All pass	2 ♠
1. 12-14.			
2. Stayman.			

[Follow up on last week's workshop]

The key to the defence here is to give nothing away. With the cards lying as they are, declarer will always lose two clubs and a heart. The critical point is for the defence never to play on diamonds. Declarer has a two way finesse in the suit so playing a diamond takes away the guess. Provided the defence is passive South will only make the contract if he guesses to play East for the queen of diamonds.

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Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

W

E

S

N

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

S 4N; NS 4♥; N 3N; NS 2♦; EW 2♣; EW 1♠; Par +430			
West	North	East	South
1 ♠	2 ♥	Pass	4 ♥
4 ♠	Pass	Pass	Dbf
All pass			

It's not obvious for West to bid 4 ♠ but it is tempting, given the seven card suit. This is a contract that has chances of making and that's more the case if East doesn't lead a club (and then plays ♦ 10 when declarer leads a diamond towards dummy).

North will lead two rounds of hearts and does best to switch to a diamond. South wins and has no easy return. The best return is a low club but South will have to hope that West plays a top card (there's an option to put in the nine, then overtake with the ten). If all of that happens declarer will be four off, losing two spades, two hearts, one diamond and two clubs. Obviously things might go quite differently and declarer could escape with fewer undertricks.

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Board 9
North Deals
E-W Vul

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

EW 3♥; EW 2N; EW 1♦; Par -140			
West	North	East	South
	Pass	1 N ¹	Pass
2 ♦ ²	Pass	2 ♥	All pass

1. 12-14.
2. Transfer showing 5+hearts.

It may be difficult for the defence to take more than three tricks here. With the spade pips as they are declarer can come to two spades, four hearts, three diamonds and a club. The best lead for South is an unlikely ♣ A. That will build two club tricks for North South and will hold declarer to nine tricks.

The hand also has an instructive point in the trump suit. When declarer plays a heart towards dummy and plays ♥ K it would be right for North to duck if holding ♥ A. Then when a second heart is played, South plays a low card smoothly again and declarer has something of a guess. Had South been dealt ♥ Jxx playing ♥ Q would generate a second trump loser.

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Board 10
East Deals
Both Vul

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

NS 3♠; NS 3♦; EW 1N; EW 1♥; EW 1♣; Par +140			
West	North	East	South
		Pass	1 ♣
1 ♥	1 ♠	1 N ¹	2 ♠ ²

1. 9-12 opposite an overcall (i.e. a king stronger than in response to an opening bid).
2. Devalues ♥ K else a 3 ♠ bid.

East's bid of 1N suggests that the spades may not be breaking so declarer might embark on a crossruff. West may lead ♥ A and switch to ♦ Q. Now South can win and cross ruff clubs and hearts to arrive at nine tricks (and East has a chance of playing some trump on the third and subsequent hearts but it won't matter).

An unlikely trump lead makes it difficult to arrive at nine tricks but it can be done.

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Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

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

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

W 5♥; E 4♥; NS 3♠; W 2N; NS 3♦; E 1N; EW 1♣; Par -300:				
NS 5♠x-2				
West	North	East	South	
1♥	2♦	4♥	Pass	
Pass	Dbf1	Pass	Pass	
All pass			4♠	
1. For takeout.				

When North makes the takeout double on the second round his shape is always similar to what he holds here (could be 6331♥ or 5440♥). He will always hold extra values when doubling at such a high level as often, if there's no clear alternative, partner will pass the double out for penalties. Here, with a six card suit, it's clear for South to bid 4♠ (and West might double this).

West will lead ♥Q, ruffed in dummy. There are a number of variations in the play but declarer can come to nine tricks, losing just two trumps, a heart and a club. South will be trying to ruff hearts in dummy and West, to prevent that, will have to play trumps, a process that helps declarer in the drawing of them for just the two trump losers.

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Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

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

♠	9 8 4	♠	—	♠	—
♥	Q 5	♥	—	♥	—
♦	9 6 5 4 3	♦	—	♦	—
♣	7 5 2	♣	—	♣	—

West	North	East	South	
1♥	Dbf	3♥1	All pass	
1. Preemptive - after a takeout double the jump raise is akin to a single raise when North is silent.				

[Follow up on last week's workshop]

North will start with two winning rounds of diamonds. He can now cash ♠A and play a second club (as good as anything else). The point is that if the defence does not get too busy the contract will fail by one trick. A too active defence would see North switching to a dangerous spade. That would give declarer a second spade trick and the contract. Left to his own devices declarer will play two rounds of trumps and take a spade finesse. One spade, one trump, two diamonds and a club to lose - the contract has been defeated by one trick.

Board 13

North Deals
Both Vul

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

EW 2N; EW 2♠; E 2♥; EW 2♦; EW 2♣; W 1♥; Par -120

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

1. 12-14.

East West have conducted a tentative auction to game so North will be seeking a passive lead. Unfortunately none of his suits shows great passivity. He may lead ♥ K and that will be a reasonable start for the defence. With the diamond finesse wrong and the spades not breaking evenly declarer ought to fail in his game contract. With the aid of two club finesses (and ♠ K dropping) declarer can come to three spades, one heart, a diamond and three clubs. But the ninth trick should prove elusive.

Board 14

East Deals
E-W Vul

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

EW 3N; EW 3♠; W 2♠; EW 1♥; EW 1♦; E 1♣; Par -600

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

1. A bid of the opponents' suit, forcing. Here looking for partner to show 3card spade support (unforthcoming).

Let's say North leads a 4th best diamond (♦ 5). Declarer does best to hop up with ♦ J, which holds. Now ♣ 10 is run*. North wins cheaply and may switch to a spade. Declarer wins in hand and plays a heart to the queen and ace. South returns his remaining diamond, with West covering with ♦ 9. North wins with ♦ 10 and plays a second spade. Declarer is in good fettle. He can cash the spades and play a club. When the king pops up declarer has five spades, a heart, a diamond and two clubs for nine tricks and game. He cannot make a third trick in clubs because the suit is blocked*.

*with a doubleton, South may have covered ♣ 10 anyway.