

**Board 1**

North Deals  
None Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

EW 6♦; EW 5N; EW 4♥; EW 5♣; NS 2♠; Par -800: NS 6♠x-4

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|------|-------|------|-------|

|      |  |    |    |
|------|--|----|----|
| Pass |  | 1♦ | 4♠ |
|------|--|----|----|

|                  |          |  |  |
|------------------|----------|--|--|
| Dbf <sup>1</sup> | All pass |  |  |
|------------------|----------|--|--|

1. Values, tending towards takeout shape.

A good time to show a lack of timidity with South's heroic leap to game posing a problem for East. East cannot be sure of facing 4hearts and may pass to "take the money". That's not ideal with +300 being outscored by those who reach the diamond suit game. Yes, 6♦ makes provided declarer guesses to rise with ♣ K when North plays low on a club lead from dummy. It's now possible to play on clubs to provide a discard for a second heart loser (one goes on ♠ K).

**Board 2**

East Deals  
N-S Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

NS 3♥; EW 1N; NS 2♦; EW 1♠; Par +140

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|------|-------|------|-------|

|  |  |    |      |
|--|--|----|------|
|  |  | 1♣ | Pass |
|--|--|----|------|

|    |      |                 |      |
|----|------|-----------------|------|
| 1♠ | Pass | 2N <sup>1</sup> | Pass |
|----|------|-----------------|------|

|    |          |  |  |
|----|----------|--|--|
| 3♠ | All pass |  |  |
|----|----------|--|--|

1. 17-18, balanced.

Lead: ♥ A.

West feels a little uneasy when partner jumps in no trumps but the six card spade suit provides some comfort. Alas that's short-lived. The layout means there are two losers in each red suit and at least one trump loser. If North can switch to a club early enough he can give South a ruff there. Otherwise the defence may still get a second trump as West needs to finesse ♠ 8 to hold his losers there to one.

This is one of a couple of coincidental examples today where South should assist North in the defence. When a side-suit ace is led against a suit contract and dummy puts down the queen to some length (three or more cards), partner should give count. That helps in allowing partner to know how many rounds of the suit may cash and/or whether to switch. Here South correct card is ♥ 9, a high card, which tells North that South has an even number of hearts. Now that may mean a doubleton but, if that were the case, West would hold 4hearts and may have ventured a 3♥ bid over 2N. We should play partner for four hearts. He cashes the second heart and switches to a diamond through dummy's vulnerable holding.

**Board 3**  
South Deals  
E-W Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

♠ 10 9 7 3  
 ♥ 10 7  
 ♦ Q 9 5  
 ♣ 8 7 5 2

♠ Q 5 4  
 ♥ 8 6 5 4  
 ♦ J 6 4 3  
 ♣ J 9

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

NS 7♥; NS 7♣; NS 6N; NS 6♠; NS 5♦; Par +1510

| West | North           | East | South           |
|------|-----------------|------|-----------------|
|      |                 |      | 1♥              |
| Pass | 1♠              | Pass | 2♣              |
| Pass | 2♦ <sup>1</sup> | Pass | 3♣              |
| Pass | 3♥              | Pass | 4♣ <sup>2</sup> |
| Pass | 4♦ <sup>2</sup> | Pass | 4N <sup>3</sup> |
| Pass | 5♦ <sup>4</sup> | Pass | 6♥              |

All pass

1. 4th suit forcing.
2. Ace-showing cue bid.
3. Roman Key Card Blackwood.
4. 3 of the 5 "aces" (bidding 4th suit would not be consistent with holding zero aces).

We may see anything from game to a grand slam on this deal. There are always twelve tricks but playing in hearts can work better than no trumps and that's because of the power of a ruff. Here West leads ♦ 5. South can see that if the clubs break 3-3 there are always thirteen tricks. But what if they are 4-2? Can anything be done? Yes, we can discard one on the second top spade but still have to deal with the fifth club. We could try to ruff out ♠ Q which works well here though the odds of that card falling are not great. How about cashing two clubs and ruffing a third round? If the suit were 3-3 all along no harm would be done ... and if they are 4-2 with East holding the doubleton but not ♥ 10 we'll succeed.

So we win the opening lead in dummy, cash two clubs and ruff a club with ♥ 9. We cash ♥ K and return to hand with ♦ K, draw trumps and claim a well-played contract. +1010 should be above average. If West holds the doubleton club no harm can occur as that hand would be discarding or ruffing in front of dummy.

**Board 4**  
West Deals  
Both Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

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

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

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

N 3♠; NS 3♥; NS 4♣; S 2♠; NS 1N; EW 1♦; Par +140

| West              | North           | East | South |
|-------------------|-----------------|------|-------|
| Pass <sup>1</sup> | 1♠              | Pass | 2♥    |
| Pass              | 2N <sup>2</sup> | Pass | 3N    |

All pass

1. Pity we don't have a weak2 in diamonds available.
2. Was too good for an opening 1N and treats the hand as a 15 count.

Yes, a weak two bid in diamonds would work very well here as East would lead ♦ 3 (low from three in partner's suit) and West would duck to preserve communication (vital when that hand has no side-suit entry). Now 3N would fail.

On the actual bidding East has an awkward decision and leading the better minor doesn't work well. Declarer can play on spades to come to four spades, two hearts and two clubs (as a minimum). When East wins ♠ A it's too late for the diamond switch to do any harm and there'll be at least nine tricks.

**Board 5**

North Deals  
N-S Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

EW 5♠; EW 5♥; EW 4N; EW 4♦; EW 4♣; Par -450

| West | North            | East             | South    |
|------|------------------|------------------|----------|
|      | 1 N <sup>1</sup> | Dbl <sup>2</sup> | All pass |

1. 12-14.

2. Penalty-oriented, a good 15+ (no kidding).

The weak no trump (12-14) is wonderfully preemptive and, like all natural no trump openings, highly descriptive but, once in a while, it comes a cropper. This is a case in point. When East doubles, South has nowhere to run (exit transfer work because they show five+ card suits). South passes and can only hope West decides to bid. If West does bid (if showing weakness) it should show a long suit and generally no more than three points. So West passes and East leads a safe ♥ 10. Declarer will do well to come to three tricks but that's still minus 4 (or -1,100). With most folk playing a weak no trump, that score *may* not seem as bad as it did at the time North was declaring.

**Board 6**

East Deals  
E-W Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

NS 2♥; EW 3♣; EW 1N; EW 2♦; Par -100; NS 3♥×-1

| West | North | East | South |
|------|-------|------|-------|
|------|-------|------|-------|

|  |  |      |      |
|--|--|------|------|
|  |  | Pass | Pass |
|--|--|------|------|

|                  |      |      |                  |
|------------------|------|------|------------------|
| 1 N <sup>1</sup> | Pass | Pass | 2 ♣ <sup>2</sup> |
|------------------|------|------|------------------|

|      |                  |      |                  |
|------|------------------|------|------------------|
| Pass | 2 ♦ <sup>3</sup> | Pass | 2 ♥ <sup>4</sup> |
|------|------------------|------|------------------|

All pass

1. 12-14.

2. Landy, showing both majors.

3. Looking for a 5-3 fit.

4. ... and finding one.

South does not have quite enough to open the bidding but is prepared to re-enter the auction once 1N fizzles out. He can use a Landy 2 ♣ bid to get both majors into the picture. North holds 3-3 in the majors and can bid 2 ♦ to maximise the chance of playing in a 5-3 fit.

That works very well as 1N makes for East West. Further East West can make 3 ♣ but that requires a bit of enterprise from East - a takeout double when 2 ♥ Pass Pass comes back to him (West duly bidding said 3 ♣). The vulnerability may put East off that course of action.

In 2 ♥ declarer can win the expected club lead and play on trumps. When playing the spades it's probably best to lead a low spade towards dummy's ♠ Q. That works well here and three spades will accrue once the suit breaks 3-3.

**Board 7**  
South Deals  
Both Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

EW 5♠; NS 4♥; NS 4♦; EW 4♣; Par -500: NS 6♦×-2; NS 6♥×-2

| West | North    | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
|      |          |      | 3♥    |
| Pass | 4♥       | 4♠   | 5♥    |
| 5♠   | All pass |      |       |

One of the general rules of preempting is that the preemptor says his piece and then gracefully leaves all further decisions to partner. Here South breaks this rule but the rebid of 5♥ works well as that contract only fails by one trick (losing two diamonds and a club) with 4♠ making an overtrick. As it is, West has sufficient strength to compete to the five level (and must be thinking that slam is close). East's fear is the defence being able to organise a club ruff but all passes off peacefully for +650 in the East West direction.

[the deal was played on a recent county A team match - Northamptonshire versus Hertfordshire - so rule-breaking applies at all levels.]

**Board 8**  
West Deals  
None Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

EW 6♥; EW 5♠; EW 4N; EW 4♦; EW 2♣; Par -980

| West            | North | East            | South    |
|-----------------|-------|-----------------|----------|
| 1♥              | Pass  | 2♣              | Pass     |
| 2♠ <sup>1</sup> | Pass  | 3♦ <sup>2</sup> | Pass     |
| 3♠ <sup>3</sup> | Pass  | 4♥              | All pass |

1. Powerful distribution and all points in the long suits - worth this reverse ("going above the barrier") even if only 14 hcps.
2. 4th suit (always game forcing after a reverse by opener).
3. Bidding out the shape to show 6hearts and 5spades.

Instead of bidding 3♦ East might try 2N. He (just about) has game values opposite a minimum reverse although the hands don't appear to fit well. Once West bids 3♠, East is happy to alight in an eight-card fit major suit game.

North leads ♦ Q but declarer should come to twelve tricks by ruffing two spades in dummy. The diamond loser disappears on dummy's ♣ A but a heart is lost to the queen. If North leads a trump that allows only one spade to be ruffed in the East had but there is no longer a trump loser. Bidding 6♥ is "going it a bit".

**Board 9**

North Deals  
Both Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

EW 3♥; NS 3♦; NS 1♠; Par -140  

| West | North | East            | South    |
|------|-------|-----------------|----------|
|      | Pass  | Pass            | 1♦       |
| Pass | 2♦    | 2♥ <sup>1</sup> | All pass |

 1. "It's now or never".

If East West give their opponents an easy time then a diamond partscore will be the sure outcome. If, as above, East becomes busy he guarantees a good board for his side since if North South compete further, West is likely to raise to 3♥ [should North South move to 4♦ don't forget to double].

South may lead ♣ Q. East wins and plays a small spade which runs to ♠ J and North's queen. There are some variations now but generally declarer will ruff two spades in dummy. That's all right for him though he'll now lose a heart to the knave to go with the top trump loser. With a loser in each of the diamond and spade suits, nine tricks are there.

If North South play in diamonds it may not be so simple for them to make nine tricks but making eight should do well (either by being allowed to play at the two level; or by going one off at the three level).

**Board 10**

East Deals  
None Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

NS 3♠; NS 4♣; NS 3♦; NS 1N; EW 1♥; Par +140  

| West            | North           | East | South           |
|-----------------|-----------------|------|-----------------|
|                 |                 | Pass | Pass            |
| 1N <sup>1</sup> | 2N <sup>2</sup> | Pass | 3♣ <sup>3</sup> |

 All pass  
 1. 12-14.  
 2. Both minors, at least 5/5.  
 3. Often, as here, preference rather than full support.

North has sufficient distribution to want to compete and makes an "unusual no trump" call to show long minors. East West cannot do much over this, though East might bid 3♥ after South's 3♣ and two passes (dangerous when North South are not guaranteed to have a great fit).

Back to 3♣ against which West leads ♥ A. With a singleton in dummy East shows suit preference for the higher side-suit, spades, by playing ♥ 10, a high heart. West obediently switches to a spade, East winning and returning a heart, ruffed in dummy. Declarer can ruff the diamonds good by seeking to ruff two rounds in the South hand (it does East no good to ruff with ♣ J as that's a natural trump trick). South can lead the remaining trump and finesse against West's king. After cashing dummy's ♣ A there are four trump, three diamond, two diamond ruff and one spade winners for ten tricks. +130, which should be reasonable for North South.

**Board 11**  
South Deals  
Both Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

♠ 9 8 7 3  
 ♥ 10 3 2  
 ♦ 8 4  
 ♣ K Q 7 4

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

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

EW 2♠; NS 1N; NS 2♦; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par -110

| West | North            | East             | South |
|------|------------------|------------------|-------|
| Pass | 1 N <sup>1</sup> | 2 ♣ <sup>2</sup> | Pass  |
| 2 ♠  | All pass         |                  | Pass  |

1. 12-14.
2. Landy, showing both majors.

We have another Landy bid (see board 6) and this time it's for East West with West able to establish the fit very quickly. South has a possible takeout double (of 2 ♠) but the balanced shape, vulnerability and defensive ♠ Q suggests caution.

North leads ♥ A and, as on board 2, South should co-operate by giving count when dummy has queen to length. He plays ♥ 5 to indicate three cards (low from odd). North cannot be certain that South doesn't have, say, ♥ 53 or ♥ 52 (depending on what card West played at trick one). If South does have a doubleton heart that would put West with four. With 4 hearts West may have bid 2 ♥ instead of 2 ♠. What's clear is the threat posed by dummy's hearts so North *may* switch to a bold ♦ A\*. Altogether the defence can cash two hearts, two diamonds and a club. Holding the contract to minus 110 may not be a great score but it's certainly better than conceding minus 140 when the rats get at one of the diamonds.

\*playing a club is another option and that works when South wins and is able to push a diamond through West.

**Board 12**  
West Deals  
N-S Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

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

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

♠ Q 7 5  
 ♥ J 8 5  
 ♦ Q 7 3  
 ♣ A J 7 2

W 2♠; EW 2♥; EW 3♦; E 1♠; NS 1♣; Par -110

| West | North    | East | South |
|------|----------|------|-------|
| 1 ♠  | Pass     | 1 N  | Pass  |
| 2 ♦  | All pass |      |       |

A simple auction with East not having quite enough to raise to 3 ♦. Where declarer makes a simple rebid, as here, after a 1N response, that rebid is not forcing. If West had a better hand he'd jump in a new suit on the second round if he had sufficient to set up a game force.

North may lead a neutral heart or a more active club. The club gives declarer a more comfortable ride as it creates some communication with the East hand. Declarer can win the second round of clubs, unblock ♥ Q, cash two top trumps and ruff a club. Now two top hearts are cashed and declarer has eight tricks. A ninth trick may arise if declarer leads East's last heart and throws a spade from dummy. North wins but either has to give declarer a ruff and discard (in clubs) or play ace and another spade, again yielding a ninth trick for East West. This is a tad fanciful as it would be more normal to play a spade toward's West's king, a play that is less successful because the ace is badly placed for declarer.

**Board 13**  
North Deals  
Both Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

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

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

♠ A 10 8 3  
 ♥ A J 3  
 ♦ A K 7 3  
 ♣ 8 4

E 2N; E 3♣; W 1N; W 2♣; NS 1♠; NS 1♥; Par -120

| West | North | East | South    |
|------|-------|------|----------|
|      | Pass  | 1 ♣  | Dbl      |
| 2 ♣  | Pass  | Pass | Dbl      |
| Pass | 2 ♠   | 3 ♣  | All pass |

It's the modern tendency to ignore an opponent's initial takeout double and bid as if there had been a pass. Here that approach by West gives North South a further bite of the cherry but the auction will subside in 3 ♣ (yes, in "olden" days, say twenty five+ years ago, West would bid 3 ♣ on the first round to show a normal 2 ♣ raise).

This contract is always safe with the defence taking a spade, a heart and two diamonds. I can't see any South leading a low diamond and, when getting in, leading a second diamond though such a spectacular series of plays would see declarer putting in ♦ 9, losing to ♦ 10! The ability to break unbreakable contracts ... far-fetched.

**Board 14**  
East Deals  
None Vul

15th July 2015 Supervised Play

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

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

♠ K 8 7  
 ♥ 8 7 5 3  
 ♦ K 9 5  
 ♣ K 6 2

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

NS 4♠; EW 2♥; EW 2♦; NS 2♣; Par +420

| West     | North | East | South |
|----------|-------|------|-------|
|          |       | Pass | Pass  |
| Pass     | 1 ♠   | Pass | 2 ♣   |
| Pass     | 3 ♣   | Pass | 3 ♠   |
| All pass |       |      |       |

Some may take the above approach where South evaluates his hand as being too good for a 1N call. Were any Souths to try that bid, North would bid a simple 2 ♠ and the contract would be at a lower level (always good when game's marginal).

East leads ♥ 7 (2nd from a bad holding) and declarer wins to take a losing club finesse. Declarer will always lose two diamonds but the question is whether a ten trick can be made for a good score. That will depend on how North plays the trump suit. Here, playing ♠ Q from hand works wonders as it pins West's singleton ♠ J. The other line would have been to cash ♠ A, hoping East had been dealt the singleton ♠ K. Now declarer prevails by running ♠ 10, picking up West's remaining ♠ J x. Very well done if you played the trump suit for the first layout.

(the clubs always provide three tricks whether they are cashed from the top or declarer runs ♣ 9 as a finesse against ♣ 10).