

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

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

NS 4N; NS 4♥; NS 3♠; NS 4♦; EW 2♣; Par +430

West	North	East	South
	1 ♥ ¹	Pass	1 ♠
2 ♣	2 ♥	3 ♣ ²	4 ♥

All pass

1. Light but good shape and two bullets (aces).
2. Light but "support with support" is a winning mantra, both helping partner and taking bidding space away from the opponents.

East is likely to lead a club. Declarer wins and draws trumps. He plays three rounds of spades, throwing a diamond. Now a diamond is led from the table.

There's now a danger, for the defence, of crashing ♦ A and ♦ Q. That ought not happen as West can take the first diamond and exit passively with a club. Now declarer is stuck in hand and the third defensive diamond trick should come easily.

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

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

EW 4♦; EW 2N; EW 2♠; EW 2♥; EW 3♣; Par -130

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

1. 17-18.

2. Conventionally asking for the lead of dummy's bid suit.

The auction shows a rare example of a double of a freely bid no trump game. This lead demands the lead of dummy's (first bid) suit. South dutifully leads his spade, noticeably a lead that would not normally be made. North is able to cash just four spades (♠ 9 becomes a winner) so he'll be happy that partner can provide the setting trick with the ace of diamonds (yes, the double wasn't without risk. Holding ♠ AKQJ9 would have been safer).

Plus 100 to North South will be a very good score for them.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

♠ A 3
 ♥ K 5 4
 ♦ K 9 7 3
 ♣ K J 9 4

♠ Q J 10 7 6 2
 ♥ Q 8 3
 ♦ 10 6
 ♣ 7 3

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

♠ 9 8 5 4
 ♥ A J 9 7 6
 ♦ 8 5
 ♣ 8 6

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

West	North	East	South
			Pass
2 ♠ ¹	Dbl ²	Pass	3 ♥

All pass

1. Weak2 in spades (6card suit, 5-9hcps).
2. A little flat. Some may prefer Pass.

North may rue his positive involvement in the auction as 3 ♥ will not play very well. With all the minor suit honours in the East hand (unsurprising after the weak opening by West) declarer will only make his hearts and a spade (it may be difficult to ruff a spade). More to the point - how many hearts will South make? It's possible to make five hearts by taking a backward finesse (yes, another form of finesse) by leading ♥ J. If it's covered, declarer's ♥ 9 will become a winner (declarer will now finesse against ♥ 10 in the East hand but that card conveniently pops up on the second round). If ♥ J is not covered it is run successfully. How likely is that to happens? Very unlikely as declarer has no reason to play West, who has few values and advertised length elsewhere (so generally short in the non-spade suits), for this card. No, declarer will finesse against East and will be held to five/six tricks - four hearts and ♠ A (and, just possibly, a spade ruff.

Board 4
West Deals
Both Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

♠ J 9
 ♥ J 9
 ♦ 7 4 3
 ♣ A K 9 7 6 3

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

♠ Q 10 7 3 2
 ♥ A K 6 3
 ♦ K 9 5
 ♣ 4

♠ A K 8 6
 ♥ 8 7 4
 ♦ A J 8 2
 ♣ Q 8

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

West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 ♠	Pass
1 N	2 ♣	2 ♥	3 ♣

All pass

West has stretched to bid 1N and may be reluctant to compete to 3 ♥. The decision to pass over 3 ♣ may be influenced by the defensive club holding West has too. That will work out well in practice as 3 ♥ will be difficult to make. Apart from being able to set up and enjoy the spade winners declarer needs to guess well to lose just one diamond (i.e. here, play South to hold ♦ J). With 3 ♥ generally failing, West will be pleased that 3 ♣ generally fails too (otherwise one off in 3 ♥ [minus 100] would be better than conceding nine trick for 3 ♣ [minus 110]). In 3 ♣ declarer seems to have five clubs (because of the 4-1 break), one diamond and two spades.

It is just possible to make a ninth trick in clubs. This needs declarer to take three ruffs with small cards in the North hand.

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

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

E 5♠; E 5♥; W 4♠; W 4♥; EW 2N; NS 1♦; EW 1♣; Par -450

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

1. 12-14.
2. Stayman.

West has just an eleven count but his 5431 shape is ideal for taking a slightly aggressive course. When East bids 2♥ West will blast to game. In practice this contract will make on the nose, with declarer losing one spade, one heart and a club. Of course, declarer will seek to lose no heart, by finessing against the king. That play fails.

West had another option in the bidding. That was to introduce his two suits by first transferring to hearts and then bidding the spades. Now the superior spade game may be reached after 1N - 2♦; 2♥ - 2♠; 3♠ (invitational) - 4♠. Unless North leads a club declarer may be able to discard East's club loser on the fifth heart. Declarer will have to be careful as making eleven tricks is also dependent on ruffing two diamonds in the West hand.

Board 6

East Deals
E-W Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

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

NS 4♥; EW 3♠; EW 3♦; NS 3♣; Par +200; EW 4♠×-1

West	North	East	South
		3 ♠	4 ♥

All pass

South as reached a good spot and will be disappointed to make just ten tricks. With the trumps as they are declarer will lose two hearts and a diamond. Of course South will welcome a double of the contract as that will convert a reasonable plus 420 into a shared-top plus 590.

Nothing more to say. Well there is. What if East is more aggressive? He looks at his 7420 shape and bids 4♠ instead. What South will not bid 5♥? Now West has a clear double and plus 100 will give his side a near top.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

♠ J 7 6 4 2
♥ A 7
♦ Q 9 7
♣ A 10 3

♠ Q 9 8 3
♥ K Q 8 6 4 2
♦ K
♣ 8 4

♠ K
♥ J 9 5 3
♦ A 6 5 2
♣ Q 7 6 5

♠ A 10 5
♥ 10
♦ J 10 8 4 3
♣ K J 9 2

NS 3♠; EW 3♥; NS 3♦; NS 2♣; Par +140

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

1. Obviously not an adherent of the suit quality test. With a decent 11 count, however, it sometimes pays to get involved. Here if North does not act there's a danger that North South will be frozen out of the auction.
2. Good raise of spades.

South has that useful 5431 spade (see board 5 too) so is right to show a good raise of partner's spades by cuebidding the opponents' suit. North has no extra values and, conscious of his suit quality, will have no interest in going to game. The spade break is problematic but declarer can make nine tricks, losing two diamonds and two trumps. There's no need to play on clubs, which requires a guess as to who holds the queen, as North's club loser can be discarded on one of South's long diamonds.

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

♠ 10 8 5 2
♥ 10 8 3
♦ 8 5 3
♣ 7 5 3

♠ A
♥ Q 7 6 5
♦ A K J 10 9
♣ A J 6

♠ Q 9 7 6 3
♥ J 9 2
♦ Q 7 4 2
♣ 10

♠ K J 4
♥ A K 4
♦ 6
♣ K Q 9 8 4 2

EW 5♦; EW 3♥; EW 2N; EW 2♠; NS 1♣; Par -400

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

1. 16+hcps, 5+diamonds and 4+hearts (a reverse).


If this was your auction a round of applause would be in order. Here West is holding the 5431 shape, a recurring theme. That semi-three-suited shape makes the hand unsuitable for a 2♣ opening bid, not least because such a bid consumes too much bidding space. The lower level start allows East West to exchange plenty of information and East's 4♦ is the key, expressing as it did, doubt about 3N. How right that was as 3N will fail by one trick on repeated (marked) club leads (yes, declarer makes an eighth trick, with ♣ J, when the defence clears the suit).

In 5♦ declarer can ruff two clubs in the East hand and his saving grace is the heart suit. He can finesse ♥ 9. When North is seen to hold ♥ 10, and the suit breaks 3-3, there are eleven tricks - one spade, two hearts, five diamonds, one club and two club ruffs.

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

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

NS 3N; NS 3♠; EW 2♥; EW 2♦; EW 1♣; Par +400

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

1. Suit quality test?

East is too strong/too defensive to consider a 3 ♥ opening bid. South has an appalling suit ... but it is six cards long*. It used to be thought better to pass on misfit hands (note South's heart holding) but modern thinking dismisses this. It's hoped that partner will furnish some trump support and those cards will allow the overcaller to ruff the losers he holds in the opening bidder's suit.


4 ♠ is a very reasonable contract and will only fail if East receives a club ruff. Whilst South has only two clubs, East's ♠ J is higher than any spade in the South hand.

** any England junior would jump to 2 ♠ (weak) without batting an eyelid.*

Board 10

East Deals
Both Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

		♠ 976		
		♥ AK6		
		♦ 6		
		♣ AQJ873		
♠ KQ1053		♠ A8	♥ 972	
♥ J105		♦ AQ874		
♦ KJ105		♣ K106		
♣ 2				
		♠ J42		
		♥ Q843		
		♦ 932		
		♣ 954		

EW 3♠; EW 2N; EW 3♦; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par -140

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

1. 12-14.
2. Transfer, showing 5+hearts.
3. For takeout.

North has a good hand so the 3 ♣ bid is pretty automatic. East passes when he might have stretched to 3 ♠ had he held three/four spades. 3 ♣ comes round to West. Following our general principle of "doubles are for takeout until we've found a fit" West can bring the diamonds and (3card) hearts into consideration by making use of such a double. Another 5431 hand. That gets East to bid a comfortable 3 ♦ where the contract may rest.

South will lead an obedient ♣ 4 (lowest with 3card support). North wins and cashes ♥ A on which partner signals encouragement (either ♥ 8; or ♥ 3 if playing "low likes"). Now the defence take its four tricks but declarer has the rest. Had North not played three rounds of hearts those losers (for declarer) could have been thrown on the spade suit.

Will that get a good score for East West? Well, it should be reasonable. With spades breaking 3-3, however, 3 ♦ will be outscored by those in 3 ♠ (plus 140 instead of plus 110). If one defensive hand had ♠ Jxxx then 3 ♠ would have failed.

Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

♠ J 9 8 5
 ♥ 10 9 6 5
 ♦ —
 ♣ 8 6 5 4 3

♠ 7 4 3
 ♥ K 8
 ♦ J 5 4 3
 ♣ A Q 10 2

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

♠ A K Q 6
 ♥ Q 2
 ♦ A K Q 9 8
 ♣ J 7

NS 3♠; EW 1♥; Par +140

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

1. 21-22, balanced; or 8 playing tricks in an unbalanced hand.
2. Relay.
3. 21-22 balanced (see text).
4. Stayman.

This auction may look perverse but it sometimes pays not to disclose suits too readily. If South doesn't treat the hand as above he may be forced to open with 1♦ after which North will pass. If South treats his hand as "big and unbalanced" the auction will be ugly : 2♣ - 2♦; 3♦ - ?. In the given auction North takes a rose-tinted view and uses Stayman (it's often right to bid with shapely hands with few values over big balanced ones). Game is reached and the spotlight falls on East. He may well lead a diamond (♦7, second from a bad suit) and now declarer is home. He can play three winning diamonds, pitching hearts, and give up a heart. Now it's possible to ruff a heart low and ruff a diamond high, the latter play setting up the fifth winner.

Ten tricks - four spades, one heart ruff, four diamonds and a diamond ruff.

Very fortunate but North South didn't give away too much information in the auction.

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

♠ K 8
 ♥ K 7 6 5
 ♦ 5 3
 ♣ K J 10 9 3

♠ A 5
 ♥ 3
 ♦ A Q J 10 9 7 6 2
 ♣ A 4

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

♠ J 9 6 2
 ♥ A Q J 4
 ♦ 8
 ♣ Q 6 5 2

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

West	North	East	South
2♣ ¹	Pass	2♦ ²	Pass
3♦	Pass	3♠	Pass
4♦	Pass	5♦	All pass

1. 21-22, balanced; or 8 playing tricks in an unbalanced hand.
2. Relay.

In contrast to the last hand West has a very shapely hand that is worth much more than its known 15 high card points. It's worth opening 2♣. After that start East West should reach game in diamonds. As it is, with hearts breaking 4-4, 3N would have made but West won't bid that with his singleton heart. South has a difficult lead and it's generally right to lead aggressively against confidently bid games. That means a heart or a club. A heart will work all right. On ♥A North can play a suit preference ♥5. If South can read this as a low card he'll switch to a club. Now 5♦ is defeated because the defence will take a spade, a heart and a club. Similarly, if South starts with a club three tricks will come North South's way.

If South leads a trump or a (?) spade declarer can make 5♦ as ♠Q can be established to provide a discard for the club loser. On a trump lead declarer should win in the West hand and play ace and another spade. If North wins and returns a heart for South to play another spade, declarer ruffs high, crosses to ♦K and enjoys the queen of spades. The mistake, on this third spade, would have been to throw the club loser. Now North ruffs that card for the setting trick.

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

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

EW 3N; EW 3♥; EW 3♣; EW 2♦; Par -600

West	North	East	South
	Pass	Pass	Pass
1 N ¹	All pass		
1. 12-14.			

Back to earth with a more mundane offering. On a 4th best spade lead declarer can hop up with the queen of spades and play on diamonds. If he gets the hearts right by dropping South doubleton holding he has a clear nine tricks - two spades, three hearts, two diamonds and two clubs - with the chance of making another trick in clubs. If North leads a learned ♥ 8 it's possible to make four heart tricks - win with ♥ K, play a heart to the ace and, later, finesse against North's ♥ 9!

Board 14
East Deals
None Vul

19thOctober2016 SupervisedPairs

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

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

1. Preemptive.
2. For takeout.

West didn't think he'd pay a role in the auction but after North's pressure jump to 3 ♥ East makes a takeout double*. West bids his spade suit at the 3level where the auction will rest (or, if it doesn't, East West will either fail in 4 ♠ or they'll double 4 ♥ for a great score of plus 500 [assuming West receives his club ruff]).

**would prefer the more "three suited" 5431 shape but flexibility in using takeout doubles is the key to good competitive bidding.*