

Greetings!

Herewith find analysis of hands played last Thursday in the **Galway/CABAI Western Region BBO IMP Pairs**.

Each hand is analysed in the subsequent pages in this document. Note that in some cases the **Saints & Sinners** comments extend over two pages.

And a few words by way of explanation as to how this analysis is undertaken...

First, the results are downloaded from BBO...this cannot be done until Friday morning. The results include the contracts and results for each board. Remember that each set of hands is played simultaneously at all tables. The results also include access to a MOV file for each hand played (at all tables) which enables me to re-play, trick by trick (an exact re-creation) of how the hand was played. In that way I can observe the actions that constitute the rationale by which I award '**Saint & Sinner**' status.

Some statistics...This review contains the analysis of **21 hands**, played at **12 tables**, representing a total of **252 contracts** that I reviewed which in turn converts to **3,276 tricks** that are minutely screened, which amounts to a grand total of **13,104 individual card plays** that are dissected!

Needless to say this takes time...and then I have to write up the analysis. And then I have to review and edit the document...it's so easy to make a mistake, typo or otherwise.

So, that's an insight into the mechanics of the process involved in the preparation of the analysis that is reflected in this document.

I would appreciate any feedback that you might provide which indicates whether or not you find the analysis to be of interest and or beneficial to you.

Comments, suggestions or observations can be emailed to me at **paulscan@iol.ie**

Paul J Scannell

15th June 2020

P.S. Are you aware that you can review your own results, and access MOV files which re-create the actual play of every contract played at your table...or indeed any table!

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

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

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

Note that E/W should only make seven tricks in diamonds but can make eight tricks in spades!

Saints & Sinners

Sinners first...the West declarer in 3♠ who managed to lose SIX tricks instead of five. Double-black mark to the South player who switched to the ♥ 8 instead of ♥ Q and gave declarer a chance of losing just one heart by playing ♥ 10 which draws North's ♥ A. Declarer's other heart loser can now disappear on a winning club!!! Unfortunately declarer played ♥ K and now lost three hearts...leading to an undeserved bonus for N/S! **Sinner** status to the West declarer who unnecessarily lost a diamond trick and duly went two down in 3♠.

Sinner status also to the N/S pair, defending 3♦, who failed to find a spade switch after winning first two heart tricks and subsequently enabled declarer to ditch two losing spades on dummy's ♣ KQ thus letting declarer make the contract instead of being two down!!! **Saintly** status to **Monica Power** for taking advantage of the opportunity presented to her!

Saint & Sinner to the South player who DID find the spade switch after winning the second heart BUT unfortunately switched to ♠ 4 instead of ♠ K from a holding of ♠ K4, thus blocking the suit. This allowed declarer to make a contract of 2♦.

Saint & Sinner status also to the N/S pair where South made the killing opening lead of ♠ K (North holding ♠ QJ7). Declarer won and played three rounds of diamonds, North winning the third round. North now cashed the ♠ Q and then switched to a club which South won and then found the killing continuation (not difficult when you look at dummy!) of ♥ Q which declarer covered. Now North, on lead for the last time, FAILED to cash ♠ J (surely partner's opening lead of ♠ K indicates a doubleton and not three!) and meekly returned a heart which end-played South who could not now prevent declarer from getting to dummy via ♥ 10 or a club and thus enabling declarer to discard his losing spade! **Sinner** status also to the South, defending 3♠ who switched to ♥ 8 instead of ♥ Q, after winning opening lead with ♣ A, and thus enabled declarer to discard his second heart loser on ♣ K when he covered ♥ 8 with ♥ 10 forcing North to win with ♥ A. **Saintly** status to **Kathleen O'Connell** who found the switch of ♠ K before trumps were drawn. **Double Sinner** status to the East player who didn't open the bidding and then failed to support her partner's spade overcall and ended up in 2♦-1 instead of 2♠ making!

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

4♥ by N/S is a likely contract...which should fail by one trick

Saints & Sinners

Sinner status to the West player who defending 4♥ led ♣ A, no problem so far, but then failed to find the obvious switch to a small spade and instead continued with a second club to dummy's now singleton ♣ K thus handing the tempo to declarer who could now safely take the heart finesse and then discard a losing spade on dummy's fourth diamond. However, West compounded her poor defense by winning ♥ K and then continued with a third club to give declarer a ruff and discard! 4♥ made by a more than grateful declarer!

Sinner status to the other West player who repeated the same defense outlined above but on this occasion the declarer was smarter and ruffed in the North hand while discarding a spade from the South hand and then subsequently jettisoned her second spade loser on dummy's long diamond thus giving declarer (**Saintly** status to **Mary B**) ELEVEN tricks!

Sinner status to the South who simply raised partner's opening 1 NT to 3 NT without showing her five card heart suit. **Sinner** status to the West at the same table who, after partner led and continued spades, declarer winning the second round, found herself on lead with ♥ K and switched to a small diamond instead of a club. Note that on a small club switch, if declarer guesses wrong, the defense can take a total of NINE tricks via 3 spade, 1 heart and five clubs! West may have thought that partner could hold ♦ A but if she did, that was false thinking. At this table North's 1 NT opening is STRONG, i.e 15-17 hcp. With West and dummy holding 19 hcp that leaves East with no more than SIX hcp of which three (♠ QJ) are already accounted for...so East CANNOT have ♦ A. Counting, counting, counting...ALL THE TIME!

Sinner status to the East player who followed with ♠ 10 on partner's small spade lead when declarer won the trick with ♠ A. Holding ♠ QJ10 in a suit and intending to give a signal why not play the ♠ Q...that will re-assure partner rather than the inconclusive 10!

Even greater **Sinner** status to the East player who played the ♠ 2 in similar circumstances! The same defender then followed with ♠ 10 on partner's ♠ K instead of a more encouraging ♠ Q! **Saintly** status to **Peggy Fay** who played an encouraging ♠ 8 on partner's lead of ♠ Q. **Sinner** status to the East player who got very lucky when leading ♠ 2 from ♠ QJ102!!!

Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

EW 5N; EW 5♠; EW 5♦; EW 2♣; EW 1♥; Par -660: EW 3N+2

E/W should reach game, either 4♠, 3NT or even 5♦. Note that East has super shape (ten cards in the black suits!) opposite partner's T/O double of South's opening 1♥. If West only makes an invitational raise in spades then East should bid game! Remember that a response of 1♠ opposite the double could be made on a hand with only 4 spades and ZERO points! The actual East hand is much better than that!

Saints & Sinners

Saintly status to the three E/W pairs who reached the spade game...**Sean & Enda, Marcella & Peggy, Mairead & Monica.**

Saintly status to the E/W pair who reached 5♦...and **Sinner** status to the declarer for failing to make it on a heart lead. There is one way home...win in hand and play on trumps and then play on spades, winning the THIRD round with dummy's ♠A and then discarding losers (hearts or club and heart) from hand. An alternative line of ruffing two heart losers in dummy should lead to defeat as North's ♦9 can be promoted via a subsequent heart play from South upon winning with ♦A. Also, if playing on clubs to re-enter own hand declarer can fail if South ruffs in with ♦6 which again will produce a promotion for North's ♦9. Better to reach the spade game!

Partial **Saintly** status to the 2 E/W pairs who doubled South's 2♥ contract and defeated it by two tricks earning a consolation prize of +300 and 0.64 IMPs as opposed to the 650 scored by those in the spade game who earned 8.45 IMPs.

Sinner status to all those who languished in a part-score!

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

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

EW 7N; EW 7♠; EW 4♥; EW 4♣; EW 3♦; Par -2220; EW 7N

As you can see there are 13 tricks available to E/W. The only problem is bidding the Grand Slam. I suspect that very few pairs will reach the 7 level. It is not always easy to bid Grand Slams with the certainty that they will make, in particular when they feature a long suit which may be dependent on a favourable break for the contract to succeed. But certainly 6 NT/6 ♠ should not pose a problem. The big issue on this hand is for East to convey his values! An Ace and a King, both with an accompanying J, are good cards. Ideal is any system where the partner of the BIG hand can show their values.

Saints & Sinners

Well, **Sinners** first...all SIX E/W pairs who failed to bid even a Small Slam scored a LOSS of 7/8 IMPs depending on denomination (NT or ♠) and number of tricks actually made.

Extra **Sinners** points to the declarer who made only 11 tricks. Finesses are always tantalizing to declarer but should not be taken where you already have 12 top tricks!

Saints?...there are a few. **Carmel Musitano** who responded 2 NT to **Pat's** opening 2 ♣. Whether playing Acol or Benjaminised Acol this is a natural bid which shows circa 7-10 points and is game-forcing. **Pat** (**Saintly** status) checked for Aces AND Kings and steered the contract to 7 ♠. This has the added value that if partner has a side suit perhaps it can be established by ruffs in declarer's hand. Well done. And they reaped a HUGE 15 IMPs for their efforts.

The other five pairs who reached 6 NT/6 ♠ earned 6 IMPs. I particularly liked the sequence of **Enda & Sean Glynn**...2 ♣ - 2 ♠ - 6 NT. 2 ♣ is Control Asking, i.e. show Aces (2pts) and Kings (1pt). The 2 ♠ response showed an Ace and a King (2 NT would show three Kings). Note that opener can now literally count 12 tricks...(7 spades, 3 side-suit Aces and 2 side-suit Kings).

I also liked **Maura Connolly's** re-bid of 3 ♠ over her partner's (Siobhan O'Sullivan) initial response of 2 ♦.

Other **Saints** who bid the Small Slam include **Sheila Baynes & Norma O'Connell**, **Margaret Ford & Rhona Bolger**, **Monica Power & Mairead O'Shaughnessy**.

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

W 4♠; E 3♠; NS 2N; NS 2♥; EW 3♦; EW 3♣; Par -420: W 4♠

N/S will probably reach 4♥. The question then becomes whether or not E/W will let it out! Note also that E/W can make a spade contract, 4♠ by West but only 3♠ by East. And a club contract with the 5-4 fit offers a good save against 4♥ by N/S. But I expect that hearts will be the most likely contract.

Saints & Sinners

Sinner status to the West defender who discarded ♠ 7 thus promoting North ♠ 5 as a winner for the vital tenth trick whilst grimly holding on to ♣ K a suit in which declarer is known to be void! Some people just find it possible to discard an Ace or King despite its absolute useless defensive value!

Sinner status to the two Easts who led ♠ 8 from ♠ 98. Unless this is a systemic lead (low from a doubleton) it can cause partner to misdefend as happened at one table where declarer played low from ♠ J103 causing West to rise with ♠ A. A subsequent continuation of ♠ 9 from East meant that declarer now scored two tricks having ♠ J10 in dummy and ♠ K5 in hand. West's ♠ Q became the meat in the sandwich! The lead of ♠ 9 would have avoided that situation...if declarer plays low from dummy's ♠ J103 then West can follow low knowing that North will have to win with ♠ K. Also, **Sinner** status to all Easts who having lead ♠ 8 (or ♠ 9) and watched partner win with ♠ A subsequently continued with a spade at next opportunity despite KNOWING that declarer must have ♠ K, and if declarer also has ♠ 7 then declarer can win two spade tricks! How do you know that declarer has ♠ K...because partner won the first trick with ♠ A which DENIES holding the ♠ K. Always win with lowest possible honour thus denying the immediate lower card.

Sinner status to those Easts who won with ♦ A when partner returned ♦ 10 after winning ♠ A failed to continue with ♦ Q which West could ruff and would subsequently lead to defeat of the contract..

Sinner status also to the N/S pair who allowed their opponents to play in 4♦ UNDOUBLED!

Board 6

East Deals
E-W Vul

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

NS 4♠; NS 4♥; NS 3N; NS 3♦; Par +420: NS 4♥; NS 4♠

If East passes then South will open either 1 NT (Strong) or 1♦. Over a 1♦ opening North should bid 1♠ (higher ranking of two touching five card suits) intending to re-bid 2♥ thus showing 5 spades and at least 4 hearts. With two four card majors North should respond 1♥. Opposite a 1 NT opening North can bid 2♣ (Stayman) and if South responds 2♦ then North can make the conventional bid of 3♦ which asks South to bid his longer major! As can be seen both 4♠ and 4♥ can make, albeit that the actual making might not be that easy! Also, opposite a strong NT, if North wants to transfer he should bid 2♥ (transfer to spades) first and then re-bid hearts (natural), twice if necessary, thus confirming at least 5/5 in spades and hearts!

Saints & Sinners

Saintly status to **Clare Burke** who responded with 1♠ opposite partner's opening 1♦ and then bid 3♥ over opener's re-bid of 3♦. This confirms at least 5 spades and 4 hearts and South should have gone on to the spade game!

Saintly status also to **John Fahy** who was the only other North to respond 1♠ in reply to partner's 1♦ opening. John, and partner **Liam**, duly bid and made 4♠ although **Sinner** status to the West player who covered dummy's ♥ Q with their ♥ K when partner switched to a heart at trick 2. A spade switch might have been more effective. But it was suicidal of West to cover the ♥ Q...North has bid hearts and West's remaining hearts (♥ 654) will never grow up to take a trick!

Sinner status to ALL North players who responded to partner's 1♦ opening with a bid of 1♥. WRONG! **Sinner** status also to all North's who transferred to hearts instead of spades opposite South's 1 NT opening.

Sinner status to the E/W pair, defending 3 NT, allowed declarer to make 12 tricks primarily because West, having observed partner discard 2 diamonds on the play of the heart suit (yes, West erred by covering dummy's ♥ Q), followed with the calamitous discard of a diamond from ♦ Jxx thus setting up five diamond winners for declarer where TWO should have been the limit! East's diamond discards were not fatal as long as West holds on to ♦ Jxx.

Sinner status to the East who overcalled 1 ♠ on a **four-card suit** and subsequently saw partner lead their singleton ♠ K handing declarer four spade tricks! **Sinner** status to all West players who covered ♥ Q, in particular where North bid 1 ♥.

Saintly status to **Sean Glynn** who having passed initially and heard 1 ♦ on his left and 1 ♥ on his right now found a perfect takeout double showing the black suits and 9-11 hcp. Seven other Easts failed to make the same bid!

Board 7

South Deals
Both Vul

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

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

An innocuous little hand...not many making contracts. N/S can make 1 ♠, North can make 2 NT whereas South can only make 1 NT. E/W can make 2 ♥, 2 ♦ or 2 ♣.

Saints & Sinners

Saints...**Miriam Mullan** who successfully declared 2 ♥. **Norma O'Connell** who brought home 2 ♣+2, and **Nora Hanratty** who contracted 2 ♣ which made with an overtrick. The latter two results suggest some **Sinners** in the N/S seats!

Sinner status to the player, defending 2 ♣, who failed to win the first club when the ♣ 8 was ducked into South. This would have given N/S three club tricks. They ended up with just two! **Sinner** status again to the same South, who having led ♠ J at trick one and seeing declarer win in dummy with ♠ Q, thereby confirming that declarer held ♠ K, panicked after winning ♣ A and cashed ♠ A thus establishing declarer's ♠ K as a winner.

Sinner status to the other South, also defending 2 ♣, who led a heart to declarer's ♥ A. Declarer then played a spade to dummy's ♠ Q and continued with a spade to her ♠ K and South's ♠ A. South had a simple play now...cash ♣ A and then continue with a cashable ♠ J and continue with a fourth spade! But South simply continued with a another heart, ruffed by declarer in hand who then ruffed his last spade with dummy's singleton trump! A series of errors ensued from both defenders and declarer emerged with ten tricks!

Sinner status to the South who failed to ruff the fourth diamond with a losing trump and then cash ♠ A and ♥ J to beat 2 ♥ by one trick and instead let the contract make! North could also have defeated the contract by continuing with a second spade through dummy's ♠ K9 (South holding ♠ AJxx) which would also have caused the contract to fail.

Serious Sinner status to the South, declaring 1 ♠, who failed to discard her losing diamond on the fourth club lead by East, into dummy's winning ♣ Q, which would have enabled declarer to lead a trump from dummy, finessing the ♠ 10 and then play a heart to dummy's ♥ K which East would ruff...but that would have been the end of the party for E/W and declarer would have emerged with EIGHT tricks. Instead. declarer ruffed the fourth club with ♠ J and ended up **FOUR down!**

Sinner status to all Souths who failed to overcall 1 ♠ where East opened 1 ♣.

Seven other Souths declared a spade contract at the 2 or 3 level. All failed, mostly by one or two tricks. Again, a **Sinning** South who rejected the option of discarding her losing diamond (one round already played) and would have escaped for a one trick defeat, but instead ended up going down by THREE tricks!

Saintly status to **drumcro** who upon winning with ♦ A and PRIOR to playing a club for partner to ruff, cashed the ♥ A making it easy for partner to know what to return... good play. And **Saintly** status for her partner, **Marie killilea** who cashed the ♦ K BEFORE playing a heart for East to ruff. That was good and thoughtful defense by both players.

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

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

EW 4♠; EW 4♥; NS 3♣; EW 1N; NS 2♦; Par -300: NS 5♣×-2

It looks like 4♠ or 4♥ by E/W can only produce ten tricks. But if the defense slips up then 4♥ offers the better chance of making extra tricks because of the discards available in the side suit (spades). Playing with spades as trumps offers no discards via the heart side suit!

Hand evaluation...note that the West hand although only boasting 15 high-card points is actually very strong. Using the **Losing Trick Count** (add one point for each A, K Q missing in a suit up to number of cards in the suit) the West hand stands as a powerful FOUR loser hand. A typical one level opening bid often reflects a seven loser hand which puts this West hand as extremely strong. It's not all about high cards...the **Power of Shape** should never be underestimated.

Saints & Sinners

Absolute **Sinner** status to the three E/W pairs who failed to bid game.

Sinner status to those Easts who either passed or bid 2♥ on a four card suit after North overcalled partner's 1♠ opening with 2♣. The best bid by East is a **NEGATIVE DOUBLE**, which promises values (8+hcp), inability to raise partner's suit, and support for the other two unbid suits. Partner will have no problem in finding the heart fit.


Sinner status to the sundry Wests who re-bid their spades rather than showing their second suit, hearts!

Absolute **Sinner** status also conferred on the North player who attempted to cash two top clubs, the second being ruffed by declarer, and then discarded all her clubs so that declarer won two tricks with ♣Q6. Watch and count...all the time.

Saintly status to all Wests who bid their heart suit at second opportunity rather than re-bidding their spades!

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

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

NS 3N; NS 3♠; NS 4♣; EW 1♥; N 1♦; Par +400: NS 3N

N/S can make 3 NT. 4 ♣ and 3 ♠ can also be made. E/W can make 1 ♥.

Saints & Sinners

Four N/S pairs reached game, three making their 3 NT contracts... the N/S pair in 5 ♣ were on a mission impossible... the highly unlikely opening lead of ♠ J being the only one to give that contract! Go figure that one out in your spare time!

Saintly status to **Sean & Enda Glynn** when they were allowed to steal the contract in 3 ♥ which Sean steered home thanks to one fatal error by South (**Sinner** status awarded), who having cashed two top clubs switched to ♠ 2 thereby presenting a gift to declarer who won the soft trick with ♠ J. A switch of the ♠ K would have netted the crucial fifth trick for the defense. But despite the soft spade trick Sean was still not out of the woods but played very carefully by twice leading a heart towards dummy's ♥ Q963 thereby establishing ♥ 96 as entries to dummy. And when North continued with a third spade Sean carefully ruffed with ♥ J thus preserving the ♥ 52 in his hand as entries to dummy which he used twice to take two diamond finesses and thus make nine tricks! Very thoughtfully played!

Sinner status to the declarer who went one down in 2 ♠ despite being offered a ruff and discard with two trumps in their own hand and one in dummy and made the fatal mistake of ruffing in the hand with the doubleton trump...one down! Ruffing in dummy with the singleton would have given her the eighth trick!

Top marks, and **Saintly** status to **Isabel Burke** who bid and made 4 ♠, aided by her partner's light opening with the North hand! But the defense was less than stellar. Cashing ♦ A when also holding ♦ QJ10 and sitting over dummy's ♦ Kxx is seldom a good idea and here it probably cost the contract. Yes, declarer can discard one diamond from hand on dummy's fifth club but West will ruff the the third club and switch to a diamond and East will now score two diamond tricks in addition to the two trumps tricks that their side must also score! I am not impressed with the lead of ♥ Q from ♥ Qxxx opposite an overcall by partner and NT bid on your right. It could easily cost a trick if declarer held ♥ K10x. **Sinner** status to the two Easts who panicked and cashed the ♠ A and then switched to a small diamond from ♦ AQJ10. Sitting back and waiting would eventually have resulted in East scoring two diamond tricks.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

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



NS 4♠; NS 3N; NS 2♥; EW 1♦; Par +620; NS 4♠

N/S can make either 4 ♠ or 3 NT, the 5-4 major suit fit making the former the more likely contract. In both cases a first round spade finesse into East's singleton ♠ Q could prove problematic for declarer. Otherwise there is always ten tricks available in 4 ♠ via 5 spades, 2 hearts, 1 diamond, ♣ A and a club ruff or second club via ♣ Q. Note that declarer can also establish a third heart trick.

Saints & Sinners

One outright **Sinner**...the declarer who failed to make 4 ♠. How did that happen? Declarer received a small heart lead from East. Declarer won with ♥ K and could now be looking at eleven tricks (declarer's losing diamond eventually being discarded on dummy's ♥ 10). Declarer played a spade to dummy's ♠ A and a spade back to her ♠ K. Then the first error...she failed to cash a third spade which West subsequently used to ruff declarer's ♥ A. West then switched to ♦ J and now the contract cannot be made because declarer must now lose ♥ Q, a diamond, and ♣ K. A costly lack of concentration. N/S lost 11.55 IMPs instead of gaining 7.36 IMPs.

Two other **Sinners**...the N/S pairs who played in 2 ♠.

And two **Sinners** at one table.. First the declarer who received a heart lead and then proceeded to play on diamonds thus conceding a trick she didn't need to...declarer's losing diamond could have been discarded on dummy's ♥ 10. And then the West who returned the favour by conceding a ruff and discard when playing a fourth diamond after declarer had already ruffed dummy's third diamond in hand! This allowed declarer to discard the losing heart from her hand while ruffing in dummy! At another table **West went asleep** when declarer led the small club from dummy's ♣ A8 and West failed to rise with ♣ K. Declarer guessed right by playing ♣ Q from hand and now had an unbelievable 12 tricks in her sights ...but took her eye off the ball. Upon winning ♣ Q declarer could have drawn the third trump and then played ♥ A and a small heart towards dummy thus establishing ♥ 10 as a discard for her losing diamond. Twelve tricks made!! But sadly declarer failed to take the opportunity. **Saintly** status to **Mairead, Clare Burke, John Fahy**, all of whom did establish the ♥ 10 in dummy for a discard of the losing diamond from hand.

Board 11

South Deals
None Vul

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

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

Note that N/S, on perfect defense, should not even make 1♥!!! E/W can make nine tricks in spades. No doubt there will be interesting auctions at some tables! And defense to match!

Saints & Sinners

Well done to **Peggy Fay** who brought home 3♠x with the E/W cards. **Saintly** status duly awarded. Another West also made 3♠ but did so due to a defensive error when South ruffed a trick with a master trump where North would have won the trick anyway!

Saintly status also to **Sean & Enda** who combined with precision like defense to defeat 4♥ by three tricks.

Sinner status to the E/W pair who let declarer make 3NT. The defense can always cash at least 3 diamonds and two major suit aces. West went asleep when on lead, with no diamonds played and the defense already having two tricks to their credit, played a spade instead of switching to ♦10 which would have seen the defense take at least four more tricks! Instead declarer made the no-hope 3NT. Not good defending!

Two outright **Sinners**, the E/W pair who between them had two opportunities to defeat 4♥ and failed to do so. Even to the point where East was on lead, E/W having already won 3 tricks, and with ♦AJ3 in hand proceeded to lead ♦3 into declarer's ♦Kx. Declarer subsequently discarded his remaining diamond on dummy's clubs! Kamikaze stuff by East. Simply cash he ♦A.

Sinner status to the N/S pair who, a) bid 3NT from the wrong side, and b) did not rise with ♠K or ♠Q when East led a spade. The result was 3NT-5!

Sinner status to the East who cashed ♦A at trick one against 4♥ and then switched to a spade and suddenly the contract could no longer be defeated. Note that the contract could have been defeated if East continued with a diamond at trick 2 giving the defense 1 spade, 2 diamonds, 1 heart. Indeed E/W can score a second heart through a trump promotion of East's ♥J via a fourth round of diamonds upon winning with ♥A.

Sinner status to all Wests who switched to any diamond other than the ♦10, the card you would play if leading the suit (an internal sequence...A109, K109, Q109).

Board 12
 West Deals
 N-S Vul

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

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



NS 5♠; NS 4♣; NS 2N; EW 1♥; Par +650; NS 4♠+1

N/S can make 4 ♠...but game may not be bid. N/S can also make 4 ♣. E/W can be held to 1 ♥. There could be a competitive auction at some tables.

Saints & Sinners

Seven N/S pairs played in a spade part-score. Four declarers made ten tricks, the other three scored only nine tricks.

One N/S pair bid to a hopeless 3 NT despite knowing of the spade fit. 4 ♠ could have made.

Board 13

North Deals
Both Vul

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

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

N/S can make 3♦ whereas E/W can make 2♠. Should be a competitive auction at many tables.

Saints & Sinners

Sinners...the E/W pair who allowed North make 3 NT on a small heart lead. E/W had two chances to beat the contract and grabbed neither. Of particular note is the stunning fact that declarer was allowed to make FIVE diamond tricks, i.e. bring in the suit without loss. Unbelievable! Yes, declarer can make four diamond tricks by playing through East, which is what declarer did. But East is entitled to at least one diamond trick and can then force out declarer's second heart stopper. West can gain the lead on a club and put East on lead with a spade who can then cash two more heart tricks to defeat the contract.

Another pair off E/W **Sinners** also allowed 3 NT to make. First mistake was when West led ♣ 7 from ♣ K109762 allowing declarer to win the first trick with dummy's ♣ 8. West erred again when playing low as declarer led a second club towards dummy's now stiff ♣ Q. Players should familiarise themselves re opening leads in respect of honour and interior sequence holdings.

A South **Sinner** who declared 3 NT and received the lead of ♠ 3 committed the cardinal sin of playing ♠ J from dummy thus throwing away their guaranteed spade trick. When you hold Jx opposite Qxx and the opponents open the suit you are guaranteed a trick as long as you do not play an honour except to win the trick!

One South came close to making 3 NT except that she blocked the diamond suit at the point where she led ♦ 6 (from ♦ 96) from hand towards dummy's ♦ 854 where East held ♦ 107. This forced her to play the ♦ 8 from dummy leaving her with ♦ 54 in dummy opposite ♦ 9 in hand!!!. Playing ♦ 9 from hand (instead of ♦ 6) would have left her with ♦ 85 in dummy opposite ♦ 6 in hand and the suit NOT blocked. Sloppy defending by the E/W opponents left them with no winners to cash when gaining the lead.

Best defense is a spade lead by West, won by East with ♠ K who then continues with ♠ 6 which West can duck. Well done to **Maura Connolly** (**Saintly** status awarded) who was the only one to find that play. It keeps communications open with East who can continue a spade when they win a diamond trick.

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

♠ Q J 8 2	♠ 9 4	♠ 10 7 3									
♥ A 6 5 2	♥ Q 7 3	♥ J 10 9 8 4									
♦ Q 4 2	♦ A K 6 3	♦ 9 5									
♣ 9 2	♣ 10 8 7 4	♣ A J 6									
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; text-align: center; width: 60px; height: 60px;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>				N		W		E		S	
	N										
W		E									
	S										
	♠ A K 6 5										
	♥ K										
	♦ J 10 8 7										
	♣ K Q 5 3										

NS 5♦; NS 5♣; NS 2N; NS 2♠; NS 1♥; Par +400; NS 5♣; NS 5♦

N/S can make 5♣ or 5♦ but should not make 3NT especially if North is declarer. If South is declarer a small heart lead from West gives declarer two heart tricks and then 3NT can make!

Saints & Sinners

One N/S pair bid 3NT...but unfortunately played it from the wrong side and the inevitable ♥ J lead from East ensured the contract failed without having a chance.

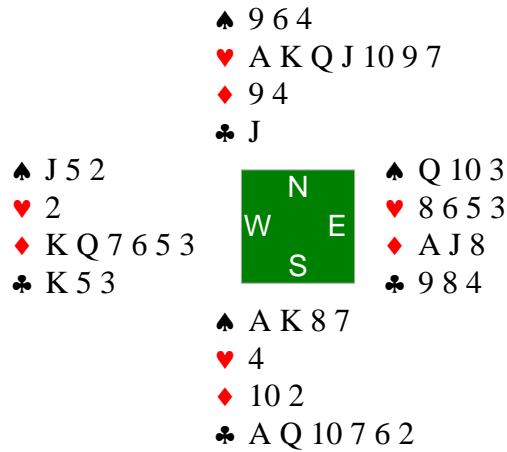
Eight N/S pairs played a diamond part-score with declarers making 9, 10 or 11 tricks.

Eleven tricks can be made by taking the diamond finesse, leading clubs from dummy, twice if necessary, to establish three club winners. Declarer's two losing spades can be taken care of via a discard of one on dummy's ♥ Q, and ruffing the other one with dummy's fourth diamond.

Saintly status to **Brendan King, John Fahy, Angela Noone, Isabel Burke, Michael O'Connor** who all scored eleven tricks in a diamond contract and **Michele** who scored the same number of tricks in 3♣.

The other three declarers in a diamond partscore conceded a trick to West's ♦ Q when they cashed ♦ A followed by ♦ K. Remember the adage...*eight ever, nine never*...i.e. finesse against the Q when holding eight trumps but not nine...although the latter is not always the right play!

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul



NS 5♥; NS 4♠; NS 3♣; NS 1N; Par +650: NS 4♥+1

N/S can make 5♥ but what will the final contract be? Note that if E/W do not cash their two diamond tricks then declarer could make twelve tricks via a ruffing finesse in clubs

Saints & Sinners

The hand was played in hearts at all tables. One N/S pair bid too high and suffered a one trick defeat in 6♥. And **Sinner** status to the West who gave declarer a ruff and discard at trick three by playing a third diamond thereby enabling declarer to ruff with dummy's sole trump while discarding his spade loser from hand!

Sinner status also goes to the only N/S pair who failed to bid game.

Board 16

West Deals
E-W Vul

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

NS 6♦; NS 5♠; EW 4♥; NS 3♣; Par +500: EW 6♥×-2

N/S can make 6♦ but declarer will need to take the right view in the trump suit. A spade contract can be held to eleven tricks if West gets a diamond ruff. And to make matters exciting E/W can make 4♥. Expect a variety of final contracts. And not all pairs will reach game, either N/S or E/W.

Saints & Sinners

Saints and **Sinners** at the same table...**Saintly** status to the two E/W pairs (**Mairead & Kathleen** and **Michele & William**) who stole the contract with 4♥. **Sinner** status to their opponents who didn't bid 4♠, in particular given the favourable vulnerability.

Sinner status is awarded to the declarer in 4♠ who failed to draw trumps and lost two ruffs to East who made two trump tricks with an original holding of ♠ 1052. Definitely a case of a declarer who took her eye off the ball!

Perhaps a mild **Sinner** status is awarded also to the other five N/S pairs who failed to bid 4♠. Not easy to bid in particular given North's 'soft' values (a Jack, 2 Queens, and a King). But South has a strong hand with a good six card suit, a void, a secondary suit headed by ♦ K10, and ♣ AJx in the other suit.

Sinner status to the East player who, having surprisingly won a trick with her singleton ♣ K, then proceeded to solve declarer's diamond problem by cashing the ♦ A...

Sinner status to the South, declaring 4♠, after East opened a weak 2♥, who received a club lead and failed to count East's hand to give him the best line in the diamond suit. After drawing trumps and cashing the ♣ J East is known to have started with 3 spades, 6 hearts, 1 club and hence three of the four outstanding diamonds. Odds favour East holding the ♦ J and declarer can safely finesse the ♦ 10 when leading a diamond from dummy and East follows low! Declarer would have scored twelve tricks!

Not easy...

Board 17

North Deals
None Vul

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

NS 3N; NS 3♠; EW 2♥; NS 3♦; EW 2♣; Par +300; EW 4♣×-2;
EW 4♥×-2

3 NT can make. 4 ♠ cannot...or perhaps should not...declarer has four inescapable losers...3 hearts and a club! Will all reach game? Note that in order to make nine tricks (in NT or spades) declarer must bring in the spade suit without loss. This can be done by leading ♠ J from dummy and letting it run if East fails to cover. In essence declarer has to decide whether to play for either player to hold a doubleton ♠ Q or West to hold ♠ 10(x) or East to hold ♠ Q10x.

Saints & Sinners

Nine N/S pairs played in a spade contract, all but one at the four level. One declarer made the game with the others failing by one or two tricks. At three tables North declared 3 NT...two failing by two tricks the other by a single tricks. **Sinner** status to the West who played ♥ 9 when partner led ♥ 4, thus conceding a gift to North's ♥ Q!

One **Saintly** heroine...**Kay Scarry**, who declared 4 ♠ from the South hand and received the lead of ♣ K. She won, played a diamond to dummy and then led ♠ J and let it run. She drew the remaining trumps, eliminated diamonds and exited on a club. An errant East won the club trick and duly gave declarer a ruff and discard for her tenth trick, discarding a heart from hand and ruffing in dummy. **Sinner** status bestowed on the errant East! Perhaps you are wondering how East could have avoided gifting the ruff and discard. The answer is that East must identify HOW MANY clubs partner has which in turn lets East know how many clubs declarer has. West has to give his partner a **count signal** which tells East how many clubs West started with...the rest is simple counting. West gets that opportunity when he has to discard on the third spade trick!

Saintly status also to **John Fahy** who first cashed ♠ A and then led ♠ J from dummy and let it run when East played low. **Michele** and **Margaret Walsh** also correctly guessed the spade position by leading ♠ J from dummy.

At one table a very **Sinful** West rose with ♥ A when South lead a small heart towards dummy's ♥ Qxx. It didn't cost on this occasion BUT IT COULD HAVE... swap ♥ J and ♥ 10 and South will now score a heart trick to which he is not entitled. A play is not poor/bad just because it costs a trick **but also because it MIGHT have cost a trick**, as here.

Board 18
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

♠ 4 3	♠ 9 6 5 2	♠ Q J 10
♥ A 10 7 6 3	♥ Q 8 2	♥ K J
♦ K 8	♦ J 10 7 4 2	♦ 6 3
♣ 10 6 3 2	♣ 7	♣ A K J 9 8 5
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ A K 8 7	
	♥ 9 5 4	
	♦ A Q 9 5	
	♣ Q 4	

EW 4N; EW 3♥; EW 4♣; N 2♠; S 1♠; NS 1♦; Par -430: EW 3N+1

Yes, E/W can make 3 NT+1...but it is a difficult hand to bid and I suspect most will play in a part-score. 4 ♣ can also be made. Note also that North can make 2 ♠ whereas South can only make 1 ♠...a heart lead from the West hand gives E/W three hearts and a trump as well as a club and a diamond. A heart lead from East reduces the heart tricks to two, or three if East ruffs the third round but that is at the expense of his natural trump trick!

Saints & Sinners

The hand was played ten times in clubs, with four E/W pairs overbidding to the 5 level, all four failing by a trick. One E/W pair bid and made 3 NT. And one N/S pair was allowed to play in 2 ♦ which made with an overtrick!

Saintly status to **Enda & Sean Glynn** who reached 3 NT after East opened 1 ♣ and over South's DBL East bid 1 ♥, North passed and East bid 2 ♣ suggesting 5+ clubs. West raised to 3 ♣ and East bid 3 NT. Nothing to the play and E/W chalked up +400 and 8.27 IMPs.

At one table E/W declared 3 ♣. South, having overcalled 1 NT after East opened 1 ♣, led the ♠ A and switched to a heart. That was the last trick that N/S scored. The heart switch can not be right. Any heart winners that North might have cannot vanish, in particular as South is holding ♦ AQ95 and dummy has only ♦ K8. Worse still, declarer scored the last trick with ♠ Q when South had to discard from ♠ K or ♦ A and guessed wrong. It shouldn't be a guess. North's **count signals in both suits** should have clearly indicated at least the suit denomination of declarer's last card! **Sinner** status to South...and possibly North. It always comes back to COUNTING!

In fact, **Sinner** status to any South that did not cash three winners after leading a top spade. **Sinner** status also to the East who carelessly, and unnecessarily, played ♥ 10 from dummy after South switched to a heart at trick 2. The lead is coming into declarer's ♥ KJ. Playing ♥ 10 from dummy cost a trick! **Sinner** status to any declarer who received a heart switch, after South cashed two top spades, and did not subsequently make all the remaining tricks!

Saintly status to **P Rabbitt** who DID cash three winners when on lead at trick one. Of course it was easy for the three Souths to cash their three top winners when on lead against 5 ♣. **Saintly** status to **Robert Delargy** who was the only person to DOUBLE 5 ♣. **Sinner** status also to the West player who passed South's 2 ♦ bid after East had shown at least 5 clubs!

Board 19

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

EW 3♠; EW 4♣; NS 1N; EW 2♦; NS 1♥; Par -140: EW 3♠

E/W can make 3 ♠ on their 5-2 but can make ten tricks in clubs. N/S, despite the 6-3 trump fit, can only make seven tricks in a heart contract! The defense can cash 2 diamonds, 1 club, 2 spades...and a spade ruff leaving declarer with just seven tricks!.

Saints & Sinners

The hand was played in hearts at eleven tables. Two declarers in 2 ♥ made eight tricks whereas another, also in 2 ♥, actually made ten tricks! At the remaining eight tables declarers suffered either a one or two trick defeat. At the last table N/S had a bidding misunderstanding and ended up in 3 ♠-4 despite East bidding 2 ♠ along the way!

Sinner status to the E/W pair who contrived to let declarer make TEN tricks. East got off to the terrible lead of ♠ 2 immediately giving declarer a soft trick. Declarer subsequently drew trumps and played a diamond towards dummy's ♦ Q which West won with ♦ A. There was still time to recover from the disastrous opening lead by playing a spade thus enabling East to score two tricks in the suit...BUT West cashed his second top diamond and then continued with another diamond despite the fact that there were none in dummy. Declarer accepted this second gift and promptly discarded the remaining two spade losers in dummy. Declarer could now ruff a spade in dummy and then lead a club towards his ♣ K95 eventually scoring ten tricks! Not a good lead!

Saintly status to **Mairead O'Shaughnessy** who found a nice Takeout Double after North opened 1 NT and South transferred to hearts which was followed by three passes to Mairead. I might have preferred three spades and two hearts for the double. And she also deserves **Saintly** status, together with partner **Monica**, for a faultless defense which saw E/W score the first six tricks! Monica led ♣ Q, Mairead rose with ♣ A, cashed two top diamonds and then switched to a spade, Monica winning her two top spades and then giving Mairead a ruff. Top-notch.

Sinner status to the South who received a club switch from West and failed to rise with dummy's ♣ K. **Saintly** status to **Margaret & Rhona, Miriam Mullan & Deirdre Corbett, Norma & Sheila** who also took the first six tricks. **Mary & Anne, Marie Killilea & drumcro** were also on their ways to **Saintly** status having scored two top spades and a ruff and then two top diamond...but failed to cash the ♣ A and watched as declarer discarded dummy's two losing clubs on winning diamonds!

Sinner status also to the E/W pair who started with two top diamonds and then continued with a third one allowing declarer to discard a club from the South hand. Worse was to come...declarer led her now singleton club and West rose with ♣ A, WHICH DENIES THE ♣ K. West then switched to a spade and East won with ♠ Q and fatally didn't cash ♠ A but returned ♣ Q allowing declarer to discard two remaining spades on dummy's ♣ K and ♦ 9!!!

Board 20
 West Deals
 Both Vul

♠ A Q 6 4	♠ 9 7 5	♠ 8 2
♥ 5 2	♥ A K Q	♥ J 10 9 8 6
♦ 9 8 4	♦ Q J 7	♦ A 10 3
♣ 8 5 4 2	♣ A K J 3	♣ Q 10 9
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px; text-align: center; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ K J 10 3	
	♥ 7 4 3	
	♦ K 6 5 2	
	♣ 7 6	

NS 4♠; NS 3N; NS 2♥; NS 3♦; NS 2♣; Par +620: NS 4♠

N/S are likely to reach 3 NT with North as declarer. This can be held to nine tricks if West switches to club each time he gains the lead. Best for declarer to play on diamonds establishing dummy's fourth diamond as a winner. Also, West can make life awkward by ducking the first spade... BUT declarer cannot be defeated in 3 NT EXCEPT BY CARELESS PLAY ON HIS PART,...

Saints & Sinners

Outright **Sinner**, A BIG MORTAL WHOPPER goes to the North player who, single-handed, defeated herself in 3 NT. Declarer received the lead of ♥ J, won in hand and ran the ♠ 9 to West who won with ♠ Q. West returned partner's suit and declarer again won in hand and continued with a second spade to West's ♠ A. West now switched to ♣ 8...and declarer made the silly mistake of finessing ♣ J. East won and cleared the heart suit while still holding ♦ A. The contract duly failed by two tricks. All declarer needed to do was win the club switch with ♣ A or ♣ K and lead ♦ Q from hand thereby establishing two diamond tricks to go with the 2 spades, 3 hearts and 2 top clubs which totals nine tricks. **Remember that you are playing IMP pairs. Guarantee your contract and reject any play which might jeopardize it.**

Another North also earned **Sinner** status when he received the same heart lead and played on diamonds, East eventually winning the third round. So, declarer has now established a third diamond winner which is in dummy. So far, so good. East continues with another heart which declarer wins in hand and now leads a spade to dummy's ♠ 10 which West wins with ♠ Q. West now switches to a club and this North correctly rejects the finesse and wins in hand with ♣ K. **CONCENTRATION IS VITAL.** Declarer should have taken stock... 3 hearts, 3 diamonds, 2 clubs and only 1 spade required. BUT declarer needs to get to dummy for the winning diamond. All declarer needs to do is lead a spade and play either ♠ J or ♠ K. West cannot deprive declarer of access to dummy and the winning diamond. But look what actually happened... declarer led ♠ 9 from hand **and followed low from dummy**...as did an alert West (**Saintly** status awarded to **Enda Glynn**) who realised that by letting ♠ 9 win declarer could no longer get to dummy! Contract failed by one trick. As it turns out declarer could still have made the contract by playing ♣ A and another club which East will win perforce with ♣ Q thus promoting declarer's ♣ J as the ninth trick whilst still holding a top heart. Contract made!

Sinner status to the third declarer to fail in 3 NT who won the heart lead, played a diamond to dummy's \diamond K and then finessed \clubsuit J!!! **Saintly** status to **Marlene O'Connor** who established the fourth diamond in dummy as a winner and then forced an entry via the spade suit. **Fiona Place** was headed in the same direction but her communication problems were eased when East won the first diamond.

Sinner status to another declarer who gained access to dummy via \diamond K and then finessed \clubsuit J but got lucky when the defenders failed to find the killing defense. East can return a spade and if West ducks then declarer can win in dummy but **the diamonds are blocked and declarer has no way back to dummy!** Declarer will subsequently lose two spades and another club for a total loss of five tricks.

Sinner status to the West player who had an opportunity to defeat 3 NT after declarer played on diamonds and having established the \diamond K as a winner led the \spadesuit 9 from hand and played low from dummy...West could have defeated the contract by also playing low, and as with the previous example, that would have been declarer's last chance to get to dummy. Again, all declarer needed to do was play a spade to dummy's \spadesuit K, \spadesuit J or \spadesuit 10. West could no longer deprive declarer access to dummy. If West ducked then declarer could cash \diamond K. If West won the trick then declarer could win any return and play another spade towards dummy's remaining honours. West could win one trick but declarer could then gain access on the third round of spades. Several declarers became fixated with the \spadesuit 9 in hand and the possibility of making several spade tricks with \spadesuit KJ10x in dummy and forgetting the ultimate objective...making nine tricks.

Saintly status to **Angela Noone** who played the hand perfectly, establishing the \diamond K as a winner before playing on spades to force access to dummy.

Note that declarer, when in dummy would still have the opportunity to take the club finesse if necessary.

Some bridge players seem to be mesmerised by the option to take a finesse and simply couldn't resist finessing the \clubsuit J thus putting the contract in jeopardy!

Always think first...then play, especially when playing IMPs. **MAKE YOUR CONTRACT.**

Board 21

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

N/S can make 2 ♠ despite having only a 5-1 fit and 2 ♥, also on a 5-1 fit.

Saints & Sinners

This board was played in spades by South at 10 tables. Declarers made between six and nine tricks! It was also played in 1NTx-1 by East and 3 ♥-1 by North.

Outright **Sinners**, two at one table. East opened 1 NT which South doubled and that became the final contract. South led ♠ A and then continued with ♠ 2 which declarer won in hand with ♠ 8. Declarer now played a small heart towards dummy and South won, perforce, with her singleton ♥ K. South now switched to ♣ 9, covered by dummy's ♣ J and North's ♣ Q declarer winning with ♣ A. Declarer now advanced ♠ Q which South won with ♠ K as North discarded ♦ 3. South now led another club thereby promoting declarer's ♣ 8 to winner status when North's ♣ 10 fell to declarer's ♣ K, although it would appear that declarer did not realise that. Declarer now cashed ♠ J, ♥ A and then played a heart to dummy's ♥ Q. At this point declarer has amassed six tricks...2 spades, 2 hearts, 2 clubs and simply needs to play a club to the winning ♣ 8 in her hand for her seventh trick and a score of +180. But it seems that declarer didn't realise that the ♣ 8 was a winner and instead she played a diamond and lost the last three tricks.

Sinner status to declarer and South...declarer for not making the contract and to South for not switching to a diamond at some stage in the play, preferably earlier rather than later, instead of sacrificing North's club trick.

A declarer in 2 ♠ received a club lead and continuation, declarer winning the third round with dummy's ♣ Q. The contract cannot now be defeated...except by declarer. Declarer simply plays three rounds of spades, conceding two spade tricks and the ♥ A to East. Declarer is left with four winning diamonds and a winning spade which added to ♠ AK and ♣ Q already in the bag, totals eight tricks. But declarer went on a sad and wayward road and ended up two light!

Another **Sinning** declarer sneaked a trick with ♥ K and again simply needed to play three rounds of trumps and claim eight tricks via 3 spades, 1 heart, 4 diamonds. Again, declarer went astray and ended up one down.

Another **Sinful** declarer received a heart lead to East's ♥ A who then played three rounds of clubs declarer winning the third round with dummy's ♣ Q. Same solution as before. But again declarer went astray and ended one down.

Yet another **Sinning** declarer received a heart lead to East's ♥ A who then switched to ♠ Q which declarer won. Declarer entered dummy and played ♥ J discarding a club from hand. A sleepy West followed low. Again declarer at this stage can make the contract by simply playing three rounds of trumps...but declarer went astray and finished one light.

At last a Saint...**Michele**. West led a diamond and declarer won with dummy's ♦ Q and pulled a heart winning with her singleton ♥ K when East played low. This declarer did not make a mistake and played three rounds of trumps and duly ended with eight tricks. Contract made! Perhaps East should have risen with ♥ A.

Michael O'Connor is also awarded **Saintly** status for making 2 ♠. He received a club lead which subsequently set up dummy's ♣ Q107 for a finesse against West's ♣ J5 for his eighth trick after playing three rounds of trumps.

Sinner and **Status** at the table where West (**Sinner**) led ♣ J from J52, East winning with ♣ K and then playing two more rounds declarer winning in hand and then playing three rounds of trumps. East, winning the third round, had one chance to hold declarer to eight tricks...cash ♥ A, but spurned it by switching to a diamond. Declarer won in dummy and played ♣ 10, discarding ♥ K as East ruffed...but the bird had flown and declarer wound up with nine tricks! **Sinner** status to West and **Saintly** status to **Robert Delargy** who grabbed the opportunities presented by the defenders.

Saintly status to **Kathleen O'Connell** who also scored a trick with ♥ K and then made 2 ♠+1 by establishing dummy's ♣ Q as her ninth trick.

Saintly status to **Brendan King** who also received the very friendly lead of ♣ J from a **Sinful** West and duly made nine tricks when East switched to a small heart, Brendan's ♥ K scoring. Brendan then entered dummy on a diamond and spurned an opportunity to make TEN tricks when he pulled a spade from dummy and East sleepily followed with ♠ 7. All Brendan had to do was cover with ♠ 10 and he would have racked up TEN tricks. One flew over the cuckoo's nest!

Saintly status also conferred on **Liam Fahery** who wrapped up nine tricks against a lack-lustre defense.