

Greetings!

Herewith find analysis of selected hands played last Thursday, 25th June 2020, in the **Galway/CABAI Western Region BBO IMP Pairs**.

This week I have analysed ten of the 21 hands....Boards 7-15 and Board #17. 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 for the benefit of those who don't already know, 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 **10 hands**, played at **12 tables**, representing a total of **120 contracts** that I reviewed which in turn converts to **1,560 tricks** that are minutely screened, which amounts to a grand total of **6,240 individual card plays** that are dissected!

On this occasion I have detailed the bidding of two slams by one of our more experienced pairs. The bidding sequences feature one or two unusual gadgets including **Exclusion Blackwood**. There should be some food for thought for the more adventurous players/partnerships!

Finally, it would be very remiss not to mention the recent passing (Sunday) of **Paddy Murphy**, a significant presence on the Galway Bridge scene for as long as I can remember. He was a true gentleman and always had a smile and greeting, and an occasional joke, for all that visited his table. He loved his game of bridge and, until recent times, he played in several clubs each week, including the Tribes Bridge Club that meets on Thursday. Sympathies to his wife Eileen and the extended Murphy family. May he Rest in Peace.

Paul J Scannell
29nd 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

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

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

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

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

NS 5♥; NS 5♣; NS 2N; NS 2♠; EW 1♦; Par +450: NS 4♥+1

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

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

EW 1N; NS 2♦; EW 2♣; EW 1♠; NS 1♥; Par +90: NS 2♦

Board 5
North Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

Board 6


East Deals

E-W Vul

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

NS 5N; NS 5♠; NS 4♥; NS 5♣; NS 3♦; Par +460: NS 3N+2

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

EW 7N; EW 7♦; EW 6♣; EW 5♥; EW 2♠; Par -2220: EW 7N

West	North	East	South
<i>David</i>		<i>Rory</i>	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 NT	Pass
3 ♣	Pass	4 ♠	Pass
5 ♣	Pass	6 ♦	Pass
Pass	Pass		

Yes, 7 NT and 7♦ are on the cards but difficult to bid with certainty of success, i.e. East cannot count thirteen tricks. So, most partnerships are likely to reach a Small Slam. Bearing in mind that this is an IMPs (International Match Points) competition (no major benefit in bidding 3 NT as opposed to 4♥/4♠ or 5♣/5♦) it would seem that 6♦ is the **safest** contract. In fact, give West ♥ QJ instead of ♠ K and suddenly 6 NT becomes a very shaky contract if the defenders lead a spade! 6 NT would actually fail if declarer cannot find ♦ Q!!!

Saints & Sinners

Saintly status to those E/W partnerships who reached 6♦. **Sinner** status to all the E/W partnerships who reached 6 NT and **Mortal Sinner** status to the pairs that languished in game.

Exalted Saintly status is bestowed on **David & Rory** for their very elegant bidding sequence.

1 NT = 15-17

2 NT = transfer to diamonds

3 ♣ = I have good diamonds

4 ♠ = EXCLUSION Key Card Blackwood. How many key cards (diamonds as trumps) EXCLUDING the spade suit?

5 ♣ = I have one key card (♦ A)

6♦ = To play...and not worried about spades!

For those who want to delve further, Google **'Exclusion Blackwood'**

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

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

N 7N; NS 7♠; S 6N; NS 5♥; EW 1♦; NS 1♣; Par +1520: N 7N

N/S can make 7 ♠ but despite the 5-3 heart fit a contract of 6 ♥ will fail on a diamond lead but can make on any other lead. Tough, particularly for the one pair that reached 6 ♥ ...and duly received the fatal diamond lead.

Note that 6 ♠ is not straightforward ...it needs to be played with care, particularly if the defense lead a diamond at trick one. If you study the four hands you will note that an initial diamond lead sets up a diamond trick for the defense UNLESS declarer can find some way of disposing of his diamond loser OR restricting his total losers to a single diamond trick..

There are various options most of which will involve a successful finesse of the ♥ J. But there is also the possibility of the club finesse failing in which case declarer might lose a club and a diamond. Note that even if the club finesse works we still need the heart finesse to succeed in order to make the contract. Best option is to assume that the heart finesse works and then to establish a long heart(s) for the discard of a losing diamond and/or club from hand.

Win any lead and draw trumps. Now finesse the ♥ J and continue with three more rounds of hearts ruffing the third one in hand. This establishes the ♥ 5 as a winner for a discard of the losing ♦ J. BUT, note that declarer needs to get to dummy to access the thirteenth heart, A club to dummy's ♣ A to cash the ♥ 5 while discarding losing ♦ J from hand will see declarer bring home the slam. Finessing in clubs would be ABSOLUTE FOLLY **because it jeopardises the contract**. If the club finesse loses the defense will also cash a diamond. In IMPs your objective is to make your contract. Taking a 50% chance which puts a guaranteed contract in jeopardy is simply foolish in the extreme.

Saints & Sinners

Mortal Sinner status to the declarer, who received the challenging diamond lead and correctly established dummy's fifth heart for a discard of their losing diamond but then put the contract in jeopardy by finessing the club. The fact the the club finesse succeeded is irrelevant and was simply undeserved luck! Another declarer also in 6 ♠ received a spade lead and hence was not under the same pressure. **Mortal Sinner** status also to the declarer who reached 6 ♠ and failed to make it despite receiving a trump lead. In this instance declarer failed to finesse the ♥ J and thereafter there was no way back.

Board 8West Deals
None Vul

♠ 7 5 4	♠ K Q 10 8 6 3	♠ 9									
♥ 9	♥ 7 3 2	♥ Q 10 8 6									
♦ K 6 3	♦ A J	♦ Q 10 9 7 5 2									
♣ 10 8 6 5 3 2	♣ Q 4	♣ K 9									
<table style="border: 2px solid green; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: auto; text-align: center; border-collapse: collapse;"> <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 J 2											
♥ A K J 5 4											
♦ 8 4											
♣ A J 7											

N 7N; NS 7♠; S 6N; NS 5♥; EW 1♦; NS 1♣; Par +1520: N 7N

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Another **Sinful** declarer in 4♠ received the diamond lead and played on clubs after drawing trumps and then played hearts from dummy duly losing a heart, a diamond, and inexplicably, a club!

Sinner status to several other declarers who won the third spade in the wrong hand (dummy) and then were forced to play hearts from the top and lost an unnecessary trick to East's ♥ Q. This is the kind of thinking that declarer should have done after opening lead is made and before playing a card from dummy... thinking ahead and working out where you need to be after drawing the trumps!

Saintly status to **Clare Burke** who played the hand perfectly and ignored the potentially fatal option to finesse in clubs.

Sinner status to the declarer who received a heart lead, winning with ♥ A, drew trumps and then finessed ♣ Q instead of playing on hearts to establish a discard for the losing diamond. Note that the ♣ A may be declarer's only means of accessing the fifth heart!

Playing on clubs after drawing trumps is pointless...you have to finesse in hearts at some stage...better to do it early in the play and benefit from a favourable layout of the heart suit which would enable you to discard a losing diamond and/or club from hand. Finessing in clubs before taking the heart finesse could see declarer lose three tricks where it might have been limited to losing one trick or indeed none!

Saintly status to **Norma O'Connell** who legitimately made thirteen tricks having established the fifth heart as a winner and with clubs unplayed so that dummy's ♣ A provided an entry for the fifth heart. **Black mark** to the East who covered declarer's ♣ Q with the ♣ K thus promoting dummy's ♣ J. Sadly, Norma was only declaring 4♠!

Board 9

North Deals
E-W Vul

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

NS 3♠; NS 2♥; NS 1♣; Par +140; NS 1♠+2

N/S can make 3 ♠ but not 3 ♥. Note that in a spade contract declare can discard a losing club (or diamond) on ♥ A. If North opens 1 ♥ and re-bids 2 ♥ over South's response of 1 ♠ then it would be wise for North to Pass South's 2 ♠ re-bid. South of course should Pass North's 2 ♥ with less than 6 spades. North should trust partner when he bids 2 ♠.

Saints & Sinners

Saintly status to **John Fahy** who passed his partner's 2 ♠ bid.

Sinner status to the South who jumped to 4 ♠ over North's 2 ♥ re-bid. Always treat misfit hands with caution.

Sinner status to the South who raised North to 4 ♥ after East had overcalled 1 NT.

Sinner status to the North who opened the bidding with a weak 2 ♥ bid. The North hand is too strong for a Weak 2 ♥.


Sinner status to the North who made a jump re-bid of 3 ♥ over partner's 1 ♠ response. The North hand is too weak for a jump re-bid.

I am not a fan of the initial takeout Double of 1 ♥ by East when the hand has only 2 spades. But **Saintly** status to **Rory Timlin** who found a Takeout Double at the second opportunity, after South responded 1 ♠ and North re-bid 2 ♥. In this situation Rory is showing the two unbid suits (clubs and diamonds). Unfortunately E/W bought the contract in 3 ♦ going three down for a poor score.

Saintly status to **Moya Mac Eoin** who was declaring 3 ♦ on the lead of ♠ 2 and won the trick in dummy and led a diamond. This had the effect of cutting down the ruffs that the opponents would otherwise have scored. The contract only went two down whereas the other two declarers in the same contract won the spade lead and continued with a spade after which N/S scored THREE ruffs in addition to ♥ A, ♦ A, ♣ AK leading to a THREE trick defeat.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

EW 3N; NS 2♥; E 1♠; EW 1♦; Par -500; NS 4♥×-2

Interesting situation if East opens 1 NT...What should N/S do? A lot depends on the defensive system that you use over the opponents 1 NT. Some South's will bid 2 ♠ (natural) and North may bid 3 ♥. Other South's, being cognisant of the vulnerability and the poor quality of the spade suit, may elect to Pass as will West. North will surely compete with 2 ♥ and indeed that is what happened at several tables. In fact eight declarers played a heart contract ranging from 2 ♥ to 4 ♥.

Some partnerships employ a Multi style 2 ♦ where the bid shows a hand with a single-suited major. At one table the 1 NT opening was passed around to North who bid 2 ♦ which was passed back to South... A bid of 2 ♠ by South at this point suggests better hearts than spades and an interest in going on to the heart game.


Saints & Sinners

Sinner status to the North, declaring 2 ♥ who got to the second last trick with a winning heart in hand and ♣ A in dummy and failed to play the trump, drawing East's losing trump in the process and instead played the club which East ruffed with her small trump! the contract failed by one trick.

Sinner status also to the North who declared 3 ♥ and with ♥ Q1085 in hand and where East was known to hold only ♥ 62 declarer ruffed a diamond with ♥ 5 thus allowing East to overruff with ♥ 6 leading to a two trick defeat of the contract!

Sinner status also to the N/S pair who were defending 3 ♦ by West and failed to negotiate even a heart ruff for South. But then South was at fault for not giving the correct **Suit Preference Signal** when giving partner a spade ruff to tell North to switch to a heart. Instead South returned her smallest spade suggesting a club return. On the other hand, North had already switched to a small club which South had won with ♣ A...DENYING THE ♣ K...so North should have known that declarer held ♣ K. Both at fault in letting this contract make when it should have failed by two tricks!

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

EW 3N; NS 2♥; E 1♠; EW 1♦; Par -500; NS 4♥×-2

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Saints & Sinners

Sinner status also to our very experienced East, but with a little sympathy, who won a trick with ♥ J whilst still holding ♥ 6 and could have defeated the contract by switching to a club, his partner having shown an even number. Partner would have gained the lead with ♣ K and would have then led his fifth diamond leading to a trump promotion of East's ♥ 6 for the setting trick. Instead East attempted to cash his ♠ A which declarer ruffed, drew trumps and made his contract!

Sympathy to the East who surely mis-clicked when defending 2♠ and underrated North's ♠ 10 with ♠ 6 instead of overruffing with ♠ Q. Contract made instead of being one down!

Major Sinner status to the South who was defending 3♦ by West and where partner led ♠ 10. Declarer won in hand with ♠ K and played a diamond to dummy's ♦ Q, South winning with the ♦ A. South now failed to give partner the certain spade ruff and instead switched to ♣ A followed by ♣ 4. Declarer could have made the contract by finessing and playing a second diamond but instead, perhaps fearful of a club ruff, rose with ♣ K and duly went one down. So, how should South have known that North had only one spade? As one of my regular partners is wont to say *'the clues are always there'*...we only need to spot them. Remember, North led the ♠ 10...now look at the spades in dummy and also the spades in the South hand. Every spade from 2 to 10 is accounted for. Hence North cannot have a smaller spade than the 10 and if she held a higher spade she would have led it. In fact the only spade unaccounted for is the ♠ J and North certainly doesn't have it! South should have given her partner a spade ruff after winning ♦ A and South should have returned her HIGHEST spade, a clear **Suit-Preference Signal** for North to return a heart which South will ruff. And with good defense N/S will also come to two club tricks because declarer will be unable to gain access to dummy's winning spades for discards from hand!

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ 10 7 4 ♥ Q 10 6 4 ♦ 9 4 ♣ 8 7 6 2	♠ A K Q 9 6 3 ♥ J 8 ♦ J 8 ♣ K 4 3	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; background-color: #008000; color: white; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	♠ 8 ♥ 7 5 ♦ A K Q 6 5 3 2 ♣ J 10 5
	♠ J 5 2 ♥ A K 9 3 2 ♦ 10 7 ♣ A Q 9		

NS 5♠; NS 3♥; NS 3♣; EW 1♦; Par +450: NS 4♠+1

4 ♠ is the place to play. After opening 1 ♥ South should give North's 1 ♠ a simple raise with three card support and a doubleton diamond.

Saints & Sinners

One N/S partnership reached 4 ♥...and duly misplayed the hand to go one light! The **Sinful** declarer received a diamond lead and continuation, followed by the switch to a club. Time to take stock. Declarer, up to this point has only lost two tricks and can afford to lose another one ...but not two more! Declarer has no losers in the black suits, nor diamonds. The only possible losers are in the heart suit! Clearly if the defenders hearts break 3-3 then playing three rounds from the top resolves the issue. BUT, if hearts do not break 3-3 (more likely) then declarer could lose two tricks if he/she cashes ♥ A, ♥ K and then plays a third round. While there is no guarantee that the play will work it might be prudent to play a small heart to dummy's ♥ J8, As, it turns out this is the winning line. If West rises with ♥ Q then that is the only heart trick the defense will take. If West ducks then declarer plays ♥ J from dummy followed by ♥ A and ♥ K thus restricting West to a single heart trick. Note also that this play will still work if the hearts do break 3-3...although the quick-minded will observe that East could defeat the contract, if West started with ♥ 10xx, by playing a third diamond which will promote West's ♥ 10. Yes, that's offering declarer a ruff and discard and yet would be the only way to defeat the contract!

Saintly status to **Margaret Treacy**, the only declarer to make twelve tricks in 4 ♠ when East elected to lead ♥ 7 instead of cashing two top diamonds. Margaret made no mistake, rising with dummy's ♥ K, drawing trumps and continuing with two more rounds of hearts ruffing the second one in hand and then using dummy's clubs as entries to ruff the fourth heart and then gain entry to dummy to cash the winning fifth heart on which she discarded her losing diamond. Well done!

Mortal Sinner status to the N/S pair who languished in 2 ♠ although I would give **Saintly** status to the South player of the partnership who doubled East's 2 ♦. This is used by many experienced partnerships as what is called a **Support Double** and specifically promises THREE card support for partner's suit (spades in this instance) whereas bidding 2 ♠ would show four card support. A neat little convention to add to your bidding armoury.

Board 12

West Deals
N-S Vul

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

EW 5♠; EW 3N; NS 2♣; NS 1♥; NS 1♦; Par -450; EW 4♠+1

Most E/W pairs will reach the spade game with the possibility of some overbidding if West opens the bidding with 1♠.

Saints & Sinners

Mortal Sinners..all the Norths who led ♣ A at trick one instead of the natural lead of ♥ K.

Sinner status to any North who, given the opportunity, failed to open the bidding or simply overcall in hearts. Note that some Wests might open with a bid of 1S. If they do, then East's hand becomes mega strong and a simple raise to 4♠ is inappropriate. The hand is too good for the simple raise to game. East should make some Slam Try. One option, chosen by **Sean Glynn** was to cue-bid North's suit. Sean bid 3♥ and then followed it up with a **Cue Bid** of 4♦ showing 1st round control of diamonds and expressing an interest in a slam.

Another option might be a bid 4♣ directly over North's heart overcall. This would be a **Splinter Bid**, promising good trump support, a singleton or void in clubs and an interest in bidding a slam if West has a suitable hand.

Sinner status to the three North's who led the ♣ A instead of ♥ K and thus permitted declarer to discard his losing heart on dummy's now established winning ♣ K!

Double Sinner status to the North player whose partner led ♥ J, taken by declarer with ♥ A who then proceeded to draw trumps and subsequently led ♣ J, finessing into North. And what did North do...he tried to cash ♣ A BEFORE cashing his winning heart! Declarer's heart loser subsequently vanished on dummy's now winning ♣ K7

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

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

E 2N; W 1N; EW 2♦; S 1♥; NS 1♣; Par -120; E 1N+1

A good six card suit and an outside Ace is more than adequate for an opening bid of 1♦.

Saints & Sinners


Sinner status to the two Easts who failed to open the bidding with an excellent six card diamond suit, an outside Ace, and 11hcp. This cost them the tidy sum of 6.36 IMPs

Sinner status also to the E/W partnership who ended up in 2♠, clearly a misunderstanding where I suspect that the 1NT opener forgot that partner's 2♠ was the beginning of a transfer sequence to a minor suit!

Mortal sinner status to the West, declaring 3NT who won the club lead and led the ♦ 5 from hand instead of ♦ 10 and then compounded the mistake by rising with dummy's ♦ A. South had no problem ducking the first two rounds of diamonds and the contract duly went two down. Leading ♦ 10 and subsequently finessing ♦ D.J if South ducks the first round, would see declarer score 1 spade, 1 heart, 5 diamonds and 2 clubs... a far cry from the seven tricks that declarer eventually won!

Saints and Sinners...at one table. **Potential Sainly** status to the North who found the searing defense of a small heart thus killing declarer's only entry to dummy for the winning diamonds. Declarer elected to rise with dummy's ♥ A and then played a small diamond towards his hand, South playing low. Declarer won with ♦ 10 and played his second diamond to dummy's ♦ A, North making what would prove to be a costly discard of ♣ 6. Declarer now led a small club towards his hand and when a sleepy South followed with ♣ 4 declarer inserted ♣ 9 from hand and North had to win with ♣ K. Now declarer had created three club tricks for himself. North continued with the calamitous play of the ♥ K, felling partner's ♥ Q and creating two heart winners for declarer. [North should have reasoned that if declarer held ♥ Q he would not have won the first trick with ♥ A and hence partner must have ♥ Q]. Declarer had now wrapped up nine tricks via 1 spade, 3 hearts, 2 diamonds, 3 clubs, in what should have been *'Mission Impossible'* once the small heart was led at trick one! Well done **Michael O'Connor**, The only **Saint** at the table!

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

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

E 2N; W 1N; EW 2♦; S 1♥; NS 1♣; Par -120; E 1N+1

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Another North also found the lead of a small heart, South winning the first trick with ♥ Q and continuing a second round of the suit to dummy's ♥ A. Next, declarer tried the reasonable line of a club to her ♣ Q in order to take the diamond finesse. North won with ♣ K and then cashed ♥ K and should have continued the suit but instead switched to her singleton diamond, declarer playing low from dummy and South committing the **Mortal Sin** of winning the trick with ♦ K thus establishing five winners in dummy which declarer can easily access with her second diamond. If South had ducked then declarer would win in hand and play a second diamond towards dummy and if she didn't win the trick with the ♦ A she wouldn't score any more diamond tricks! A grateful declarer duly scored nine tricks!

Venial Sin committed by the two South players who played the ♣ J from a holding of ♣ J104 on partner's opening lead. In third seat **always play the lower of touching cards**. The play of the J in this situation DENIES holding the 10 and partner will reasonably place that card with declarer!

Saintly status to **Enda Glynn** who managed to eke 2 tricks out of a spade holding of ♠ A93 - ♠ 1087 due to some injudicious carding and discarding by the defenders. Enda scored ten tricks in his 2 NT contract. **Sinner** status to South who won the first diamond where ducking would have meant that declarer would subsequently have to use ♥ A to access the winning diamonds thus making it easier for N/S to defend. Nice play by **John Fahy**, **Saintly** status duly awarded, who unblocked his ♠ K, partner having played the ♠ J, when declarer led a spade from dummy winning with ♠ A in hand after cashing dummy's diamonds. Unfortunately it cost his side a trick but a considered play nonetheless and sign of a thoughtful defender!

Saintly status also to **David Walsh** the only other declarer to gather ten tricks albeit in 2 NT after some costly discarding by N/S.

Sinner status to the various South players who played ♣ J instead of ♣ 10 on partner's opening lead. **Saintly** status to **Sheila Baynes**, **Isabel Burke** and **Liam Faherty** who played the ♣ 10 from the holding of ♣ J104.

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

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

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

EW 6♠; NS 3♥; EW 2N; EW 3♦; NS 2♣; Par -800; NS 7♥×-4

West	North	East	South
<i>David</i>		<i>Rory</i>	
		1 ♠	Pass
2 ♦	Pass	3 ♦	Pass
3 ♠	Pass	4 ♣	Pass
4 ♦	Pass	4 ♥	Pass
4 ♠	Pass	5 ♠	Pass
6 ♠	Pass	Pass	Pass

Only one pair bid the spade slam...**Rory Timlin & David Walsh**. 12 tricks can always be made via the diamond finesse or dummy's losing diamond can be discarded on the third club and then declarer's two long diamonds can be ruffed n dummy. All roads lead to home! 13 tricks can only be made on a club lead by South.

Saints & Sinners

Saintly status to **Rory Timlin & David Walsh** who were the only partnership top reach 6 ♠.

- 1 ♠ = 5+
- 2 ♦ = Improvisation, promising a diamond suit
- 3 ♦ = Diamond support.
- 3 ♠ = Agrees spades
- 4 ♣ = Cue bid. Ace or void
- 4 ♦ = Cue bid. Ace or void
- 4 ♥ = Cue bid. Ace or void
- 4 ♠ = No more to say
- 5 ♠ = I'm concerned about the trump suit. Bid on if you have good trumps
- 6 ♠ = I have good trumps.

Note that 4 NT (Roman Key Card Blackwood) was not used. On this hand it is relatively useless. What is required is knowledge about the possession of controls in the side suits, i.e. Aces, Kings, and voids or singletons, in the side suits. Also needed is re-assurance re the quality of the trump suit. **Sean & Enda** were the only other pair to get past 4 ♠...but ultimately failed to bid the slam.

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

♠ K Q 10 6	♠ 3	♠ A J 9 7 4 2
♥ 10 7 5 3	♥ A J 9 8 4	♥ —
♦ A K 5	♦ 3	♦ J 10 4 2
♣ 5 2	♣ 10 9 8 7 4 3	♣ A Q J
	<div style="display: inline-block; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; padding: 5px; text-align: center; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 5px;"> N W E S </div>	
	♠ 8 5	
	♥ K Q 6 2	
	♦ Q 9 8 7 6	
	♣ K 6	

EW 6♠; NS 3♥; EW 2N; EW 3♦; NS 2♣; Par -800: NS 7♥×-4

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Saints & Sinners

One declarer made 13 tricks thanks to an unfortunate (for the defense) opening lead of ♣ K.

Sinner status to the declarer who played on clubs and then failed to discard the losing diamond from dummy and ended up with only 11 tricks!

Sinner status also to the declarer who cashed ♣ A before taking diamond finesse. If the finesse lost then the defense could also cash ♣ K thus losing two tricks when this could have been avoided!

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

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

EW 4♥; EW 3N; EW 3♠; EW 4♦; EW 4♣; Par -420; EW 4♥

An interesting hand that proved too difficult for some declarers. Several E/W partnerships reached 4♥ by West and in several cases faced a club lead. The bad trump break makes this an awkward hand to play and unwary declarers might easily go astray. The winning line is to cash ♥ AK, ruff a diamond and then use diamonds and clubs as trumps! Be sure to ruff a diamond BEFORE playing clubs. The ♣ K is the entry back to hand. If declarer loses a spade then North can draw declarer's trumps and N/S can then cash THREE top spades!

Saints & Sinners

At one table, a very **Sinful** West became declarer in 4♥ and received the hugely beneficial lead of ♣ 9 (very costly for the defense). Declarer covered with ♣ 10 in dummy and South thoughtlessly played ♣ J. Declarer won in hand with ♣ A and played two top hearts getting the bad news re trumps. Declarer now cashed three top diamonds, discarding two losing spades from hand, and continued with two more top clubs, discarding another spade from hand and then led the ♣ 8 from dummy, and with victory in sight by simply discarding another spade on the WINNING club, turned success into defeat by ruffing in hand. North overruffed, cashed ♥ Q and led ♦ J. West could ruff the diamond but then had two losing spades in her hand and so went a needless one down. The mistake was made at trick one when declarer failed to realise that because of the fortuitous lead, the ♣ 8 was promoted to a winner. It is imperative to pay attention to the promotion of intermediate cards (8,9,10) to winner status.

One **Saint** and two **Sinners** at the same table. South, defending 3NT led ♠ 4 and North (**Murt Scarry**) correctly played ♠ 10, earning **Saintly** status, and then cashed ♠ K whereupon his partner fell from grace and earned **Mortal Sinner** status when she overtook the ♠ K with her ♠ A and proceeded to cash ♠ Q thereby creating two winners (♠ J8) in dummy for declarer. However, a sleepy declarer, duly awarded **Sinner** status, was obviously not paying attention and upon winning the heart switch played a club to dummy's ♣ A and then failed to cash the winning spades and got lucky when South duly won the fourth club and was forced to play a spade to dummy's ♠ J, declarer undeservedly escaping with nine tricks!

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

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

EW 4♥; EW 3N; EW 3♠; EW 4♦; EW 4♣; Par -420; EW 4♥

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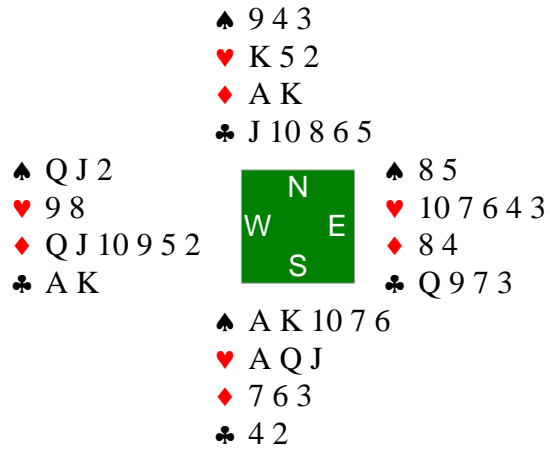
Saints & Sinners

One **Sinful** West, declaring 4♥, gave herself no chance when she won the club lead in dummy and proceeded to play three rounds of hearts. N/S then cashed three top spades and the contract failed by two tricks.

At another table, South led the ♦ 7 (M.U.D - **M**iddle, **U**p, **D**own, a standard lead from three small cards) and declarer won in hand and proceeded to cash two top hearts, getting the bad news in the process. All is still well at this point but declarer needs to be very careful to keep North off lead because they could cash a heart drawing declarer's small heart and then cash several spades. A winning line is to ruff a diamond in dummy, cash ♣ A and return to hand with another club. Now cash ♣ Q and discard a spade from dummy and then play diamonds, as if they were trumps, discarding three more spades from dummy. North will eventually ruff, cash a top heart and a top spade and play ♣ J which declarer can ruff in dummy! And declarer emerges with ten tricks.

Another **Sinning** E/W partnership overbid and reached a hopeless 6♥ which declarer did well to hold to a two trick defeat after receiving the beneficial lead of ♣ 9, thus promoting dummy's ♣ 8 as a winner.

Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul



NS 4♠; NS 3N; NS 2♥; NS 2♣; S 1♦; Par +420: NS 4♠

Board 17

North Deals
None Vul

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

E 6N; E 6♠; E 6♥; E 6♦; W 5N; W 5♠; W 5♥; W 5♦; EW 3♣;
Par -990; E 6N

It is best if East can bid NT thus protecting ♣ AQ and the tenaces in spades and diamonds. East can open 1 NT if playing strong NT in which case West should simply raise to 3 NT knowing that the maximum combined point count holding is 32 points. If West wants to push then he should simply bid 4 NT. This is a **Quantitative 4 NT** which asks opener to bid 6 NT with a maximum opening or else Pass.

If E/W are playing Weak NT then East will open 1 ♦ and West should bid 1 ♥. East should re-bid 1 NT showing 15-16 or 15-17 points. If the former, then West should simply raise to 3 NT and if the 1 NT shows 15-17 then some Easts may want to probe and should simply bid a **Quantitative 4 NT** which East will Pass.

Saints & Sinners

Sinners...all the E/W partnerships that sailed into 6 NT when the combined point count holding suggests that they shouldn't. The standard recognised point-count requirement for 6 NT is a combined 33 points. This hand boasts a combined 31 points. That is not to say that you cannot make 12 tricks on less as is exemplified in this case...just that it is not recommended. Note the lucky spade and diamond suit combinations, each producing the maximum 4 tricks. Note also the very favourable heart layout which here can produce 3 tricks! Place one of the two heart honours in the North hand and declarer will struggle. Not surprisingly the two strongest pairs in the field each settled for 3 NT.

And now look what happened to those that bid 6 NT, which is unbeatable if East declares and can also be made if West is declarer and receives a non-club lead.

Sinner status to the South who decided to double 6 NT by West and got very lucky when North found the fatal (for declarer) lead of ♣ 5. If an experienced player was sitting in the North seat and found himself on lead after South doubled 6 NT then a diamond would have hit the table before South could request 'Undo'. A double of 6 NT in an uncontested auction is generally understood to be a request for a lead of dummy's first bid suit! South's Double was silly and could have been costly. South has no reason to think the contract will fail, in particular given that her hearts are underneath the heart bidder.

Board 17
 North Deals
 None Vul

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

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



E 6N; E 6♠; E 6♥; E 6♦; W 5N; W 5♠; W 5♥; W 5♦; EW 3♣;
 Par -990; E 6N

Saints & Sinners

Sinners abound... At two tables East declared 6 NT on the lead of ♥ K and unbelievably and inexplicably went down! **Grand Sinner** status awarded to those declarers who failed to make 12 tricks on the lead of the ♥ K. The most important thing that a declarer can do when dummy is tabled is to stop and take stock. Clearly some declarers did not do this. Let's count...4 spade tricks, 1 heart, 4 diamonds, 1 club giving a total of 10 tricks. Two more required to make our 6 NT contract. Now let's look at the heart suit... ♥ A1097 - ♥ J4. South has led ♥ K. If we beat that with ♥ A and lead ♥ 7 towards our ♥ J then South has two options. a) Win with ♥ Q in which case dummy's ♥ 10 and ♥ 9 are now winners giving us the two extra tricks that we need. Alternatively, South might duck in which case declarer next plays a spade or diamond to dummy and continues with ♥ 10. If South ducks then declarer reels off his remaining eight winners in spades, diamonds and ♣ A, giving declarer twelve tricks in total. Note that declarer should resist any temptation to finesse ♣ Q. Just take your twelve tricks!

At two other tables East again declared 6 NT on the lead of ♠ 10 or ♦ 10 respectively. Again, declarer has 10 top ricks and the question is what is the best line for the two extra tricks needed to make the contract. There are two options...heart and clubs. The club suit is highly unlikely to produce more than one extra trick (in addition to ♣ A) in which case declarer should realise that he needs to produce at least once extra trick from the heart suit. The best line for at least one extra trick in the heart suit is to lead ♥ J from hand and finesse if South follows with a low heart. If the ♥ J loses to ♥ K or ♥ Q in the North hand then declarer can repeat the finesse by leading towards dummy's now ♥ A109 and finessing if South again plays low. This offers approx. a 75% chance of success based on the expectation that South holds EITHER the ♥ K or ♥ Q OR both!. This also gives declarer a slight extra chance of an additional trick if South started with three hearts INCLUDING ♥ K or ♥ Q as well as the ♥ 8... And guess what! In this case declarer does not need to take the club finesse for the 12th trick! And if ♥ 8 doesn't appear then declarer can finesse the ♣ Q for the vital 12th trick. **Sinner** status to all declarers that failed to make 12 tricks except the aforementioned West who received a club lead!

Board 18
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

<p>♠ A Q 10 8 ♥ Q 9 7 ♦ A Q 8 6 ♣ 5 2</p>	<div style="background-color: green; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto; display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> N W E S </div>	<p>♠ J ♥ 10 2 ♦ K J 5 3 2 ♣ K J 9 7 4</p>	<p>♠ 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♥ 6 5 ♦ 7 4 ♣ 10 6 3</p>
<p>♠ K 9 ♥ A K J 8 4 3 ♦ 10 9 ♣ A Q 8</p>			

NS 4♥; S 3N; NS 5♣; S 4♦; N 2N; N 3♦; EW 1♠; Par +600: NS 5♣

Board 19
South Deals
E-W Vul

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

EW 4♠; EW 3N; E 1♥; EW 1♦; EW 1♣; Par -620; EW 4♠

Board 20
West Deals
Both Vul

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

EW 5N; EW 4♠; EW 4♦; EW 4♣; EW 2♥; Par -660; EW 3N+2

Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

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

NS 6♦; NS 5N; NS 5♠; NS 3♥; NS 3♣; Par +1370: NS 6♦