

Greetings!

Herewith find analysis of selected hands played last Thursday, 30th July 2020, in the **Galway/CBAI Western Region BBO IMP Pairs**.

This week I have analysed 14 of the 24 hands: 2,4,5,6,10,13,14,15,16,17,20,22,23,24
Hand vary in term of complexity and each reflects specific points of interest and learning that I couldn't let pass without a comment! Some hands are analysed in more detail than others.

Please note that in some cases the **Saints & Sinners** comments extend over several pages.

Some topics that are mentioned include: 'Chines Finesse'; Inverted Minor Raises; Splinters; Five Ace Blackwood and 'Quen Ask'; Checkback; Breaking The Transfer...

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...late on Thursday night or early on Friday morning. The downloaded content includes 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 **14 hands**, played at **12 tables**, representing a total of **168 contracts** that I reviewed which in turn converts to **2,184 tricks** that are minutely screened, which amounts to a grand total of **8.736 individual card plays** that are dissected! Just for info!

Paul J Scannell

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

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

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

This is a tricky 4♠ by N/S, the play for ten tricks not being immediately obvious. But it can be made. A top diamond lead from East can be ruffed in dummy. Declarer can play a heart to his ♥ Q and then lead ♣ J, losing to West's ♣ K who will continue with a diamond, again ruffed in dummy and reducing dummy's trump holding to ♠ K9. Declarer can now play two rounds of clubs discarding a diamond from hand and then play a heart to ♥ K and ruff declarer's last diamond with dummy's ♠ 9. Declarer then plays ♠ K, West winning with ♠ A.. West can only play a diamond, heart or spade. On a spade continuation declarer plays low (finessing against West's ♠ 10), East's ♠ Q winning and promoting declarer's ♠ J. Alternatively, on a heart switch by West, declarer can win in dummy and then lead a master heart or club, ruffing with ♠ 5....East can overruff or discard. Declarer now plays ♠ 6, East winning perforce with ♠ Q and declarer holding ♠ J5 can claim the last two tricks. An intricate sequence of plays that requires a very specific layout in spades, hearts, clubs. Yes, declarer could have been lucky and the club finesse might have worked! But that aside the 3-3 breaks in hearts and clubs and the very specific trump layout all contribute to a miraculous outcome for declarer! Don't expect it to be matched at too many tables!

Saints & Sinners

At six tables a spade contract was reached, two of which were played at game level. At both tables a top diamond was led, both declarers ruffing in dummy. At the first table declarer continued with a small club and a sleepy West played low and declarer won with ♣ J. This declarer continued with a club to dummy's ♣ A and then led a heart to her ♥ K and then played a spade to dummy's ♠ K, West winning with ♠ A. West now played his ♣ K, declarer ruffing as East followed suit. Declarer next played a heart to dummy's ♥ A and another heart to ♥ Q in hand. Declarer now ruffed a diamond in dummy and then led the master heart, West discarding a diamond as North ruffed with ♠ 6 following which declarer led another diamond and ruffed with dummy's last trump... And by that stage declarer had racked up ten tricks. Well played by **Ita** who is duly awarded **Saintly** status.

At the other table, North took a different line and ended up with eight tricks.

Sinner status to the N/S pair who let East play in 1 NT...if you don't already have a convention for defending against the opponents opening 1 NT then you should address it ...ASAP.

Board 2East Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

Sinner status to the two N/S pairs who allowed East play a contract of 2♦. A Double of 1♦ by South is Takeout...a subsequent Double by South of 2♦ is also Takeout...North can then bid 2♠. Note that 2♦ is not on the list of makeable contracts but the defense is not easy. At one table South lead ♠ 7 and that was that. Declarer now scored 2 spades, ♣ K, 5 trumps. Contract made.

At the other table South found the lead of ♣ A, North following with ♣ J. Declarer continued with a club to dummy's ♣ K, North following with ♣ 10. Here, declarer had not received the spade lead which would have gifted a trick to his ♠ Q. Declarer continued with a trump to his ♦ A and took stock. He was still a trick short and was looking at three heart losers and a club loser and would surely lose a spade trick if he had to open the suit. So, at trick four declarer exited with ♣ 9, South winning perforce with ♣ Q as North discarded ♠ 2. South could easily have gone astray at this point by switching to a spade but found the winning play, perhaps guided by North's discard of ♠ 2, of a small heart to North's ♥ K (**Venial Sin** for playing the ♥ K instead of the ♥ Q). N/S had been card perfect to this point and could still defeat the contract if they got the next two plays in the proper sequence. North needs to play a small heart to South's ♥ A who can then continue with a heart to North's ♥ Q (hence the importance of playing ♥ Q on the first round!) and then North can complete a fine defense by exiting on a trump and eventually declarer will have to open the spade suit and should lose a sixth trick to the defenders. Alas, North continued with her second heart honour and then played a third heart to South's ♥ A...and now South was end-played! A club would permit declarer to ruff with ♦ 10 in dummy whilst discarding a losing spade from hand. Similarly, if South played the thirteenth heart. In the end South led a spade, declarer winning in hand with ♠ Q. **Saintly** status to declarer, **David Walsh**, and also to N/S (**Norma O'Connell & Sheila Baynes**) for putting up a super defense that nearly saw the contract defeated.

Saintly status to South who bid 2♣ (presumably natural) over East's 1NT and made 8 tricks although a ninth trick is possible by leading a spade from dummy and finessing ♠ 9 and subsequently pinning East's ♠ Q by playing ♠ K from hand thus promoting ♠ J.

Board 2East Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

At one table East played in 3♦x where South led ♣ A and continued with a second club to dummy's ♣ K. Declarer carefully drew only three rounds of trumps but made the fatal mistake of winning the third round with dummy's ♦ 10 (thus North could overruff with ♦ 9 if South subsequently gave declarer a 'ruff and discard'. Retaining ♦ 10 in dummy would have prevented that outcome should the occasion arise). Declarer now played a spade to her ♠ Q, losing to declarer's ♠ K. South should probably have continued with a spade through dummy's ♠ A10 (declarer surely didn't start with ♠ QJ otherwise they would have finessed against South's ♠ K and hence partner must be holding ♠ J!). Also, it means that North can open the heart suit rather than South...safer! Anyway, this South got off lead with ♥ A (**Venial sin...** If East holds ♥ Q then cashing ♥ A sets up declarer's ♥ Q as a winner!) and continued with another heart whereupon North cashed ♥ KQ before exiting on a diamond. Declarer could not avoid six losers... +300 to N/S which was worth a handy 5 IMPs. **Saintly** status to **Rhona & Margaret**.

At another table East also contracted 3♦ after South overcalled 2♣ (**Sinner** status to South who should make a **Takeout Double** instead of making an overcall in clubs. The South hand is **IDEAL** for a Takeout Double of East's 1♦). South led ♥ A and could consider herself very lucky to find partner with ♥ KQ. (**Saintly** status to **Anne McElwain** for winning the first heart with ♥ Q). North cashed her two top hearts and continued with ♣ J, South rising with ♣ A and then making the fatal (for the defense) switch to ♠ 7...(Sinner status awarded to **South**). But declarer spared South's blushes by rising with ♠ A instead of letting it run to her ♠ Q in hand....**Sinner** status awarded to **declarer** who duly ended 2 down.

Board 3
South Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

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

3 NT is not included in the list of makeable contracts but is likely to be the most popular contract with 4 ♠ as a minority alternative.

3 NT by South has no chance on a heart lead but North is more likely to become declarer after South opens 1 ♠ and in that case declarer may have chances unless East finds a small heart lead.

Saints & Sinners

At one table, East led ♣ 5 declarer winning in dummy with ♣ A and playing a spade to his ♠ Q, East winning with ♠ A. East continued with ♣ 3 declarer letting it run to his ♣ K whereupon declarer then continued with three rounds of diamonds ending in hand with ♦ A as West discarded a hugely significant ♠ 8. Declare now led ♠ 2, East rising with ♠ J...and declarer, with victory in sight, snatched defeat by ducking.. Declarer should have won with ♠ K and continued with ♠ 9 (or ♠ 7 given West's earlier discard of ♠ 8) and thus established two more spade winners bringing the total number of tricks to nine. But now East found the heart switch and there was no recovery. **Absolute Sinner** status to North. It is vitally important to keep one's eye on the smaller cards, in particular the intermediate cards...8,9,7

At another table East led a diamond, correctly choosing the ♦ 7, second highest from four small cards, declarer winning in hand with ♦ A where it might have been better to win in dummy to lead a spade TOWARDS ♠ Q2. Declarer played ♠ Q at trick two, East winning with ♠ A while West followed with ♠ 8, East continued with another diamond, declarer winning perforce in dummy. Declarer now played three rounds of clubs ending in hand with ♣ K and with victory in sight (simply play a spade towards dummy's ♠ K974, finessing ♠ 9 if East follows low or beating ♠ J (or ♠ 10 with ♠ K and continuing with ♠ 9 or ♠ 7 to establish two more spade tricks) had a blind moment and instead played ♣ 8 to West's ♣ J. West continued with ♥ K, felling East's ♥ J and declarer could still have got home by winning with ♥ A, cashing ♠ K, ♦ K and exiting with ♥ 7 which West could win with ♥ Q but would then have to concede the last trick to declarer's ♥ 10 giving declarer nine tricks by virtue of 1 spade, 2 hearts, 3 diamonds, 3 clubs.. But unfortunately declarer ducked the ♥ K and that was the last opportunity for declarer to succeed. Two chances, neither grasped! **Sinner** status to **North**

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

At another table, North received the lead of ♠ 6 (**Sinner** status to **East** for leading a suit with a holding of AJ106 which was bid by South). Winning with ♠ Q, declarer cashed top clubs winning the third one in hand with ♣ K as East made the fatal discard of a small diamond thus establishing declarer's ♦ 8 as a fourth diamond winner. This little detail did not escape **Clare Burke's** attention and she duly cashed four diamonds, East making another fatal discard of ♠ 10 on the last diamond. Declarer was now in full flight and next led a spade towards dummy, East rising with ♠ A thereby establishing dummy's ♠ K9 as winners. At this stage declarer had lost just one trick and duly racked up a total of 11 tricks with ♠ K9, ♥ A. Well played **Clare**, **Saintly** status deservedly awarded

At another table East led ♠ J (**Sinner** status awarded) despite South having shown a five card suit, declarer winning in hand with ♠ Q and subsequently winning two more spades (and ten tricks) when East discarded a spade on the fourth club. **Additional Sinner** status awarded to East

Sinner status to the **East** at another table who got a chance to switch to a heart before declarer was able to establish a crucial second spade trick and instead helped declarer by cashing a master spade thereby establishing the crucial second spade winner in dummy. Declarer made no mistake and assisted by some injudicious club discards by West duly racked up ten tricks. **Saintly** status to **Anne McElwain**

Saintly status to **Ann Roche** for leading the ♦ 7 from ♦ 9753 (second highest from four small cards). This helps partner to accurately discern the actual lead as opposed to being from four headed by an honour (or two). Declarer won in hand (winning in dummy would have been better and would have preserved an entry to hand for possible use later in the play). Declarer duly played a second diamond winning perforce in dummy and duly led a spade to ♠ Q and East's ♠ A. East continued with a third diamond, establishing her ♦ 9 as a winner. Declarer won in dummy and cashed three top clubs before leading a spade towards dummy, East rising with ♠ J. Declarer made no mistake, winning with ♠ K and then leading ♠ 9, establishing dummy's ♠ 74 as winners with ♥ A as an entry. Declarer finished with ten tricks. **Saintly** status to **Rhona Bolger**. Perhaps East should have considered a heart switch after winning ♠ A and before declarer had established extra spade winners? That would lead to the defeat of the contract.

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

Sinner status to the East, who led ♦ 3 suggesting a four card suit headed by an honour(s). ♦ 7 (the second highest card in the holding) is the technically correct lead from this combination. Declarer made a mistake by winning in hand and then followed it up by leading ♠ 2 (from ♠ Q2) and when East played low declarer played ♠ K thus creating three spade winners for East and zero chance of an extra spade for declarer. **Sinner** status to **North**. Declarer would have been much better positioned by winning the opening lead in dummy and then playing a spade TOWARDS her ♠ Q2. Declarer duly cashed club and diamond winners before leading ♠ Q from hand whereupon East fell from grace (**Additional Sinner** status awarded) by cashing two more spade winners thereby establishing declarer's ninth trick. East could have beaten the contract by **cashing one top spade** and the ♦ 9 and then switching to a heart, How should East have known that partner must have ♥ KQ? Because declarer has already shown up with ♠ Q, ♦ A, ♣ K and therefore cannot also hold ♥ KQ and have only responded 1 NT! **Counting, counting...all the time!**

At another table, **East** (**Absolute Sinner** status awarded) made the fatal (and incorrect) lead of ♦ 9 which instantly handed declarer a fourth diamond winner an nine tricks.

At one table **East** earns **Sinner** status for leading ♦ 3 instead of ♦ 7 but is then bestowed with **Exalted Saintly** status for finding the switch of ♥ 6 after winning ♠ A, WHICH SHOULD have led to the defeat of the contract but unfortunately East's **Exalted Saintly** status **was tarnished** when he discarded a diamond instead of ♠ 6, on the third club! Thus declarer scored 1 spade, 1 heart, 4 diamonds, 1 club.

Two declarers played in 4♠. At one table West overcalled 2♥, a poor bid which could have suffered a -300 penalty, and South subsequently declared 4♠. Both defenders made errors, West discarding a club whilst seeing 4 clubs in dummy! East didn't help matters by unnecessarily inserting the ♠ J on the second play of the suit thus making it easy for declarer to limit his trump losers to two! **Saintly** status to declarer **Enda Glynn** who scored eleven tricks discarding his heart loser on dummy's promoted fourth club.

Board 4

West Deals
Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

Saintly status to **Moya MacEoin**, East at the other table where 4 ♠ was played, for playing low on the second spade resulting in her scoring her ♠ J and ♠ 10 when declarer rose with ♠ K. Unfortunately partner (West) made a fatal club discard which enabled declarer to discard his losing heart on dummy's fourth club! **Sinner** status awarded to **West** who can see the four clubs in dummy and knows therefore that only she can prevent declarer from scoring four club tricks. West could comfortably discard a heart instead.

Note that East's spade holding is such that two tricks are guaranteed and that East should know that if declarer plays ♠ K on second round that East will win THREE tricks not two. So, playing low is correct...let declarer find the right play (playing ♠ 9). Don't hand it to him by inserting ♠ J or ♠ 10 on second round. There is no combination of spades in declarer's hand that can make it right for East to insert ♠ J or ♠ 10 on the second round.

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

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

NS 4♥; W 2♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; E 1♦; Par +500; EW 4♠×-3;
W 5♦×-3

4♥ can be made. The problem is how to bid it! North will open 1♣ and assuming that East Passes (not a great 1♠ overcall missing four of the top five cards in the suit!) the question is whether South should bid or not? My inclination is to Pass and then bid later if I get an opportunity which would clearly show a weak hand with long hearts!

Saints & Sinners

Absolute Sinner status to the **South**, declaring 4♥x, who let the opponents cash the first three tricks via three top spade, declarer discarding ♦ 3 from dummy on the third round instead of ruffing with ♥ 3, cashing ♥ A and ruffing a club in hand to play a second heart and claim ten tricks!

Sinner status to the North who bid 4NT over South's 4♥ response to North's opening 1♣. Whatever about the merits or otherwise of South's bid it is certainly a bid that bespeaks weak hand. North should have passed.

At another table the bidding proceeded, without opposition interference, as follows:

1♣ - 1♦; 2NT - 3♥; 5♦ - 5♥

Presumably North's 5♦ was simply showing preference for diamonds (South's first bid suit!) rather than hearts. **Sinner** status to South for bidding 1♦ unless it was negative by partnership agreement.


Sinner status to the three East players who overcalled 1♠ on such a weak hand and with such a poor suit.

Five E/W pairs played in 3♠, one going down by a single trick and the other four all failing by two tricks. **Saintly** status to the two North players (**Anne McElwain** and **Evelyn Clarke**) who Doubled the final contract, scoring +300 and +4.09 IMPs.

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

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

NS 4♥; W 2♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; E 1♦; Par +500: EW 4♠×-3;
 W 5♦×-3

Saints & Sinners (continued)

One North declared 4♣ on the lead and continuation of a spade followed by a switch to a small diamond...**Sinner** status to **West** for not switching to a club thereby removing the ruffing potential of a third diamond with dummy's singleton ♦ 6. Declarer won in hand and duly played three rounds of diamond ruffing the third round with dummy's singleton trump! At this point in the hand declarer can actually make the contract as long as she finds the right play in the trump suit! The correct play is ♣ A followed by ♣ Q. And yes, I hear you say but perhaps ♣ A followed by a small club would drop a doubleton ♣ K... A doubleton ♣ K is of limited use to declarer who will also lose a trick to ♣ J whereas a doubleton ♣ J will mean that declarer will avoid losing two club tricks! This declarer returned to her hand via a ruff of dummy's third spade and then fell from grace by leading ♣ 9 from hand, thereby guaranteeing the **loss of at least two trump tricks**. Cashing ♣ A and continuing with ♣ Q limits the loss to a single club trick! **Sinner** status to declarer.

At another table North declared 2♣ on a heart lead which declarer won, cashed two top diamonds and ruffed the third diamond with dummy's ♣ 6. Declarer subsequently ruffed a spade and then fell from grace by leading ♣ 10 from hand thereby conceding two club tricks to the defenders. **Sinner** status awarded to declarer

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

NS 3N; NS 5♦; NS 3♠; NS 3♣; NS 1♥; Par +400: NS 3N; NS 5♦

N/S can make 3 NT but the contract is unlikely to be bid and less likely to be made! N/S can also make 5♦. E/W can make 1♥ but no more than that. At unfavourable vulnerability, West needs to be disciplined!

Saints & Sinners

Sinner status to the West who bid hearts three times, without any bid from partner and duly contracted 3♥x which went three light for a penalty of -800.

West at another table also contracted 3♥ but was undoubled perhaps due the fact that South opened with a Weak 2♦. At this table the defense was less demanding and declarer escaped for one down!

At two other tables West declared 2♥ going one down.

Board 7
South Deals
Both Vul

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

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

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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



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

Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul

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

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

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

A difficult hand to bid. 5♣ and 3NT are lucky makes because of South's doubleton ♠Q and also because of the location of the ♥A. And in a NT contract note that N/S cannot establish four heart winners without conceding a trick to East. North cannot cash 6 (or even 5 diamond tricks) without conceding a diamond trick to E/W. Give South the ♥A and the lead against 3NT and N/S could cash the first seven tricks! Meanwhile N/S can make 3♦ through careful play but this contract is more likely to fail than make as it requires an inspired guess in the trump suit!

A useful bidding convention is the **Inverted Minor Raise** where a simple raise of opener's 1♣ or 1♦ is strong (10+ hcp), guarantees a fit for opener's suit and denies a four card (or longer) major. Conversely, a jump raise is WEAK, certainly less than 8 hcp.

Saints & Sinners

3NT was contracted at two tables. At one table, defending 3NT by West, North led ♦10, declarer winning perforce with dummy's singleton ♦K. Declarer then proceeded to misplay the hand by cashing five club tricks, ending in hand with ♣J and now had no means of playing the spades suit other than cashing ♠AK and getting very lucky when South turned up with a doubleton ♠Q. What declarer should have done after winning ♦K is to play a spade to the ♠K in hand and then play five clubs ending in DUMMY whereupon declarer can now lead a second spade towards her ♠AJ, at least leaving herself with the option of finessing ♠J for her ninth trick. Playing it the way she did declarer left herself with no option to finesse ♠J. **Sinner** status awarded to **declarer**.

At another table East declared 3NT on the lead of ♥Q ducked to declarer's ♥K who then proceeded to cash five clubs, ending in hand. Declarer then played a spade to dummy's ♠A, cashed the ♠K felling South's ♠Q, and then cashed the promoted ♠J for her ninth trick. But at this table the major culprit was North who discarded her four small spades on declarer's clubs thus removing the necessity for declarer to consider the spade finesse....declarer and dummy have seven spades, North has discarded four leaving just two outstanding. **Counting, counting...all the time! Absolute Sinner** status to **North** who can see that the spades finesse works but declarer does not know that! North should have tried to 'protect' South's ♠Q and not made it an 'Open Book' for declarer.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

A club contract was reached at eight of the twelve tables in play, with four E/W pairs bidding game.

At one table, West made an **Inverted Minor Raise** to 2♣ opposite partner's opening 1♣ over which North bid 2♦. East who should have devalued her hand in the light of her singleton ♦K made an overbid of 5♣ (**Sinner** status awarded) which closed the auction. South led ♦6, North winning with ♦A and switching to ♥4 in case declarer had ♥KJx and makes the wrong guess (playing ♥J instead of ♥K). But declarer had no choice but to rise with ♥K which won. Declarer then cashed three top clubs and subsequently took a first round finesse of the ♠J and made her contract! Lucky!

Now let's go back to trick three, after winning ♥K, Declarer can play a second heart which South will likely win and then continue with another diamond (a heart will have same result!), declarer ruffing the diamond in hand and then ruffing her third heart in dummy. Now declarer plays three rounds of clubs, ending in dummy and then plays ♦J, North covering with ♦Q on which declarer discards a spade from hand and then claims as North is now endplayed and must either lead a spade into dummy's ♠AKJ or give a ruff and discard. Much more elegant and obviates the need for a spade finesse! Good players only take a finesse when there is no better line!

At another table, West declared ♣C with no opposition bidding. South made the inspired but unfortunate lead of ♠Q and declarer clocked up 11 tricks! No Saints or Sinners here!

At one table West raised East's opening bid to 3♣ over which North bid 3♦ and East then overbid with a final call of 5♣. **Sinner** status to ♣. South led ♦7, North winning with ♦A. North then cashed ♥A when the play of ♥4 might have been a better choice. Declarer duly emerged with eleven tricks by taking the simple route of a first round finesse of ♠J.

Another E/W partnership took the direct route via 1♣-3♣-5♣. South made the inspire but unfortunate lead of ♠Q and declarer duly romped home with eleven tricks.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

	♠ 8 6 5 3										
	♥ A 8 4										
	♦ A Q 10 9 8 2										
	♣ —										
♠ A K J	<table style="border: 1px solid black; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W</td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ 10 9 7 2
	N										
W		E									
	S										
♥ 9 3		♥ K 6 2									
♦ J 5 3		♦ K									
♣ J 10 8 6 4		♣ A K Q 9 2									
	♠ Q 4										
	♥ Q J 10 7 5										
	♦ 7 6 4										
	♣ 7 5 3										

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

At the tables where the club game was not bid one declarer failed to rise with ♥ K when North switched to a small heart. **Saintly** status to **North (Anne McElwain)** for playing a small heart rather than ♥ A, **Sinner** status to declarer for not rising with ♥ K. At three other tables, North, defending 3 ♣, switched to ♥ A instead of ♥ 4 at trick 2. **Sinner** status to the respective **Norths**.

At one table South declared 3 ♥ and is awarded **Sinner** status for going FOUR light! The defense started with three rounds of spades declarer ruffing with ♥ 5. Declarer then ruffed a club in dummy and played ♠ 8, dummy's last spade, East following with ♠ 10. Declarer then committed a **Mortal Sin** by ruffing with ♥ 7 knowing that West has no more spades! Not surprisingly, West overruffed with ♥ 8 and then played another heart removing the ruffing potential from dummy. Declarer now made a second error by playing low from dummy, AND SHOULD HAVE LOST TO EAST'S ♥ K who could have continued a good defense by continuing with another heart. BUT, for whatever reason (a misclick?) East failed to play ♥ K and declarer won in hand with ♥ 10. Declarer now tried a finesse of ♦ Q, losing to East's singleton ♦ K. East continued with a heart to dummy's stiff ♥ A, leaving declarer with a singleton ♥ Q in hand and East with ♥ K. Declarer attempted to cash ♦ A which East ruffed and then cashed three top clubs, declarer ruffing the third one with his last trump and subsequently conceding a diamond to West's ♦ J. FOUR down. South would have been wiser to Pass partner's 2 ♦ overcall knowing that there was at least a 5-3 maybe 6-3 fit. But the real problem, and start of the rot was ruffing the fourth spade with ♥ 7 instead of ♥ 10. Perhaps declarer was unlucky that West turned up with ♥ 8. **Saintly** status to West (**Lonzer**) for returning a heart after winning with ♥ 8. **Sinner** status to declarer for not reading the clues more accurately when she finessed ♦ Q into East. What clues, I hear you say? West led ♠ AKJ having responded 1 NT to partner's 1 ♣ opening. How can West also have the ♦ K?...11 hcp, as a minimum, for a 1 NT response!!! East is clearly marked with ♦ K and ♥ K. Look at the difference it makes.... Double-dummy, declarer could play a diamond to dummy's ♦ A and then play ♥ A and another heart (East is known to hold ♥ K so finesse will fail). If East rises with HK then a club ruff can be won in dummy and a subsequent lead of S8 can be ruffed in hand, last trump drawn and D10 finessed. If East ducks HK, declarer wins in hand and finesses ♦ 10 and continue with diamonds, East eventually ruffing with HK and playing a cubs, declarer ruffing with dummy's last heart and then cashing remaining diamonds. Contract making!!!

Sinner status awarded to another North, declaring 3 ♦ who also finessed ♦ Q after West had already shown up with ♠ AKJ and ♣ J for her 1 NT response to East's opening 1 ♣.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

Sinner status awarded to another North, declaring 3♦ who also finessed ♦ Q after West had already shown up with ♠ AKJ and ♣ J for her 1 NT response to East's opening 1♣. **Counting, counting...all the time!**

Board 11
South Deals
None Vul

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


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

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

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

EW 4♥; E 3N; EW 3♠; EW 4♣; W 2N; EW 1♦; Par -420; EW 4♥

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

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

EW 7♦; EW 3N; EW 3♣; EW 1♠; EW 1♥; Par -2140; EW 7♦

7♦ is solid...but can you even bid the Small Slam? The E/W hands represent an absolutely magical fit and both hands are rich in controls (Aces and singletons). 3 NT is likely to prove to be a popular contract with 9 tricks on top!

Saints & Sinners

3 NT became the contract at seven tables. At one table where West was declarer, North led ♥ 2 (**Sinner** status awarded...the correct lead is ♥ 5). Declarer played low from dummy (surely a clue to South!!!) and South erred by playing ♥ Q leaving declarer to score eleven tricks. **Sinner** status to **South** who should have played low. Firstly if North's ♥ 2 is a genuine fourth best lead then South should know that declarer has a singleton. South should play low just in case declarer has singleton ♥ A. Secondly, why didn't declarer play ♥ J (or ♥ 10) from dummy? Too much danger in playing ♥ Q at trick one.

Sinner status to the two **East**s who re-bid 2♥ (a **Reverse Bid** promises 16+ hcp). East should re-bid 2♦

Sinner status to the two **E/W** pairs who settled in a diamond contract below game. **Additional Sinner** status to the **East** who made only twelve tricks when she discarded a spade instead of a club on the ♥ K. A spade discard is pointless because declarer can ruff spades in hand having started with a singleton ♠ A.

Sinner status to the **North** who led ♣ 9 instead of ♣ 10 (**K109** is an interior sequence) and to partner **South** who played ♣ Q THUS DENYING ♣ J!!! And **Additional Sinner** status to the same North who discarded clubs and spades and clung grimly to three small hearts eventually conceding the thirteenth trick to declarer's ♥ 10 while South had two winning spades!

Saintly status to the two declarers (**David Walsh** and **Clive Robinson**) who received a heart lead from South and duly made ten tricks by establishing a third heart winner whilst still retaining ♠ A and ♣ A.

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

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

NS 6♥; NS 4N; NS 3♠; NS 3♣; NS 2♦; Par +980; NS 6♥

6♥ can be made by N/S but is very difficult to bid and may also pose problems in the play! Not likely to be bid often and even if bid not all declarers will make the contract.

Saints & Sinners

Two pairs reached 6♥.

At one tables East lead ♠ A (**Sinner** status...East should lead ♦ K. When you hold an outside Ace and a combination that could produce a second trick it is much better to establish the second trick BEFORE cashing the outside Ace. East switched to ♦ K, declarer winning in dummy with ♦ A, while discarding a small club from hand. Declarer, a seasoned warrior who has a propensity for playing too fast, drew THREE rounds of trumps leaving dummy with a solitary trump despite holding three potential black suit losers in her hand! Declarer subsequently led ♠ J from dummy, covered by West with ♠ Q and declarer winning with ♠ K. **As luck would have it**, declarer's ♠ 108 were now promoted as winners because East's ♠ 9 fortuitously dropped on declarer's ♠ 10!

After declarer wins ♦ A she should have taken stock. One solution that does not require a lucky finesse against West's ♠ Q, and the ♠ 9 dropping on third round of spades, is to simply ruff the three black losers, ♠ 108, ♣ 8 in dummy. Note that it may be necessary to ruff one of the three losers with a small heart and the other two can be ruffed with ♥ QJ (which cannot be overruffed!). So. after winning ♦ A, play three rounds of clubs and ruff the third club with ♥ 7. Next ruff a diamond in hand with ♥ 2, then ruff a spade with ♥ Q, Ruff another diamond in hand with ♥ 5 and then ruff another spade with ♥ J. Play dummy's last trump winning in hand with ♥ 10 and then cash ♥ AK for twelve tricks, i.e 1 spade plus 2 spade ruffs, 3 hearts, 1 diamond plus 2 diamond ruffs in hand, 2 clubs plus 1 club ruff in dummy.

An alternative option is to cash ♠ K, ruff a spade, play a club to ♣ A and ruff last spade with ♥ Q, then play a club to ♣ K and ruff third club with ♥ J and then play a trump to hand, cashing five hearts when the suit breaks 3-2. This line could fail if either opponent started with 3 spades and 2 clubs, discarding a club on the fourth spade and then ruffing the second club.

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

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

NS 6♥; NS 4N; NS 3♠; NS 3♣; NS 2♦; Par +980: NS 6♥

Saints & Sinners (continued)

Severall Sinners, all defending 4♥. At one table, East led ♦ K, declarer winning with ♦ A while discarding ♠ 4 from hand. Declarer then cashed three top trumps before playing three rounds of clubs ruffing the third round with dummy's last trump. Declarer now lead ♠ J, West ducking (note that declarer has no means of re-entering dummy for a repeat of the spade finesse!) with East winning with ♠ A. East now committed a **Mortal Sin** by leading ♠ 2 instead of playing ♦ Q, a suit in which East knows declarer to be void, which would then force declarer to play spades from HAND. East's continuation of a spade was in effect giving declarer a second finesse against West's ♠ Q.

FOUR other East's also returned a spade in similar circumstances ...**SINNERS ALL**

Saintly status to **Bridin** who led a trump at trick one and continued with another trump upon winning with ♠ A. **Saintly** status also to **Liam Faherty** who recognised the need for establishing spade winners and duly led ♠ J at an early stage in the play, and despite **Bridie's** challenging trump leads eventually ended up with twelve tricks as a result of a well played hand.

Saintly status to **Enda Glynn** who also played on spades before drawing trumps and also duly emerged with twelve tricks.

Sinner status to the South who failed to bid game after North made a **Reverse Bid** of 2♠ showing 16 point and a 4 spades/5 hearts shape, and simply bid 3♥.

Sinner status also to the declarer who failed to take a finesse against East's ♠ 95 whilst holding ♠ 1084 and instead rose with ♠ 10. Declarer could still have gained an extra trick if she continued with ♠ 4 felling East's now stiff ♠ 9. Continuing with ♠ 8 whilst the opponents held ♠ Q76 was an absolutely no-hope play. Continuing with ♠ 4 DID HAVE A CHANCE and would have succeeded.

Sinner status to the **North** who ruffed his winning ♠ 10 with dummy's last trump and ended up with eleven tricks due to injudicious discarding by the defenders! **Sinner** status to **E/W**.

Board 15

South Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

Eight tricks SHOULD BE the limit in NT whereas eleven tricks can be made in a spade contract!
But can all pairs reach the spade game?

Saints & Sinners

Sinner status to the six E/W pairs who contracted 3 NT without finding their 4-4 spade fit.

3 NT by West, on a diamond lead, is always doomed to fail. Declarer has 1 spade, 1 heart, 1 diamond (on the opening lead) and 4 clubs. Declarer has no option to develop the two extra tricks to make the contract without losing the lead!

A recommended bidding sequence is as follows:

1 ♣ - 1 ♥; 2 NT - 3 ♠; 4 ♠ - P

A note about the above bidding. 2 NT re-bid promises 18-19 or 17-18 according to your system agreement. The important bid is 3 ♠ which promises 4 spades as well as ONLY 4 hearts. Bidding 3 ♠ does not promise 5 hearts unless you have a specific agreement that it does and that you also have some other means of showing only 4 spades.

One common method of showing 5 ♥ and 4 ♠ is to respond 1 ♥ and then over partner's NT response (1 NT or 2 NT) is to use a Convention called '**Checkback**' whereby responder bids either clubs or diamonds at lowest level which asks the NT bidder to show either 3 hearts or 4 spades by bidding the relevant suit. Partnerships can agree whether responder should bid hearts first (promising 3) or bid spades showing 4. Partnerships can also agree re the use of clubs or diamonds or the '**unbid**' minor as being the trigger for **Checkback**. Further study is recommended for those that are interested in exploring the use of this convention.

A NT contract was played at seven tables, six at game level and one in 2 NT. the latter contract was successful whereas those in 3 NT all failed.

Five pairs played in spades, two reaching 4 ♠ both making ten tricks. Those playing below game scored eleven tricks!

Board 16

West Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

Another Misfit! Remember my father's tip...drop it, as early as possible. The list of makeable contracts above suggest that N/S can make 5♥, 4NT, 4♠.

Saints & Sinners

Sinner status to the N/S pair who contracted the hopeless 6NT which has absolutely no chance irrespective of lead.

Sinner status to North who launched into an unmakeable 6♥ in the face of what is clearly a misfit. In this case North re-bid 3♥ over partner's initial 1♠ response. Two things about this: 1) North should clearly recognise that there is a possible misfit and consequently should take things slowly; 2) North should re-bid diamonds, twice if necessary, in case N/S have a diamond fit...

Sinner status, although it may be a bit unfair, to the North who declared 6♥ on the very favourable lead of ♣Q declarer winning in hand with ♣K. At this point the contract can actually be made. If declarer plays hearts from the top, noting East's ♥10 falling on second round, thus promoting North's ♥9, West will win the second round (or third) and cannot make a killing continuation. These are the continuations depending on what West does after winning with ♥K

- 1) a heart...declarer draws the remaining trumps and then finesses ♣10 and cashes remaining clubs scoring in total, 1 spade, 5 hearts, 1 or 2 diamonds, 5 clubs
- 2) a diamond...declarer wins in dummy, ruffs a spade and draws outstanding trumps before finessing ♣10
- 3) a spade... declarer wins in dummy and then ruffs a spade and draws outstanding trumps before finessing ♣10
- 4) a club, declarer wins in dummy (remaining clubs now established as winners), ruffs a spade in hand, draws trumps and accesses dummy via ♦A to cash remaining winners

All roads lead to home!

At the table declarer went astray in the play from the start and eventually scored eleven tricks.

Board 16
 West Deals
 E-W Vul

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

♠ A 10 8 5 4 2	<table style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: 0 auto;"> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">N</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">W E</td></tr> <tr><td style="text-align: center;">S</td></tr> </table>	N	W E	S	♠ A 10 8 5 4 2
N					
W E					
S					
♥ 4		♥ 4			
♦ A		♦ A			
♣ A 10 9 5 2		♣ A 10 9 5 2			

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

At two table 4♠ was contracted by South. Both failed, one by a trick and the other by two tricks.

What intrigued me is the fact that 4♠ is listed as a makeable contract when my initial analysis seemed to suggest that declarer must lose at least three trump tricks and also has to take care of three club losers. Yes. two can be discarded on ♥A and ♦K but how to dispose of the third club without losing a fourth trick. ...3 spade losers cannot be avoided!

After some careful study I came up with the following solution. Declarer, with a heart finesse, can create six tricks via ♥Q, ♥A, ♦A, ♦K, ♣A, ♣K and declarer can also engineer two red suit ruffs in hand (one diamond and one heart...if East ruffs with ♠7 or ♠9 on the third heart declarer overruffs with ♠8 or ♠10...if East ruffs in with ♠K or ♠J then declarer discards a club and later covers East's ♠9 or ♠7 with ♠10 or ♠8 respectively and eventually comes to two spade tricks. If East fails to ruff then declarer wins in hand and exits on his last club., East winning and with declarer holding ♠A1085, West ♠Q63, and East holding ♠KJ97, declarer can simply cover either small spade that East plays BUT must duck if East switches to ♠K or ♠J and then cover the next spade, declarer eventually winning two tricks. Yes it's intricate...but it works! Time to put the cards out on the kitchen table, just the spade suit in each hand!

Board 17

North Deals
None Vul

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

NS 6♥; NS 5N; NS 5♣; NS 3♠; NS 3♦; Par +980: NS 6♥

Another '**Impossible To Bid**' slam. 6♥ makes but is very difficult to bid with confidence. Again note the convenient 2-2 heart break, 3-3 club break and crucial spade honours as well as South's ♦ A and North's singleton diamond! And only a combined 27 hcp. I won't be surprised if it's 4♥ all the way!

Saints & Sinners

No **Saints** who reached the Small Slam....and no surprise!

Two declarers made all thirteen tricks, one by virtue of a friendly club lead from East enabling declarer to discard the three losing spades from dummy and then ruff declarer's ♠ K5 with dummy's two remaining trumps. No Saints and no Sinners.

But **Exalted Saintly** status is awarded to the other declarer who scored all thirteen tricks in 4♥. **Sean Glynn** executed a special coup! Sean received the lead of ♦ Q from East who had overcalled 1♠. Sean won in dummy and drew one round of trumps before playing ♠ 5 from hand. When East played low Sean rose with dummy's ♠ Q and then discarded the ♠ K from hand on dummy's ♦ K. Sean then played a second top trump and subsequently set up his club suit to claim all thirteen tricks. Some may wonder why **David Walsh** didn't rise with ♠ A,...David almost certainly placed the ♠ K with North but would have been uncertain re the diamond position. If Sean held three small diamonds and ♠ K5 then if East rises with ♠ A declarer will be able to discard his losing diamond on dummy's ♠ Q.


Two declarers only scored eleven tricks. In the first case East led ♠ A and continued with another spade to declarer's ♠ K. Declarer cleared the trumps in two rounds and then played a club to dummy's ♣ K, cashed ♦ AK and ♠ Q, throwing two clubs from hand and then had an absolute mental blank... At this stage declarer had ♥ 1095, ♣ AJ opposite dummy's ♥ 87, ♦ 86, ♣ 8. All that declarer needed to do was cash ♣ A and then ruff ♣ J with one of dummy's two trumps. But declarer led the club and inexplicably finessed the ♣ J into East's ♣ Q. **Sinner** status to declarer for lack of concentration!

Board 18
East Deals
N-S Vul

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

E 3♠; W 2♠; E 2♥; EW 1N; W 1♥; EW 1♣; Par -140; E 1♠+2

Board 19
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

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

NS 1N; N 1♠; NS 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +90; NS 1N

Board 20

West Deals
Both Vul

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

EW 5♥; EW 2N; E 2♦; W 1♦; Par -650: EW 4♥+1

Eleven tricks can be made in a heart contract...but not twelve!

Saints & Sinners

Not much to see on this board...it was hearts contracts down the line, All, bar two declarers making eleven tricks. At one table, South found a light, but not outrageous, Takeout Double of East's 1♥ opening. North got into the action with a spade bid as E/W settled in 4♥. South, made an unusual and costly lead of ♠K which gifted declarer a twelfth trick! Declarer might still have guessed right by playing ♠Q from dummy if South had led a ♠4 instead of ♠K.

At the other table declarer NEEDED to score twelve tricks because E/W had bid to 6♥!!! Perhaps fueled by the fact that they had failed to bid 6♦ on board #13. A brief review of their bidding which was as follows:

1♥ - 4♦
4NT - 5♣
5♦ - 6♥

The opening bid promised a five card suit, 4♦ was a **Splinter Bid** promising a trump fit, usually 4+ trumps and a singleton or void in diamonds as well as sufficient points for game and an interest in a slam if West had a suitable hand. 4NT was Key card Roman Keycard Blackwood and Rory's response of 5♣ showed one of the FIVE keycards (4 Aces and King of trumps). David's next bid of 5♦ asked if Rory had the trump queen (♥Q). Rory's final bid of 6♥ confirmed possession of ♥Q.

Barring a spade lead by South (and assuming that declarer guesses right to rise with ♠Q) 6♥ has few options. However it is not totally without a chance and one possibility is that either defender holds ♣Kxx in which case declarer can ruff out the ♣K and then discard his losing spade on dummy's ♣Q.

The actual lead was ♣3 and declarer would have felt a brief moment of hope that South held ♣J and North held ♣K. Unfortunately for declarer dummy's ♣10 drew ♣J from North. And subsequently the ♣K failed to fall in three rounds and so 6♥ failed, Change EITHER of dummy's black suit queens to a king and the contract will make! Unlucky.

Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

Board 22
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

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

EW 4♣; EW 2♥; EW 1N; EW 1♦; Par -130: EW 2♣+2

3 NT by West is likely to be the popular contract. On a small diamond lead this should not make. Declarer can create 4 hearts, 2 spades (yes, one trick may have to be sacrificed in order to play the hearts safely!), 1 diamond and hope for a club or two in the end play. Alternatively declarer might opt to play on clubs but will require a very specific layout for this line to work. Another line would involve playing a club to dummy's ♣ K and then playing hearts safely into North to protect declarer's ♦ J8.

Saints & Sinners

3 NT by West was played at seven tables. Unbelievably, the contract made at four of these tables and failed at the other three. More **Sinners** than Saints abound!

At the three tables where the contract was defeated by two tricks North led ♦ 6 and two declarers ducked the first two rounds and after winning with ♦ A they led ♣ J, North covering with ♣ Q and dummy's ♣ K losing to South's ♣ A. South now played a small heart, declarer winning and then continuing with ♣ 8 to North's ♣ 10 who then cashed the two diamond winners and the contract ultimately failed by two tricks.

At the three tables where 3 NT was allowed to make, the ♦ 6 was also led at trick one.

At one table South inexplicably played ♦ 5 and now declarer had a second diamond and a tempo! Declarer eventually collected ten tricks. A **gentle admonishment** to South for what was likely a 'mis-click'.

At another table declarer beat South's ♦ Q with ♦ A, played a small spade to dummy's ♠ A and then finessed ♥ 10 into North's ♥ J. North now fell from grace by cashing ♦ K, surely in the full knowledge that declarer had ♦ J...How so, I hear you say? Quite simple...South's play of ♦ Q at trick one DENIES ♦ J!!! BUT, declarer was still not out of the woods and required a defensive slip, in the final few tricks, from South who had to reduce to three cards holding ♠ J10, ♣ A5 while dummy held ♠ K ♣ K9. South discarded ♣ 5 and now declarer who held ♣ J83 exited on ♣ J and North, holding ♦ 7, ♣ Q10 covered and declarer played ♣ K from dummy, South winning perforce with ♣ A and then having to play a spade to dummy's ♠ K for declarer's ninth trick. **Sinner** status awarded to South.

Board 22
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

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

EW 4♣; EW 2♥; EW 1N; EW 1♦; Par -130: EW 2♣+2

Saints & Sinners (continued)

At another table, North also led ♦ 6 against 3 NT, South's ♦ Q holding the first trick as declarer ducked. South now earned **Mortal Sinner** status by switching to ♠ J, despite ♠ AK7 being clearly visible in dummy. Declarer, given breathing space from the diamond attack by virtue of South switching to spades, let the spade round to dummy's ♠ K and then led a heart to her ♥ K. In hand declarer now led ♣ J, covered by North's ♣ Q, dummy's ♣ K, and South winning with ♣ A. South now had a second chance to beat the contract by returning ♦ 5 but continued with another spade declarer winning in hand. Declarer now sealed the deal by continuing with another club to North's ♣ 10. North was now stymied...she couldn't play another diamond without conceding a trick to declarer's ♦ J and so exited on a heart, declarer winning in hand with ♥ A and then continuing with ♥ 10 to South's ♥ Q. At last South found the continuation of a diamond but it was too late as declarer had heart winners in hand and spade and club winners in dummy. Nine tricks made. **Major Sinner** status awarded to **South**.

One East/West pair reached 5 ♣ which has no chance. 3 NT is the place to play on this hand. **Sinner** status to E/W. Bidding should go 1 ♥ - 2 ♣; 2 NT - 3 NT.

Another pair played in 2 ♣ (**Sinner** status awarded) but **Bridie** is awarded a compensatory **Saintly** status for her declarer play which saw her establishing dummy's two long hearts to bring in eleven tricks when N/S failed to set-up their diamond trick. Well played **Bridie**.

Sinner status to the West who opened 1 ♥ and rebid 2 ♥ over partner's 2 ♣ response. I think that particular partnership play a Strong NT in which case West should have opened 1 NT which East would have raised to 3 NT. **Sinner** status to West who should take the blame for languishing in 2 ♥. **Sinner** status to **North** who made the fatal switch of ♣ Q thus eliminating declarer's second club loser and contributing to a poor defense that saw declarer ultimately emerge with eleven tricks.

At the final table West contracted 2 ♥ (**Sinner** status awarded to E/W) and declarer was restricted to eight tricks mostly due to a tight defense by **Murt & Kay Scarry** upon whom **Saintly** status is duly bestowed!

Board 23
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

E/W can make nine trick in spades but SHOULD NOT make ten. N/S can make nine tricks in hearts. Against a spade contract South (or North) should play trumps at first and subsequent opportunities to deprive declarer of heart ruffs in dummy!

Saints & Sinners

Saintly status to the **West** who managed to accumulate ten tricks in 4♠...and **Sinner** status to the N/S pair that stood by, not helplessly, and allowed it to happen! North led her singleton diamond, South winning with ♦ 10. South can kill the contract at this stage by switching to ♠ 4, cutting down dummy's ruffing potential, but instead found the continuation of ♦ J (if declarer had a small doubleton club one could be discarded on this trick leaving South with egg on her face!) but declarer ruffed with ♠ 9 and then cashed ♥ A and ruffed a small heart with dummy's ♠ 2. Declarer now led another diamond and ruffed with ♠ 10 and led a third heart ruffing with dummy's ♠ 5 which was overruffed by South with ♠ J. South now had a second chance to kill the contract by continuing with ♠ 4 which would have removed dummy's last trump. BUT South fell from grace for the second time and continued with ♣ A and another club to declarer's ♣ K which allowed declarer to ruff her fourth heart with dummy's ♠ 7. Declarer now ruffed a diamond with ♠ Q and drew trumps and claimed ten tricks and her contract. **Saintly** status to declarer **Mary (Lonzer)** and **Exalted Sinner** status to **South** who stood idly by while it all unfolded and failed to prevent it!

At another table, North also led her singleton diamond and South committed a **Venial Sin** by winning with ♦ A (denying the ♦ K). **Additional Sinner** status to South for not switching to a small spade but instead continued with ♦ 10 (a suit preference signal for a club return from partner?) and declarer, oblivious to the danger, ruffed with ♠ 3 which North gratefully overruffed with ♠ 6. North dutifully returned a club to south's ♣ A who continued with another diamond which declarer ruffed with ♠ 10. Declarer then inexplicably played ♥ 8 from hand (a misc-click?) instead of ♥ A. North won with ♥ Q and found the excellent continuation of ♠ 8, South foolishly following with ♠ J which declarer won with ♠ Q. Declarer could have won all the remaining tricks by ruffing her two losing hearts in dummy BUT, instead played all her remaining trumps and eventually lost two hearts to finish three down VULNERABLE, instead of going only one down! **Sinner** status to declarer for careless play,.. **Saintly** status to North (**Evelyn Clarke**) for finding the spade switch after securing her diamond overruff.

Board 23

South Deals
Both Vul

♠ A K Q 10 9 3	♠ 8 6	♠ 7 5 2						
♥ A 8 6 4	♥ K Q 9 7 5 2	♥ J						
♦ 2	♦ 8	♦ Q 9 7 6 5 4 3						
♣ K J	♣ 9 6 5 4	♣ Q 2						
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #006400; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">W</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">N</td> <td style="padding: 2px 5px;">E</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3" style="padding: 2px 5px; text-align: center;">S</td> </tr> </table>			W	N	E	S		
W	N	E						
S								
	♠ J 4							
	♥ 10 3							
	♦ A K J 10							
	♣ A 10 8 7 3							

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

At another table North also led her singleton diamond against West's 4♠, South beating dummy's ♦ Q (a pointless play!) with the ♦ K and then continuing with ♦ 10 which declarer ruffed with ♠ 3 (**Sinner** status awarded) which was overruffed by North with ♠ 6. North duly returned a club to South's ♣ A and declarer committed another error by following with ♣ K and thus using up a simple entry to his hand because he now had ♣ Q in dummy and ♣ J in hand! **Additional Sinner** status to declarer. South could still find the damaging (for declarer spade switch but instead continued with another diamond which declarer ruffed with ♠ Q. Declarer now cashed ♥ A and ruffed a heart low. perhaps the foolishness of playing ♣ K on South's ♣ A suddenly registered with declarer because he could not play a club to hand and instead made another mistake by playing a trump from dummy whilst still holding two losing hearts in his hand and now with only one trump left in dummy! Declarer would have done better to ruff a diamond with ♠ 10 and then ruff a heart and still get back to hand to ruff his last heart with dummy's last trump and get out for one down. Instead declarer drew trumps (didn't even ruff one of his two losing hearts in dummy!) and duly lost two hearts at the end for two down! **Sinner** status to declarer for poor planning and declarer play.

Sinner status to the declarer in 4♠ who ruffed the second diamond with ♠ 3 and then ruffed the third diamond with ♠ A and next cashed two more spades thereby removing the ruffing potential for her three losing hearts! Declarer duly finished two down....**Sinner** status awarded.

Saintly status to **Enda Glynn**, who found the killing defense of switching to ♠ 4 after winning the first diamond. Declarer (**Siobhan O'Sullivan**) did her best (**Saintly** status awarded) by ruffing two losing hearts in dummy, the second one being overruffed by South and leaving North to score the setting trick with ♥ K at the end.

Sinner status to the West who meekly Passed at first opportunity and then let the opponents play in 3♥

Sinner status to the **South** who rose with ♦ A (wasteful in the first place when ♦ 10 would have the same winning status and also misleading to partner who will rightly assume that declarer has ♦ K) when declarer played LOW from dummy on partner's singleton lead against 4♠! **Sinner** status to **declarer** for ruffing the diamond continuation with ♠ 3 and **Additional Sinner** status to declarer for not ruffing her fourth heart with dummy's ♠ 7.

Board 23
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

Saintly status to **John Fahy** who found the killing spade switch after winning the first diamond trick. Partner had actually led a top heart instead of his singleton diamond. Declarer scored one heart ruff in dummy but John was able to overruff the third heart and declarer still had to lose a heart at the end.

Saintly status to **Margaret Forde** who found an identical defense to that outlined above which ensured the defeat of 4♠ by one trick.

Sinner status to the West, declaring 3♠, who ruffed the second diamond with ♠3, which was overruffed by North with ♠6. After a club return to South's ♣A declarer ruffed the third diamond with ♠Q and then fatally drew a round of trumps before playing ♥A followed by another heart, ruffing in dummy. Declarer was able to ruff a third heart which was overruffed by South with ♠J and declarer still had a losing heart in hand. One down. Drawing the round of trumps was fatal. **Sinner** status also to **South** for not playing a trump at first opportunity.

At another table declarer ruffed the second diamond with ♠Q and mistakenly cashed two top trumps and thus ended up with two losing hearts at the end. **Sinner** status awarded to declarer.

Saintly status to **May O'Sullivan** who Doubled South's slightly off-centre (but acceptable nonetheless given the minor suit holdings) 1NT opening. May then bid 2♠ over North's 2♥ and there the contract rested. North led her singleton diamond and South won with ♦10 and continued with ♦J upon which declarer discarded...but unfortunately she discarded the wrong suit by throwing ♣J instead of a losing heart. The club discard is pointless because declarer is still left with a losing club. It would have been different if declarer's club holding was ♣Ax or even ♣xx. A heart discard on the other hand is the disposal of a **definite loser**. Anyway, declarer subsequently scored nine tricks. **Saintly** status to **May** for correctly diagnosing the diamond situation, the only declarer to do so, and availing of the opportunity to discard instead of ruff. **Double Sinner** status to **South** who, if continuing with a diamond should have played ♦A (or ♦K) st trick two, And also for not finding the spade switch upon winning ♦10 although perhaps this is mitigated by the fact that N/S were only defending 2♠.

Board 24
 West Deals
 None Vul

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

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

An interesting hand. West (but not East) can make 3 NT....the lead of a diamond by South (must be ♦ 9, ♦ 8 or ♦ 7) sees N/S score 4 diamonds and 1 spade. With North on lead at trick one the same result cannot be achieved. But it is likely that East will declare 4♥...and that is fool-proof, indeed declarer can score eleven tricks by taking the winning finesse in hearts and the standard finesse in spades, i.e. low to the ♠ Q and then finesse ♠ 10.

Saints & Sinners

Absolute Sinner status to the two declarers (one West and one East) who floored ('failed to make') the heart game.

At one of these two tables, East declared 4♥ on the lead of a diamond. As I repeatedly say in these columns, the most important thing that declarer can do at trick one is to STOP, THINK and FORM A PLAN. This declarer clearly did not do that. In the space of five tricks declarer played a spade to her ♠ Q, took a 'Chinese finesse' in clubs (leading ♣ J without ♣ 10) and subsequently rejected the heart and spade finesses and duly ended up a trick short. And deservedly so! **Double Sinner** status awarded to declarer.

At the second table where 4♥ failed, West declared the contract after a transfer sequence. Again, West rejected the spade and heart finesses and duly lost 2 spades, 1 heart, 1 club.

Double Sinner status awarded.

No sympathy for the E/W partnership that ended up in 3 NT. West opened 1♣ and East responded 1♥ whereupon West re-bid 1♠. East re-bid 2♥ over which West bid 2 NT and now East, presumably concerned that West had only a singleton heart, raised partner to the NT game. West would have been better advised to re-bid 1 NT thus confirming at least two hearts and a balanced hand where re-bidding 1♠ suggested nine cards at least in the black suits. **Additional Sinner** status to West for not making 3 NT after North started with four rounds of diamonds. Unfortunately declarer disposed of his vital ninth trick when he discarded a small heart from dummy instead of a small spade. Declarer duly finished a deserved one down.

Board 24

West Deals
None Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners (continued)

It is more difficult for E/W to reach game where West opens or re-bids 1 NT showing 12-14 hcp. It is the fact that West has no wasted values in diamonds which makes the contract so good. But no East has telepathic resources. Also, remember that some partnerships play '**Optional Responses**' to Transfers, e.g. re-bidding 3♥ instead of 2♥ or bidding 2 NT or bidding a suit rather than simply converting the transfer bid. Each of these '**alternative options**' (**Breaking The Transfer**) can be used to show different things, e.g. and in no particular order: max hand with 4 hearts; max hand with a side suit and 4 hearts; minimum hand with 4 hearts. It's up to each partnership to agree what these bids show. But they can be very useful and make it possible to bid games that might not otherwise be reached! So, in this case, for those that were playing '**Alternative Options**' over East's 2♦ transfer, the lack of such a bid from West would have disinclined East to proceed further.

Sympathy extended to the East who made a Transfer bid of 2♦ over partner's opening 1 NT. Unfortunately partner failed to convert to 2♥...**Sinner** status awarded to West. If this partnership has only recently added 'Transfers' to their bidding system then remember that patience is required and accidents will happen, particularly in the early stages of taking the new convention on board!

At one table West declared 2♥ on the lead of ♦ A. Ruffing in dummy declarer finessed ♥ J into North who won with ♥ Q and returned another heart to declarer's ♥ K. Declarer now ruffed a diamond and drew the last trump reducing dummy to a single trump. Declarer now tried the '*Chinese Finesse*' in clubs losing to North's ♣ Q. North continued with another diamond, declarer ruffing with dummy's last trump. Declarer next played on clubs and then led ♦ J, with three diamonds still outstanding in the opponents hands and no trump in dummy! Fortunately the diamonds were divided 2-2 because otherwise declarer would have scored NO spade trick despite two spade tricks there from the beginning of the hand! Declarer literally escaped with a mere eight tricks when eleven can be made! **Sinner** status awarded to declarer for a poorly considered line of play.