

Board 1

North Deals
None Vul

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

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

North will open 1♣ and if the opportunity presents will rebid 1♠ thus showing a hand with at least nine cards in the black suits!

The big question is what East does over North's 1♣ opening? Some may pass feeling they do not have quite the right shape (support for ALL unbid suits) for a takeout double. Others will double and hope that partner has a four card (or better) major!

IF East does double, and presuming that South passes, the next question is what West should do?

What West should NOT do is bid 1♦. Note that West is now forced to bid (once South passes East's double) and would still bid 1♦ on a hand with no points! So, with values West must indicate this to partner and needs to make a jump bid with 9-12 points. In this instance 2♦ will do the job. This shows a hand with 9-12 pts and at least 4 diamonds. With a stronger hand West could use an **Unassuming Cue-bid** i.e. cue-bid the opponents suit, 2♣ in this case, to indicate that the partnership probably has game-going values and can then explore what the final contract should be. **Saintly** status to **Liam Faherty** who was the only player to make a jump response to partner's takeout double.

So, **Sinner** status to all the Wests who simply bid 1♦ in response to East's takeout double.

Also, neither West nor East should bid NT unless they have at least two **'stoppers'** in opener's suit....and in this instance that is clearly not the case. And yet several E/W partnerships ended up in NT contracts even at the 3 level! So, **Sinner** status to all the players who bid NT without a club stopper. Sinful!

Board 2

East Deals
N-S Vul

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

NS 4♣; NS 2♠; NS 1N; E 1♥; EW 1♦; Par +130: NS 3♣+1

Most East's will open 1 NT (12-14). South may bid 2♥ or some other system bid to show a single major or hearts and a minor. North should persist with his clubs. 5♣ is both lucky (doubleton ♣ Q) and unlucky because West can ruff the third spade.

Saints and Sinners

Saints and **Sinners** at those tables where 5♣ was bid and made or bid and not made! Only two Easts (**newinn2** and **crookhaven**) started with three rounds of spades thus defeating 5♣.

At one table a lucky declarer received a spade lead followed by a heart switch at trick two which enabled declarer to cash two top clubs, dropping East's ♣ Q3 in the process, whereupon declarer fell from grace by failing to draw West's remaining trump which subsequently ruffed one of declarer's winning spades to defeat the contract. **North was a major Sinner.**

But, biggest **Sinner** by far was the North who allowed South to play the hand in 3♦. Declarer performed valiantly against the odds, aided by a less than stellar defense, and managed to escape for only one down...truly a miracle!

Board 3

South Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

As can be seen from the list of makeable contracts above, E/W can make 3 NT although it does require a lucky layout in the club suit. Note also that it takes a heart lead by West to defeat 3♥ by N/S...East cannot play three rounds of hearts except at the expense of a heart trick!

At four tables N/S became declarer in a heart contract. How many of these declarers REALLY studied carefully the hearts that they commanded (N/S hands) and noted those held by the defense? Yes, the only important trumps that you are missing are the ♥ A, K J. So, DON'T lead trumps at any stage and simply cross-ruff the hand. Discard your losing spade on the third diamond and then play on clubs. Fortunately East has to win the first club and cannot profitably attack hearts.

Saints and Sinners

Sinner status to any East who won the first heart with ♥ J and then failed to cash the ♥ A, K which would have stripped N/S of potential ruffs in both hands.

Sinner status also to all declarers who played a trump thus enabling East to play THREE rounds of trumps!

Saintly status bestowed on **May O'Sullivan** and **Enda Glynn** who played the hand as outlined above and specifically did NOT play a trump. They were each rewarded with nine tricks scoring a whopping 12 IMPs for May who played a contract of 3♥x. Enda was rewarded with a haul of 5.4 IMPs for declaring 2♥.

Saintly status also conferred on **Rhona Bolger** who won the first heart with ♥ J and then proceeded to cash ♥ A and ♥ K leading to a two trick defeat of 3♥

Saintly status also to those E/W partnerships who negotiated a NT contract, particularly **Brendan King** and **Kay Scarry** who played in 3 NT reaping 10.10 and 10.50 IMPs respectively.

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

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

EW 4♠; EW 1N; NS 2♦; NS 1♥; EW 1♣; Par -620: EW 4♠

4 ♠ should be reached by E/W. Ten E/W pairs did reach 4 ♠ and all N/S pairs lost 1 IMP on the board. The big winner was the N/S pair where E/W did NOT reach game. This N/S pair was awarded 10 IMPs and their opponents lost 10 IMPs for their failure to bid the game!

The play should not have presented any problem as long as declare remembered to draw the opponents trumps!

Saints and Sinners

Sinner status for the E/W pair who failed to bid 4 ♠

Board 5

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

E 2♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; EW 1♥; W 1♦; Par -90: E 2♦

As the makeable contracts list above shows, E/W can make 1♥, 1♠ and East can make 2♦ while West can only make 1♦. This is not uncommon where a contract can make an extra from one side of the table but not the other. It is usually related to a lead that can be made by one defender but not the other...

If declaring a spade contract there is an interesting play in the trump suit to restrict losers to two tricks....play a small card from hand towards dummy's ♠ J10 ...and then repeat the play at next opportunity. Cashing ♠ A on 1st or 2nd round of the suit will eventually lead to the loss of three trumps!

Saints & Sinners

At ten tables E/W played in a contract at the one level...nine Easts opened 1♠ and played there when it was followed by three passes. One East opened 1♥ (intentional or misclick?) and duly made seven tricks.

At the eleventh table, South took a more positive view of his hand and made a takeout double after East opened 1♠. North bid 1NT and East continued with 2♥. South passed and North came to life again with a bid of 3♣. If East passed she could have achieved a positive score of +100. Instead, East re-bid her four card heart suit and ended up in a contract of 3♥-2 thereby converting a potential gain into a loss of 4.40 IMPs. **Sinner** status conferred.

Saintly status awarded to **Brendan King** and **Carmel Musitano** who found the winning play in the spade suit to limit trump losers to two tricks

And special mention of **Mairead Rabbitt** who swindled South out of their club trick by leading low from hand towards dummy's ♣ Q75 and scoring with the ♣ Q when an unsuspecting South played low!

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

As the above list of makeable contract shows...4♥ should NOT make...and yet it requires almost double-dummy defense to defeat it. In fact it made at THREE tables, each time with an overtrick!!!

Saints and Sinners

Three major **Sinners** to start...the three E/W pairs who let declarer make eleven tricks! Most grievous was the East who lead ♠ 9, which declarer covered (♠ 10875 clearly visible in dummy). and won in hand with ♠ A. Declarer cashed ♥ A and continued with ♥ Q which East won with ♥ K. East now continued with ♠ 2 which gave declarer a free finesse against West's ♠ J63 and thereby eliminated declarer's spade loser! West then compounded the error by subsequently discarding a spade thereby establishing TWO spade winners in dummy for a club discard.

A similar defense by two other E/W pairs led to the same effect and result! Watch for the small cards...they can make a huge difference.

At another table declarer played out all the trumps and West discarded spades so that declarer won the last trick with ♠ 4 while West was left holding the ♦ A! How could this have been avoided...West needs to know how many diamonds partner has which then enables him to calculate how many diamonds declarer has! Discarding the ♦ A is then much easier to do!

At least two declarers received a switch of ♠ 9 from East and failed to cover with dummy's ♠ 10. **Sinner** status awarded.

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1N; NS 2♣; EW 1♥; EW 1♦; Par +100: EW 2N×-1

N/S can make eight tricks in spades and shouldn't make more... but that depends on the opening lead. Declare certainly shouldn't make less than eight tricks! Note that the defense to hold declarer to 8 tricks requires E/W to cash a diamond winner before playing three rounds of hearts. This ensures that the defense will score 1 diamond, 1 club, 2 hearts and a ruff or trump promotion.

Saints and Sinners

Two N/S pairs made TEN tricks in spades and three made nine tricks! **Sinner** status to the E/W pairs who provided less than stellar defense. There's something wrong when declarer scores a trick with a singleton ♦ 10 while the defense holds ♦ A, K, J!!!

Black mark and **Sinner** status to the N/S pair who let declarer make 3 ♦ instead of defeating it by two tricks! **Saintly** status to **Kay Scarry** who took her chance in 2 ♦ and made the required eight tricks.

Saintly status to **Pat & Carmel** who combined effectively to defeat 4 ♠ by FOUR tricks. **Sinner** status to their opponents for being in the lofty heights without a known fit!

Board 9North Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

N/S can make nine tricks in spades. It took me a while to work out how declarer can be held to nine tricks as declarer seems to be able to forge ten tricks on any normal defense! In fact the defense to beat 4♠ is quite unusual and most unnatural. I leave you to see if you can work this out for yourself and will provide the answer at the end of this document.

And of course E/W can make 2NT...but not 3NT. Three E/W pairs found themselves in 3♣, all failing by just a single trick although declarer can be restricted to seven tricks.


Saints and Sinners

A definite **Sinner** status to the West player, defending against 3♠, who upon winning the second spade, and with partner having led a club at trick one, simply had to play the ♠A (removing the last trump in dummy) and then cash two club winners to defeat the contract. Instead, our errant West gave declarer a free club ruff with dummy's remaining trump! Declarer also given **Sinner** status for not ruffing clubs in dummy BEFORE playing on trumps!

Saintly status to **Sean Glynn, Angela Noone, Clare Burke**, all of whom ruffed their closing clubs in dummy before playing trumps.

Sinner status to all declarers who proceeded to play trump BEFORE attempting to ruff their losing clubs with dummy's small trumps.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

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

W 6♣; W 5N; W 5♠; E 4N; E 4♠; E 5♣; W 2♥; EW 2♦; E 1♥;
 Par -1370: W 6♣

Well, I would have been proud to have 'fixed' this hand. West (but not East) can make 6♣ via a Squeeze.. North gets squeezed in spades and hearts. A heart lead by South beats 6♣. But this contract is unlikely to be reached. Most E/W partnerships will settle in 3NT and, depending on who is declarer, can make up to 11 tricks due to the favourable position of ♠KQx in the North hand.

Saints and Sinners

Definite **Sinner** status to the three E/W pairs who only reached a club part-score.

Saintly status to the two Wests who brought in 12 tricks. In one case, North led a small heart giving declarer (**Pat Ward**) a soft trick with ♥J and the twelfth was subsequently created from the spade suit. At the other table North led ♥K which declarer (**Liam Faherty**) ducked and North then made a fatal continuation of a small diamond (switching to ♦J is better). Declarer beat South's ♦Q with his ♦K and then finessed the ♦10. Liam then proceeded to make all of the remaining tricks via a squeeze on North who with three cards remaining had to discard from a holding of ♠KQ and ♥KQ where Liam had ♠x, ♥AJ opposite ♠AJ, ♥x. Poor North felt the squeeze. Well done Liam.

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

♠ Q J 4	♠ K 9 5 2	♠ 10 7									
♥ K 6 4 2	♥ A J 8 7	♥ Q 10 9 5									
♦ 6	♦ Q 9 8 4	♦ K 5 3 2									
♣ A K J 10 5	♣ 6	♣ Q 4 2									
<table style="border: 2px solid green; width: 60px; height: 60px; margin: 0 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 8 6 3										
	♥ 3										
	♦ A J 10 7										
	♣ 9 8 7 3										

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

N/S can make ten tricks in spades or nine in diamonds. E/W, against best defense, can make 1 ♥ or 1 ♣ but in practice may make more. Note that this is one of those situations where declarer makes better use of his trumps by ONLY cashing two top trumps and not playing a third round,. That leaves declarer with two trumps in each hand with which to ruff losing clubs and hearts respectively. It is certainly not productive, in this instance at least, to give the defense two of your losing trumps for one of their master trumps!

Saints and Sinners

At seven tables a heart contact was reached by E/W, ranging from 2 ♥ to 4 ♥ with declarers scoring anything from five to nine tricks!!! Three N/S pairs played in a spade part-score making nine or ten tricks. One E/W pair played in 2 ♣ which made with an overtrick.., partially thanks to a less than stellar defense. North led a small diamond and when declarer played low South played ♦ A!!! Look what happens if South plays ♦ 10 instead...South will win the trick and switch to a small spade, North winning with ♠ K and continuing with ♦ Q. Now declarer is under pressure. If he ruffs then he loses control if he draws trumps. North can win ♥ A and N/S will cash two more diamonds and ♠ A, holding declarer to seven tricks!

At three tables South declared a spade part-score. One declarer made ten tricks; the other two made nine tricks

At the remaining seven tables E/W laboured in a heart contract with only three declarers producing a positive score... The adverse trump break made it very awkward for declarer.

Just one of those hands...

Board 12

West Deals
N-S Vul

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

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

N/S can make 4 ♠, maybe with an overtrick. But it is not easily achieved and the unwary could find themselves in difficulty.

Eight N/S pairs reached 4 ♠, of which five were successful. One pair bid to 3 ♠ and made eleven tricks. Two pairs reached 3 NT, one making eight tricks and the other scoring ten tricks.

First to the bidding. When West opens 2 ♥ (weak) North has a perfect takeout double. At one table South elected to bid 3 NT. At least this meant that the contract was right-sided, i.e. played from the right side of the table. A heart lead from West would be INTO (not through) South's heart holding. As it was, West erred by leading ♥ 9 (4th best?). But this holding calls for the lead of ♥ K. The lead of ♥ 9 gifted South an easy trick with ♥ J. Note that if West does lead ♥ K then South can counter by ducking... West cannot continue the suit without giving South a soft trick. Declarer at this table subsequently made ten tricks by first setting up club tricks and then establishing diamond winners.

Saints & Sinners

Saintly status to **Peggy Fay & Marcella** for right-siding 3 NT and to Peggy for safely steering it home.

Sinner status to the N/S pair at the other table where 3 NT became the final contract, for wrong-siding it and then failing to make the contract!

Sinner status to the three Souths who declared 4 ♠ and received a small club lead from West who had opened the bidding with a weak 2 ♥. So, if it looks like a duck, and squeaks like a duck, then you can bet it is a duck. RISE with ♣ A and draw even just two rounds of trumps and then continue with ♣ Q. Subsequently play on diamonds...and enjoy ten tricks.

Saintly status to the three E/W pairs who made no mistake when declarer played low from dummy on the first club and very quickly had scored a club, two ruffs and ♦ A.

And **partial Saintly** status to **Isabel Burke**, who having committed the error of playing low on the first club lead and then suffered a ruff at trick two was quick-witted enough to ruff the third club with ♠ A. Unfortunately East's ♠ 10 was subsequently promoted as the setting trick for the defense. But a well reasoned play by Isabel and perhaps a tad unlucky that it didn't work.

Board 13
 North Deals
 Both Vul

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

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

4 ♠ by E/W can be made. Declarer can ruff the third heart with a low spade in dummy and then lead a small spade towards West's ♠ AJxxx. **It is absolutely wrong to lead ♠ Q from dummy.** There is NO layout where leading ♠ Q can be right. Indeed it can be fatal, as it is here!

Saints & Sinners

At ten tables declarer played a spade contract. Of these, only three bid the game, of which only one made ten tricks. Normally that would command **Saintly** status but in this instance it is not justified. In many cases the defense started with two top diamonds followed in some cases by ♣ A and a small club. In other cases South switched to ♥ J after the two top diamonds. At the table where 4 ♠ made declarer upon winning the heart switch simply cashed the ♠ A and got lucky when South turned up with a singleton ♠ K. The alternative and recommended line of cashing a second top heart and ruffing a third heart in dummy allows declarer to lead a spade towards his hand, finessing the ♠ J if South plays low is, I believe, a better line as it allows for South having ♠ Kx rather than ♠ K singleton. **Saintly** status to **Liam Faherty** who played accordingly and was the only other declarer to make ten tricks!

Sinner status also to all other Wests who failed to make ten tricks in a spade contract.

Sinner status also to the South player who, without any vocal support from partner, bid diamonds not once, not twice, but three times... on a five card suit!

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

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

E 2♥; NS 1N; NS 2♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♠; W 1♥; Par -100: NS 2N×-1;
 NS 3♣×-1; NS 3♦×-1

The Wild West...and anything goes! As you can see, no contract at the 3 level or higher SHOULD make. And certainly 1 ♠ is the limit in a spade contract. And for N/S ...2 ♣ or 2 ♦ is the limit of makeable contracts. But don't expect any of the above to reflect what actually happens at the eleven tables in play!

Saints & Sinners


Sinner status is awarded to the South player who initially bid 3 ♣ over East's opening 1 ♠ when 2 ♣ would have been sufficient given the poor quality of the suit. South made a second error in not doubling 4 ♥ bid by E/W and then compounded it when misplaying as declarer in 5 ♣x. South got a lucky break when the opponents led a spade. Cashing ♠ A and ♠ K she discarded her two losing diamonds and was now on the way to a very healthy one trick defeat...All declarer needed to do was cash ♥ A and ruff ♥ 8 in dummy and then play a club. The opponents could take three clubs and that would have been all. But declarer tried to cash three top hearts...East ruffed the third round and continued with a spade which declarer ruffed and West overruffed. West now erred big time by not cashing two top trumps which would remove the two trumps in dummy and THEN cash the winning ♥ J. West instead played ♥ J which declarer could have ruffed in dummy but instead discarded a worthless loser. **Sinner** status to West for failing to cash two top trumps before playing ♥ J. South thus had opportunities to get out for one down, then two down, but ultimately suffered a three trick defeat! BUT...in her favour, and **Saintly status awarded**, she was the only declarer in a club contract who saw the necessity to play on hearts BEFORE drawing clubs. She's a budding star of the Irish Junior Bridge scene and we haven't seen the best of her yet!

Sinner status to all other Souths who played on trumps without making an effort to ruff the losing ♥ 8 in dummy BEFORE playing trumps.

And **Sinner** status to the various Wests who failed to cash trumps and ended up conceding a trick to South's ♥ 8.

Black mark and **Sinner** status to the North who passed her partner's takeout double of 2 ♠ by E and then failed to find the defense to beat it. Refrain from ruffing the third heart lead from dummy and North will eventually score four trumps added to South's ♥ AK leading to a one trick defeat.

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

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

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

ALWAYS be aware of the vulnerability before deciding to take a 'Save'. E/W can make a heart game whereas despite a 5-5 fit N/S can only make eight tricks in spades. That's two down. If doubled that means -500 versus -420 if E/W bid to 4♥ Always pay attention to the vulnerability!

Saints & Sinners

Sinner status is definitely awarded to the two E//W partnerships who allowed their opponents to play in 4♠ UNDOUBLED. If they had doubled the contract it would have resulted in a swing of approx. 15 IMPS...in their favour!

Saintly status is awarded to the partnerships of **John Fahy & Liam Faherty** and **Pat Ward & Carmel Musitano**, both of whom DID double their opponents in 4♠ and 5♠ respectively and duly earned 3.30 and 9.40 IMPs.

At the other seven tables E/W played in a heart contract. Unfortunately one pair played in a level too high, 6♥, and duly failed by a trick. Perhaps a little unlucky.

The remaining declarers scored eleven tricks with one exception who scored a trick less.

Board 16

West Deals
E-W Vul

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

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

A simple part-score hand...or maybe it's not so simple! And yes, that list of makeable contracts is correct...N/S can make 1 ♠ although it may take a little time to work out how that can be achieved. 1 spade (K or Q), 2 hearts (double finesse), 2 diamonds...AND a heart ruff in the South hand or two trumps in North hand if East ruffs the fourth hearts with ♠ A!!!

If North becomes declarer in 1 NT and East leads a small spade then declarer needs to guess correctly (playing low from dummy) in order to score two spade tricks. Personally speaking I think I would be rising with the ♠ 10 ...and thus getting it wrong and my sympathies would lie with those declarers who did the same. Anyway, irrespective of whether or not declarer guesses right on the spade situation he/she can still secure seven tricks via a double finesse of the heart suit. And of course this is a 'safety' play in so far as you are finessing into the safe hand, East, who cannot continue spades without giving declarer a second trick in the suit!

Declarers who play on clubs will receive a rude awakening! HOWEVER, they will get a second bite of the cherry on discovering the bad club break in so far as they can then switch to hearts and still make seven tricks.

Also, note that if you misguess and play the ♠ 10 at trick one you can still cause a blockage in the spade suit by winning trick one, playing a diamond to dummy and finessing a heart into East. If East switches to a club and you duck in dummy, West will win and when he places his remaining spade on the table you duck in the North hand. This effectively kills East's spade winners.

Saints & Sinners

This hand was played by North in 1 NT at nine tables...and that's where the similarity ended! Number of tricks made, ranged from as many as nine to as few as five!

Saintly status to **Sean Glynn** who initially played on clubs and then switched to hearts and thus made eight tricks (it would have been seven if West hadn't discarded a heart!). **Sinner** status is definitely awarded to the N/S partnerships who overbid to 3 NT and duly paid the price when this contract failed by two tricks! **Sinner** status also awarded to the East who failed to cash her fifth spade! **Sinner** status to the declarers who, upon discovering the bad club break, **with THREE losers before being able to enjoy the fifth club**, and yet persisted with the suit instead of switching to hearts!

Board 17
 North Deals
 None Vul

♠ A 8 7 5 3 2	♠ K	♠ Q 10 9 6						
♥ 7	♥ J 5 3	♥ K 6 4 2						
♦ 10 9	♦ A J 8 7 3 2	♦ K Q 4						
♣ A J 6 4	♣ K Q 3	♣ 9 2						
<table style="margin: auto; border: 1px solid black; background-color: #008000; 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								
<table style="margin: auto;"> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♠ J 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♥ A Q 10 9 8</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♦ 6 5</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">♣ 10 8 7 5</td> </tr> </table>			♠ J 4	♥ A Q 10 9 8	♦ 6 5	♣ 10 8 7 5		
♠ J 4								
♥ A Q 10 9 8								
♦ 6 5								
♣ 10 8 7 5								

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

Play safe...or play lucky! The spade layout offers a perfect safety play to avoid losing two tricks in the suit! But, those that choose to ignore safety (small spade towards dummy which caters for either defender holding all three missing trumps) actually end up with an undeserved bonus! If I was fixing this hand South would hold ♠ KJ4!!! HOWEVER, in this instance it will be noted that declarer has three unavoidable losers... a heart, a diamond, and a club..UNLESS north cashes D.A and continues with a diamond in which case declarer's losing heart can be discarded on dummy's diamond winners. And note what happens...if declarer continues with a third diamond then South ruffs with ♠ J. If declarer overruffs then North's ♠ K is promoted and declarer still has a losing heart and club...a total of four defensive tricks! But how about this for a bit of magic...declarer discards his losing heart instead of overruffing and subsequently cashes ♠ A and then only loses a club. Contract making. But of course this would fail if South had a singleton spade and North held ♠ Kx!

And, finally, if declarer has to play the trump suit for no loser how should he proceed. In essence there are two options.... Play North for a singleton ♠ J in which case lead ♠ Q from dummy. Alternatively play North (or South) for a singleton ♠ K and drop it by cashing ♠ A. Usually it's a case of tossing a coin, mentally of course! Of particular interest is whether South bid (suggesting 5+ pts) and if the play has already indicated that South has ♥ AQ. If that is the case then there is a greater likelihood that North holds S.K in which case cashing ♠ A on first play of spade suit is more likely the better option

Also, note the vulnerability...not the time for N/S to sacrifice in 5♦

Saints & Sinners

Absolute Sinner status to the two N/S pairs who ended up in 5♦x, both going FOUR down but should have restricted the loss to minus two! -800 was a hefty price to pay which converted into a loss of -10.80 IMPs. Deserved!

Six E/W pairs claimed a spade contract of which only two bid the game. One declarer made the requisite ten tricks and one fell a trick short. In the latter case South had already shown up with ♥ AQ and perhaps declarer should have cashed ♠ A instead of leading ♠ Q from dummy...

Board 18
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

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

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

Yes, E/W can make 6♥ or 6♦ but the more likely contract will be 3NT where eleven tricks can be made against any defense. Essentially declarer sets up the diamond suit in the East hand and then gains access to the winners via ♣ J (or 10) or ♠ J by leading low from the West hand.

Saints & Sinners

Sinner status to the West declarer in 3NT who received a favourable heart lead, beating South's ♥ K with her Ace and then inexplicably cashed ♥ Q BEFORE playing on diamonds. But despite this start all was still well when South continued with a small spade after winning with ♦ K....All declarer needed to do was play low from hand and eventually dummy's ♠ J would become an entry to the winning diamonds. BUT declarer rose with ♠ K and now the singleton ♠ J no longer provided an entry to dummy. BUT, declarer could still have made the contract by the simple play of leading a small club from hand towards dummy's ♣ J10. BUT the door finally slammed shut when declarer cashed ♣ A and then played a spade towards dummy's singleton ♠ J. North rose with ♠ Q and then made a mistake of switching to ♣ 9 instead of a small club. This promoted declarer's ♣ 8 to winner status but still left declarer with only eight winners and a one trick defeat where eleven tricks were there for the taking!

And **Sinner** status to the SIX West declarers in 3NT who received a spade lead, rose with dummy's ♠ J and upon winning the trick then made the only play to put the contract in jeopardy by leading ♣ J. Not seeing the wood from the trees!

Sinner status also to the Souths who either covered the first club lead from dummy OR who correctly ducked the first club but then failed to cover the second round thus handing declarer FOUR club tricks!

Saintly status to **Margaret Ford, Fiona Place, Pat Ward**, all of whom won the opening lead and then played on diamonds before gaining entry to dummy by playing a small club towards dummy's ♣ J10. Bridge can be such a simple game... :-)

Board 19
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

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

NS 4♠; NS 5♣; NS 4♦; NS 2N; NS 2♥; Par +420: NS 4♠

Note...the only makeable game is 4 ♠ by N/S. This type of contract, a 4-3 trump fit, is not uncommon but seldom a contract of choice by less experienced partnerships. Expect 3 NT to be the contract of choice. A SMALL heart lead from either defender should see the contract fail by at least one trick. On any other lead the contract can make.

Saints & Sinners

At all eleven tables the final contract was 3 NT, with South as declarer. Tricks made varied with five declarers failing by one trick where others scored nine, eleven or twelve tricks.

Sinners abounded. Firstly to the two Wests who led ♥ Q thus presenting declarer with two heart tricks...and the contract. **Sinner** status also awarded to the East player who at trick one played ♥ 9 which presented declarer with two heart tricks... and the contract.

At another table, E/W got off to the perfect start. A heart to East's Ace followed by a small heart to South's ♥ J and West's ♥ Q and a third heart to South's ♥ K. East now has two heart winners...and partner has a fourth heart to put East on lead... BUT East made a big mistake in discarding a diamond on the fourth spade, Declarer was now able to cash three diamond by finessing the second round against West's ♦ J7 East could have safely discarded the ♣ 5, thereby ensuring that declarer could not cash three diamonds.

And **Double Sinner** status to the East player who not only discarded a heart on the fourth spade but then played low when North lead ♣ 10...thus handing declarer his ninth trick...and the contract!

And another **Double Sinner** award to East and South at the same table!...Firstly to the East player who discarded a heart, instead of ♣ 5, on the fourth spade and then failed to cover ♣ 10 but was forgiven by declarer who failed to grasp the gift presented to her and rose with ♣ A from hand when letting ♣ 10 run would have given her a ninth trick and the contract.

Saintly status is awarded to the only two E/W partnerships who were faultless in their defensive plays...**Fiona Place & Brendan King** and **Robert & Ita** who gave the respective declarers no chance!

Board 20

West Deals
Both Vul

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

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

N/S can make 5♠, 5♦, 5♣ with 4♠ being the most likely contract. A favourable diamond layout, and a successful guess in the two-way club finesse layout should help to counter the poor trump break and likely heart attack.

Saints & Sinners

Is this the only board where all eleven N/S declarers made their contract? Three N/S partnerships reached 4♠ all making eleven tricks. At all other tables 3NT, played by North, was reached and declarers made between nine and twelve tricks. Yes, the double-dummy lead of the♥K scuppers 3NT outright but most East's are unlikely to find that lead. The choice is between♥10 (standard interior sequence lead, e.g. A109, K109, Q109, or 4th (3rd/5th for some) best. At all tables East lead a heart.

First **Sinner** is the West who found themselves under pressure when declarer won the heart lead with♥Q and then cashed four diamonds on which West discarded two hearts...a black suit discard would have likely picked up that suit for declarer. But when declarer then led a club from dummy West jumped in with the♣A and then switched to a small spade instead of returning♥J. Declarer duly scored TWELVE tricks. If West played low declarer may have played♣K and now West will come to two club tricks.

Sinner status also awarded to the West who won the second club after declarer mis-guessed by playing a club to the♣K and then returned one to her♣Q. West now erred by cashing her second club BEFORE continuing the heart attack. This established declarer's fourth club as a winner and was the last trick the defenders scored, declarer ending up with eleven tricks.

Sinner status to the declarer who having setup her fifth spade as a winner failed to cash♦109 to claim ten tricks and duly ended up with only nine!

An interesting observation in respect of all West players, in so far as I can discern, NOT ONE OF THEM gave a signal to partner on the opening lead to indicate either **encouragement** or count in respect of the heart suit! **Sinners** all.

Board 21

North Deals
N-S Vul

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

NS 4♥; NS 3N; NS 3♠; NS 4♦; Par +620; NS 4♥

Either 4♥ or 3NT will be the likely contracts. 3NT will make on the lucky location of the ♠ K. 4♥ is reasonably safe but doesn't offer much chance of an eleventh trick and is somewhat complicated by the poor trump break. Declarer should still bring home the bacon by ruffing the third club in the south hand BEFORE drawing trumps OR by ruffing the fourth spade in the North hand with ♥ 9... Will some declarers fail to do that? Also, declarers in a heart contract should be careful to cash two top hearts in the North hand whilst retaining ♥ Ax in the South hand. In this way East cannot secure a club ruff because South can overruff with ♥ A. Declarers who cash ♥ A on first or second round of trumps may run into problems and East may score a trump trick via a club ruff or trump promotion if West can play a third round of the clubs.

Saints & Sinners

Seven N/S pairs reached a heart contract of which only FOUR bid game. Of those four, three made their contract. One declarer failed to ruff third club in the South hand BEFORE playing trumps. **Sinner** status awarded.

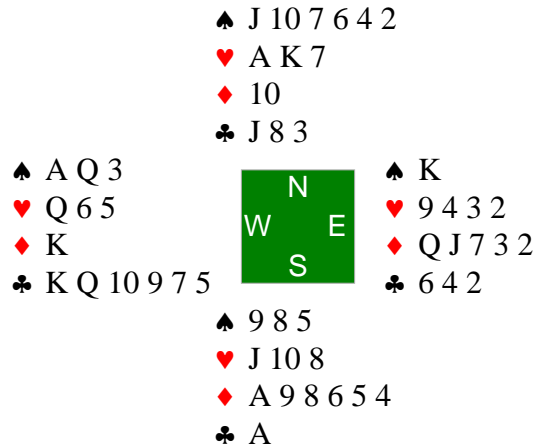
One **Sinning** East player failed to cover the ♠ J when lead from dummy and then played his ♠ K on dummy's ♠ 3 on the second round thereby gifting declarer an extra spade trick to which he was not entitled.

One East committed a major error by failing to ruff the third club with ♥ 10 which would have been the setting trick and instead discarded a spade while declarer was able to ruff in dummy with ♥ 5 which East could clearly see!!! **Major Sinner** status awarded.

Sinner status also awarded to the East player, who having ruffed the third club gave declarer a free spade finesse (declarer having already finessed the suit twice and with no way of finessing the third round himself) instead of returning his last trump which would have restricted declarer to nine tricks.

Two N/S pairs elected to defend a club contract by West and scored a miserable +100 for their efforts. Better bidding might have seen these N/S pairs reach 4♥

Board 9
 North Deals
 E-W Vul



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

So, this is Board#9 where N/S can make nine tricks in spades. As I said previously, it took me a while to work out how declarer can be held to nine tricks as declarer seems to be able to forge ten tricks on any normal defense via 3 trumps, 3 hearts, 1 diamond, ♣ A and 2 club ruffs in dummy!

In fact the defense to beat 4♠ is quite unusual and most unnatural. I left you to see if you could work this out for yourself and top marks to those that did.

Hereunder is the solution...

The solution is quite strange. East must lead ♠ K and West must overtake with ♠ A and then cash ♠ Q and continue with a third spade!!! Yes. E/W have now reduced their three trump winners to two...BUT look what comes back to them...two club tricks which together with the aforementioned two trump winners amounts to four tricks for the defense. And that's the only defense to beat 4♠. Strange but successful!

And if east does lead ♠ K how would West know to overtake and play two more rounds. Good question, and in some cases West might not know. BUT, at those tables where North has opened with a weak 2♠ (or Multi 2♦ subsequently known to be a weak 2♠) then West does know. Six spades with North, three in dummy and looking at three in our hand means that East can only have one...

Counting, counting...all the time...the key to success at the bridge table.