

Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

2020-05-28

♠ A J 10 9 3 2

♥ 4 3

♦ Q J

♣ A J 5

♠ K Q 8

♥ Q 10 7 2

♦ K 2

♣ K 8 3 2



♠ —

♥ K 9 8 6

♦ 10 8 4 3

♣ Q 10 7 6 4

♠ 7 6 5 4

♥ A J 5

♦ A 9 7 6 5

♣ 9

No...I didn't fix this hand. It was one of those that was 'randomly' dealt!

N/S should reach 4 ♠. Note South's four card support, singleton club and two aces.

The simplest line for declarer is probably to ruff his two losing clubs in dummy. And note that declarer will have to play 'safely' with the trump suit.

On a club lead declarer can win with ♣ A, ruff a club and lead a spade. If West follows with the only low trump outstanding (♠ 8) then declarer can safely finesse. If East wins with ♠ K or ♠ Q then no damage can be done. Declarer can subsequently ruff his remaining losing club in dummy and then take a diamond finesse after drawing the remaining trump(s).

What about a diamond lead by East? Declarer may duck in dummy losing to West's ♦ K who may continue the suit which declarer will win in hand. Declarer can now ruff a club in dummy and lead a small spade. Again, if West follows with ♠ 8 declarer can 'safely' cover. If East wins with ♠ K or ♠ Q no return can hurt declarer. A diamond return might see West ruff with the remaining spade honour but declarer can overruff.

And a heart lead fares no better for the defense other than guaranteeing a heart trick for the defense.


E/W might save a few IMPs if they find a sacrifice in 5 ♣ which could gather 9 tricks but requires good views in the play of trumps and the heart suit!

Saints and Sinners

Just two **Saints** on this hand...**May O'Sullivan** and **John Fahy**, both of whom made the **Safety Play** of simply covering West's ♠ 8 when a trump was led from dummy. Lots of **Sinners** who cashed the ♠ A from hand early in the play. And one **sinning West** who switched to ♠ K upon winning ♦ K thus solving the potential trump issue for a grateful declarer. To reiterate what I said above...the Safety Play does not cost but failing to play safely should!.

Board 2
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

2020-05-28

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

E/W should reach no higher than 1 NT. South will likely lead ♠ Q. Declarer will survey his combined assets and quickly realise that he has six top tricks with finesse options in hearts and clubs for a seventh trick. Declarers who try either or both of those finesses should end up with what they started, i.e. six tricks! Rather, declarer should set about developing a winning diamond. Note that once you force out the ♦ AKQ you will have established a diamond winner for your side. Win the spade lead in hand and lead ♦ J. Regain the lead and play a second round of diamonds. Opponents will cash their two spade winners and should then play a club through dummy's ♣ KJ. Win in hand with ♣ A and play a third diamond, establishing dummy's fourth diamond as a winner. Win any return and cash your winning diamond and you have now secured your seventh trick and the contract.


Note that if you attempt to finesse either ♣ J or ♥ J you should now lose seven tricks...2 spade, 3 diamonds and at least two other tricks. 'Tempo' is crucial...and by playing on diamonds at trick two you will be ahead of the posse! Even ducking the first spade might not matter as long as you play on diamonds at first opportunity...and continue the suit at subsequent opportunities.

Saints and Sinners

Only one **Saint** on this hand...**Margaret Ford** was the ONLY declarer to play on diamonds upon winning the lead. All other declarers, **Sinners all**, took an immediate finesse of ♣ J or ♥ J . And there was one major **Sinning North** who proceeded to cash his diamond winners thereby establishing declarer's vital seventh trick instead of establishing winners for N/S which would have led to the defeat of the contract! And one E/W overbid and lost 3.86 IMPs in the process. The two successful declarers won +3.71 and 4.86 IMPs respectively.

Board 3
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

2020-05-28

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>♠ K 7 ♥ A Q 10 9 6 5 ♦ 4 3 ♣ Q J 10</p> |  | <p>♠ Q 10 8 6 4 ♥ 7 4 ♦ J 9 8 ♣ K 4 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">♠ A J 9 5 2 ♥ K J ♦ K 7 6 ♣ 6 5 3</p> |
|---|---|--|

Sometimes we need to exercise caution when evaluating a potential 5-5 major suit fit. If South opens 1 ♠ (5+) North could become overly excited at the prospect of the 5-5 trump fit and may bid too high. Assuming that West overcalls 2 ♥ many North's will make a pre-emptive raise to 3 ♠. East will surely bid 4 ♥ and that will probably pass back to North...

North should check the vulnerability before making his next bid...in fact all players should be aware of the vulnerability before any bids are made!

In this instance both sides are non-vulnerable. North might think that with the known 5-5 spade fit that there is a 'Save' available against the 4 ♥ contract freely bid by E/W. North should exercise caution. Look at the vulnerability and do the appropriate calculation in your head. E/W will score circa 420 for making 4 ♥. In order for a sacrifice by N/S to be viable they will need to ensure that their contract does not fail by more than 3 tricks (-500 assuming the final contract is doubled).

But 4 (or more!) down (doubled) would be an absolute disaster for N/S (-800) and a potential loss of -1100 or more could also be on the cards (excuse the pun!).

North is best advised to forget the 'Save' on this occasion. In fact, on best defense, E/W can take EIGHT tricks leaving N/S incurring a whopping penalty of - 1100.

Saints and Sinners

One pair of **Saints... Fiona Place and Brendan King** who not only doubled their opponents in 4 ♠ but made it count by registering a penalty of -800 on the N/S pair which exceeded the 680 they would have scored for making 4 ♥+2. **On the way to full Sainly status** were **Rhona Bolger & Margaret Ford**, the only other E/W pair to double 4 ♠. Unfortunately they let a couple of tricks escape in the defense and only scored +500 for their efforts which was worth +2 IMPs.


The highest E/W scored COULD have accrued to **Peggy Cheevers & Angela Noone** who scored the maximum number of tricks (five) but only scored +250 because they did NOT double the final contract. But no slip-up in the defense!

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

2020-05-28

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

An interesting bidding problem...If West opens 1 NT (12-14) what will East do? It might be tempting to bid 3 ♦ or to make a transfer (to diamonds) via 2 NT or whatever gadget you have in your system armoury. Note...3 ♦ should make but declarer will be short a trick(s) in a higher diamond contract. 5 ♦ has no chance.

It gets really interesting if West ends up in 3 NT. A heart lead (and continuation if top heart led) will see declarer win in hand and lead ♦ 9 and let it run to South. And the crux of the defense lies in what South does. If South wins with ♦ Q then 3 NT will romp home. South may return a heart (or spade) but eventually declarer will regain the lead and play a second diamond and with ♣ A still in dummy to access the winning diamonds declarer will saunter across the finish line ahead of the defense.

So, have the defense any recourse...Yes, South can kill dummy's diamond suit by ducking the first diamond! The crucial information was provided when North followed to the first round of diamonds thereby confirming that declarer started with only two diamond in his hand. If South ducks the first round then declarer has insufficient entries to play a third round **and to subsequently access the winning diamonds.**

A spade lead should always lead to defeat of 3 NT...the defense can score two spades, two hearts and two diamonds.

Saints and Sinners

Only one **Saint** here....**Enda Glynn**, who was the only South to duck the first diamond. The subsequent defense, with partner **Sean Glynn**, saw the contract of 1 NT fail by one trick. Perfect carding by the two defenders. All other Souths, **Sinners all**, won the first diamond and thus paved the way for declarer to make the NT contract.

And one South earns **double Sinner** status for cashing the second diamond honour, thereby establishing FIVE winners in dummy with ♣ A still available as an entry.

And a declarer, who received the softer heart lead, easily established diamond winners in dummy and then took a totally unnecessary finesse of ♣ J (with ♣ A still in dummy and ♣ K in hand) and failed by a trick! As the British actor, James Domald, utters at the end of the hugely successful anti-war movie, 'The Bridge On the River Kwai'. as the bridge is blown up...'Madness, utter madness'!

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

2020-05-28

♠ A 10 8 7 6 5 2

♥ 3

♦ A Q 2

♣ K J

♠ K J 9 4

♥ A 9 7 5

♦ J 3

♣ 7 4 2



♠ —

♥ K Q J 10

♦ 10 8 6 5 4

♣ Q 10 9 8

♠ Q 3

♥ 8 6 4 2

♦ K 9 7

♣ A 6 5 3

North should bag the contract in 4 ♠ against which East will likely lead the ♥ K. North will ruff the second round of hearts and then comes the crux of the hand.

Any players who participated in last week's Thursday game should recognise the potential banana skin....Declarer has already lost one trick and can afford to lose two trumps BUT NOT three!

A simple safety play of leading a small trump towards dummy's ♠ Q3 ensures protection against either defender holding all four outstanding trumps. It quickly becomes apparent that West holds S.KJ94. If the Q loses to West's S.K then declarer subsequently gains access to dummy and leads towards the S.A10xxx in his hand and simply covers whatever spade West plays.

An interesting situation develops if declarer fails to find the safety play in spades and instead cashes the ♠ A on the first play of the trump suit... Whatever declarer subsequently does, West must be very careful NOT to ruff in with h♠ 9 on any card led from dummy because declarer may be able to overruff with ♠ 10 and West's setting trick goes out the window. So, if West sits back what will happen? Quite simple...at some stage declarer will have to ruff in hand (too many trumps) and lead a trump into West's KJ9 thus giving the defense three trump tricks in addition to the heart winner. And if declarer leads the remaining spade from dummy then West should play the ♠ K (or ♠ J) and exit on any suit except trumps!

Saints and Sinners

A single **Saint** on this hand...**Sean Glynn** who not only made the **Safety Play** of a small spade towards dummy's ♠ Qx BUT also made the essential follow-up play of leading the second spade from dummy towards his hand and thus restricting West to two spade winners.

Partial **Saintly** status to **John Fahy** who correctly played a low spade towards dummy's ♠ Qx but then failed to lead the second spade from dummy and ended up losing three spade tricks.

Several **Sinning** declarers found an **unsafe play** of leading the ♠ Q which works on the actual layout but would have failed if the West and East spade holdings were switched. **The only safe play to guard against either defender holding all four outstanding trumps is low towards dummy's ♠ Q.** The objective is to restrict our spade losers to two tricks!

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

2020-05-28

♠ K Q 10 8 7

♥ 4 3 2

♦ K Q J

♣ A K

♠ 6 3

♥ Q 10 6

♦ 7 6 3

♣ 9 7 6 5 4



♠ 2

♥ A K J 9 8 7

♦ 10 9 4

♣ J 10 8

♠ A J 9 5 4

♥ 5

♦ A 8 5 2

♣ Q 3 2

Knowledge about '**Controls**' is vital when bidding Slams. Controls are not just Aces and Kings. Voids and singletons are also important controls. Do you and partner have the means of showing voids / singletons? If not at present then you should explore this aspect of bidding for the on-going development of your bidding system.

This is a hand in point. Suppose North opens 1 ♠ and East overcalls 2 ♥, how should South proceed?

Many less experienced players will simply raise partner to game with a bid of 4 ♠. North might now be keen to proceed but will be wary of the possibility of two heart losers. Using 4 NT does not solve the problem because once it is known that an Ace is missing North will still be concerned that the defense can cash the first two (or three) tricks and defeat a contract of 6 ♠.

Enter the '**Splinter**' which is a bid of the opponents suit, usually involving a jump, that signals 4+ card support for opener's suit and a singleton or void in the opponents suit together with values for game and even a potential slam if opener has a suitable hand.

In this instance that is conveyed very simply (and effectively) by South bidding 4 ♥ over East's 2 ♥ overcall. That is like music to North's ears because now he is no longer worried about losing two heart tricks. A quick check for Aces via 4 NT and a confident 6 ♠ bid by North results in an excellent contract that will make comfortably. Indeed if South showed 3 Aces (including ♥ A) then North could confidently bid 7 ♠!

There's a lot more to Splinters but this should give you a taste of what it can offer. Further study and reading required! And if playing Splinters then a direct raise to game is now used to show good trump support but a weak hand with distributional values.

Saints and Sinners

Only one **Sinner** here...**me!** I forgot to set the hand so that North was dealer! As you can see I should have rotated all hands through one position so that East would be opening 1 ♠...and now my analysis above makes more sense! Apologies. Not easy to reach 6 ♠ on the actual hand as played at each table. Note that the key to the slam is the singleton heart in the South hand. North has a big hand but will always be concerned at the possibility of losing two heart tricks. Three N/S pairs bid the slam and one N/S pair failed to bid game! A couple of Easts failed to open with a Weak 2 ♥!

Board 7
 South Deals
 Both Vul

2020-05-28

♠ K 3 2
 ♥ A Q J 6 4
 ♦ A K
 ♣ K J 5

♠ J 10 7 6
 ♥ 8 7
 ♦ 8 7 2
 ♣ A 10 9 8



♠ A Q 9 8
 ♥ 5 3 2
 ♦ Q J 10 9
 ♣ 3 2

♠ 5 4
 ♥ K 10 9
 ♦ 6 5 4 3
 ♣ Q 7 6 4

N/S should reach 4 ♥. East will likely lead ♦ Q.

Declarer should quickly conclude that he can count (barring major bad breaks in side suits) nine tricks via five hearts and four minor suits winners. Yes, a tenth could come from a favourable break in clubs...but not likely on hands from this author! And of course there is always the ♠ K which will bag a trick if the Ace is favourably placed with West.

So, how to proceed? Perhaps we should draw trumps and then play a spade towards our hand hoping to score the ♠ K? Unfortunately that line does not work in this case and the contract fails.

Okay, we won't draw trumps...just play a heart to dummy and then lead a spade towards our ♠ K and if it loses we might still be able to negotiate a ruff of the third spade in dummy! Are you dreaming? After East wins with ♠ A he will play a second trump ...and then he will play a third trump when he regains the lead on the second spade leaving no trumps left in dummy to ruff your third spade... :-)

Sometimes it's difficult to see the wood from the trees! Simple solution ...win the opening diamond lead and play a small spade from hand at trick two! Regain the lead and play a second spade. Even if the defenders switch to a trump after winning the first spade you are now a TEMPO ahead of the defense and can safely ruff your losing spade in dummy and then draw trumps and play on clubs for your contract! And if East starts the defense with a trump (and subsequently continues with more trump leads) he will be awarded **Saintly** status (see below). Just say well done to him/her at the end of the hand. And of course the solution would have been much more obvious if North held three small spade rather than ♠ Kxx. Wood and trees!

Saints and Sinners

Another Sinner status for me! I forgot to reduce North's point count so that he would be opening at the one level (1 ♥) and that a likely 4 ♥ contract would ensue. Not surprisingly 3 NT was the contract at five tables. A 4 ♥ contract was reached at one of the the other three tables and went down when declarer failed to negotiate a spade ruff in dummy. At another table the contract was 1 ♥ which scored only nine tricks when declare failed to get a spade ruff in dummy. At the third table, where 4 ♥ was reached, declarer got the super-friendly opening lead of ♠ A and duly scored eleven tricks. And of course 3 NT can be defeated if West, upon winning with ♣ A switches to ♠ J...but not easy to find that defense!

Board 8
West Deals
None Vul

2020-05-28

♠ 7 4
♥ 10 3
♦ 9 6 5 4 3
♣ 10 8 7 5

♠ 6 5 3
♥ 4 2
♦ A K Q J
♣ A K Q J



♠ 10 8
♥ K Q 9 8 7 6 5
♦ 10 2
♣ 4 3

♠ A K Q J 9 2
♥ A J
♦ 8 7
♣ 9 6 2

East will probably become declarer in 4♥. South may face a decision as to whether or not he should sacrifice in 4♠ but the absence of a favourable vulnerability (Non-Vul versus Vul) should dissuade him from taking that route.

And so to the defense. South will kick off with three rounds of spade, declarer ruffing the third round in hand. Declarer may enter dummy with a club or diamond and lead a heart towards his hand as North follows with the ♥ 3 while declarer plays ♥ Q (or ♥ K) from hand.

Over to you?

This should be relatively simple. You win with ♥ A and consider your next move. Obviously declarer has no losers in the minors, nor indeed in spades. So, how can we defeat this contract?

It's time to put on your thinking cap...I mean real thinking and not the casual thoughts that might drift through your head at times like this. And if you do then you should come up with the relatively simple and only plausible solution. You should place the ♠ 2 on the table and keep your fingers crossed that your partner has the only card that can see this contract defeated ...♥ 10.

If partner has this card, and if you can encourage him to play it on this trick, it will cause declarer to win the trick with his remaining heart honour thereby promoting your ♥ J to a winner!

This play is known as an '**Uppercut**' and brings about a promotion of South's ♥ J

Saints and Sinners

Four clear **Saints** here...**MB Drury & newinn2**, and **Enda Glynn & Sean Glynn**, both partnerships finding the right sequence of plays to promote South's ♥ J to defeat the contract. Most other defenders cashed two top spades and then aimlessly switched to a diamond through dummy's ♦ AKQJ....!!!

One partnership were on their way to full **Saintly** status until one North ruffed the fourth spade with ♥ 3 instead of the ♥ 10....An oft used expression at bridge aptly sums this up...'**never send a boy on a man's errand**'! Unless it is absolutely obvious, always ruff with your **highest trump**, particularly when performing an '**Uppercut**'.

Board 10
 East Deals
 Both Vul

2020-05-28

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

Another cracker from the **Play Bridge Hand Generator**...also dealt via the Goulash option!

At first glance it looks like E/W can make 7 ♠ via eight spade tricks and five diamonds. **HOWEVER**, look what happens if South leads ♣ A...now declarer has to ruff in dummy with ♠ J which subsequently promotes a trump trick for North via his holding of ♠ 10953! Cruel!

And of course if South leads ♥ A then 7 ♠ romps home. I suspect that there may be some sorry Souths after this hand is played!

A diamond contract by E/W looks easy but depends on the level. 5 ♦ could prove difficult, if not impossible, on a heart lead causing declarer to ruff in dummy thereby reducing dummy's trumps to a doubleton ♦ Q10!!!

Also of interest is the fact that South can make 6 ♣. So, 7 ♣ is a good sacrifice against 6 ♠.

And of course another bout of Wild West bidding is likely to ensue!

Saints and Sinners

So...no pair bid a slam, neither N/S or E/W. Five E/W pairs played in 4 ♠/5 ♠ making 11 or 13 tricks. One E/W pair were lucky to be doubled in 5 ♠ scoring 850 and earning 8.86 IMPs. Two E/W pairs ended up in 5 ♦ and found the going tough despite receiving a club lead. Now the contract can make by simply trying to cash ♠ J at trick twp. South can ruff and switch to a heart but declarer can now cash two trumps, **ENDING** in dummy, and then reel off dummy's spades! An initial heart lead will cause the contract to fail. **Sinner** status awarded to the two declarers who failed to bring in 5 ♦ on a club lead.

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

2020-05-28

♠ A J 9 6 5 4

♥ —

♦ J 4 3 2

♣ K 8 5

♠ 10 8

♥ K Q 10 8 7 5 4

♦ 8 5

♣ A 6



♠ Q

♥ A J 9 3

♦ K Q 10 9 7

♣ J 10 3

♠ K 7 3 2

♥ 6 2

♦ A 6

♣ Q 9 7 4 2

4 ♠ by N/S and 4 ♥ by E/W are both makeable contracts...the question is whether both are biddable. Certainly E/W should get to 4 ♥. Will N/S get into the action?

E/W can be held to ten tricks if N/S get a club trick established BEFORE declarer can setup dummy's diamonds for a club discard.

N/S can make 4 ♠ if declarer takes the right view in the play of the club suit....small towards North's ♣ Kxx and then duck the second round bringing down West's ♣ Ax... OR by ruffing two losing diamonds in dummy after drawing two rounds of trumps.

An interesting bidding duel may transpire at some tables...

Saints and Sinners

Two N/S pairs played in 4S, one making eleven with a little assistance from an East who switched to ♣ J whilst looking at ♣ Q9xx sitting over her in dummy! Not a success!!! **Sinner** status awarded. The other declarer started out on the simple line of attempting to ruff two losing diamonds in dummy...BUT failed to draw any trumps and was overruffed by West and eventually finished with only nine tricks! **Sinner** status awarded. Drawing two rounds of trumps enables North to safely ruff his two losing diamonds in dummy without fear of being overruffed!

At all other tables the contract was played in hearts...all declarers making ten tricks. Unfortunately at four tables the contract was 5 ♥, all failing by one trick. At these tables the defense either started with a small club or switched to a small club after the ♠ A was cashed...no comeback for declarer on this defense. At another table declarer made ten tricks but was only in 3 ♥. **Sinner** status bestowed on the East who passed partner's opening 3 ♥. And the big winner was the declarer who played in 4 ♥, making exactly ten tricks and amassing 9.71 IMPs..

Board 12
West Deals
N-S Vul

2020-05-28

♠ 10 9 8 5 3

♥ K

♦ 10 6 5 2

♣ A 8 5

♠ A K 6 4

♥ Q 8 7 6 5

♦ 8

♣ Q 3 2



♠ J

♥ A J 10 2

♦ A Q J 9 4

♣ J 7 6

♠ Q 7 2

♥ 9 4 3

♦ K 7 3

♣ K 10 9 4

What determines whether or not YOU will open the bidding at the one level? Many still use the old rule of 12+ high-card points as a minimum requirement for opening at the one level. But for some, if the length of your two longest suits when added to your high-card points totals 20 then you can open with a one level bid.

Here, West has 5 hearts, 4 spades and 11 high card points, i.e. the hand meets the Rule of 20 and so it can be opened with a bid of 1 ♥. But just because you can doesn't mean you should!

And there is also the useful **Flannery** convention where some partnerships use an opening bid of 2 ♦ (or 2 ♥) to show a hand with 4 ♠/5 ♥ and 11-15 hcp, which could also be used in this instance.

But, if West opens 1 ♥ then East could use a **Splinter** bid of 3 ♠ to show his singleton spade, 4+ card heart support, and a hand of game-going values with an interest in a slam if West has a suitable hand. In this instance West would reject the invitation and simply bid 4 ♥.

Interesting aspect re the play...If North leads a spade declarer can win and lead a heart and will be mightily pleased when North's ♥ K pops up.

Now, the safe line is to draw trumps and then cash ♦ A and continue with ♦ Q, intending to discard a loser (spade or club) from hand. Note that even if the ♦ Q loses to North's ♦ K the defense are helpless and can only cash two top clubs. 4 ♥ made.

Saints and Sinners

One board...and the exact same contract at all eight tables...4 ♥. But that's where the uniformity ends...4 declarers made ten tricks, 2 made nine, and 2 made eleven. Both declarers who failed to make ten tricks seem to have mislicked and given the defense a trick they would not have otherwise made...these things happen. But remember, **UNDO** is active and if you have mislicked then you can request an UNDO from your opponents and if granted you will be able to replay your card to that trick.

The two declarers who made eleven tricks did so by executing a dummy-reversal and scored 2 spades, 4 trumps, 5 diamonds. **Saintly** status for **play2day** and **Maura Connolly** for securing the bonus trick although in one case South could have ruffed in and the defense could also have scored two club tricks to restrict declarer to ten tricks.

Board 13
North Deals
Both Vul

2020-05-28

♠ 9 5
♥ A Q J 8 5 3
♦ 8 4 2
♣ A 6

♠ Q J 7 4
♥ K 10 9
♦ A J 3
♣ J 10 2



♠ K 8 6 3
♥ 4
♦ Q 10 6
♣ K Q 9 8 7

♠ A 10 2
♥ 7 6 2
♦ K 9 7 5
♣ 5 4 3

An innocuous little hand? North will open 1 ♥ (too strong for a Weak 2). If East passes then South will bid 2 ♥. West might also pass as will North and then the bidding reverts to East again. Now, in the knowledge that the opponents seem to be happy to settle for a part-score, East has a very appropriate **Take-out Double**. Some West's may get excited and it becomes a case of what level of spade contract E/W will reach. Or East may simply overcall in clubs.

A lot will depend on whether East or West becomes declarer. And of course 4 ♠ can always be defeated on a club lead (or switch after winning the first heart) and continuation with North scoring a club ruff AS LONG AS SOUTH WINS THE FIRST SPADE TRICK.

A bidding duel with options for declarer in the play, be it N/S or E/W that buys the contract. Likely scores might include 2 ♥-1 by North or E/W making eight or nine tricks in spades or clubs.

Saints and Sinners

Various contracts reached at the eight tables in play. Six Norths played in a heart part-score, i.e. 2 ♥ or 3 ♥. ALL should have failed by one or two tricks but three declarers in 2 ♥ were allowed to make the contract and one of the declarers in 3 ♥ got away with a one trick defeat, again due to mis-defense. So, **Sinner** status bestowed all the the E/W partnerships!

At only two tables were declarers in a heart contract restricted to the seven tricks to which they were entitled, i.e. five hearts and two black aces. Well done to both E/W partnerships who are duly awarded **Saintly** status... **Robert Delargy & Sheila Baynes** and **Rhona Bolger & Margaret Ford**. No soft tricks gifted to declarer by either partnership.

Saintly status also bestowed on E/W pair **Kathleen & Teresa** who bagged a contract of 3 ♣ and made ten tricks.

A partner with whom I have played regularly over the past 25 years often quotes me when he says...**The money is in the defense!**... Bridge players usually spend 50% of their time at the bridge table in defensive mode. It is without doubt the most difficult aspect of the game. And the two defenders need to be on the same wavelength!

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

2020-05-28

♠ 9 4
 ♥ 10 8 7
 ♦ 9 8 7 5 2
 ♣ K 6 5

♠ A K Q 7 3
 ♥ A J 3
 ♦ K Q 10 6
 ♣ 8



♠ J 8 6 5
 ♥ K Q 6 4
 ♦ A J
 ♣ Q 9 3

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

E/W should arrive in 6 ♠. Sometimes a player makes a **transfer bid** with a five card suit bid but doesn't subsequently attempt to find out how many cards in the suit that responder actually holds. The player making the transfer bid sometimes 'assumes' that there is a fit when in reality partner may have only two cards in the suit transferred. It can be important to confirm whether there is a fit or not before launching forth in to the nether regions...

A simple way to achieve that outcome is to bid a second suit which then gives opener the opportunity to show support (3+ cards) for the transferred suit. In this example, West can bid 3 ♦ over partner's 2 ♠. Now East can show spade support by bidding 3 ♠/4 ♠ thus confirming at least 3 spades. Now West can proceed to the spade slam knowing that there is at least an 8 card trump fit.

Declarer can make all 13 tricks on a non-club lead.

Note that 6 NT could see N/S cash the first six tricks!

Saints and Sinners

Saints and **Sinners** abound! Four E/W pairs bid the spade slam...well done. **Saintly** status bestowed on **Brendan & Fiona, Rhona & Margaret, Robert & Sheila, Peggy & Angela**. **However**, one pair only bid spades. **for the first time**. at the SIX level without any idea of support in partner's hand! So...perhaps it should be amended to three **Saints** and one **almost Saint**.

Two other pairs bid to 4 ♠, both making thirteen tricks.

And then the **Sinners**...who both paid a heavy price for their sins. One pair bid to 4 NT, going down three, and the other bid to 5 NT and went four light, suffering losses of 11.71 and 12.29 IMPs, respectively. A heavy price for not identifying a 5-4 spade fit.... In both cases East opened 1 NT and both Wests used Stayman instead of making a transfer bid of 2 ♥ to show their five+ spades. There's no point in using Stayman when you have five cards in one major and only three in the other... UNLESS 2 ♣ is an enquiry for 5 card majors...

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

2020-05-21

♠ Q 6 4 2
 ♥ 7
 ♦ A K J 9 7 2
 ♣ 7 4

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

♠ 3
 ♥ A Q J 10 9
 ♦ Q 10 6 5 3
 ♣ A K

South has a big **Two-Suiter** and will open 1 ♥. West has a re-biddable club suit and will enter the fray. Can North get both of his suits into the auction? A '**Negative Double**' of West's 2 ♣ overcall suggests support for both UNBID suits. East cannot support partner and will pass. And now it's over to South.

What is needed is 'vision', a little imagination to see into North's hand. South should make a **jump re-bid in diamonds** to signal his extra strength and the power of his shape.

Those N/S pairs not playing '**Negative Doubles**' will see North make a 'free bid' in diamonds which should get South very excited.

The question is how many N/S pairs will reach the small slam in diamonds.

The play should be straightforward AS LONG AS DECLARER DOES NOT PLAY MORE THAN ONE ROUND OF DIAMONDS which denudes the defenders of their two trumps. In essence it becomes a simple **cross-ruff**. Declarer will fail if he/she takes a ruffing finesse in hearts.


Saints and Sinners

A diamond contract was reached at all eight tables! Three N/S pairs are awarded **Saintly** status for bidding the small slam....**John Fahy & Liam Faherty, Sean & Enda Glynn, Kay & Murt Scarry,**

The remaining five partnerships simply bid the diamond game.

Board 16
West Deals
E-W Vul

2020-05-28

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

Two slams in two successive boards! Yes, 6 ♣ or 6 ♦ will make whereas 6 NT should NOT. But 7 ♣ or 7 ♦ is the top spot but difficult to bid.

In matchpoints events many partnerships tend to reject minor suit contracts in favour of No-trump. This is a classic example of why you should pay more attention to bidding minor suit slams. And note that N/S only have a combined 27 hcp.

The **Power of Shape** should never be underestimated!

Note that E/W also have a double fit in the major suits. But the adverse vulnerability should steer E/W from taking the 'Save'!

Saints and Sinners

Seven pairs bid a club contract...three at the six level and four to game. All made thirteen tricks. So, **Saintly** status conferred on **Enda & Sean Glynn, May O'Sullivan & Ann Roche, Peggy Fay & iidoella** for bidding the slam.

It is noted that several South's responded with a bid of 1 ♥ to North's opening bid of 1 ♦. With this shape and strength (opening bid opposite an opening bid) it is more descriptive to respond 2 ♣ initially and then bid the hearts later. This will more accurately convey a holding of five (or more) clubs and at least four hearts thus making it easier for North to assess the club fit as being 5-5 rather than 5-3 or 5-4.

Board 17
North Deals
None Vul

2020-05-28

♠ A 10 2
♥ K Q 8 2
♦ A Q 4
♣ K Q 2

♠ 9 7
♥ 10 9 5 4
♦ 9 8 5 3 2
♣ 9 8



♠ K Q J 8 6
♥ 7 6
♦ 10 6
♣ J 10 7 6

♠ 5 4 3
♥ A J 3
♦ K J 7
♣ A 5 4 3

N/S will likely arrive in 6 NT and East has a natural and safe lead of ♠ K. Declarer will probably be a little disappointed that he can only count to eleven top tricks (1 spade, 4 hearts, 3 diamonds, 3 clubs. And then declarer will realise that the club suit offers a chance for his 12th trick. But if he is aware of suit distributions and relevant percentages he will come back down to earth when he remembers that a 3-3 break of six outstanding cards only offers a 36% probability. Not great odds for success!

But is there any other chance? Clearly we cannot manufacture more than seven tricks in the red suits. And there is definitely only four guaranteed tricks in the black suits...but yes, there is a chink of light as long as we can see it!

What if East is also holding four clubs in addition to the ♠ KQJ. So, we throw our mind into a little forward thinking and we get to trick ten, i.e. everyone has four cards left. Declarer would hold ♠ 10, ♣ KQ2. Dummy would hold ♣ A543. And what about East? Would he be struggling to hold on to his four clubs and a top spade?

So, there it is. Duck the first spade. Win the continuation and cash your red suit winners ending in the North hand after winning the last red suit winner and now you should be down to the four card ending outlined above. All declarer needs to keep an eyes on is whether or not East has discarded the remaining spade honour thus promoting your ♠ 10 to winner status. If not, then declarer proceeds to cash the club winners, winning the last two tricks with dummy's ♣ A5. Well done. You have just executed a **Simple Squeeze**.

Note the following: 1) You must duck the first trick, 2) You must cash the red suit winners BEFORE playing the club suit. The squeeze will NOT work if you don't duck the first trick (**rectify the count** in Squeeze parlance). Nor will it work if you play three rounds of clubs before cashing the red suit winners. Try it out on the kitchen table!

Saints and Sinners

Instant elevation to **Saintly** status for **John Fahy** and **Sean Glynn** who played exactly as outlined above and duly brought home the slam. Credit to **William Kinsella** who started out correctly until he discarded a club on the fourth heart! **Kay Scarry** also made the key play of ducking the first spade but then proceeded to play on clubs...**Drumcro** also started well by ducking first spade, cashing hearts (discarding the spade from dummy) and would have made the contract if she then played diamonds BEFORE clubs! Others were doomed from the start when they won the first spade...

Board 18
 East Deals
 N-S Vul

2020-05-28

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

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

Can E/W get to 4 ♠? Some East's will open with a simple 2 ♠ (weak). Others may open with a Multi 2 ♦ intending to subsequently show their Weak 2 ♠ opening.

But really the focus turns to West. Does West have the ability to identify East's Weak 2 ♠ opening in terms of strength and suit quality which might assist West in deciding whether or not to bid the game? At this vulnerability many West's might take advantage to open on a very weak hand!

With a club and two heart losers off the top declarer needs to be careful. It is important to negotiate a heart ruff in the West hand BEFORE playing three rounds of trumps. Indeed, even playing one round of trumps might lead to defeat. Declare should win at first opportunity and play hearts if they have not already been played by the defense. Safely cashing one spade honour obviates the need to consider finessing ♠ J.

Bonus IMPs will accrue to those that bid, and make, the spade game.


Saints and Sinners

Siobhan O'Sullivan bid and made 4 ♠ even if she waited until trick 11 before securing the heart ruff in dummy! **Angela Noone, Carmel Musitano, P. Rabbitt** also bid and made 4 ♠. And a couple of **Sinners**...one bid the game but went two light when taking a trump finesse into South's singleton ♠ Q...and then forgetting to ruff the third heart in dummy! Another sinner also took the first round finesse in trumps but was only in 2 ♠. Re the first round finesse there is an old saying in bridge...*eight ever, nine never*...meaning always finesse for the missing queen if you have only eight trumps but don't finesse when you have nine. But I have to add that not finessing when holding nine isn't always the right play!

And **Sinner** status is awarded to a North player who was faced with choosing a discard from ♣ K and ♥ A at trick twelve and made the wrong choice. All hearts bar the ♥ A were already accounted for...so, discarding ♥ A should have been easy!

Board 19
 South Deals
 E-W Vul

2020-05-28

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

A defensive problem...well it shouldn't actually be a problem!

N/S are likely to reach 3 NT with South as declarer. West will probably lead ♥ K, and continue with ♥ Q if declarer ducks the opening lead. Declarer will win the third round of the suit and will finesse a club into East who will win the first or second round of the suit. Note that ducking the first club turns out to be a better play because it kills dummy's club suit....declarer has no access to the remaining winners.

When East does win with ♣ K what should he do next? Well, that all depends on what West has suggested that East should do? East needs to be very aware of what heart West played at trick three because that should have carried a very straightforward **Suit Preference** signal clearly indicating which suit West wants his partner to play after winning ♣ K.

If East has been closely watching the hearts that have been played he will recognise that South won the third round with ♥ A...BUT, what heart did West play on that trick? If it was a low heart it means East should switch to the lower ranking of the two remaining suits (spades and diamonds). If West played the ♥ J then East should switch to a spade, the higher-ranking of the two remaining suits..


Saints and Sinners

At six tables 3 NT by N/S was reached. The contract succeeded at two tables. Two N/S pairs failed to bid game...one played in 3 ♣ making ten tricks and the other played in 3 ♦ and made eight tricks.

Saintly status to any West who having won the first two heart continued with the ♥ 2 on the third round of the heart suit. This must be a clear suit-preference signal to partner to lead a diamond when East gains the lead. West knows that declarer has a bare ♥ A at this point and so any heart from West will cause South to win with the ♥ A. Well done **Fiona**. Black mark to any West who continued with ♥ J on the third round. Black mark to any East who failed to switch to a diamond if partner did give a suit-preference signal for a diamond switch! **Saintly** status to all East's who found the diamond switch **for the right reason...none did!** **Saintly** status also to the two East's (**Brendan King** and **Angela Noone**) who ducked the first club finesse... Double black mark to the West player, who having won the first two heart tricks switched to a spade instead of continuing with a third heart thereby establishing two more heart winners whilst still holding ♦ A as an entry!

Board 20
 West Deals
 Both Vul

2020-05-28

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

Stayman...one of the most popular basic additions to everyone's bidding system. And yet some people seem to have acquired unusual understandings re its use, e.g. you can only use Stayman with more than 9 high-card points!

'Poppycock', as my father used to say whenever I made some outlandish statement! Stayman can be used on ANY hand where you can stand any response from the NT opener. This little hand illustrates the point and is a classic shape for the sue of Stayman. Assuming that West opens 1 NT and North passes, East should whip out a bid of 2 ♣ (Stayman) on the simple understanding that he will pass whatever response West makes...be it 2 ♦, 2 ♥, 2 ♠.

2 ♦ is likely to become the final contract unless South makes a Take-Out DBL in the pass out position in which case N/S may end up in 3 ♣ which should fail.

And what happens to 2 ♦?...It should make, with an overtrick!

Saints and Sinners

At three tables West opened 1 NT which in two instances was followed by three passes. The respective declarers suffered a two trick defeat...-200. **Sinner** status awarded to the two Easts who left partner stew in 1 NT. At the third table East found the winning bid...2 ♣ (Stayman) and subsequently passed West's response of 2 ♦ which became the final contract. Declarer scored +110. Well done to **Saint Teresa**.

At a couple of other tables West opened 1 ♣ which sort of spiked N/S and E/W duly reached a low level diamond contract which made comfortably.

Board 21
North Deals
N-S Vul

2020-05-28

♠ A J 10 4
♥ A J 10 7 5
♦ 5
♣ Q 10 9

♠ 9 7 5 2
♥ Q 8
♦ 8 6
♣ 8 7 5 4 3



♠ 8 6 3
♥ 9 6
♦ A K 10 4 2
♣ J 6 2

♠ K Q
♥ K 4 3 2
♦ Q J 9 7 3
♣ A K

And, to finish...another slam! Is it biddable? Those playing **Flannery** will open with a bid of 2 ♦ or 2 ♥ to show 4 ♠/5 ♥, 11-15hcp and may have an advantage if South responds with a 2 NT enquiry. North will bid 3 ♣ indicating a 4-5-1-3 distribution which will make it much more comfortable for South to bid 6 ♥ knowing that the defenders cannot cash two diamond winners.

Those Souths not playing Flannery may simply bash their way to 6 ♥ and when East leads ♦ A, and follows with ♦ K at trick two, will be mightily relieved when declarer ruffs the second diamond.

Bids (opening or otherwise) that show two or more suits offer a real advantage in so far as it makes it easier for partner to identify when double (or treble) fits are present and where to land the final contract!.

The play should be easy as long as declarer starts with a heart to dummy's ♥ King. A second heart now sees West produce the ♥ Q and North will breathe a sigh of relief!

Needless to say 6 NT should fail on a diamond lead by either defender. But E/W will pay a price for any other lead as declarer can then wrap up 12 tricks!

Saints and Sinners

Two N/S pairs reached 6 ♥. Well done to **John Fahy & Liam Faherty** and **Peggy Fay & idoella**. All others N/S pairs played in the heart game with five of the six signing off at the five-level after using either Gerber or RKCB (Roman Keycard Blackwood). **Sinner** status to the South who made no attempt to investigate a slam and simply raised North's opening to 4 ♥.

Two North's made a '**Reverse**' bid of 2 ♠ in response to South's 2 ♦ reply. This should have propelled South into the heart slam. Why so? Because a reverse bid shows 16+ hcp and, in this case, 4 spades and at least five+ hearts. North should simply have re-bid 2 ♥.

All declarers made exactly 12 tricks.