

Session: Jansim25

NORTH

BD: 1 S- Dlr: N
H-K7543 Vul: None
D-AK2
C-J9543

S-KJT2 S-Q853
H-962 H-AT
D-JT4 D-Q63
C-862 C-AKQT

S-A9764
H-QJ8
D-9875
C-7

South is a little too good to give simple preference to hearts, but a conservative 2♥ would not be wrong. With a good holding in North's second suit East should lead ace and another heart to cut club ruffs. This should keep N. to eight tricks

BD: 2 S-AT54 Dlr: E
H-A9 Vul: N-S
D-Q754
C-J62

S-QJ3 S-972
H-2 H-8754
D-AJ982 D-K63
C-AQT3 C-K54

S-K86
H-KQJT63
D-T
C-987

South has a model weak two opening, and West a slightly off-shape takeout double which leaves East with a difficult decision. Two spades (bid in tempo without any hesitation or tell-tale squirming!) is probably best to keep the auction low, but this lands EW in a 3-3 fit. If South leads ♥K and switches to a trump, they can draw three rounds, leaving East to try to scramble as many tricks as they can. They should escape for two-off, which shouldn't be too bad as NS can make +110 in two hearts

BD: 3 S-972 Dlr: S
H-Q4 Vul: E-W
D-T972
C-KT73

S-T865 S-AK
H-JT52 H-AK9
D-A86 D-KQJ43
C-54 C-862

S-QJ43
H-8763
D-5
C-AQJ9

BD: 4 S-A73 Dlr: W
H-AT832 Vul: Both
D-T
C-K976

S-QJ95 S-62
H-J754 H-K6
D-K85 D-AQ963
C-52 C-A843

S-KT84
H-Q9
D-J742
C-QJT

East has almost got an overcall at the first round, but really needs a six-card suit or an exceptional hand. When NS find a fit they should consider competing with 2NT to ask partner to bid their better minor. It's not a good idea to leave the opponents in a comfortable fit at the two level. However, at this vulnerability it might be wiser to

BD: 5 S-932 Dlr: N
H-743 Vul: N-S
D-KJ43
C-862

S-AKJ54 S-Q7
H-QJ5 H-KT62
D-A6 D-QT852
C-AJT C-94

S-T86
H-A98
D-97
C-KQ753

If North leads a diamond West can come to eleven tricks by knocking out ♥A, but a passive club lead is better round to the strong hand. This should hold West to ten tricks. A speculative major suit lead should be avoided after a Stayman

BD: 6 S-543 Dlr: E
H-K2 Vul: E-W
D-K8743
C-QJ4

S- S-KJT98
H-9754 H-AT83
D-J95 D-A6
C-KT9653 C-A8

S-AQ762
H-QJ6
D-QT2
C-72

West has an uncomfortable choice when their partner opens in their

void suit. It could be right to pass so the auction doesn't get too high. The alternative of bidding 1NT risks being left to play there, or of getting a rebid of 2♠. This time those who bid are rewarded when East rebids 2♥. It's tempting to raise this with a good fit, but at pairs it's probably wiser to pass. Ten tricks can be made by setting up clubs, but only because the suits split favourably.

BD: 7 S-984 Dlr: S
 H-KT4 Vul: Both
 D-9842
 C-AQ9

S-63 S-KQ5
 H-AJ83 H-95
 D-AKJ6 D-Q53
 C-KJ4 C-87532

S-AJT72
 H-Q762
 D-T7
 C-T6

West has a pretty-much borderline hand for inviting game. It will only be good if East is at the top of their range. As it is, EW have a combined 22-count but even 1NT is uncomfortably high. On ♠J lead you have six tricks, and your sights should be set on avoiding a two-trick defeat (-200) rather than making the contract. A finesse of the ♠J looks as good as anything, but your luck's out. At least you will have company, and there won't be many NS pairs making a part score.

BD: 8 S-K32 Dlr: W
 H-AK6 Vul: None
 D-8752
 C-Q76

S-Q8754 S-J
 H-7 H-QJ98542
 D-AKQ94 D-J
 C-52 C-A843

S-AT96
 H-T3
 D-T63
 C-KJT9

East is not really strong enough to bid 2♥, but I can't bring myself to bid 1NT and possibly play there. West then cannot force to game with 3♦, so has to rebid spades. When East rebids hearts it's time to shut up. (If East

responds 1NT, West can bid 2♦ and pass East's sign-off in 2♥, but East is really too good for this.) On a club lead, East wants to lead a trump from dummy to finesse the nine (good outcome if the ten's onside) but with only one entry there's other work to do first. Overtake the ♦J and discard clubs on the top dias. When the ten falls continue with the nine to throw your last club loser. South can ruff, but East loses only three trumps and a spade to make the contract

BD: 9 S-K2 Dlr: N
 H-QJT9764 Vul: E-W
 D-J4
 C-AJ

S-QJT87 S-A5
 H-K H-32
 D-KQ7 D-T98653
 C-T976 C-852

S-9643
 H-A85
 D-A2
 C-KQ43

North has too much slam potential to open 4♥ in the first seat. South has a great supporting hand, but after finding South with a minimum opener should be satisfied with game. On the lead of ♦10 North should win, unblock the clubs and lead ♥Q (a sleepy or foolish East might cover) to the ace to take discards on the clubs. When the king drops, the eight draws the last trump and two losers go on the clubs for twelve tricks.

BD: 10 S-973 Dlr: E
 H-A72 Vul: Both
 D-AKJ94
 C-QT

S-J85 S-K62
 H-J854 H-Q3
 D-5 D-T86
 C-AJ954 C-K8763

S-AQT4
 H-KT96
 D-Q732
 C-2

After three passes North may open 1NT or consider the hand too good and open 1♦. On the given auction, East should lead ♠6 (fourth highest) and West will take the ace and return their own original fourth highest, ♠5. I've seen defences go wrong here, but in

this case they shouldn't. East doesn't have an entry, and ducking cannot help (it's not possible for North to have QJx anyway) so they should take the first five tricks. If North starts with 1♦ and rebids 1NT, South might jump-raise to 3♦, stop there or in 3♥ if North takes another bid, alerted to the weakness in clubs. Anyone taking this route should be in for a good score.

BD: 11 S-964 Dlr: S
 H-KQ9764 Vul: None
 D-J7
 C-94

S-82 S-AKQJT7
 H-82 H-AT3
 D-863 D-A9
 C-AT7652 C-Q3

S-53
 H-J5
 D-KQT542
 C-KJ8

South might open a weak 2♦ if available, or even 3♦, but the hand isn't a classic pre-empt (it has too much defensive potential) and so it's better to pass. North opens 2♥, and East is a shade too strong for a strong jump overcall in spades. After a double, West bids a Lebensohl 2NT to ask East to bid 3♣ with any normal-strength double, intending to pass. East now bids the most likely game. On the ♦K lead, East needs to find a tenth trick, and the best option is to lead out two rounds of hearts, hoping the third round can't be overruffed. The only alternative is to run ♣Q, hoping to pin a singleton jack with North, or to find South with KJx (duck if it's covered and take a later finesse against the jack). As it happens either play works.

BD: 12 S-JT873 Dlr: W
 H-98 Vul: N-S
 D-KT5
 C-A83

S-AK6 S-Q2
 H-QT6 H-AKJ432
 D-AQ2 D-J94
 C-KQ95 C-76

S-954
 H-75
 D-8763
 C-JT42

When West shows 20-22 points in a balanced hand, East is certainly worth a slam try. My choice is to transfer and then jump to 5♥, asking partner to bid slam with either good trumps or good outside controls. There's a slight risk of finding West with two small hearts, but that's unlikely. If East had a way to show hearts and ask for keycards (some play 4♣ as a good heart suit, with a follow-up 4NT as RKCB rather than quantitative) it's not as useful as it won't guarantee there aren't two losers in any suit. On the obvious ♠J lead there's a double-dummy line for twelve tricks, but no one will finesse the ♠9. With both minor-suit cards offside, the slam goes down, but any EW failing in this slam can hold their heads held high.

BD 13 S-AQT53 Dlr: N
 H-J9 Vul: Both
 D-K852
 C-T8

S-KJ2 S-874
 -A84 H-QT762
 D-J974 D-AQT6
 C-762 C-9

S-96
 H-K53
 D-3
 C-AKQJ543

Three no trump by South won't make on a diamond lead. East will win, put West in with a heart to lead diamonds through dummy. If West doesn't start on diamonds until in with the ♥A, EW have to play their cards exactly the way a declarer would: lead the nine so East can follow with the six, and then lead the jack if North doesn't cover, so East can underplay the ten, leaving West on lead. It's not

so easy when you can't see partner's cards. Five clubs makes, but that's rarely the right contract at pairs.

BD: 14 S-KJ9532 Dlr: E
 H-7 Vul: None
 D-K973
 C-72

S-Q8 S-764
 H-T94 H-KQ6
 D-Q8542 D-AJT6
 C-Q65 C-KJ9

S-AT
 H-AJ8532
 D-
 C-AT843

North might pass 2♥, and that ought to make for a good score. Four spades might make, but it's not easy. East has a horrible choice of leads, and my try a trump to cut down ruffs (a good idea if you're strong in the side suits). If North takes the ace, plays ace and a heart, ruffing, ruffs a diamond and ruffs another heart, the suit is set up with a club entry intact. A club lead turns out to be more damaging, but that's not likely to be found.

BD: 15 S-KJT87 Dlr: S
 H-Q5 Vul: N-S
 D-AQ95
 C-Q5

S-5 S-96432
 H-AK8 H-JT9743
 D-K8764 D-
 C-A643 C-98

S-AQ
 H-62
 D-JT32
 C-KJT72

South has an awkward opening bid. It's not a crime to pass, but the hand is really too good. Opening 1♣ leaves you with a difficult rebid, so I think it's best to upgrade the hand to twelve points for the good club suit. After a transfer you find yourself in 3NT. A heart lead would leave you two off, but a diamond lead looks better with good entries to set up the suit. Now South can run for home with nine tricks.

BD: 16 S-AT7 Dlr: W
 H-AJ8543 Vul: E-W
 D-4
 C-K74

S-6 S-KJ9854
 H-Q7 H-T9
 D-A98653 D-QT
 C-QJ65 C-AT3

S-Q32
 H-K62
 D-KJ72
 C-982

EW should not be keen to let the opponents play in a fit at the two level, but they are vulnerable and don't have a spade fit. Three diamonds might make, or might go one off, depending on the view West takes in trumps. If South judges that 2♥ will make (as it should), they might be tempted to double 3♦ to protect their plus score. If it makes, minus 670 won't be a much worse score than -110, and +200 should be a top. I wouldn't like to judge how this will go. NS might do best to cash their three major suit winners and continue hearts, forcing West to ruff in one hand or the other.

BD: 17 S-AQ92 Dlr: N
 H-Q42 Vul: None
 D-Q75
 C-A95

S-K4 S-J753
 H-AKJ863 H-7
 D-J82 D-AT94
 C-72 C-QJT8

S-T86
 H-T95
 D-K63
 C-K643

I can't see the auction going any other way. North has a difficult choice of lead. In this situation, a system of elimination can work. They cannot lead a trump, nor a spade or a club away from the ace, so that leaves a black ace or a small diamond. I would try a diamond, but it wouldn't be a happy choice. South can win and switch to a spade, but after taking two rounds North is stuck again. Ace and another club bag

keep enough winners at the end,
North should be content with
cashing eight tricks.

BD: 22	S-KT4	Dlr: E
	H-Q842	Vul: E-W
	D-A92	
	C-T65	
S-QJ		S-52
H-KJT9		H-6
D-T63		D-QJ754
C-AJ74		C-KQ983
	S-A98763	
	H-A753	
	D-K8	
	C-2	

This auction could develop in a number of ways. South has a clear opening bid, and West a clear, if minimum, double. North's redouble suggests 9+ points, no good fit for partner's spades and an interest in defending the opponents' doubled contract, although they will probably show their invitational three-card spade raise on the next round. With a good hand in this position, the standard ploy for East is to pass and bid on the next round, but with two suits to get in I think I would start bidding them now. South rebids hearts to show no interest in a penalty, North makes an invitational raise and South bids game over East's second suit on the strength of their distribution. As they are vulnerable, EW should stop bidding now and hope they have pushed NS too high. If South starts trumps with the king they have the option of finessing the nine when West drops an honour. The bidding will point to this line, and also experienced players know this position: West is more likely to have been dealt a singleton honour and been forced to play it than to have been dealt QJ and have chosen to play the one they played. Some Souths will play with the odds and go down.

BD: 23	S-Q	Dlr: S
	H-KT65	Vul: Both
	D-K3	
	C-AJ9742	
S-94		S-T8752
H-42		H-J87
D-QJ54		D-9862
C-QT853		C-K
	S-AKJ63	
	H-AQ93	
	D-AT7	
	C-6	

North responds in their longest suit and just raises South's rebid to game. South has too many controls to pass, with a good source of tricks in spades, so will go for slam unless missing both key cards. When North shows them both (denying ♠Q as well) South could make a grand-slam try if they have sophisticated methods, but settling for six will probably be enough. You may notice they would struggle in six if the trumps split 4-1, even though North is providing two unpromised high cards in spades and diamonds.

BD: 24	S-JT732	Dlr: W
	H-KJT	Vul: None
	D-876	
	C-AQ	
S-K		S-96
H-Q96532		H-A87
D-Q4		D-AT2
C-KT85		C-J7432
	S-AQ854	
	H-4	
	D-KJ953	
	C-96	

Both West and North have almost got opening bids, and some will certainly open one or other of these hands. South is the first with a clear opening bid. Although light on high cards, they have shape and the spade suit. West's hand is no one's idea of a two-level overcall, but at love all it pays to compete the part score aggressively. North, who may have been regretting not opening, jumps to game. How many tricks they make depends on how good South's guesses are. On a heart lead to the ace, East may find the tricky

return of a small diamond and put South to the test immediately. South may put the overcaller with the ace (it's a thin clue, but better than nothing) and lose two diamond tricks, a heart and a trump if they take the finesse.

BD: 25	S-654	Dlr: N
	H-532	Vul: E-W
	D-KJ74	
	C-J83	
S-A7		S-QJ98
H-AQ964		H-KT7
D-Q2		D-985
C-AT54		C-Q72
	S-KT32	
	H-J8	
	D-AT63	
	C-K96	

South might try opening 1♠ non-vulnerable in third seat, intending to pass partner's response (2♥ would be a five-card suit, of course), to put the opponents off their stride, but the spade suit isn't ideal for this action. If West opens the bidding East will respond in spades and then give simple preference for hearts. West might consider themselves worth a game try (2NT?), but East won't be interested, and will either sign off in 3♥ or pass 2NT. Three hearts should make for the loss of two diamonds and two clubs. How 2NT fares depends on how West plays the spades. If they run the queen or play ace and small to an honour they should get eight tricks. If they play ace and try to finesse the ten they will go down.

BD: 26	S-J32	Dlr: E
	H-T7	Vul: Both
	D-A754	
	C-9874	
S-AKQ8		S-T754
H-AQ4		H-K63
D-K63		D-QJT2
C-QJ5		C-A6
	S-96	
	H-J9852	
	D-98	
	C-KT32	

When West opens 2NT East may be tempted just to raise to three, but is more likely to bid Stayman to try to find a spade fit. As North I would lead a club to either contract, but it doesn't

look to make any difference, as eleven tricks looks certain in both cases. That'll be a good score for anyone who chose no trumps.

BD: 27	S-A74	Dlr: S
	H-983	Vul: None
	D-T32	
	C-J763	
S-K98		S-6532
H-AK		H-JT4
D-AQ4		D-985
C-AK842		C-Q95
	S-QJT	
	H-Q7652	
	D-KJ76	
	C-T	

West picks up an even stronger balanced hand this time, and opens 2♣, rebidding 2NT to show 23-24 points. East should raise to game with any useful cards, and it's not worth using Stayman with such a flat hand. North's best lead is probably a heart, trying to give nothing away and maybe find partner's long suit. At no trumps "top of nothing" is probably easiest to read from three small cards, as there is less importance of distinguishing it from a doubleton. If West puts up dummy's jack to tempt a cover, South should resist in case the layout is as shown. If West starts the clubs with a high card from hand, the fall of the ten gives them a chance to finesse the nine and bring in the suit. (It's more likely that South had been dealt a singleton honour than both honours doubleton and chosen which one to play - see hand 22.) They can use dummy's club entry to try the diamond finesse without cost, and make nine tricks.

BD: 28	S-84	Dlr: W
	H-3	Vul: N-S
	D-J762	
	C-AKQ642	
S-AJ75		S-KQ92
H-AQ94		H-T85
D-T4		D-AQ853
C-J75		C-8
	S-T63	
	H-KJ762	
	D-K9	
	C-T93	

I don't know how the auction would go here. West will open a weak no trump, and North could overcall 3♣

directly to take away bidding space, but they'd quite like to be on lead against a no trump contract, so may pass at their first turn. After Stayman, West shows four hearts and now North may come in with 3♣. East is now in an awkward spot, and I'll bet many pairs don't have agreements here. A pass may be taken as "garbage Stayman", discouraging West from bidding again. A double should at least show values. West may take the view that East must have spades as they didn't raise hearts. Note how South's raise makes life harder for NS. NS can be held to seven tricks in clubs, but East has to lead a trump and West continue the suit at every opportunity to prevent a diamond ruff.) EW should make four spades, and eleven tricks if they run hearts through South.

BD: 29	S-KJ83	Dlr: N
	H-AJ842	Vul: Both
	D-2	
	C-762	
S-AT5		S-974
H-T9765		H-KQ
D-T4		D-J98763
C-854		C-T3
	S-Q62	
	H-3	
	D-AKQ5	
	C-AKQJ9	

This will be a difficult hand for those who don't have firm agreements about continuations after a reverse bid. A popular agreement is for a rebid of North's suit to be forcing, but possibly minimum, and for the lower of the fourth suit and 2NT to show weakness. Without such agreements North should be reluctant to introduce no trumps and so make a waiting bid in the fourth suit. South jumps to 3NT to show extras, and North might make a slam try with 4NT or 4♣, as they are also about an ace stronger than they might have been. South may stop in 4NT, but if they go on to 6♣ they should get a very good score. Anyone who finishes in 6NT can count themselves unlucky.

BD: 30	S-Q942	Dlr: E
	H-KT943	Vul: None
	D-8	
	C-KT8	
S-KJ5		S-T8763
H-7		H-A62
D-974		D-AJ3
C-AQ9432		C-5
	S-	
	H-QJ85	
	D-KQT652	
	C-J76	

South could double 1♠ if playing "equal-level conversion", that is, if a correction of partner's 2♣ to 2♦ would not promise extra values, but they don't really have the high-card strength a double promises. If the auction goes as suggested they won't find their heart fit, and EW will probably end up in the making spade game. (West is stretching a bit to bid a forcing 3♣, but they should take courage from the good spade support they have.) If South doubles 1♠ EW may find themselves at the four level before they know of their spade fit, and may have to content themselves with a penalty double and one off. (East will win the first heart and lead a club for a ruff.)

BD: 31	S-T965	Dlr: S
	H-A7	Vul: N-S
	D-942	
	C-Q832	
S-KQ32		S-8
H-KJ43		H-98652
D-Q53		D-KJ7
C-J5		C-AK94
	S-AJ74	
	H-QT	
	D-AT86	
	C-T76	

East was intending to continue with an invitational 2NT over the expected 2♥ rebid, but when West jumps in the transfer suit to show a minimum with four-card support, they should pass (although I couldn't swear I'd resist the temptation to raise to game). A weak no trump usually has 7-8

losers, and when the good heart
fit is revealed East can put West
with the higher number if they are
minimum, and their own seven is
not enough for game. It looks as
if game depends on a good guess in
hearts - finesse the jack and you
make, the king and you're one
down. It needs them 2-2 as well if
the honours are split (or a
singleton queen with South), so
it's probably better to stay out
of it in pairs

BD: 32 S-KT9 Dlr: W
 H-T96 Vul: E-W
 D-T983
 C-AKQ

S-J862 S-A7
H-543 H-AJ87
D-K4 D-Q2
C-J642 C-T9753

S-Q543
H-KQ2
D-AJ765
C-8

On a club lead (10 is best, unless
playing strong tens) North will
win and go after diamonds. They
should scramble nine tricks before
the clubs are set up, even if they
try running the ♠10. If they use
diamond entries to double-finesse
against the ♠J they may come to
ten tricks for a good score.