

Which hand should I write about? Maybe Board 12, where every table played in 2H, and every declarer made 9 tricks? A rare example of a flat board at pairs. Or how about Board 5, where East held ♠ A, ♥ AKJ8, ♦ -, ♣ AKQ98752. How do you bid that? Realizing that our partnership did not have the technology to find out about my Heart holding, Paul chose to open 6C ! “Bid what you think you can make.” In fact everyone made 13 tricks, but two pairs failed to reach the slam.

Perhaps the bidding was harder on Board 17:-

	♠ A98	
	♥ AK102	
	♦ AK9	
	♣ 1075	
♠ 54		♠ KQJ107632
♥ J653		♥ 74
♦ 7642		♦ J8
♣ J83		♣ 6
	♠ -	
	♥ Q98	
	♦ Q1053	
	♣ AKQ942	

North was dealer at love all, and opened 1H (Acol) or 1C (5 card majors). East came in with 4S (or only 3S at one table). What should South say?

When North has started with 1C it is easy for South – 5C looks obvious to me, although Annabel chose 6C, leading to a successful grand slam. But if North has opened 1H, South will have a harder decision.

In the end there were 6 different contracts. The play was straightforward in Spades (by East), or in No Trumps or Clubs. But in Hearts declarer has to decide how to

handle the trump suit. Since East has advertised considerable length in Spades it seems natural to finesse West for the ♥ J, and this was the winning play on the night.

Let's turn to a hand with more to say about the play. Here is board 14.

	♠ KQ953	
	♥ 4	
	♦ 82	
	♣ QJ864	
♠ 864		♠ A10
♥ 73		♥ AQ102
♦ J1095		♦ AKQ3
♣ A953		♣ 1072
	♠ J72	
	♥ KJ9865	
	♦ 764	
	♣ K	

This was played in no trumps at four tables, with South overcalling Hearts along the way. Deep Finesse says that only 7 tricks are available, but between 6 and 9 tricks were made. One South chose to lead a Heart, despite East having promised a stop. Perhaps the best chance of defeating the contract is to find North with a Heart honour? But on the night this gave Declarer an easy extra trick.

At our table East (Paul) played in 2NT, and South began with a low Spade. Maybe Declarer should hold up, but in the event the Spade Ace was played. East then took four rounds of Diamonds, leaving the Defence to find discards. Here is the position with one round left to go.

	♠ K953	
	♥ 4	
	♦ -	
	♣ QJ86	
♠ 86		♠ 10
♥ 73		♥ AQ102
♦ 10		♦ Q
♣ A953		♣ 1072
	♠ J2	
	♥ KJ9865	
	♦ -	
	♣ K	

What should the Defenders throw on the final round of Diamonds? Does it matter?

South chose a Heart, which was safe, but North has an awkward decision. It looks as if one should keep ♥ 4, in order to lead through Declarer if possible, but can one afford to weaken either black suit?

In the event North chose to discard ♠ 3 – No good!

East now led ♣ 2, and when South's ♣ K appeared it was (crucially) ducked in Dummy. The Defence could then take their Spade tricks, leaving this position with North on lead.

	♠	
	♥ 4	
	♦ -	
	♣ QJ8	
♠ -		♠ -
♥ 73		♥ AQ10
♦ -		♦ -
♣ A9		♣ 10
	♠	
	♥ KJ96	
	♦ -	
	♣ -	

At this point however there was no escape for South, who was eventually thrown in to lead a Heart into Declarer's tenace for the eighth trick.

wpp!

	♠ K953	
	♥ 4	
	♦ -	
	♣ QJ86	
♠ 86		♠ 10
♥ 73		♥ AQ102
♦ 10		♦ Q
♣ A953		♣ 1072
	♠ J2	
	♥ KJ9865	
	♦ -	
	♣ K	

	♠ 943	
	♥ QJ6	
	♦ 973	
	♣ A962	
♠ KQ6		♠ 105
♥ 1075432		♥ AK9
♦ K		♦ A10865
♣ 874		♣ QJ10
	♠ AJ872	
	♥ 8	
	♦ QJ42	
	♣ K53	