

TRIBES BRIDGE CLUB - 50th ANNIVERSARY: 1971 - 2021

Greetings!

Herewith find attached the analysis of selected hands played last Thursday, 18th March 2021, in the **Tribes Bridge Club BBO IMPs Pairs**.

Another set of interesting hands with several declarer play and defensive problems which many found challenging. This week I have analysed six hands in varying degrees of detail: Board# 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 18 I have also included brief comments on : Board # 24.

In total there are thirty pages of analysis/comment.

Board#6 is an interesting and challenging 4 ♠ which is likely to fail but some defenders came to the aid of declarer...but at some tables declarer didn't appreciate how to best use the aid that was offered!

Board#7 sees declarer tackle a diamond contract at many tables but with N/S stealing a club contract at a few tables.

Board#8 I devoted eleven pages to this hand which saw several interesting play and defensive options which many found too challenging. But there are also some fine efforts by declarer and defenders.

Board#9 one of the most fascinating hands of the session...a real challenge for the defense. 3 NT+3 at one table...3 NT-3 at another and lots of other varied results in between!

Board#10 did you get to 4 ♥...and if so, did you make it? Or did you defend and find the killing defense!

Board#18 another fine example of the Power of Shape...but not all players sitting in the East seat appreciated the power of the shapely hand they held! In fact, only one player really appreciated the hand... although a few others eventually joined him in reaching the right spot!

Board#24 an opportunity missed by one player who declared 3 ♠x...and another who found herself in 4Sx. And a third declarer who actually made 3S

Enjoy!

Paul J Scannell
25th March 2021

Board 1

North Deals

None Vul

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

EW 5N; EW 5♣; EW 4♦; EW 1♠; NS 1♥; Par -460: EW 3N+2

Board 2

East Deals

N-S Vul

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

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

Board 3

South Deals

E-W Vul

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

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

Board 4

West Deals

Both Vul

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

N 4N; S 3N; NS 2♦; N 2♣; Par +630: N 3N+1

Board 5

North Deals

N-S Vul

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

NS 3♥; EW 3♣; NS 1N; NS 2♦; Par +100: EW 4♣×-1

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

NS 4♠; NS 2♥; EW 3♣; NS 1N; Par +420; NS 4♠=

If South opens 1 ♠ then N/S will likely reach 4 ♠ which can make if declarer plays West for a doubleton ♥ A. But declarer will probably play for a finesse of ♥ 10 and lose two hearts as well as two clubs. Some N/S pairs may reach 4 ♥ where, a spade lead could lead to a two trick defeat if East scores two spade ruffs. Alternatively, a spade switch after a club lead could lead to East scoring one spade ruff. And of course declarer will likely lose two trumps and two clubs anyway! And East needs to be particularly careful not to lead a heart which would solve declarer's problem in that suit. Even though this is a marginal hand on balance I think I would like to play this hand in 4 ♠ with the benefit of a possible red suit lead perhaps coming into my ♥ K and ♦ Q. And in the absence of unfortunate breaks it may rest on a simple finesse against ♥ J, which unfortunately doesn't work on this occasion!

Saints & Sinners

At two tables (of 23) N/S only reached a part-score, 3 ♠ making at both tables. At two other tables N/S played 4 ♥ after both Souths opened 1 NT. At one table North bid 2 ♣ (Stayman...this is wrong. When you hold only a five card major and don't have four cards in the other major you should use a Transfer bid). South responded 2 ♠, showing 4 spades (if the pair were using **Puppet Stayman** this bid would show a five card suit). North bid 3 ♥ and South raised to the heart game. East led her singleton spade, declarer winning with ♠ Q. Declarer played a heart to dummy's ♥ K and West's ♥ A. The contract can now be defeated by two tricks if West gives partner a spade ruff and East returns a club and West then gives partner a second spade ruff. **BUT**, West cashed ♣ KQ and East duly scored a trick with ♥ J and declarer finished one down.

At the other table where South opened 1 NT (12-15), North transferred via 2 ♦ and South bid 2 ♥. North jumped to 3 NT and South converted to 4 ♥. West led ♣ KQ and then switched to a spade despite looking at ♠ QJ10 in dummy...I would have switched to a diamond in case partner held ♦ Qxx! Declarer won the spade switch with dummy's ♠ Q and played a heart to his ♥ K, West winning with ♥ A. West played another spade and East ruffed with ♥ 9. East continued with ♣ A, declarer ruffing in hand. Declarer now led ♥ 4 as West followed with ♥ 6...and declarer 'guessed' right to rise with ♥ Q, dropping East's ♥ J. If West had started with ♥ AJ6 rising with ♥ Q would see declarer two down! The theory of **Vacant Places** may have swayed declarer to rise with ♥ Q!

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

NS 4♠; NS 2♥; EW 3♣; NS 1N; Par +420: NS 4♠=

Saints & Sinners

At nineteen tables N/S contracted 4♠. At eight tables the contract failed, in one case by three tricks! At eleven tables the contract was successful, two declarers emerging with twelve tricks!

At one table South declared 4♠ after North responded 2♥, South raising to 3♥ and North closing the auction with 4♠. West cashed ♣ KQ, as East followed with ♣ 6 and ♣ 9. West continued with a third club and declarer ignored the basic tenet of coping with a ruff and discard...ruff in the hand with the short trump holding and discard from the hand with trump length! At the table declarer discarded a heart from dummy while ruffing in hand with ♠ 2. [Note: declarer could have eliminated a potential second heart loser while retaining five trumps in hand by ruffing the third club in dummy and discarding ♥ 2 from hand!] Declarer is now in big trouble, with West holding four trumps! Declarer now cashed ♠ J10 and then led a heart to her ♥ K and West's ♥ A. West continued with ♠ 6, declarer winning in hand with ♠ K. Declarer now led a heart and finessed dummy's ♥ 10, losing to East's ♥ J. East continued with ♣ A, declarer ruffing with ♠ A, her last trump. Declarer now led ♥ 4, West ruffing with ♠ 9 and then cashing ♣ 5 to leave declarer THREE down! Mishandling the ruff and discard was a major error by declarer who could have MADE the contract by discarding ♥ 2 from hand while ruffing with dummy's ♠ 10. Declarer could then cash ♠ QJ, enter her hand with ♦ Q, cash ♠ AK and concede a heart to West's ♥ A. **Sinner** status to **declarer**. But, **Sinner** status also to **E/W** for gifting declarer a chance to make the contract by offering a ruff and discard at trick three! How should West have known NOT to lead a third club? By East giving a count signal in the club suit!

At another table declarer received the lead of ♣ KQ followed by a third club which declarer correctly ruffed in dummy with ♠ 10 while discarding ♥ 2 from hand.. Declarer next led ♥ 10, East covering with ♥ J as declarer's ♥ K lost to West's ♥ A. West continued with a heart to dummy's ♥ Q and declarer is now home! Simply cash ♠ QJ, play a diamond to her ♦ Q, cash ♠ AK and declarer's hand is high! Declarer DID cash ♠ QJ, **BUT**, then led a heart and declarer ruffed with ♠ K when East followed to the third heart thus promoting West's ♠ 96 into the setting trick. **Absolute inner** status to **declarer** for turning ten trick into nine! **Sinner** status also to **West** for providing the Ruff & Discard that created the tenth trick.

Board 6

East Deals

E-W Vul

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

NS 4♠; NS 2♥; EW 3♣; NS 1N; Par +420; NS 4♠=

Saints & Sinners

At SIX other tables where South reached 4♠ and the contract failed, the defense avoided offering declarer a ruff and discard by switching to a diamond or a trump at trick three! **Saintly** status to those **E/W pairs**, in particular to the East players who either provided a count signal or overtook the second club and switched to a trump or a diamond: **Kevin & Mary Moylan, Anne Killilea & Frank Reynolds, Marion Coy & Deirdre McCoy, Louise Mitchell & Clodagh Cox, Miriam Moloney & Margaret Walsh, Colett Mulhern & Liam Hanratty.**

At eleven other tables South also contracted 4♠ with an entirely different set of outcomes! At two of these tables declarer emerged with twelve tricks when both Wests elected to lead ♥ A and continued with another heart thus establishing dummy's heart suit for one loser AND providing discards for declarer's two losing clubs. Holding a solid club suit and four trumps, which could produce a forcing defense and while also knowing that partner has very limited resources, West might have been more effective leading clubs which might put declarer under pressure, in particular if dummy holds three clubs. **Sinner** status to both **Wests**.

At the other nine tables South emerged with ten tricks. But that's where the similarity ends! At one table East discarded a heart on the second spade and declarer subsequently guessed right when playing the heart suit. **Sinner** status to **East** who could afford a club or diamond discard.

At three tables East won the second club and switched to a heart thus ensuring declarer would only lose one heart trick. **Sinner** status to the **three East players**. Declarer's losing hearts have nowhere to go...unless the defense makes them vanish!

At another table E/W cashed two club winners and West then cashed ♥ A and continued with a second heart! **Sinner** status to **West**.

At three tables West gave declarer a Ruff & Discard and all three declarers did the right thing! **Sinner** status to the **respective Wests**.

At another table South drew trumps and led a heart from hand, West rising with ♥ A! **Sinner** status to **West**.

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4♣; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +130: NS 4♣=

With the points evenly distributed it may be a case that E/W's higher ranking diamonds will out bid N/S's clubs even though N/S can make 4 ♣ whereas E/W should be held to nine tricks in diamonds!

Saints & Sinners

At one table South opened 1 ♣, West overcalled 1 ♠ and North inappropriately bid 2 ♥ (too weak!). East bid 3 ♦ and South made a senseless bid of 3 NT holding ♦ 1075!!! West led ♦ K and by the time the dust had settled declarer had suffered a FOUR trick defeat which cost N/S the loss of 7.55 Imps! **Sinner** status to **North & South**.

At another table South opened 1 ♣, West overcalled 1 ♠ and North Doubled (showing hearts). East Passed when she should have bid 2 ♦ with her good seven card suit. South bid 1 NT which was Passed out... Again East should have bid 2 ♦ at the second opportunity. West led ♠ 8 (♠ J is recommended from this interior sequence (KJ10xx), declarer winning with ♠ Q. Declarer now made the mandatory **Safety Play** of ♣ K, in case either opponent held all four outstanding clubs and duly emerged with nine tricks! **Saintly** status to declarer (**Enda Glynn**) and **Sinner** status to **East** for not bidding diamonds at either opportunity!

At another table South opened 1 ♣, West overcalled 1 ♠ and North, who should have Passed or made a Negative Double, actually bid 1 NT which became the final contract. East might have bid 2 ♦ which makes, with ease. East led ♦ Q and when it held East found the continuation of ♦ A, felling partner's ♦ K in a crocodile coup, and proceeded to cash his remaining diamonds to inflict a one trick defeat on declare. **Saintly** status to East (**Eugene Gath**) for finding the opening lead and continuation to sink the contract. **Sinner** status to **North**

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4♣; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +130: NS 4♣=

Saints & Sinners

At two tables West contracted 3♠. At one of these tables South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠, North and East Passed and South re-bid 2♣. West now bid 2♥, and North came to life with 3♣. East, who might have tried 3♦ having Passed on the previous round, actually bid 3♠ holding a nebulous ♠ 62! Her faith in partner was duly rewarded when N/S combined to give a very uninspiring defense. You will note that not even 1♠ by E/W is listed as a Makeable Contract! North led ♣ Q and continued with ♣ 7, South producing ♣ A suggesting to partner that West held ♣ K!!! South now switched to ♥ 4 instead of ♥ J, North rising with ♥ A and continuing with ♥ 3 to dummy's ♥ Q. Declarer now led ♠ 6, South rising with ♠ A and continuing with ♣ K which declarer ruffed with dummy's ♠ 2. Declarer now played a diamond to her ♦ K, drew North's three trumps and then cashed dummy's diamond winners for nine tricks! Not an inspiring auction, in particular East's inability to bid her diamonds. And a very lacklustre defense to a contract that could have been defeated by several tricks. For example, North could have led her singleton diamond and South could then give North a diamond ruff while simultaneously killing dummy's diamond suit! Declarer might also lose three heart tricks in addition to 2 clubs and might even lose trump control. What does declarer do on a diamond lead? If dummy wins with ♦ J and a spade is led South can rise with ♠ A and give partner a diamond ruff. The defense can then cash cash ♥ A and ♣ AK to defeat the contract by at least one trick.

At the other table, South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠, North Passed and East bid 2♦, South rebid 3♣, West bid 3♥ (suggesting a stronger hand than what she actually holds!) and East converted to 3♠. North led ♣ 7, South winning with ♣ K, cashing ♣ A, and then playing a third club which declarer ruffed with dummy's ♠ 2 whilst discarding ♥ 5 from hand. Declarer continued with dummy's ♠ 6, South rising with ♠ A. South now played another club and declarer ruffed with ♠ 8 as North overruffed with ♠ 9. North now cashed ♥ A and then played another heart to dummy's ♥ Q. Declarer played a diamond to her ♦ K, cashed ♠ KJ10 and then claimed the remaining tricks for one down. 3♦ would have made with ease.

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4♣; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +130: NS 4♣=

Saints & Sinners

At three tables South played a club contract. At one table South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠ and North stretched with an under strength 2♥. East Passed and South bid 3♣ which closed the auction. West led ♠J the standard lead from an interior sequence, South gratefully winning with ♠Q. South now has ELEVEN tricks in her grasp...2 spades, 1 heart, 2 diamond ruffs, 6 clubs. Simply play a diamond at trick two and subsequently ruff two diamonds in dummy while returning to hand with spade ruffs. **BUT (#1)**, declarer proceeded to draw trumps...drawing two rounds would still see declarer ruff one diamond in dummy and still emerge with TEN tricks....**BUT (#2)**, declarer played THREE rounds of trumps, the third round drawing blanks from both defenders! Now declarer was down to scoring NINE tricks via 2 spades, 1 heart, six clubs. **BUT (#3)**, declarer won the third club with dummy's ♣Q and then led a small heart to her ♥J and West's ♥K. West continued with ♠K, declarer winning in hand with ♠A. Declarer now led ♥4 and when West followed with ♥5 declarer finessed ♥10 which lost to East's now stiff ♥Q and suddenly eleven tricks had become eight. Declarer now lost three diamonds to finish one down! This sequence of plays by **declarer** earns an **Absolute Sinner** status award.

The most important period in the play of a hand is the time given to considering an initial plan when partner's hand hits the table and before declarer plays a card from dummy!

At another table South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠, North overbid with 2♥ and, East bid 3♦ and South closed the auction with 4♣. This contract can be defeated if West leads a trump and the defense then plays a second trump after winning the first diamond. Also, West must avoid leading a spade! At the table West led ♦K...and East could have avoided what was about to happen by rising with ♦A...**BUT**, East ducked and West now found the fatal continuation, for the defense, of ♠J!!! Declarer won with ♠Q, drew two rounds of trumps and subsequently ruffed a diamond in dummy and emerged with ten tricks via 2 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond ruff, 6 clubs. Safely played and **Saintly** status to **Peggy Cheevers**. East could have saved a trick by overtaking partner's ♦K with ♦A and then switching to a spade. On the other hand, declarer might then find the play of ruffing diamonds BEFORE drawing trumps and should still emerge with ten tricks. **Sinner** status to **East** for not rising with ♦A and continuing with a spade or a trump.

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4♣; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +130: NS 4♣=

Saints & Sinners

At a third table South opened 1♣, West Passed (could have overcalled 1♠), North bid 1♥ and, East bid 3♦ and South closed the auction with 4♣. At this table West led ♦K...and East failed to overtake with ♦A and switch to a spade or even a trump. West now found the fatal continuation, for the defense, of ♠10!!! Declarer won with ♠Q, ruffed a diamond in dummy, returned to hand with ♠A and ruffed his last diamond in dummy. Declarer now ruffed a spade and then played a club to dummy's ♣Q. Declarer next cashed ♥A and then ruffed another spade in hand, drew trumps and duly conceded a heart to the defense while emerging with eleven tricks. Well played and **Saintly** status to declarer, **William Kinsella**.

At the remaining fifteen tables a diamond contract was reached although in several instances it was a case of overreach! At one table South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠, North Passed and East bid 3♦(?), South bowed out with a Pass and West now bid 3♥, North Passed, and East, instead of showing preference by bidding 3♠, bid 4H!!! This passed to North who not surprisingly applied a Double which was Passed to West who now retreated to 5♦ which South Doubled. South led ♥J, North rising with ♥A and continuing with a heart to declarer's ♥Q. Declarer played a diamond to dummy's ♦K and then cashed ♥K, discarding a club from hand as declarer discarded a losing club from hand. South cashed her two black aces to leave declarer suffering a two trick defeat and a loss -500, a handsome return for N/S who can only score +130 in a club contract! **Sinner** status to **E/W** for overbidding.

At three other tables E/W reached 4♦ and all declarers suffered a two trick defeat despite the fact that declarer can easily score nine tricks via 7 diamonds and 2 major suit tricks! The play varied at each table. At one table South cashed two top clubs and then switched to a diamond, declarer winning with dummy's ♦K. Declarer now played a heart, North playing low as declarer won in hand with ♥Q. Declarer started to walk on thin ice when he played a second heart to South's ♥J, dummy's ♥K and North's ♥A. North continued with ♥9 and declarer fell through the ice when he ruffed with ♦8 and South overruffed with ♦10. South subsequently scored ♠A for two down. Declarer erred by not stopping to think **CLEARLY** when North continued with ♥9. One round of trumps has already been played, both defenders following suit. Hence only 2 trumps are still outstanding. Declarer was holding ♦AQJ864 and could safely ruff with ♦A (♦Q or ♦J) and still draw South's trumps. **Sinner** status to **declarer**.

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4♣; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +130: NS 4♣=

Saints & Sinners

At another other table South opened 1♣ and West Doubled (overcalling 1♠ is best). North bid 1♥ and East bid 2♦. South bid 3♣ which Passed back to East who now bid 4♦ which became the final contract. South led ♥J, declarer playing low from dummy as North rose with ♥A and switched to ♣10, South winning with ♣K and then cashing ♣A, North following with ♣7. South, perhaps convinced that partner had a doubleton club, continued with a third club presenting declarer with a ruff and discard! Declarer ruffed in hand and then played a diamond to dummy's ♦K and then cashed ♥K, crashing ♥Q from hand. Declarer led a heart from dummy and ruffed with ♦J as South discarded a club. Declarer now started on the slippery slope when she played a spade, South contributing ♠Q as dummy's ♠K won the trick. Declarer next led ♥8 from dummy, North covering with ♥10 and declarer had now contrived to bring about a situation where nine tricks would become eight as South was now destined to lose a trump trick to South's ♦107. Declarer ruffed with ♦Q, leaving herself with ♦A86 thereby promoting South's ♦107 to a winner. Declarer duly finished two down when nine tricks were there for the taking. I cannot understand what declarer was trying to achieve by ruffing hearts in hand where North is known to hold at least four hearts and thus declarer exposes herself to an eventual overruff, or trump promotion, by South. **Sinner** status to **declarer**.

At yet another table South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠, North Passed, East bid 2♦, South bid 3♣, West showed a stronger hand than what she held by bidding 3♥, North bid 4♣ and East closed the auction with 4♦. South cashed ♣AK and then switched to ♥4 (why not ♥J?), declarer playing low from dummy as North rose with ♥A. North now switched to her singleton diamond, declarer winning in hand with ♦A, cashing ♥Q and then playing a diamond to dummy's ♦K, perhaps hoping that South held a third heart (South's switch to ♥4 might have encouraged that thinking) and that declarer could discard a potential losing spade. Declarer continued with dummy's ♥K and ensured a two trick defeat when she discarded ♠2 from hand as South ruffed with ♦10. The spade discard is pointless because ♠K is guaranteed to win, South assuredly holding ♠A for his opening bid...North originally Passed and has already shown up with ♥A and can't have ♠A as well. Declarer can save a trick by ruffing the third heart with ♦J, cashing ♦Q, drawing South's ♦10, and thus only losing a spade to South's ♠A. **Sinner** status to **declarer**.

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4♣; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +130: NS 4♣=

Saints & Sinners

At another table South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠, North Passed and East bid diamonds at the 2, 3, and 4 level after South rebid 3♣ and North, on the following round belatedly showed support for partner by bidding 4♣. South cashed ♣ AK and then switched to ♥ J, declarer winning in hand as dummy and North played low. Declarer subsequently lost the 2 major suit aces to finish one down for a net loss to E/W of -1.95 Imps.

At another table East also declared 4♦ after a similar auction to that outlined above. South cashed ♣ AK and continued with a third club. Declarer elected to discard ♥ 5 from dummy while ruffing in hand with ♦ 2. Declarer drew trumps and eventually lost two major suit aces for one down. 4♣ by N/S can make so 4♦ -1 represents a minor plus for E/W.

At nine tables E/W contracted 3♦. At seven of these table declarer emerged with nine tricks via a seven diamonds in hand and a trick from each major suit. **Sinner** status to the **Souths** who offered a ruff and discard to declarer even though on this occasion it didn't cost. It might have!

At another table East also contracted 3♦ after South opened 1♣, West overcalled 1♠, North bid 2♥ and East bid 3♦ which became the final contract. At this table South cashed ♣ AK and then switched to ♥ J, declarer playing low from dummy as North rose with ♥ A. North switched to a diamond and declarer cashed three round of trumps and then cashed ♥ Q. Declarer next led ♠ 2 and South erred by following with ♠ Q, intending to win the second round with ♠ A and thus deprive declarer of any further spades. Unfortunately South focused on the wrong thing... depriving declarer of access to spade winners and didn't see foresee what was about to happen. Declarer won with dummy's ♠ K and promptly discarded her remaining spade on dummy's ♥ K! An impossible ten tricks to declarer. **Sinner** status to **South** who should have been able to count declarer's hand... 2 hearts, 2 diamonds, 2 clubs and hence only two spades. And dummy's ♥ K looking ripe for the discard of a spade from hand!

At another table South cashed ♣ AK and then played a heart to North's ♥ A who continued with another heart to declarer's ♥ Q. Declarer cashed two diamonds, ending in dummy. Declarer now led ♥ K and discarded ♠ 2 from hand as South ruffed with ♦ 10. Declarer duly lost the setting trick to South's ♠ A. **Sinner** status to **declarer** who turned nine tricks into eight!

Board 7

South Deals

Both Vul

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

NS 4♣; EW 3♦; NS 1♥; Par +130: NS 4♣=

Saints & Sinners

At yet another table South opened 1 ♣ West overcalled 1 ♠, North Doubled (not alerted!), East Passed (!!!), South re-bid 2 ♣ and West bid 2 ♠ (the five card spade suit was shown with the first overcall. This re-bid promises at least six spades. West would have been better advised to bid 2 hearts, at least offering partner a choice of suits.) North bid 3 ♣ and East finally came to life with 3 ♦ which became the final contract. South cashed ♣ AK and then played a heart to North's ♥ A who continued with another heart to declarer's ♥ Q. Declarer cashed two diamonds, ending in dummy. Declarer now led ♥ K and discarded ♠ 2 from hand as South ruffed with ♦ 10. Declarer duly lost the setting trick to South's ♠ A. Declarer is guilty of poor play. Declarer has already lost three tricks and can afford to lose one more...but not two more! To date South has shown up with ♣ AK, ♥ J, i.e. eight hcp. Yes, declarer might also hold ♣ Q but that still leaves declarer short of values for an opening bid. Discarding a spade from hand while South ruffs, and with another spade still in hand, is not a winning play. Declarer would have been better advised to draw South's ♦ 10 and play on spades for a ninth trick! **Sinner** status to **declarer**.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110; NS 2♠=

Not many contracts make on this board. and I suspect that E/W will play in NT or hearts, but without much success. East is likely to open 1♥ and some Souths will overcall 2♣ where Pass might be better advised. A Takeout Double on the South hand is not ideal with only three spades and a doubleton diamond. West might bid 2♦ and East may bid 2NT. A club lead from South sees declarer in a very precarious position! And everything is wrong...in particular, both red suits are lying unfavourably for declarer. Double-dummy it can be seen that declarer's best option is to immediately play on hearts...from hand! Note that if South leads a club North will play ♣ 10 which should warn South that declarer holds ♣ KQ8. With either honour, North would play it at trick one. When North plays ♣ 10 then declarer has ♣ 8 (note ♣ 9 in dummy!)as well as ♣ KQ. Easy!

Saints & Sinners

The hand was played in NT at eleven tables...ten times by E/W and once by N/S! At one table East opened 1♥ and South made an injudicious Takeout Double. West bid 1NT and North volunteered 2♦ (personally speaking, if I was going to bid with the North hand in this situation, I would bid 2♠ in the light of North's Takeout Double of East's 1♥, which is more likely to reflect a hand with 4 spades. Also, West's bid of 1NT rather than 1♠ gives extra weight to the likelihood that partner has spade support. But the real problem lies with South's Takeout Double). After East Passed South now bid 2NT which became the final contract. The defensive onslaught was ruthless. West led ♥ 3 (standard leads would suggest ♥ 8), East playing ♥ K which declarer won with ♥ A (ducking might be better). Declarer now led ♦ 4 to West's ♦ 2, dummy's ♦ J and East's ♦ A. East continued with ♥ J, declarer ducking. East should now continue with ♥ 6, a clear suit preference signal for a club, but actually played ♥ 10, declarer winning with ♥ Q as West discarded ♣ 3. Declarer continued with ♦ 9, West covering with ♦ 10 as declarer won with dummy's ♦ K. Declarer now led ♣ 5, East playing ♣ K as declarer won with ♣ A and continued with a club to dummy's ♣ 10, East winning with ♣ Q. East now cashed ♥ 9 and when declarer discarded ♦ 3 from dummy E/W could not be stopped from taking the rest of the tricks. East cashed ♥ 7 and then played a spade, West cashing ♠ AK, ♦ Q7 for FOUR DOWN! Note that declarer could have saved one trick by retaining ♦ 83 in dummy. **Sinner** status to **South** for making an inappropriate Takeout Double and, to a lesser extent, to **North** for making a free bid with light values.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At one table East opened 1♥ (five card), South bid 2♣ and West Doubled (not alerted but actually Takeout). North Passed and East bid 2 NT (12-14). South led ♣ 4 to North's ♣ 10 and declarer's ♣ K. Declarer cashed ♦ A and continued with ♦ 6, South following with ♦ 9, declarer playing ♦ 10 from dummy as North won with ♦ J. North returned ♣ 5, declarer playing ♣ 8 from hand as South won with ♣ J. South now cashed ♣ A62 as declarer discarded ♠ 4 and ♦ 5 from dummy while North discarded ♥ 2, ♥ 4, ♥ 5. Declarer discarded ♠ 2 and ♥ 9 from hand. South continued with ♠ 3, dummy's ♠ K winning as North followed with ♠ 5 and declarer played ♠ 9. Declarer now led ♥ 8 from dummy and North discarded ♠ 7 while declarer followed with ♥ 7 and South won with ♥ Q. So, South is now on lead and holds ♠ Q6, ♥ A6. Dummy holds ♠ A, ♥ 3, ♦ Q7. How should South continue and how many tricks should declarer make? South should cash ♥ A and continue with a spade which declarer will win with dummy's ♠ A. Declarer will then concede a diamond to North's ♦ K leaving declarer FOUR down! **BUT**, South suffered a lack of clear thinking and cashed ♥ A and exited on a heart, into declarer's known ♥ KJ10, leaving declarer to score the last three tricks for only two down instead of four down!!! Declarer clearly doesn't hold ♦ K (why would declarer, holding ♦ AKQ between the two hands, lose a trick to North's ♦ J on the second round of the play of the suit?). **Sinner** status to **South**.

At another table East opened 1♥, South bid 2♣, West Doubled (not alerted), East bid 2 NT (12-14?) and West raised to 3 NT. As E/W play a strong NT I suspect that E/W may have had a bidding misunderstanding re East's 2 NT rebid. South led ♣ 4 to dummy's ♣ 9, North's ♣ 10 and declarer's ♣ K. Declarer cashed ♦ A and continued with a diamond to South's ♦ 9, dummy's ♦ 10 and North's ♦ J. North returned ♣ 5 and South won with ♣ J when declarer followed with ♣ 8, cashed ♣ A62 as North discarded three hearts while declarer discarded ♠ 4, ♥ 3 from dummy and declarer discarded ♠ 2, ♥ 7. South now cashed ♥ A, North discarding ♠ 5. South continued with a spade to dummy's ♠ A. Declarer now led ♦ 5 from dummy, North winning with ♦ 8 as declarer discarded ♥ 10 and South holding ♠ Q6, ♥ Q6, erred by discarding ♠ 6...should have discarded ♥ 6. Now North erred by cashing ♦ K instead of returning a spade to dummy's ♠ A [Note: Declarer has absolutely no means of getting to his hand] By cashing ♦ K, North established dummy's ♦ Q as a winner with ♠ K still in dummy. By playing a spade North would have established ♠ J as a winner upon gaining lead with ♦ K. Declarer ended 4 down instead of 5 down. **Sinner** status to **North**.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110; NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At two tables West declared 1 NT (at one table South made an inappropriate Takeout Double of East's opening bid of 1♥). At both tables North led ♦ 3, declarer playing low from dummy as South played ♦ 9 and declarer won with ♦ 10. And now declarer has **'the tempo'**! Declarer ran ♥ 8 to South's ♥ Q... South returned ♦ 4, declarer winning with dummy's ♦ A. Declarer played a heart from dummy, South ducking and then winning the continuation as declarer discarded a club from hand. South now led ♠ 3, declarer winning in hand with ♠ A. Declarer next played C7 to dummy's ♣ K and South's ♣ A. Declarer was now in a great position. Declarer won the spade continuation from South with ♠ K and then played a club to dummy's ♣ Q and cashed ♥ KJ for eight tricks.

At the other table North also led ♦ 3, declarer winning in hand with ♦ J and again declarer has 'the tempo' and can establish eight tricks via 2 spade, 3 hearts, 2 diamonds, 1 club. All this due to the lead. Note that a club lead from North would produce an entirely different result. South can duck the opening lead if declarer plays ♣ K or ♣ Q from dummy. South will win with ♥ Q and can return a diamond, North gaining the lead via ♦ KJ and then continuing with a club through dummy. N/S will score at least 1 spade, 2 hearts, 2 diamonds, 4 clubs, and can actually keep declarer out of dummy so that he scores NO hearts!

At another table East opened 1♥, South bid 2♣, West bid 2♦, East rebid 2 NT and West raised to 3 NT. South led ♣ 2 to North's ♣ 10 and declarer's ♣ Q. Declarer then cashed ♦ A and continued with ♦ 6 to dummy's ♦ 10 and North's ♦ J. North returned ♣ 5 to declarer's ♣ 8 and South's ♣ J who then cashed ♣ A62. Declarer discarded ♠ 4, ♥ 3 from dummy while North discarded three hearts and declarer discarded ♠ 2, ♥ 7. South made a MAJOR mistake by cashing ♥ A and continuing with ♥ 6 straight into the jaws of declarer's ♥ KJ10. Declarer claimed and emerged with seven tricks when she could have been held to FOUR!!! N/S won one of the last six tricks when they should have won FOUR. South should exit on a spade instead of cashing ♥ A. Declarer is now stuck in dummy and has few options...and none of them are good. If declarer plays another diamond, North wins, South discarding ♥ 6, and North exits on a spade. Declarer wins in dummy and must exit on another diamond, or a heart, North wins the former and South discards ♥ Q and wins the next spade and cashes ♥ A. If South cashes two top spades and then exits on a heart, South can UNBLOCK ♠ Q on the second top spade and partner will win the third spade! All roads lead to FIVE down! **Sinner** status to **North**.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110; NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At another table West also declared 1 NT after South made a Takeout Double over East's opening 1♥. North led ♦ 8, declarer winning with ♦ 10. Declarer led ♥ 3 (should have led ♥ 8 in case North holds ♥ Qxx, otherwise South can duck and declarer is stuck in dummy and cannot continue with another heart without losing to North's ♥ Qx! Leading ♥ 8 means that if it wins declarer can play a second heart FROM hand). Anyway, South won with ♥ Q and continued with a diamond to dummy's ♦ A. Declarer now played ♥ 7 to ♥ 8 in hand as South followed with ♥ 6! [Note: Declarer should have continued with ♥ K, ♥ 10, or ♥ 9 thereby establishing three heart winners in dummy with entry guaranteed via ♣ KQ. **BUT**, upon winning second heart with ♥ 8 declarer now cashed ♠ A and then played ♣ 3 to North's ♣ 10, dummy's ♣ K and South's ♣ A. South exited on ♠ 6 (exiting on ♠ Q is better), declarer playing low from hand as North won with ♠ J. North exited on ♠ 7, declarer winning perforce with ♠ K. Declarer played a club to dummy's ♣ Q and South scored the remaining tricks with ♥ A, ♣ J64 for two down. **Saintly** status to N/S, **Breda Cunningham & Sheelagh McInerney**. Note that declarer could have done MUCH better by winning the second spade with dummy's ♠ K and exiting on a spade, South winning perforce with ♠ Q which was why I suggested that South should have exited on ♠ Q and not ♠ 6....now South cannot be endplayed. After winning with ♠ Q South would be forced to play a club INTO dummy's ♣ Q8. Winning the first club declarer could then continue with a heart forcing South to win (♥ A) and then return another club to dummy's ♣ Q and declarer would then cash two more hearts to emerge with NINE tricks!

At another table East opened 1 NT and South led ♣ 4 to North's ♣ 10 and declarer's ♣ Q. Declarer now played ♦ 6 from hand to dummy's ♦ Q and North's ♦ K. North played a club to South's ♣ J. South now cashed ♣ A62, dummy discarding ♠ 4, ♦ 2 while North discarded ♥ 5, ♥ 2, ♥ 4, and declarer discarded ♠ 2, ♠ 7 (should discard ♥ J, or ♥ 10 or ♥ 9 instead of ♥ 7). South continued with ♠ 3 to dummy's ♠ K. Declarer at this table also led ♥ 3 to her ♥ J, South winning with ♥ Q. South next cashed ♥ A and continued with ♦ 9, declarer winning in hand with ♦ A. Declarer then cashed ♥ K and played a spade to dummy's ♠ A, leaving ♥ 10 stranded in her hand! Declarer lost the last trick to North's ♦ J and emerged with five tricks instead of six! **Sinner** status to **East**.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At another table East opened 1♥, South bid 2♣, West bid 2♦, East rebid 2NT and West raised to 3NT. South led ♠ 3, declarer playing low from dummy as North won with ♠ J. North now switched to ♣ 10, declarer rising with ♣ Q as South won with ♣ A. The presence of ♣ 9 in dummy rightly dissuaded South from continuing with another club! South reverted to a spade, dummy's ♠ K winning. Declarer now made an anti-percentage play of leading ♦ 10 from dummy. [Note: To be effective it requires South to hold ♦ 98 (doubleton) and North to hold ♦ KJ43...If North plays ♦ J then declarer wins with ♦ A and continues with ♦ 6 and covers South's ♦ 9 with dummy's ♦ Q. If North wins with ♦ K then dummy's ♦ 752 are winners. And if North ducks then declarer can continue with dummy's ♦ 7! **BUT**, it's anti-percentage because of the fact that it requires both North and South to have very specific cards...against the odds!] North covered with ♦ J and declarer won with ♦ A. Declarer continued with ♦ 6, South playing ♦ 9 and declarer playing dummy's ♦ Q as North won with ♦ K. North erred by cashing ♦ 8, setting up two diamond winners in dummy! North compounded her previous error by continuing with a heart instead of a club through declarer's ♣ K8, setting up three winners for South! Declarer won with ♥ Q, cashed ♥ A and continued with ♥ 6 to declarer's ♥ KJ. Declarer won the rest of the tricks to finish only two down! **Sinner** status to **North**. N/S only scored 3 of the last eight tricks! If North played a club after winning ♦ K then N/S can score at least 5 of the last eight tricks!

At two other tables East declared 2NT after opening 1♥. At one table South Doubled whereas at the other South overcalled 2♣. Both Wests bid 2♦ and both Easts rebid 2NT. At both tables South led ♣ 4 to North's ♣ 10, one declarer winning with ♣ K whereas the other won with ♣ Q. The play diverged at this point. At one table declarer cashed ♦ A and continued with ♦ 6 to South's ♦ 9, dummy's ♦ 10 and North's ♦ J. North returned ♣ 5 and South won with ♣ J and then cashed ♣ A62 as North discarded three hearts while ♠ 4, ♦ 5 were discarded from dummy while declarer shed ♠ 2 and ♠ 9. South exited on ♠ 3 to dummy's ♠ K, declarer following with ♠ 10. Declarer now finessed ♥ 8 to South's ♥ Q as North discarded ♠ 7. Unbelievably, declarer cashed ♥ A, North discarding ♠ 8 as declarer followed with ♥ K as if South would not know that declarer also had ♥ J109. **BUT**, low and behold, South continued with ♥ 6 into declarer's ♥ J109. Two down instead of FOUR down. **Absolute Sinner** status to **South**.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At the other table (see bottom of previous page) declarer played a spade to dummy's ♠ K and finessed ♥ 8 to South's ♥ Q. South continued with ♦ 4 to dummy's ♦ 10, North's ♦ J and declarer's ♦ A. [Note: South's continuation of ♦ 4 instead of ♦ 9 has now left the defense's diamond position BLOCKED (South holds ♦ 9 and North holds ♦ K83! N/S have two diamond tricks but cannot cash them!)] Declarer continued with ♦ 6 from hand, South following with the blocking ♦ 9 as declarer played dummy's ♦ Q, thus unblocking the suit for the defense, and North won with ♦ K. North wisely refrained from cashing ♦ 8 and continued with ♣ 5, South winning with ♣ J as declarer followed with ♣ 8. Declarer now cashed ♣ A62, North discarding her three hearts as dummy discarded ♠ 4 and ♦ 2 while declarer discarded ♥ 9 and ♠ 9. South next cashed ♥ A. South now holds ♠ Q6, ♥ 6 while dummy holds ♠ A, ♦ 75. South knows that declarer is holding ♥ KJ and either a diamond or a spade (If North's first spade discard was a count signal then South would know whether declarer's last card was a spade or a diamond!) This is a simple case of 'the devil you know' versus 'the devil you don't know'. South should clearly lead a spade, putting declarer in dummy where he cannot get to hand UNLESS he holds the ♦ 8...and if declarer does hold the ♦ 8 then South cannot prevent declarer from scoring the last three tricks! **BUT**, South led ♥ 6 straight into the jaws of declarer's ♥ KJ, giving the declarer the last three tricks. If South had played the spade, declarer would have lost two of the last three tricks. North winning ♦ 8 at trick 12 and N/S cashing a spade winner at trick thirteen! **Absolute Sinner** status to South.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At two tables West declared 2♦ after East opened 1♥. At one table South overcalled 2♣ whereas at the other South made a Takeout Double. At both tables North led ♣ 10 to dummy's ♣ Q and South's ♣ A. At both tables South switched to ♠ 3, declarer winning in dummy. Both declarers continued with a diamond to dummy's ♦ A and a second diamond to South's ♦ 9, declarer's ♦ 10 and North's ♦ J. Both North players continued with a spade to South's ♠ Q, declarer winning in hand. The play at both tables diverged at this point. At one table declarer continued with ♦ Q, North winning with ♦ K. North cashed ♠ J and continued with ♠ 8 as dummy and South discarded hearts and declarer discarded a club. N/S duly scored ♦ 8 and ♥ AQ for three down.

At the other table declarer, after winning the second top spade played a heart to dummy's ♥ K and South's ♥ A. South played a spade to North's ♠ J who then continued with ♣ 5 to dummy's ♣ K. Declarer next led ♥ J, South winning with ♥ Q. South cashed ♣ J and continued with another club as North duly scored ♦ K8 to leave declarer three down. Well defended at both tables and **Saintly** status to the respective N/S pairs... **Evelyn Clarke & Geraldine Coyne** and **Frankie McGreevy & Bridie Redahan**.

By stark contrast, 2♦ was also contracted at two other tables with entirely different outcomes to that achieved at the two previous tables. At both tables South overcalled 2♣ and North led ♣ 10. At one table declarer rose with dummy's ♣ K, South winning with ♣ A. South erred by continuing with a club which declarer won with dummy's ♣ 8. Declarer cashed ♦ A and continued with ♦ 6 to South's ♦ 9, declarer's ♦ 10 and North's ♦ J. North now played ♥ 2 to dummy's ♥ J and South's ♥ Q. South now erred by switching to a small spade instead of playing another club to remove dummy's ♣ Q, an entry for an established heart which could provide declarer with a discard for a losing spade! Declarer won the trick with ♠ A and continued with ♦ 5, North winning with ♦ 8. North failed to spot the danger of dummy's hearts and continued with a second heart to dummy's ♥ 9 and South's ♥ A. Too late, South switched to a club but the failure to do so earlier would now cost N/S as declarer won with dummy's ♣ Q while North discarded ♥ 5 and cashed ♥ K, discarding ♠ 4 from hand to escape for one down. [Note: North could have ruffed the third club with ♦ K and exited on a spade thus ensuring an extra trick for N/S as declarer could not access dummy for a spade discard on ♥ K.] **Sinner** status to N/S.

Board 8

West Deals
None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110; NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At the second table declarer also rose with dummy's ♣ K, South winning with ♣ A. But at this table South switched to ♠ 3, declarer winning with ♠ A as North played ♠ 7 (showing count?). Declarer continued with ♥ 3 to dummy's ♥ J, South winning with ♥ Q. South now continued with ♠ Q, declarer winning in hand with ♠ K. Declarer now played another heart to South's ♥ A. South exited on ♠ 6 to North's ♠ J. North continued with ♠ 8 declarer ruffing with dummy's ♦ 6 as South covered with ♦ 9 and declarer overruffed with ♦ 10. Declarer continued with a diamond to dummy's ♦ A and then cashed ♥ K, discarding a losing club from hand. Declarer continued with another club and with ♦ Q75 in hand and where North held ♦ KJ8, could not be prevented from winning one more trump trick to escape for one down. Well played and well defended. Sainly status to declarer, **Deirdre O'Halloran** and defenders **Henry Curran & Michael MacDonagh**.

At seven tables East declared 2♥ with two declarers emerging with an improbable eight tricks while the other five suffered a one trick defeat! At six tables East opened 1♥, South overcalled 2♣, West bid 2♦ and East rebid 2♥! At the other table East opened 1NT, South overcalled 2♣, West bid 2♦ and East now bid her five card heart suit.

At one table South led ♦ 9, dummy's ♦ 10 being covered by North's ♦ J as declarer won with ♦ A. Declarer now played a spade to dummy's ♠ K and then finessed ♥ 8, losing to South's ♥ Q. South continued with ♠ 6 (♠ Q would be better), dummy's ♠ A winning the trick. Declarer played another heart, South winning with ♥ A. South cashed ♠ Q...would have been better if South had played ♠ Q on 1st or 2nd round so that North could win the 3rd round and continue with a 4th spade. South now held ♥ 6, ♦ 4, ♣ AJ642...of the seven cards in South's hand, any one of six would have seen declarer fail by one trick...**BUT**, South played the only card to let the contract make...♣ A. **Sinner** status to **South**. On a small club lead from South, North will play ♣ 10 forcing declarer to win with ♣ K (or ♣ Q). South will subsequently score two more clubs with ♣ AJ sitting over declarer's ♣ K8.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At another table South led ♠ 3, declarer winning with dummy's ♠ A as North played S5. Declarer incorrectly led ♥ 3 instead of ♥ 8 and finessed ♥ J, losing to South's ♥ Q. South continued with ♠ 6, dummy's ♠ K winning the trick. Declarer continued with ♥ 8, correctly overtaking with ♥ 10, South winning with ♥ A. South cashed ♠ Q and continued with ♦ 9 to dummy's ♦ 10, North's ♦ J and declarer's ♦ A. Declarer cashed ♥ K and continued with ♦ 6 to South's ♦ 9, dummy's ♦ Q, North winning with ♦ K. North now held ♠ J, ♦ 83, ♣ 105 while dummy held ♦ 752, ♣ 97. Declarer held ♥ 97, ♣ KQ8...and South held ♣ AJ642. North could have safely played ♠ J, forcing declarer to ruff and then lead clubs from her hand OR, North could play ♦ 8 forcing declarer to ruff and lead clubs from her hand (clearly declarer has no means of accessing the established ♦ 7)...**BUT**, North decided to lead clubs, partner's suit and placed the ♣ 10 on the virtual table. Declarer rose with ♣ Q and South was at the crossroads...and took the wrong turn when she won with ♣ A and then found herself leading back into declarer's ♣ K8! Eight tricks and contract made to declarer. **Sinner** status to **South**, who, as often happens at the bridge table, played without thinking. When North leads ♣ 10 it is quite clear that declarer holds ♣ KQ(x). South made the 'instinctive' play rather than the thoughtful play. South should DUCK, leaving her in a position to win the next club trick with ♣ J and then cash ♣ A. Note also that North might have paid closer attention to the ♣ 973 in dummy and realised that it might be more prudent to have declarer play the club suit from her hand. That can be achieved by playing ♠ J (or ♦ 8) forcing declarer to ruff and eventually lead a club from hand thus avoiding the situation that actually arose at the table. But certainly South should have paid attention to dummy's ♣ 973 and realised that by winning the first club she was going to have to return a club and dummy's ♣ 97 was now a very real threat. Of course, South could also have ducked the first club leaving her with ♣ AJ64 sitting over declarer's ♣ K8. **Sinner** status to North and South, but **mostly South**.

At the remaining five tables declarer failed by one trick where N/S won 1 spade, 2 hearts, 1 diamond, and 2 clubs, OR ♣ A with North also scoring a club ruff.

BUT, at two tables the defense threw a lifeline but declarer failed to grasp it! Continued over.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110; NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At one table against East's 2♥, South led ♦ 9 to dummy's ♦ 10, North's ♦ J and declarer's ♦ A. Declarer played ♦ 6 at trick two, dummy's ♦ Q losing to North's ♦ K. North continued with ♣ 10 to declarer's ♣ K, South winning with ♣ A. South now switched to ♠ 3, dummy's ♠ A winning and declarer then finessing ♥ 8 to South's ♥ Q. South now played ♠ 6, dummy's ♠ K winning. Declarer now played a second heart to her ♥ 9 and South's ♥ A. South cashed ♠ Q and then played ♣ 2 and declarer, with ♣ 97 in dummy and ♣ Q8 in hand, carelessly played dummy's ♣ 9 which held the trick! When declarer continued with another club North ruffed with ♥ 5 for the setting trick!!! **Sinner** status to **South** and **declarer**.

Three observations:

- 1) declarer should have played ♣ 7 instead of ♣ 9 and could then win in hand with ♣ 8, draw trumps and claim...
- 2) once declarer won with dummy's ♣ 9, declarer should have led a diamond and could then ruff a diamond with ♥ K or ♥ J or ♥ 10, and draw trumps and claim. Declarer should have remembered South's 2♣ bid which surely is based on at least five clubs leaving North with a doubleton, both of which have now been played...
- 3) when North leads ♣ 10 it clearly signals that declarer holds at least ♣ KQ. South has two options when declarer plays ♣ K ...a) duck... b) win with ♣ A and DO NOT return a club. South can simply exit on ♥ 6 and sit back and wait for ♣ J to win a trick!

At the other table, South led ♦ 9, declarer playing dummy's ♦ 10, North contributing ♦ J as declarer won with ♦ A. Declarer played a spade to dummy's ♠ A and then ran ♥ 8 to South's ♥ Q. South continued with ♦ 4, declarer playing low from dummy as North went asleep and played ♦ K instead of ♦ 8. North continued with ♦ 8, declarer discarding a spade from hand as South ruffed with ♥ 6. South now cashed ♣ A and continued with a club, declarer winning with ♣ Q. Declarer played ♥ K, South winning with ♥ A and then giving partner a club ruff for one down! **BUT**, after declarer won the second club with ♣ Q declarer could have played a spade to dummy's ♠ K and then led ♦ Q, discarding ♣ K from hand leaving South to ruff with ♥ A...**BUT** no club ruff now for North! Sometimes playing a bridge hand is like a juggler trying to keep track of all the moving bits! **Sinner** status to **North**, **South**, and **declarer**.

Board 8

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 2♠; EW 1♥; NS 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♠=

Saints & Sinners

At one table East opened 1♥, South overcalled 2♣, West Passed and East Doubled (Not alerted). All passed and West led ♠ A and then switched to ♥ 8, South winning with ♥ Q. Declarer played a club to dummy's ♣ 10, East winning with ♣ Q. East continued with ♥ 9, declarer winning with ♥ A. Declarer now cashed ♣ A and continued with ♠ Q, West ducking and winning the spade continuation with ♠ K. West continued with ♦ Q (small diamond is adequate), declarer rising with dummy's ♦ K as East won with ♦ A. East cashed ♥ K and continued with ♥ J, declarer ruffing with ♣ 6 as West overruffed with ♣ 9. East subsequently scored a trick with ♣ K to leave declarer two down. E/W earned a significant +7.82 Imps. Declarer could have escaped for one down by playing another round of trumps after cashing ♣ A.

A very interesting hand from the perspective of bidding, play and defense. Sadly, as is often the case in these columns, there were more Sinners than Saints!

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

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

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

What a list of makeable contracts. 4 ♣ or a one level contract in any other denomination. I suspect that the hand will mostly be played in NT and the results will be varied, and in some cases, strange! On a diamond lead from South, declarer can scrape seven tricks in either of two ways...1) finesse ♥ J at trick two... or 2) play on clubs. Note that from a defensive perspective South MUST play low on the lead of ♣ Q (or ♣ J) from declarer's hand. Some South's will find that difficult! North MUST win the first club and return a diamond. South can then win the second club and cash four more diamond winners before declarer can claim the remainder to emerge with precisely seven tricks.

So, seven tricks in NT or ten in a club partscore. Or could it be that some declarers will make 3 NT or even 5 ♣?

This is not an easy hand for N/S to defend.....

Saints & Sinners

This was a hand of extremes...3 NT+3 at one table and 3 NT-3 at another a table. And there were the usual oddball contracts and results.... 6 NT-2, 4 ♥-4 and several other less extreme examples.

At one table East opened 2 ♣, West bid 2 ♦ (relay?), East re-bid 2 ♥, West bid 3 ♣ and East jumped to 6 NT!!! South found the paralyzing (for the defense) lead of ♦ K!!! Declarer won with ♦ A in hand and then cashed ♥ A...with absolutely no reason to do so! She then switched to ♣ Q, and South rose with ♣ K and continued with ♠ 10, declarer winning in hand with ♠ A and continuing with ♣ J, North winning with ♣ A. North continued with ♠ Q, declarer winning in hand with ♠ K. Declarer thoughtlessly continued with her third club and cashed all dummy's club winners and ♦ QJ and then conceded a spade to North because she couldn't get back to her hand to cash ♥ K. Okay, cashing ♥ A at trick two was unnecessary BUT after winning the second spade declarer could have cashed ♥ K, discarding dummy's losing spade and dummy would then be 'high'. **Sinner** status to **declarer** and to **South** for a hugely costly lead. Why South opted for the lead of ♦ K instead of a standard 4th best diamond is a mystery to me and I suspect most others! And **Sinner** status to **declarer** for not scoring eleven tricks!

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

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

♠ 10 9 4	♠ 10 9 4
♥ 6 3	♥ 6 3
♦ K 7 6 5 3 2	♦ K 7 6 5 3 2
♣ K 9	♣ K 9

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

Saints & Sinners

At another table East opened 2♣ and rebid 2♥ over partner's 2♦ response, West bid 3♣ and East closed the auction with 3NT. South led ♦ 3 (3rd/5th leads), declarer rising with dummy's ♦ J as North followed with ♦ 9. Declarer next finessed ♥ J and when it won declarer tabled ♣ Q which South and North ducked!!! Declarer continued with ♣ J... and the roof fell in for the defense as South's ♣ K and North's ♣ A collided. Declarer won the diamond return with ♦ A and led ♣ 4 to access dummy's club winners. Declarer finished with twelve tricks. North's duck of the first club created a swing of FIVE tricks. If North wins the first club with ♣ A and continues with a diamond, South would win the second club and cash four diamonds to hold declarer to seven tricks! North might feel that by ducking the first club he can deny declarer access to dummy's clubs. First of all, the diamond lead guarantees that South has ♦ A or ♦ K (low card from a suit with an honour...second highest from a poor suit without an honour!). Secondly, if declarer has three clubs then declarer cannot be deprived access to dummy's clubs unless declarer holds a blocking combination, e.g. KQJ. But if that's the case then ducking the first club offers no benefit. And if South holds three clubs, again, ducking the first club brings no advantage to the defense.

At four other tables East contracted 3NT and in each case declarer emerged with eleven tricks! At one table East opened 2NT and West bid 3NT. South lead ♦ 5, dummy's ♦ Q winning the trick. Declarer next played a club to his ♣ J and South's ♣ K...and that was the end of the defense! South continued with a diamond to declarer's ♦ A and declarer played ♣ Q, North winning with ♣ A. North switched to ♥ 10 declarer winning in hand and then playing his third club to dummy's ♣ 8. Declarer rattled off dummy's clubs and North discarded hearts leaving declarer to score the rest of the tricks with ♠ AK, ♥ KJ.

It was similar defense at three other tables. South leading ♦ 5, declarer winning in dummy and leading a club to ♣ Q (or ♣ J) South winning with ♣ K... and that's the end of the defense. 3NT CANNOT make except though a mis-defense which is precisely what happened at each of these four tables. The culprit is North who should rise with ♣ A on the first round of the suit and continue with a diamond. Now South can win the second club and cash four diamond winners. **Sinner** status to the **four Norths**.

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners

At one table East opened 2♦, West relayed with 2♥ and North showed hearts with a Double. East rebid 2NT and West raised to 3NT. South led ♥6 and that was the end of the defense as declarer now has 'the tempo' and was able to establish dummy's clubs before the defense could threaten with their diamonds.

At another table South led ♠4 against East's 3NT and again declarer had 'the tempo'. Declarer won the opening lead and played ♣Q from hand, South winning with ♣K and continuing with another spade which declarer ducked. Declarer won the third spade and played ♣J, North winning with ♣A and cashing ♠Q to hold declarer to nine tricks.

At yet another table East opened 2♣, West relayed with 2♦, East rebid 2♥, West bid 3♣, East bid 3NT and West jumped to 5♣. When South led ♦7 that was the end of the defense. Declarer duly lost two top trumps and declarer's ♥K took care of dummy's third spade. Eleven tricks to declarer who was an innocent bystander once South led a diamond!! Unlucky lead.

At one table South led ♠10 against East's 3NT, declarer winning with ♠K. Declarer, with a 6-3 fit in one suit decided to play on her 5-1 fit!!! Declarer cashed ♥AK and then continued with ♥J... and the roof fell in as North won with ♥Q and then cashed ♥109. North continued with ♠Q, declarer ducking but then winning the next spade. Belatedly declarer led ♣J, South winning with ♣K and then returning a club to North's ♣A. North cashed ♠7 and declarer won the last two tricks with ♦A, ♣Q and finished three down, **Absolute Sinner** status to **declarer** for a self-inflicted defeat. And it could have been worse...if South let North win the first club then North would cash ♠7 and continue with a diamond and South would duly score ♦K and ♣K for FOUR down!

At three tables where East declared 2NT South led a diamond and all three declarers won in dummy. Two led a club to ♣Q, losing to South's ♣K whereas the other finessed ♥J and then led ♣Q, South winning with CK. All three played a second club at first opportunity and emerged with ten or eleven tricks. Again, if North rose with ♣A and continued with a diamond declarer would have failed by one trick.

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners

Several other declarers played 2 NT or 3 NT and persisted in playing on hearts even when South showed out on the third round and refused to play on clubs, often discarding dummy's clubs on losing hearts! In some case declarer played one round of clubs and refrained from playing a second round. Several declarers had more than once chance to switch to the club suit but persisted in playing losing hearts to North. I was left with an impression that some declarers did not truly appreciate the simple situation that North also had five hearts and no matter what declarer did North was always going to score at least two heart tricks.

Some observations:

- 1) finessing ♥ J after winning the opening diamond lead in dummy will produce five tricks in only one very specific layout...North must hold exactly HQ109 with South holding H6432. As soon as North follows to the first or second round of hearts with any card other than those three specific cards declarer will score four hearts at most.
- 2) the 6-3 club fit will see the four outstanding clubs break 2-2 approx. 41 times in a 100.
- 3) several declarers scored four club tricks...some scored not even a single club trick
- 4) on a diamond lead from South, declarer has no chance of making nine tricks without scoring at least one club trick EVEN if the heart suit produces four tricks.

At another table South led ♦ 5, declarer winning in dummy while North played ♦ 10 (count signal?) Declarer now played a heart to hear ♥ J and then cashed ♥ AK getting the bad news while discarding precious clubs from dummy! Declarer belatedly led ♣ Q from hand, South winning with ♣ K and continuing with a diamond to declarer's ♦ A. Declarer could still get home by playing ♣ J thereby establishing two winners in dummy...**BUT**, declarer exited on ♥ 8 to North's ♥ 10. North continued with a spade to declarer's ♠ K and declarer had ANOTHER chance to make her contract by simply playing ♣ J...**BUT**, declarer played ♥ 5 to North's ♥ Q and North continued with ♠ Q to declarer's ♠ A. Declarer now played ♣ 4 to North's ♣ A. North cashed ♠ J7 for a two trick defeat. **Absolute sinner** status to **declarer** who had several chances to make the contract and rejected them all.

Board 9

North Deals

E-W Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners

Lastly, at three tables East declared a heart contract. At one table it was 2♥. At another it was 3♥ and the third declarer found herself at the helm in 4♥ when she rebid 4♥ over partner's 2♦ relay after East opened 2♣. Quite simply this is 'crazy bidding'. A simple rebid of 2♥ is adequate on the East hand and E/W should subside in 2NT or even 3NT. 4♥ finished a deserved FOUR down. 3♥ failed by three tricks and even 2♥ failed by one trick.

Some partnerships would do well to spend a little time discussing the bidding of 'big' hands involving 2 level openings!

Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

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

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

Yes, 4♥ is NOT listed above as a Makeable Contract...BUT will the defenders find the play to defeat it? The answer to that question is, by and large, a resounding NO! It takes a spade lead, or switch after East wins the first heart, resulting in a spade ruff by West, to defeat 4♥. And although that defense was not found at many tables (2 to be precise!) many declarers still managed to emerge with only nine tricks! Old habits die hard! Most declarers, on receipt of a diamond lead, played on hearts at first opportunity and duly lost 2 spades, 1 heart, 1 diamond. Declarer can avoid the diamond loser by playing three rounds of clubs, discarding a diamond from the South hand BEFORE playing on trumps. The other big question is whether or not South will bid the heart game? If South opens 2♥ (Weak), North will likely Pass. If South opens 1♥ then game will probably be reached. And if South Passes and North opens 1♠ then a spade contract will likely be reached but probably only at partscore level. And if North opens 1NT then South can 'transfer' and over North's 2♥ reply South faces a decision as to whether he should Pass, raise to 3♥ or bid 4♥? Using the '**Losing Trick Count**' approach the South hand equates to a seven loser hand which is the equivalent of an opening bid at the one level. South can bid 4♥. Note that 4♠ can also be beaten.

Saints & Sinners

At 4 tables N/S bid a spade contract whereas a heart contract was reached at the other 19 tables. At 4 tables 4♥ was reached whereas only 1 other N/S pair reached 3♥ and the rest played the hand in 2♥. In most cases South opened 2♥ and, not surprisingly, that became the final contract.

At one table where South declared 4♥, West led a diamond and declarer, oblivious to the threat posed by the lead, won with ♦ A and immediately played a trump, East winning with ♥ A and the defense then cashed a diamond winner and subsequently scored two top spades to defeat the contract by one trick. **Sinner** status to **declarer** who simply needs to cash three top clubs after winning ♦ A and before playing trumps. Yes, the defense can still beat the contract if East, upon winning with ♥ A, switches to a small spade to West's ♠ K who then returns a spade to partner's ♠ A and receives a spade ruff for one down. But, let the opponents find that defense!

Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners

At two of the other three tables where 4♥ was reached West led a club and thus declarer was able to play on hearts straight away and the contract rolled home when East did not find the spade switch after winning ♥ A.

At the third table, North declared 4♥ after opening 1 NT and South transferred via 2♦. North bid 2♥ and South invited with 3♥. North bid the game despite holding a minimum value hand. East led a diamond and declarer won with dummy's ♦ A and then played three top clubs, discarding dummy's losing diamond. Declarer then led ♥ Q, East winning with ♥ A. At this stage in the play East now has a much clearer picture and a very simple option. Simply put...in order to defeat the contract the defense needs to score three spade tricks. East must switch to a small spade. West will win with ♠ K and return a spade to partner's ♠ A and West will ruff the third spade for one down. **BUT**, East switched to ♠ A and now the defense could no longer engineer a spade ruff for West. **Saintly** status to declarer, **Rosaleen O'Muircheartaigh** who recognised the danger posed by the diamond lead. **Sinner** status to **East**.

At one table where South declared 2♥, West led ♠ K and continued with a spade to partner's ♠ A. East gave partner a spade ruff and West then exited on a diamond. Declarer now played on hearts and E/W scored a fifth trick with a diamond after East won with ♥ A. **Sinner** status to **declarer**.

Six other declarers in 2♥ who received a diamond lead duly lost a diamond trick and only scored nine tricks. **Sinner** status to **all**.

In total, only two declarers in a heart partscore contract played three rounds of clubs after receiving a diamond lead. **Saintly** status to **Marlene O'Connor** and **Muire McLoughlin**.

Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners

One table featured 1 bystander (dummy!), 2 Saints, and 2 Sinners! Yes, I know...that makes five at a table for four! This is what happened. South opened 2♥ (Weak) and all Passed. West led ♥ 9, declarer playing ♥ Q from dummy as East won with ♥ A. East now found the switch of a small spade to West's SK. **BUT**, West, upon winning with SK continued with another heart, dummy's ♥ 10 winning the trick. Declarer continued with a club to his ♣ A and cashed ♥ KJ, West discarding ♣ 4 while East discarded ♦ 2 and ♦ 7 as declarer discarded ♦ 5, ♦ 10 from dummy. Declarer next played ♠ Q from hand...and East ducked!!! Now declarer had eleven tricks in his sights! Declarer played a club to dummy's ♣ K, cashed ♣ Q discarding ♠ 10 from hand and then led ♠ J, ruffing in hand, as East followed with ♠ A. Declarer then entered dummy with ♦ A and discarded his losing diamond from hand on dummy's ♠ 9. 2♥+3 for declarer and **Saintly** status to **South, Frank Reynolds**, the only declarer to score eleven tricks. **Saintly** status also to East, **Carmel Musitano**, for finding the spade switch at trick two. **Sinner** status to **West** for not returning a spade after winning ♠ K. And unfortunately, **East's** previously awarded **Saintly status is tarnished** by her failure to win the second spade trick with ♠ A.

A spade contract was played at four tables. Two N/S pairs reached 4♠. At one of these tables East led ♦ 2 to West's ♦ K and declarer's ♦ A. Declarer immediately cashed three top clubs discarding a diamond from dummy. Declarer then played a spade to dummy's ♠ 8, and West's ♠ K. West now played a fourth club and declarer ruffed in hand with ♠ 5, counter to the normal Ruff & Discard practice of ruffing in the hand with the trump shortage whilst discarding from the hand with the trump length! Declarer now led ♠ 7, East rising with ♠ A and continuing with ♠ 6 as West discarded an informative, and very helpful to East, ♥ 4 (showing an odd number of hearts. i.e. 1, 3 or 5), Declarer won with dummy's ♠ Q and then played ♥ K, West following with ♥ 5, confirming an original three card holding, as declarer tried to fool East by following with ♥ Q from hand! But East knew who to trust and ducked. Declarer continued with another heart to her ♥ 10, East winning with ♥ A as West comfortably produced her third heart meaning that dummy's heart winners were now inaccessible by declarer. E/W now cashed two diamond winners for two down. Well defended and **Saintly** status to E/W, **Orla McEntee & Deirdre O'Halloran**. **Sinner** status to **declarer** who could save a trick by ruffing the 4th club in dummy.

Board 10

East Deals

Both Vul

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

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

Saints & Sinners

At another table South opened 2♥ (Weak) and North, who should have Passed, actually bid 2♠ which South raised to 4♠! East cashed ♥A and then switched to ♦2. Declarer won and did not cash three top clubs discarding the losing diamond from dummy but played a spade to dummy's ♠Q and West's ♠K. West cashed ♦J and continued with a heart, declarer winning in hand with ♥10 as East followed with ♥6. Declarer led a spade to dummy's ♠10, East following with ♠6. Declarer, aware that only ♠A was outstanding, now continued with ♥K, discarding the losing diamond from her hand and subsequently lost just one more trick to East's ♠A to finish one down. **BUT**, declarer could have done one better! After winning with ♦A, declarer could cash three round of clubs, discarding the losing diamond from dummy. Declarer then ruffs a diamond in dummy and returns to hand with ♥Q and duly ruffs her remaining diamond with dummy's ♠Q. Declarer then leads dummy's ♠10 and, no matter what the defense do, declarer will score three trump tricks to add to ♥Q, ♦A and 2 diamond ruffs, 3 clubs. Ten tricks and contract made! The issue that declare faces is what to do with her two small (losing) diamonds. Note also the sequence of spades declarer has at her disposal...♠QJ10987, and the fact that the opponents trumps break 3-2! Just because the List of Makeable Contracts suggests that a particular contract shouldn't make doesn't mean, that in certain circumstance, that it can't be made!

At two other tables North declared 3♠. At one table declarer made nine tricks whereas the other declarer made an overtrick! At the latter table East led ♥A and continued with ♥6. West won the first spade with ♠K and returned a heart...and East failed to ruff! (Misclick or lack of concentration?)

Board 11
 South Deals
 None Vul

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

EW 5♠; EW 4N; EW 3♦; NS 3♣; Par -450: EW 5♠=

Board 12
 West Deals
 N-S Vul

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

S 1N; NS 1♠; NS 1♥; EW 1♦; Par +90: S 1N=

North Deals
Both Vul

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

Board 14
 East Deals
 None Vul

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



EW 6♠; EW 5♥; EW 4N; EW 3♦; EW 2♣; Par -980: EW 6♠=

Board 15
 South Deals
 N-S Vul

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

NS 3N; S 3♥; EW 4♣; NS 2♠; N 2♥; EW 1♦; Par -130: EW 4♣=

Board 16
 West Deals
 E-W Vul

	♠ J 8	
	♥ 9 3	
	♦ A J 5	
	♣ A J 7 4 3 2	
♠ A K 10 9 3	<div style="display: inline-block; width: 40px; height: 40px; background-color: green; color: white; text-align: center; vertical-align: middle;"> <div style="display: flex; flex-direction: column; align-items: center;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; width: 100%;"> W E </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: center; width: 100%;"> N S </div> </div> </div>	♠ Q 7 2
♥ 10 6 2		♥ Q J 5
♦ K Q 7		♦ 9 8 4 3
♣ K 6		♣ Q 8 5
	♠ 6 5 4	
	♥ A K 8 7 4	
	♦ 10 6 2	
	♣ 10 9	

NS 3♣; EW 1N; EW 1♠; NS 1♥; EW 1♦; Par +110: NS 2♣+1

North Deals
None Vul

NS 6♠; NS 5♣; NS 2♥; EW 2♦; Par +980: NS 6♠=

Board 18

East Deals

N-S Vul

♠ K 7 5 3 2		♠ A 4									
♥ A Q 9 5		♥ J 6 4 2									
♦ K		♦ A J 7									
♣ A 5 4		♣ Q 10 8 2									
	<table><tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr><tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr></table>		N		W		E		S		
	N										
W		E									
	S										
		♠ J 10 9 8 6									
		♥ 7									
		♦ 8 6 5 4 3									
		♣ J 9									
		♠ Q									
		♥ K 10 8 3									
		♦ Q 10 9 2									
		♣ K 7 6 3									

EW 4♠; NS 3♥; S 3♣; N 2♣; NS 1♦; Par -420: EW 4♠=

Another example of the **Power of Shape**. When West opens 1 ♠...East can bid 4 ♠...and declarer can make ten tricks as long he does not play a spade until three hearts and a club are ruffed in dummy! On the other hand if North cashes ♠ A and continues with ♠ 4 declarer will need to finesse ♥ Q and then ruff 2 hearts and a club in dummy. Yes, the East hand only possesses two black jacks but the playing strength, in a spade contract, is HUGE. Also, note the favourable vulnerability! If West opens 1 ♠ and North makes a Takeout Double then East should bid 4 ♠.

Saints & Sinners

Despite the fact that 1 ♠ was opened at every table, only 4 E/W pairs reached 4 ♠! **Saintly** status to **David Walsh**, the only East to jump directly to 4 ♠ after partner opened 1 ♠ and North made a Takeout Double. Three other Easts eventually bid 4 ♠: **Louise Mitchell, Henry Curran, Bernie Morrissey**. And **Sinner** status to **all other Easts**.

Of those that reached 4 ♠, one declarer emerged with eleven tricks (heart lead), two made ten tricks and one scored nine tricks! At one table North lead ♣ 2 to dummy's ♣ J, South's ♣ K and declarer's ♣ A. Declarer played ♦ K at trick two, North winning with ♦ A. North cashed ♣ Q and then, perhaps cogniscent of the fact that partner had at most one trump and that it could be ♠ K, played ♠ 4. Declarer beat South's ♠ Q with ♠ K and then proceeded to crossruff hearts in dummy and diamonds in hand and eventually emerged with ten tricks. Note that if North had continued with ♠ A4, drawing two rounds of trumps then declarer would have had to finesse ♥ Q to make ten tricks because the crossruff would now only produce 6 ruffs, ♠ K, ♣ A and ♥ A, i.e. a total of nine tricks!

At another table North led ♥ 2 to South's ♥ K and declarer's ♥ A, Declarer next cashed ♥ Q, discarding ♣ 9 from dummy. Declarer then cashed ♣ A and ruffed a club in dummy. Declarer now led ♠ 8, South playing ♠ Q and North covering with ♠ K as North won ♠ A. North should have realised declarer's intention of cross-ruffing and should have continued with ♠ 4. This would have held declarer to ten tricks. **BUT**, North cashed ♦ A, felling declarer's ♦ K, and continued with ♦ 7 which declarer ruffed in hand. Declarer subsequently cross-ruffed the rest of the hand, ruffing diamonds in hand and hearts and clubs in dummy, and duly made eleven tricks.

Board 18

East Deals

N-S Vul

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

EW 4♠; NS 3♥; S 3♣; N 2♣; NS 1♦; Par -420: EW 4♠=

Saints & Sinners

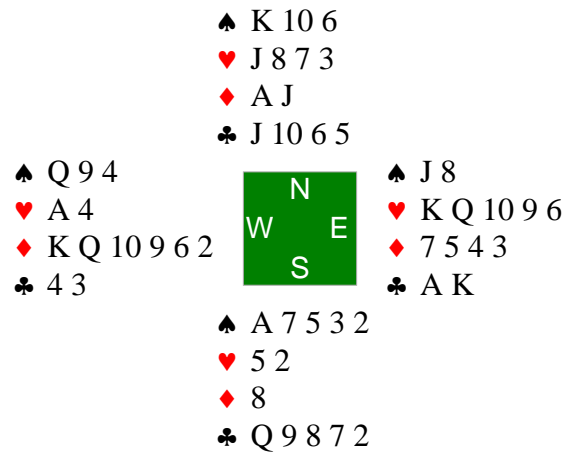
At a third table where West contracted 4♠, North led ♣ 2 to South's ♣ K and declarer's ♣ A. At trick two declarer fatally cashed ♥ A and then ruffed a heart in dummy. Declarer next played a diamond to her ♦ K and North's ♦ A. North cashed ♣ Q and continued with ♥ J, declarer ruffing in dummy. Declarer then led ♠ J, South playing ♠ Q which declarer covered with ♠ K as North won with ♠ A. North unerringly found the only card to defeat the contract when she next played ♠ 4 drawing a trump from the hands of declarer and dummy. This left declarer with a losing heart and club and only one trump in dummy! One down. **Saintly** status to North, **Miriam Moloney**.

At another table West opened 1♠, North Doubled, East Passed (snake in the grass waiting to pounce!) and South bid 2♣. this was Passed to East who now bid an innocent 2♠. South Doubled (not alerted) and that became the final contract when it was followed by three Passes! West rattled off ten tricks giving a score of +670 and a whopping +10.32 Imps! **Sinner** status to N/S who should have a talk about Doubles!

At ten other tables West contracted a spade partscore with declarers emerging with nine, ten or eleven tricks.

It is often the case that the most effective defense against a trump contract where declarer and dummy both have trump length is to lead a trump. ♠ A followed by ♠ 4 would put the defense in a good position in this hand!

Board 19
 South Deals
 E-W Vul



EW 3♥; EW 4♦; EW 2N; NS 2♣; NS 1♠; Par -140: EW 3♥=

Board 20
 West Deals
 Both Vul

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

NS 3♦; NS 1N; W 1♠; EW 1♥; EW 1♣; Par +110: NS 2♦+1

Board 21

North Deals

N-S Vul

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

EW 4N; EW 4♠; EW 4♥; EW 4♦; EW 2♣; Par -430; EW 3N+1

Board 22
 East Deals
 E-W Vul

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



EW 4N; E 5♦; W 4♦; EW 2♥; EW 2♣; E 1♠; Par -630: EW 3N+1

Board 23
 South Deals
 Both Vul

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

EW 2♠; NS 1N; NS 2♦; NS 2♣; EW 1♥; Par -110: EW 2♠=

Board 24

West Deals

None Vul

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

NS 4N; NS 3♥; NS 4♦; EW 2♠; NS 3♣; Par +430: NS 4N=

No time for detailed analysis of results.

Most N/S pairs will likely reach 3 NT and score at least nine tricks. Also, N/S need to be very careful if defending 3 ♠...it takes a spade lead and continuation to beat that contract.

Saints & Sinners

At one table West declared 3 ♠x. North cashed ♦ A, ♥ A and then played ♦ K... Nine tricks are now cold. Declarer simply needs to ruff in hand, cash two top clubs and ruff a club in dummy, ruff a diamond in hand and ruff declarer's last club in dummy and then play on trumps. North eventually scores ♥ K and ♠ K...Nine tricks to declarer. **BUT**, for some unknown reason declarer discarded a club on the ♦ K and suddenly the contract could no longer be made!!!
Sinner status to **declarer**.

At another table **Rhona Bolger** found herself at the helm and made no mistake in the play. North cashed ♥ K, ♥ A, ♦ K and then continued with a third heart, declarer ruffing in hand. Declarer played three rounds of clubs, ruffing the third round in dummy and then ruffed a diamond in hand and ruffed her fourth club in dummy. Declarer then conceded a spade to North's ♠ K. Nine tricks to declarer and **Saintly** status to **Rhona**.

At another table West declared 4 ♠x. North cashed ♥ AK and continued with a third heart, declarer ruffing with ♠ 3. Declarer then played three rounds of clubs, ruffing the third round in dummy with ♠ 7. Declarer was now at the crossroads. How to get back to his hand to ruff his fourth club in dummy. Declarer led dummy's fourth heart and when South followed with ♥ 10, declarer ruffed with ♥ 4 and North overruffed with ♠ 5...and that meant two down! Declarer should have put his strong thinking cap on when South followed to the fourth heart because that meant that North had no hearts left and would surely overruff declarer's ♠ 4. Declarer had an easy solution that would have seen him restrict total losses to four tricks... discard ♦ 9 and rise with ♠ A if South returns a spade after winning ♥ 10 and then ruff the club in dummy and lead dummy's last trump. Ruff a diamond in hand and then play trumps from the top. North will score ♠ K...and that's it. One down instead of two down!