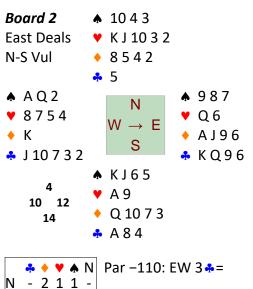


A strong no-trump raised to three will be the standard auction here.

# **PLAY**

With a very awkward choice of leads I'd guess East will lead a diamond, and declarer should plan to go after clubs while keeping West off lead too early, for fear of a potentially embarrassing spade shift. so declarer should win the diamond ace (the finesse can wait) and lead a low club from dummy, planning to put in the nine if West follows small. When East takes the ace and returns a diamond, declarer finesses. Declarer should then play hearts from the top before diamonds. The fall of the V J will allow declarer to come to 12 tricks without needing the spade finesse.



- 2 1 1 -3 - - - 1

North

Pass

East

1 🚣

1 NT

W 3 - - - 1

West

1 💙

### **AUCTION**

Some will open 1 ♣, some 1 ♦ (I prefer to open the suit, clubs, that I want my partner to lead). whatever they bid, the auction is likely to terminate in 1 NT by East -- the issue of whether West might correct to clubs is discussed below. This is also the likely result if East opens a weak no-trump.

### **PLAY**

South

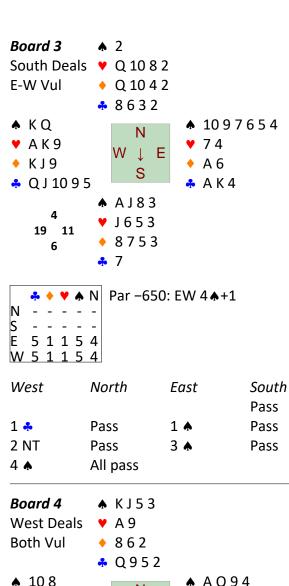
All pass

**Pass** 

After South leads a low spade declarer is in a quandary. if they put in the A Q and it loses, the defenders are likely to be able to run spades and hearts on you. but if you duck the spade unnecessarily you may still be poorly placed. declarer does best to put in the A Q and clear the clubs. Now the defenders are unlikely to cash out -- though if South ducks the A they may get a helpful discard from North.

# **PASSING THOUGHTS**

With 3 • easy to make, maybe West should insist on clubs if partner opens the suit and suggests short hearts?



West has nothing close to a 2 NT opener, with his spade honors not pulling their full weight. After 1 \$-1 \$-2 NT East should consider making a slam try in spades. Rebidding spades should be forcing and asking West to cooperate for slam. Identifying the missing \$\int\$ J may be beyond some pairs. Any pair who reach 6 \$\int\$ may count themselves truly unlucky today.

### **PLAY**

Today there are 11 tricks in spades, but only 10 in no-trumps. With West declarer in no-trumps North had better lead his stronger four-card suit!

# AUCTION

When West opens 1 ◆ and hears a 1 ♥ response they might be tempted to jump to 3 ♥, the extra shape and decent controls make that at worst a slight overbid. the simple raise to 2 ♥ would end the auction, while the jump will see East declare 4 ♥.

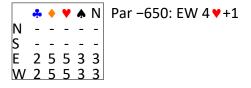
# **PLAY**

South rates to be leading a spade (my choice would be the ♠ 7 (not a namby-pamby unreadable MUD ♠ 6!). This should go to the ten king and ace. As East I think I would win the opening lead and try a heart to the ♥ 10. When the suit breaks and the ♥ J is onside it only remains to guess diamonds (or to guess clubs if you manage to take a ruffing finesse in diamonds) to bring home the slenderest of games.

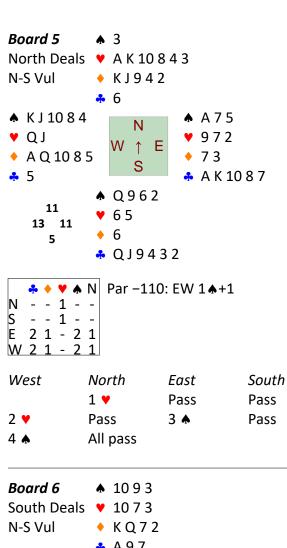
# **PASSING THOUGHTS**

After declarer negotiates trumps he might also consider taking the spade finesse, to pitch a possible club loser, I suppose?

# ♠ 108 ▲ AQ94 N K 10 3 2 Q765 $W \leftarrow E$ AKJ 109 74 S 🚣 K J **863 ↑** 762 10 ♥ J84 Q53 7 A 10 7 4



West	North	East	South
1 •	Pass	1 🔻	Pass
3 ♥	Pass	4 💙	All pass



North has a normal 1 ♥ opening bid, East an equally normal pass -- and NOT a 2 ♣ overcall with a balanced hand and five-card suit.

Many Souths will respond 1 ♠ rather than pass, stealing E/W's best fit in the process. but who knows where the music will stop now. My guess: the red card will be applied to the final contract at many tables!

### **PLAY**

N/S can be held to six tricks in hearts on repeated trump leads, while the black suits handle for eight tricks for E/W.

for example in spades the defenders do best to cash their hearts and play a club. declarer leads a spade to the jack, draws trump while cashing the second club, and can then play on diamonds.

#### **PASSING THOUGHT**

If Mrs Guggenheim held the South cards she would pass 1 ♥; "Only 5 points partner!". Now E/W might bid to 4\*S\* AND misguess the play.

(And for fans of Flannery: (1) My commiserations (2) Maybe a 1 NT response would be in order here?

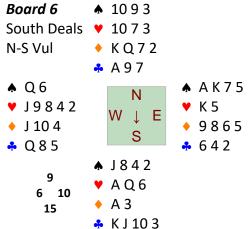
# **AUCTION**

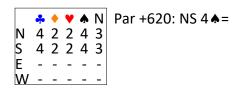
When South opens a strong no-trump it seems right to me to invite rather than drive to game as North. Even if you have to use Stayman to do so, I'm not convinced this nine-count belongs in game facing a minimum hand. South has an easy pass of 2 NT.

### **PLAY**

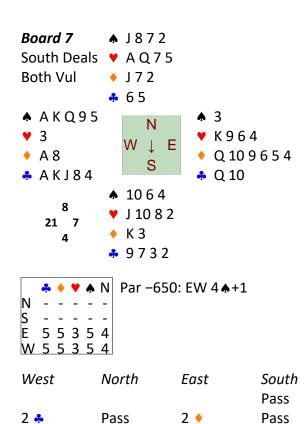
Some will opt for a top diamond lead rather than a heart. this would be even more attractive after the Stayman sequence. When West leads a low heart to the king and ace, declarer may regret his partner's caution since making 3 NT hinges only on the club guess. If you knew West had led from five hearts you might well play East for the • Q, but the fourth-highest • 4 is not easy to read.

If you misguess clubs declarer may still benefit from a misdefense to make nine tricks.





West	North	East	South
			1 NT
Pass	2 🚣	Pass	2 🛦
Pass	2 NT	All pass	



2 NT

3 NT

3 🔸

Pass

**Pass** 

All pass

**Pass** 

Pass

Pass

2 🛦

3 🚓

3 ♠

# **AUCTION**

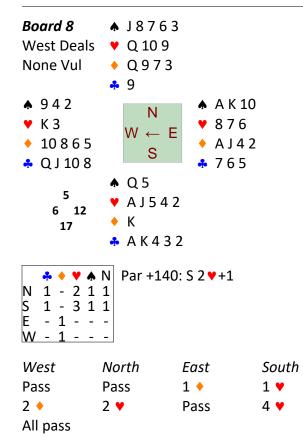
West's assets add up to a 2 • opener, and now it may not be easy to diagnose the misfit to come to a stop in 3 NT. West may well show both suits, after which it may be hard to determine whether to play spades, diamonds or clubs. As to whether slam has play, maybe 6 • will come home at some tables on a no-trump lead?

### **PLAY**

The 4-3 spade break means that declarer can come to 11 tricks by establishing the ♥ K as a discard for the diamond loser. technically 3 NT by East looks safest, and on a heart lead 10 tricks appear to be the limit.

### **PASSING THOUGHTS**

East's rebid after the 2 ♠ call by West is far from clear. if one uses 3 ♣ as a double-negative then the choice is 2 NT or 3 ♦, and the latter would probably take E/W past 3 NT?



# **AUCTION**

When East opens 1 ◆ in third chair South can overcall in hearts and then bid clubs, or jump to an unusual 2 NT. With such a strong hand and values in the short suits I prefer the overcall, but both calls are markedly superior to doubling, when someone may preempt you in spades, to prevent you getting the nature of your hand across.

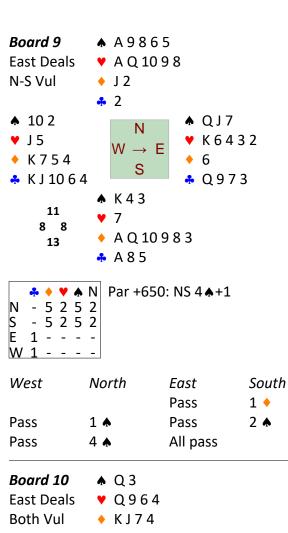
if North ever raises hearts (I'm not convinced it is right to do so should West compete to 3 ◆) South will surely end up in game.

# **PLAY**

If West has raised diamonds he may lead a high spot to prevent his partner doing something stupid at trick one -- a necessary precaution today. East must win his ◆ A and cash the spades, after which the unlucky placement of the ♥ K holds South to nine tricks.

#### **FINAL THOUGHTS**

I'm not a big fan of using a 2 NT overcall (or Michaels for that matter) to be weak or strong and not the in-between hand. Without the • K I would make the call here.



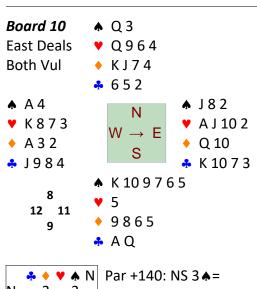
The expert community is divided into two non-equal groups: those who insist on rebidding their six card suits as South, and those who would raise spades at their second turn. Put me in the latter group, though I can also see a case for inventing a club suit. today, all routes should lead to 4 \( \bigsim\), though.

#### **PLAY**

If North has shown both majors East will surely lead a club. declarer should probably win that and cross to the spade ace to pass the • J. The defenders might do best to duck, but normal play would be to win the • K and now they can take a ruff or a natural trump trick, but that is all.

### **PASSING THOUGHT**

If West ducked his • K smoothly, wouldn't you as declarer simply play a second diamond? When East ruffs in and plays a club declarer can go to the • K and set up diamonds. But if declarer makes the mistake of drawing a second trump before playing on diamonds that line is no longer available.



# N - 3 - 3 -S - 3 - 3 -E 3 - 2 - -W 3 - 2 - -West North East South Pass 2 •

All pass

# **AUCTION**

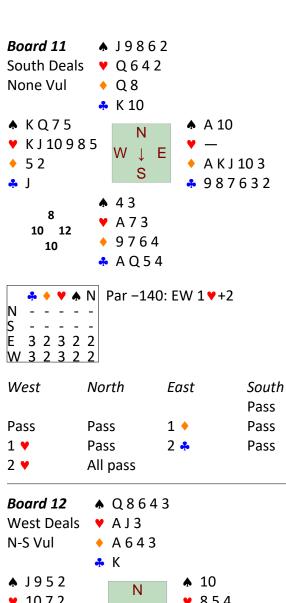
The South hand is not ideal for a 2nd in hand preempt -- with stuff outside the suit and only one top honor. Still beggars cannot be choosers. then the spotlibght shifts to West, who has almost the shape and values required to double...but vulnerable facing a passed hand I'm not sure I have the necessary cojones. Sometimes too dangerous IS an excuse, despite Bobby Wolff's mantra.

### **PLAY**

After a likely club lead into the tenace declarer will guess spades, then need to negotiate diamonds after finding East as a passed hand with • K, • J and at least one of the top hearts. I think the odds favor playing West for the • A.

#### **PASSING THOUGHTS**

Any East who leads a low diamond to trick one will get himself in his opponents black books (but it does make sense in a warped sort of way!).

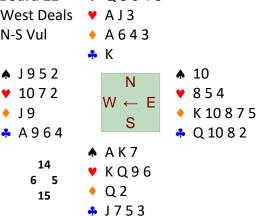


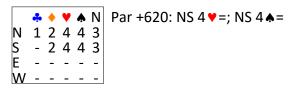
Unlike the previous deal, here I CAN see a good reason not to open a weak-two, despite the good suit. Those spades are just too good to risk losing.

The suggested auction sees East open 1 ◆, because that club suit is hardly strong enough to reverse into, is it? At his third turn East might sensibly correct 2 ♥ to 3 ♣ if his partnership style was to open any moderate six-card suit. but the risk of being put back to 3 ◆ might persuade him to go quietly.

#### **PLAY**

After a low spade lead you could imagine declarer winning the 10 then playing off three rounds of diamonds to pitch a club. if North ruffs and returns a club the defense may lose their spade ruff.





West	North	East	South
Pass	1 🛧	Pass	2 🚣
Pass	2 🔸	Pass	2 🛦
Pass	2 NT	Pass	3 ♠
Pass	3 NT	Pass	4 🛧
All pass			

#### **AUCTION**

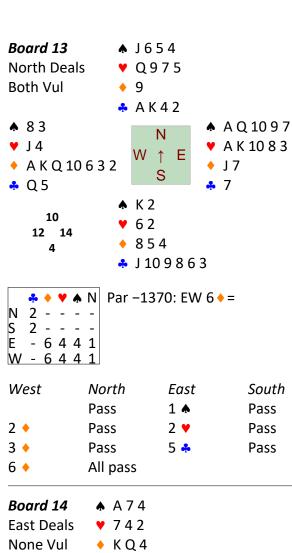
Playing 2/1 N/S should be able to agree spades cheaply and avoid getting too high here. North has weak trumps and no real extras, South an uninspiring 15-count, so there seems no reason to explore for slam here. There again, South might well envisage a more suitable hand opposite (the ♣ K could easily be the ◆ K, when slam by N/S could well be excellent!

# **PLAY**

If East leads the unbid suit, hearts, declarer should win in hand and lead a diamond towards the queen. East will win and shift to a club for West's • A -- after which the defenders should score a trump trick but no more.

#### **PASSING THOUGHTS**

The featured auction sees North rebid 3 NT over 3 ♠, meaning it as 'non-serious'. When a major has been clearly agreed this is an attempt to say "I would cooperate in a slam try but cannot initiate one".



With 6 ◆ for E/W being no worse than a finesse, while 3 NT is no play and both 4 ♥ and 4 ♠ somewhat awkward contracts, it is very hard to predict an ideal contract.

And I'm sure results from the field will be all over the place. At his third turn if East repeats his hearts then E/W might find their way to 4 ♥. After two rounds of clubs, ruffed, best play for declarer is to lead a low heart to the jack!

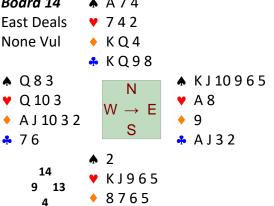
### **PLAY**

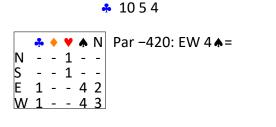
The play is far from simple in either 5 ◆ or 6 ◆. I think in 5 ◆ or 6 ◆ after a top club lead and trump shift you simply ruff a heart, then ruff a club in dummy. You can now ruff the hearts good and can now draw trumps and claim.

After a club lead to trick one it looks reasonable to advance the 

✓ J and test North's reactions. If he covers you will need to finesse the 

✓ 8 later.





West	North	East	South
		1 🛧	Pass
2 🛦	Dbl	3 🚣	3 🔻
3 ♠	All pass		

#### **AUCTION**

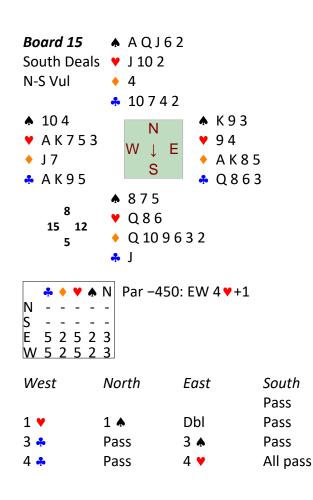
If you play a forcing no-trump, together with constructive raises (and perhaps even if you do not) then East is worth a game-try on hearing of support opposite whether or not North stretches to come into his opponents' auction with a double.

West has no honors in his partner's side suit and a dubious value in the form of the ♥ Q, so while he might make a repeat gametry of 3 ♦ he will not be worth more than a bid of 3 ♠ on the auction shown.

### **PLAY**

South might well simplify the play by leading a heart, of course. East can come to ten tricks because of the favorable lie of the clubs; but after a trump lead to the ace and a second round of trumps, declarer would be heavily odds against to make his game.

He can hold his losses to one heart, one club and one spade if he reads the position well. But he might well not do so.



Another exceptionally difficult hand for E/W where in 3 NT on a spade lead to the jack declarer will have to negotiate clubs to come to even nine tricks. You certainly could not blame East for bidding 3 NT over 3 ...

By contrast, 4 ♥ is easy when hearts break 3-3 and would be favorite to succeed even if hearts were 5-1.

And what about clubs? the need to ruff a heart (or two) means that you cannot survive most 4-1 trump breaks.

#### **PLAY**

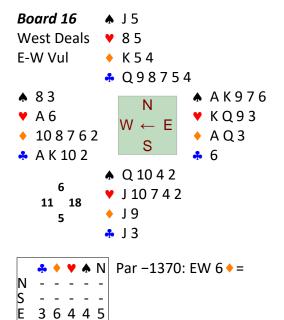
in 4 ♥ on the singleton diamond lead, I cannot see a good reason to do anything but win and play three rounds of trumps. South can win and continue with the • Q, after which declarer will be able to lead a top club from hand and handle the bad break there.

# **PASSING THOUGHT**

In the suggested auction West's jump to 3 . is encouraging but not forcing, to force one starts with a cuebid then describes the hand at the next turn, contrast the unopposed sequence 1 ♥-1 ♠-3 ♣ which IS forcing, as opener has no cuebid available at his second turn.

By the by: Dante's lowest circle of hell is reserved for those

who open the West cards 1 NT...you know who you are.



West	North	East	South
Pass	Pass	1 🛦	Pass
1 NT	Pass	2 🔻	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 🔸	Pass
3 NT	All pass		

3 6 4 4 5

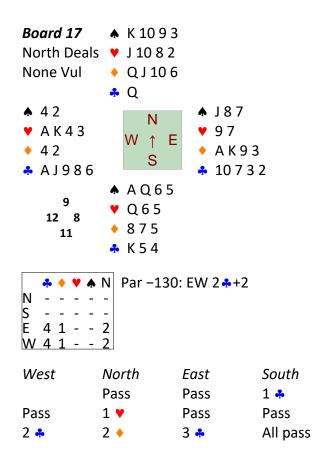
# **AUCTION**

If West opens 1 ♦ then East may drive him to the diamond slam. If he passes, then 3 NT (probably declared by West) is the most likely final contract. Is the West hand an opener? It depends on your threshold; the 5-4 pattern and great controls argue for opening, the vulnerability and weak suit argue for passing. Me? I'm on the fence.

# **PLAY**

In 6 ♦ the simple play is to take an early diamond finesse, cash the • A then pitch a club on the hearts and then ruff a club in dummv.

As far as I can see the lie of the cards does not allow play for 6 NT. Switch the North and south cards and the menaces are well placed for a double squeeze.



though it may be the more popular choice?

# **AUCTION**

If South passes in third chair (see below) E/W should find their way to a club partscore and will bring home +110 or +130 depending on how West negotiates the trumps.

"Nothing to see here...move along please."

However a 1 ♠ opener by South might see N/S climb to 3 ♠ fast, after which E/W can double -- but even if they do not, they can crossruff for seven tricks.

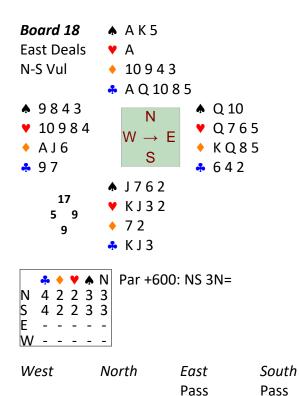
### **PLAY**

After a top diamond lead West should win and duck a spade. Best defense is for South to win and shift to a trump, after which declarer must rise with the \* A for an easy route to 10 tricks.

# **PASSING THOUGHTS**

There are winners and losers at the bridge table. Those who pass the South cards in third seat non-vulnerable will be doomed to the losers' pool, as far as I'm concerned. When The Fates allow you to open a chunky four-card major on a one bid hand, you should grab your chance -- and if it doesn't work don't blame me...

A 1 - opener might work today, but I'm not keen on it, even



1 🚣

2 NT

3 NT

Pass

Pass

All pass

1 🔻

3 🔸

**Pass** 

Pass

**Pass** 

### **AUCTION**

I suppose some people will open the North hand 1 NT but i hate doing this with any singleton honor bar the king. Your results may vary.

After North treats his hand as strong balanced (I'd hate to reverse into a second suit not headed by an honor) South will use whatever his systemic methods are to look for a spade fit and settle for no-trump when no fit comes to light.

#### **PLAY**

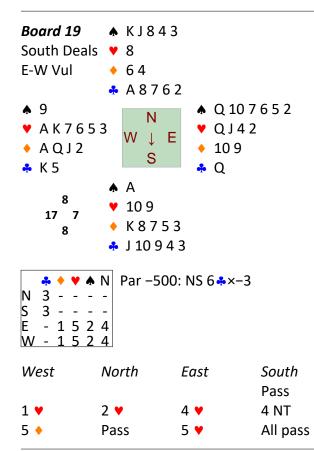
Defending 3 NT it might look easy for East to lead diamonds as an unbid suit, to permit the defenders to cash out. but if you knew North had no major and 18-19 a low diamond lead is incredibly dangerous.

#### **PASSING THOUGHTS**

After the jump 2 NT rebid there are four sensible methods you might play.

- (1) Use 3 ♣ as an inquiry and 3 ♦ as agreeing partner's minor
- (2) Use the other minor as an inquiry
- (3) play transfers -- here a 3 ♥ call would show 4-4 in the majors because with five hearts and four spades you transfer into hearts then bid spades.

(4) Wolff signoff; 3 ♣ puppets 3 ♦ to play there, or show various weak hands or choice of games. All other actions are game-forcing.



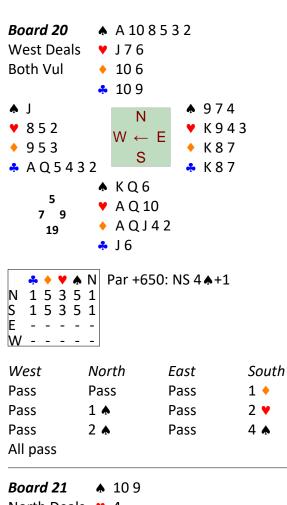
# **AUCTION**

When North produces a Michaels Cuebid to show spades and a minor, East might jump to 4 ♥ as a two-way shot. Maybe it will make, maybe the opposition can make something in a minor?

South can sacrifice with 4 NT to get to a minor (yes his spade suit is much better on defense but with a 5-5 fit in a minor he has to act) and West should bid 5 ♥. this contract needs the diamond finesse (or in some variations a ruffing finesse). With 6 ♣ x costing 500, some N/S pairs may find the save, I suppose.

### **PLAY**

North can truncate proceedings (disadvantageously from his perspective) by leading a diamond. After the ♣ A -- on which South drops the ♣ J to get a spade shift -- followed by a spade to the ♠ A for a shift to a deceptive ◆ 8 West can make his game either by taking the finesse or ruffing out the suit.

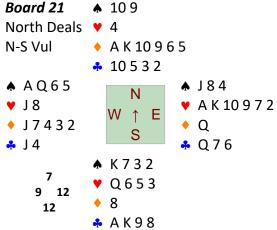


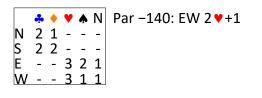
Few Wests or Norths will deem their hand worthy of a preempt. so South can open in 4th chair, and whether he rebids 2 NT or invents a reverse, N/S should surely reach 4 ♠.

### **PLAY**

After the indicated club lead the defenders will take their two winners, and do best to shift to a heart.

You could make a (slim) argument for rising with the ace and relying on the diamond finesse, but it looks normal to take both red-suit finesses. either way, +650 for E/W will be the result at the plurality of tables...won't it?





West	North	East	South
	2 🔸	2 🔻	Pass
2 NT	Pass	3 🔻	All pass

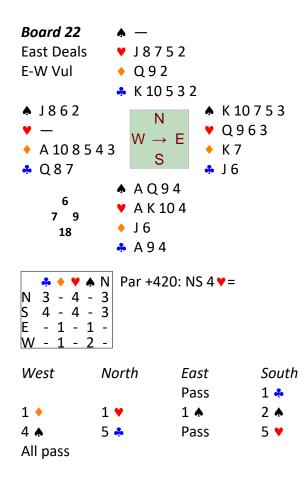
#### **AUCTION**

While some might open the North hand 3 ◆ at any vulnerability, my view is that at unfavorable vulnerability 2 ◆ is quite sufficient. when East overcalls 2 ♥ it looks reasonable for West to advance with 2 NT -- a raise to 3 ♥ is also sensible enough.

now should East revert to 3 ♥? I can definitely see a good case for that. Today that would be the winning move. The shortage of outside entries suggests that hearts may play better.

### **PLAY**

After South cashes a top club and leads his singleton diamond North has to decide whether to play for trump promotions or to go relatively passive with a club or heart return. The diamond play looks the better one to me. Declarer will ruff with an intermediate trump and South should pitch a black card. it should not matter today as declarer's trumps are solid enough to withstand the promotion.



Normally my comments on the auction and play reflect best practice...not today. I've no idea how this deal should work out in practice, even though in theory E/W should not compete in spades beyond the two-level. in practice best play is somewhat unlikely to be achieved here.

the critical question is if East will bid spades or double 1 ♥ to show 4+ spades and values. Either action makes sense but if he bids spades West may take a save in 4 ♠ and push North into indiscretion.

### **PLAY**

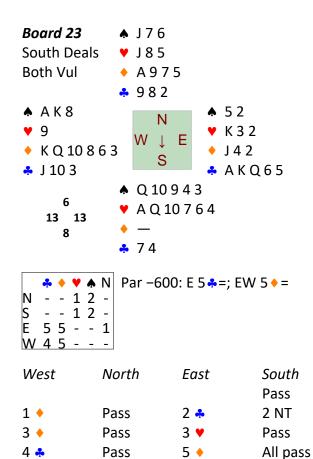
What will East lead against 5 ♥? if he selects a spade declarer should finesse and pitch two diamonds on the ♠ A-Q. The ♥ A will bring the disappointing news, after which best defense sets the contract.

Declarer can do no better than play ♣ AK and advance the ♥ 7, covered by the nine and ten. On the third rounds of clubs to West's ♣ J East must pitch a diamond. Now the ◆ A and another diamond promote a trump.

### **PASSING THOUGHT**

At double-dummy after the spade lead to make 5 ♥ declarer needs to resist cashing the ♥ A. He must for example take a ruff

in hand (in some variations NOT with the ♥ 2 but an intermediate trump!) and then run the ♥ J. Let's leave such abstruse musings to the Monday-Morning Quarterbacks.



http://kwbridge.com/bb/habits-11h.htm

# **AUCTION**

I would not argue with anyone who chose to open the South hand if they had a sensible way to describe their hand. As an incompetent golfer I only have the regulation 14 clubs in my bag, and so I leave my "weak major two-suited opener" in the clubhouse...and don't even mention Flannery to me! (Yes, opening 1 ♥ is not absurd, but some of my partners like me to have more than 8HCP and I can only recite "6-5 come alive" so many times...)

it may be hard to avoid playing 3 NT here but West's hand looks much more like a minor-suit game than no-trump doesn't it?

#### **PLAY**

5 ◆ handles like a dream, since the defenders cannot organize a ruff, but 5 ♣ only makes because diamonds are 4-0 not 3-1. if N/S buy the hand, which will surely happen at a few tables, the 6-3 fit runs into a ruff, the 5-3 fit does not. Fans of the Vondracek Effect (where the weaker suit plays better than the stronger one) may see a parallel.

### **PASSING THOUGHTS**

Don't all ask at once: "Where can I find out about the Vondracek effect?". try:

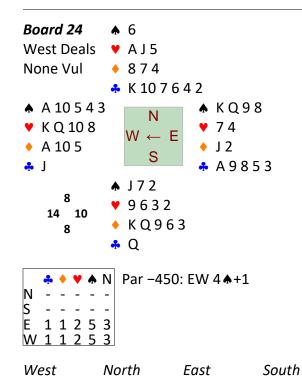
# **AUCTION**

Whether or not North overcalls, E/W will surely declarer 4 ♠ at almost every table, and I'd expect North to find a passive diamond lead quite often. Even if North preempts in clubs East is unlikely to play for penalties. Length and soft honors in partner's suit often backfire when defending doubled partscores.

# **PLAY**

The play in 4 ♠ is only about the overtrick. it looks logical to win the opening lead and play on the side suits rather than drawing all the trumps. This is especially clear if North has bid clubs since after drawing one trump and cashing the red winners the crossruff is almost sure to produce 11 tricks.

if you do draw trump you may have to guess whether to finesse for the ♥ J or play for the drop.



2 🚣

**Pass** 

All pass

3 🚣

3 ♠

**Pass** 

**Pass** 

1 🖈

3 🔻

4 🌲

